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North Korean children and youth in Lower Silesia and Masovia in 1951-1959

There is scarce historical research on North Korean children and youth residing in Poland in the 1950s. In fact, the scale of research is only measured with one article by Jolanta Krysowata published in the quarterly journal *Karta*¹. The article is a very valuable and poignant historical report based on the memories of the people who were working for several years with the Korean orphans at the State Educational Centre (Państwowy Ośrodek Wychowawczy, POW) No. 2 in Płakowice² near Lwówek Śląski in Lower Silesia. The greatest knowledge on the subject is acquired from the experience of the residents living near the towns of Lwówek Śląski, Szklarska Poręba, Bardo, Gołotczyzna, Świder, Otwock and Falenica, which for several years hosted the greatest number of Koreans, living and learning there. Undoubtedly, several years of reporter's work of Jolanta Krysowata have contributed to the broadening and dissemination of the knowledge about their stay and, above all, about the group staying in the town of Płakowice. The chief merit of her work was in gathering a collection of reports from many people who were the witnesses of this story³. It should, however, be borne in mind that several decades after the events, the memory of people who participated in them has become selective and

¹ Jolanta Krysowata, *Sieroty koreańskie*, *Karta*, 42, 2004, pp. 98–121. The author is an educator, journalist, radio and television reporter and film director. She has worked for the Polish Radio Wrocław, Polsat Television, and the Polish Television (TVP) She has won numerous journalism awards in the country and abroad. In 2009, the documents about North Korean children and young people were published, see Łukasz Sołtysik, "Dzieci i młodzież północnokoreańska w Polsce w latach 1953–1954 w świetle wybranych dokumentów", *Rocznik Jeleniogórski*, 41, 2009, pp. 195–210.

² The Centre in Płakowice between 1949 and 1950 was subject to Employees' Holiday Fund (Fundusz Wczasów Pracowniczych, FWP) in Łądek Zdrój. Between 1948 and 1950 it hosted the children from Macedonia and Greece admitted to Poland after the Civil War in Greece. This led to the creation of the State Educational Centre (Państwowy Ośrodek Wychowawczy, POW), which took over the buildings in six cities: Łądek Zdrój, Bardo, Duszniki Zdrój, Międzygórze, Szczawno Zdrój, as well as Płakowice (<http://ladek-zdroj.w.interia.pl/zdroj0.html>, accessed on: April 11th, 2008). Another study says that until 1945 in Płakowice there was a Wellness Centre (Zakład Leczniczo-Pielęgnacyjny). Temporarily in different periods it also served as a hospital. Between 1945 and 1946 it became a gathering point for the exiled German people. Then the School of Industrial Training (Szkoła Przystosobienia Przemysłowego) was moved to Płakowice from Komarno, near Jelenia Góra, where about 300–350 male youths learned the trade of electrical power engineering specialist. In 1951, POW No. 2 was created. Between 1951 and 1953 it hosted a group of several-hundred young Macedonians and Greeks. In 1953, the children from Greece were moved to the centres in Zgorzelec and Western Pomerania. One of the first directors of POW No. 2 was Marian Waliński (he definitely performed the duties in 1953–1956), but for unclear reasons he does not figure in the list of directors of the centre in the quoted study. It stated that between 1951 and 1980 the institution was managed by Ryszard Klecki. After a brief overhaul and freshening up the buildings, Płakowice hosted the Korean children. In 1959, the Koreans left Płakowice (see *Rys historyczny [Płakowic]*, <http://lwowekmos.republika.pl/Link1.htm>, accessed on: April 11th, 2008).

³ The result of this tedious work was a series of radio broadcast: *Osieroceni (Orphaned)* (2003), *Portret w czerwieni (Portrait in Red)* (2004) and documentary films made with Patrick Yoka: *Kim Ki Dok* (2006) and *Osieroceni (Orphaned)* (2007).



inaccurate. The access to the discovered documents has allowed to verify and supplement the findings of Jolanta Krysowata.

Small pieces of information about the stay of Koreans in Poland can be traced in very few and scattered publications. Having collected and contrasted them, it turned out that they often did not provide satisfactory answers to such basic questions as, for example, how many Koreans came to Poland and when they actually arrived. For instance, the reference books and the Internet contain conflicting data on the number of Korean children living in Płakowice. According to Jolanta Krysowata, the group from Płakowice consisted of 1,270 people⁴. On the other hand, the doctors from Wrocław who examined all the Korean orphans, claimed that there were 1,000 of them⁵. Then again, in the Internet descriptions and reviews of Jolanta Krysowata's radio broadcasts and her two films: *Kim Ki Dok* and *Osieroceni (Orphaned)*, the numbers of Korean children are estimated at 1,200 or 1,500. The differences concern also the total number of Koreans residing in Poland at that time which oscillate between 1,500 and 1,720 people⁶. Serious concerns about this issue are also connected with the information included in the books by Marian Brandys⁷, which is expanded further in the article.

I would like to begin with passing a few comments concerning this text. This article has been written on the basis of archival materials found during the preliminary research in the archives of Lower Silesia and Warsaw. Although I have not conducted research targeted specifically on this topic, detailed preliminary survey of the archival collections concerning the issue of national minorities in Lower Silesia, as well as the accidentally discovered documents, have allowed to present new facts related to the stay of the North Korean children and young people in Poland between 1951 and 1959. I have also decided to conduct survey in three newspapers: *Trybuna Ludu* (The People's Tribune), *Gazeta Robotnicza*, (The Workers' Newspaper) and *Słowo Polskie* (The Polish Word)⁸. The collected material proved to be far more abundant and valuable than I had initially expected. The results of the preliminary research have allowed to verify some of the assumptions, supplement factual material and slightly revise the assessment of the nature of the Korean operation.

Due to political reasons, the nature of the stay of North Korean children and young people in Poland was that of a special operation, and the people working with the Koreans were bound to maintain confidentiality⁹. For this reason, it is difficult to find any documents concerning this issue (for the years 1951–1959) in the State Archives in

⁴ Krysowata, *Sieroty*, p. 100. However, we find there no information on the fact that children also populated Szklarska Poręba and Bardo.

⁵ Izabela Kania, Bohdan Leski, Roman Marciniak, *Paragonimioza płuc (Paragonimiasis pulmonorum) u dzieci koreańskich w Polsce*, Wrocław 1957 (Wrocławskie Towarzystwo Naukowe, series B, no. 85), p. 27.

⁶ E.g. Michał Gibki, *Osieroceni. (Recenzja reportażu J. Krysowatej "Osieroceni", March 11th, 2007)*, http://www.reporter.edu.pl/dokument_radiowy/recenzje/osieroceni (accessed on: May 6th, 2008).

⁷ Marian Brandys, *Dom odzyskanego dzieciństwa*, Warszawa 1953; *idem, Koreańscy z Gołotczyzny*, 1st edition, Warszawa 1954.

⁸ Preliminary research included *Trybuna Ludu* (TL) from the periods: November 20th–30th, 1951, July 20th–August 9th, 1953, May 9th–July 10th, 1956 and July 20th–August 20th, 1959, *Słowo Polskie* (SP) from the periods: January 1st–March 31st, December 1st–31st, 1951, July 23rd–September 3rd, 1953, February 1st–August 31st, 1956 and July 1st–September 30th, 1959; *Gazeta Robotnicza* (GR) from the periods: January 1st–October 7th, and December 1st–30th, 1951, July 17th–September 1st, 1953, July 1st –August 31st, 1956 and July 1st–August 31st, 1959.

⁹ E.g., each person employed in POW No. 2 in Płakowice signed a declaration committing to the secrecy about the fact that they worked with foreign children (Krysowata, *Sieroty*, p.102).



Wrocław, its local branches in Jelenia Góra and Kamieniec Ząbkowicki, or in the Central Archives of Modern Records in Warsaw¹⁰. It also seems that so far no one has undertaken any research on the subject in the archives which store the files of the powiat of Ciechanów and the towns of Świder, Otwock and Falenica (powiats of Warsaw and Otwock).

From the 25th of June 1950 to the 27th of July 1953, the Korean peninsula was an arena of war aimed at seizing power over the area inhabited by the Korean people. The sides of the conflict were not only the two Koreas: the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) under the rule of the communist dictator Kim Il-Sung against the Republic of Korea led by Syngman Rhee, but also the following world powers: the USSR (along with European satellite countries, including Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary) and China as the supporters of Kim Il-Sung, against the United States, Canada, France and the United Kingdom (as well as other countries that constituted NATO) allied with Syngman Rhee¹¹.

The Korean war was an ever-present issue (between 1950 and 1953) in the Polish papers. Already in July 1950, the Central Trade Union Council (Centralna Rada Związków Zawodowych, CRZZ) announced the so-called 'Korea Defence Week' held under the banner of 'Hands off Korea' during which cash donations to help the people of North Korea were collected, probably not only among the soldiers of the Internal Security Corps¹². At the beginning of 1951, on the instruction of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (KC PZPR) a mass campaign to support Korean children was organized all over Poland. At that time, however, few people in the country, and certainly none of the

¹⁰ For the presented issue, in the State Archives in Wrocław (APWr.) and its branches in Jelenia Góra (O/JG) and Kamieniec Ząbkowicki, the following collections have been covered by detailed studies: the Board of Voivodship National Council (PWRN) in Wrocław (years 1949–1956, for the years 1957–1959 I have examined the records of the Department of Internal Affairs), Voivodship Committee of Polish United Workers' Party (KW PZPR) in Wrocław (years 1949–1956, for the years 1957–1959 I have examined the files of the Department of Administration and the Committee for Nationality Affairs), the Powiat Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (KP PZPR) in Lwówek Śląski, Jelenia Góra and Ząbkowice Śląskie (for the years 1949–1956), the Board of Powiat National Council (PPRN) in Lwówek Śląski (1951–1959, minutes of PPRN meetings according to the delivery acceptance certificate; the team is disordered, currently under development; information from Wojciech Szczerepa, the archivist from APWr.O/JG), in Jelenia Góra (years 1950–1956) and Ząbkowice Śląskie (years 1950–1956) together with the acts of gmina (municipality) for those powiats (years 1945–1954). The folders under research have contained protocols of the meetings, reports, memos, resolutions, information and evaluation. Whereas in the Central Archives of Modern Records (AAN) in Warsaw I have thoroughly researched the minutes of the meetings of the Political Bureau and the Organisational Bureau of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (BP / BO KC PZPR), of the Foreign Department of KC PZPR (WZ KC PZPR), i.e. the team of KC PZPR, and the Ministry of Education, and the Social and Cultural Association of the Czechs and Slovaks in Poland (TSKCiSP). The survey has also included the archival collections of: the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Cabinet Office (URM) and the Communist Parties of the Socialist and Capitalist Countries, but it has not resulted in any new arrangements. I have also conducted preliminary research in the archives of the Institute of National Remembrance–Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation in Wrocław, where I have examined the report of the Powiat Offices of Public Security (PUBP)/Powiat Offices of Public Security Affairs and the District Commands of Citizen's Militia in Lwówek Śląski, Ząbkowice Śląskie and Jelenia Góra (1945–1956), but I have not found any mention of Korean orphans.

¹¹ Joanna P. Rurarz, *Historia Korei*, Warszawa 2005; Waldemar Jan Dziak, *Kim Ir Sen*, Warszawa 2001; ibidem, *Kim Ir Sen. Dzieło i polityczne wizje*, Warszawa 2000, pp. 129–180; Wiesław Olszewski, *Świat po roku 1945*, Poznań 2000 (series: *Dzieje powszechnie XX wieku*), part. 1, pp. 193–201.

¹² The Archives of the Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw (AIPN), cat.no. BU IPN 635/549, *Rezolucja odpis*, July 15th, 1950, p. 9; cat. no. BU IPN 635/549, *Sprawozdanie Wydziału Politycznego 13. Pułku Korpusu Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego z przebiegu akcji zbierania składek dla ofiar wojny w Korei*, July 29th, 1950, p. 30–31 (the total sum donated was 128,559 Polish zlotys).



residents of the powiats of Ciechanów and Otwock in Mazovia and the powiats of Lwówek, Jelenia Góra and Żąbkowice Śląskie in Lower Silesia, could have imagined that Poland would host the orphans from the Korean Peninsula. Also the Powiat Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (KP PZPR) began to mobilise the community of the Lwówek Land to help the struggling North Korea. At the meeting of the Executive of the Powiat Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (KP PZPR) in Lwówek Śląski it was urged that: 'All institutions shall participate in the undertaken operation, and then the outcome of the operation shall certainly be positive'; 'the PRZZ (the Powiat Council of Trade Unions - Ł.S.) organizes events, the total income of which will be used to help the Korean children'; "'Groups of three", which collect gifts for the Korean children should make the residents aware of the fact that by taking part in the aid for Korea, we strike hard at the Anglo-American instigators who seek to unleash a new war'¹³. A similar campaign was carried out in the powiat of Jelenia Góra, but, contrary to the one organised by the KP PZPR in Lwówek, it was summarized after having been completed¹⁴. Relevant material on this issue, which particularly exposes the suffering of the Korean children, was shown in the Polish Film Chronicle¹⁵.

Inviting North Korean children and adolescents to Poland was related to the aid provided for the DPRK by Poland in the 1950s. The whole operation in the Eastern Bloc was animated and coordinated by the USSR. It was organized under the propaganda aegis of international friendship among the communist parties¹⁶. The first 200 North Korean

¹³ APWr., KP PZPR Lwówek Śląski, cat. no. 22, *Sprawozdanie z przygotowań do zbierania podarków dla dzieci koreańskich na posiedzenie Egzekutywy KP PZPR w Lwówku Śląskim do protokołu nr 39/51 Egzekutywy KP PZPR w Lwówku Śląskim*, January 11th, 1951, p. 4.

¹⁴ APWr., KP PZPR Jelenia Góra, cat.no. 30, *Sprawozdanie z akcji zbierania podarków dla dzieci koreańskich*, January 1st–31st, 1951, pp.179–180.

¹⁵ Aid collected in Poland, (mostly aid in kind) was to be given to children. See also *Dzieciom bohaterskiej Korei*, phot. Władysław Forbert and the Archives of the Polish Film Chronicle, "Polska Kronika Filmowa", 5, 1951. See also: *Trójka koreańska*, 1951, directed by Stanisław Grabowski (feature short film); *Korea oskarża*, 1951, directed by Bronisław Wiernik (documentary film).

¹⁶ Olszewski, *Świat*, pp. 193–201; Rurarz, *Historia*, p. 390. According to the author, after the end of the Korean War, in three years the socialist countries provided the DPRK with financial aid of 3.7 million roubles, of which Poland accounted for more than 360 thousand roubles. The largest aid was provided by the USSR and China. The aid provided was significantly higher and reached about 3.7 billion roubles, including, as reported by the Polish press, about 1 billion from the USSR (for more information see "Braterska pomoc ZSRR dla narodu koreańskiego umożliwi mu szybką odbudowę przemysłu i transportu", *SP*, no. 210, September 3rd, 1953, p. 1; Dziak, *Kim Ir Sen. Dzieło*, p. 209: 1 billion roubles, i.e. 250 million USD). On the 28th of July, 1953, the Government Presidium of the People's Republic of Poland adopted a resolution to grant aid to the DPRK. For more information see "Uchwała rządu polskiego o udzieleniu pomocy Korei w odbudowie gospodarki narodowej", *GR*, no. 182, July 31st, 1953, p. 1. A similar resolution was adopted by Hungarians: "Naród węgierski udzieli braterskiej pomocy narodowi koreańskiemu", *SP*, no. 186, August 6th, 1953, p. 1. It seems that the years from 1953 to 1957 were a period of the most intense relations between Poland and North Korea. Between 1954 and 1957, the People's Republic of Poland was supposed to carry out, among others, the following activities in Korea: rebuild two steam locomotive and railway vehicle, repair shops, carry out automation and electrification of two mines, develop a master plan of Czendin reconstruction (from December 1954 to July 1956, the team leader of the Polish experts was Professor Piotr Zaremba) (Kim Dze Fu, "Polscy inżynierowie projektują koreańskie miasto", *TL*, no. 184, July 4th, 1956, p. 2; "Korea bliska Polsce", *TL*, no. 183, July 3rd, 1956, p.1). Economic aid, however, was greater. In 1956 the DPRK received the foundries from the Casting Machines Factory in Kraków ("Z Krakowa do Korei i Jugosławii", *SP*, no. 187, August 7th, 1956, p. 2) and electrical devices and electrical switchboards for wood lathes from the High Voltage Circuit Breakers Factory A-10 in Międzyzylesie near Warsaw ("Z Międzyzylesia – do Korei", *SP*, no. 131, June 2nd, 1956, p. 1). Other areas of aid and cultural contacts are confirmed by interesting photographic



orphans arrived to Poland in November 1951¹⁷. The purpose of their stay was to gain education, so that when they returned to North Korea they could participate in rebuilding their homeland as professionals and skilled workers¹⁸. In the spring of 1952, North Korean children were also taken in and offered care and education by a number of families from Romania (600 people) and Czechoslovakia (400 people)¹⁹. In July 1953, Poland decided to welcome another group of Korean children. Two transports which arrived on the 25th and 27th of July, 1953, carried 1,000 orphans²⁰.

It seems that the arrival of young Koreans in July 1953 had not been planned earlier. The Polish authorities were surprised by the rapid referral of the children to Poland and forced into frantic preparations. The decision in this case had been probably reached at the end of June and the beginning of July, 1953. However, the preparation of legislative and the arrangements between the ministries began in Warsaw no sooner than at the end of July. They were certainly at work throughout August and were protracted at least until September. The burden of organizing childcare for the Koreans rested on the Child Care Department (DOnD) of the Ministry of Education. By the end of July, an estimated expenditure for this purpose had finally been agreed on with the State Planning Commission (the 24th of July), the Ministry of Finance (the 31st of July) and the State Employment Commission (Państwowa Komisja Etatów) (the 31st of July)²¹.

In August 1953, the Ministry of Education prepared also a draft resolution of the Presidium of the Government on the adoption of 1,000 North Korean orphans providing justification²². The adoption of this resolution was to legitimize the status quo and formally impose the tasks which had in fact been already performed since July. The Minister of Education was entrusted the organisation of the care for North Korean orphans and The Minister of Finance was responsible for granting and opening the credit in the amount of 16,264,343 Polish zlotys from the central budget reserve for the period from July to December 1953. According to the draft resolution, both of the abovementioned ministries were held responsible for the execution of childcare. The beginning of its implementation was assumed to be the 1st of July, 1953.

documentation stored in AAN (see AAN, Ministry of Education, cat. no. 1213, Ministry of Education, cat. no. 1214, *Koreański album ze zdjęciami z 1955 r. dokumentujący przekazanie przez Ministerstwo Oświaty PRL młodzieży koreańskiej kompletu pomocy naukowych*; AAN, KC PZPR, cat. no. 237/XXII/719 – material about the Polish construction professionals in Korea). It is worth noting that in 1955 North Korea was toured by the Central Artistic Team of the Polish Army. Their second tour was no sooner than in 1977. (Zbigniew Kozakiewicz, "Phenian – pierwsze wrażenia. Notatki z Dalekiego Wschodu", *Żołnierz Wolności*, no. 137, June 11th–12th, 1977, p. 6). Another issue is the participation of the Poles in the reconciliatory mission of the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission on the Korean Peninsula which began in 1953 (Adam Stasiński, "Przerwana misja", *Magazyn Tygodniowy*, extra supplement *Polska Zbrojna*, no. 13/213, March 31st–April 1st, 1995, p. VII).

¹⁷ "200 sierot koreańskich przybyło do Polski", TL, no. 327, November 25th, 1951, p. 1.

¹⁸ Marian Bielecki, *Przedmowa*, [in:] Brandys, *Koreańczycy*, pp. 5–11.

¹⁹ Brandys, *Dom*, pp. 215–216.

²⁰ AAN, KC PZPR, cat.no. 237/XXII/486, Notatka służbowa o przyjeździe do Polski 1000 dzieci sierot koreańskich i o aktualnym stanie organizacyjnym opieki nad nimi, August 4th, 1953, p. 2.

²¹ AAN, Ministry of Education, cat. no.851, *Pismo poufne dyrektora Departamentu [Opieki nad Dzieckiem] (DOnD) Franciszka Pawuły do Gabinetu Ministra*, August 28th, 1953 p. 8.

²² AAN, Ministry of Education, cat.no.851, *Pismo dyrektora DOnD F. Pawuły do Gabinetu Ministra w/m*, August 18th, 1953, p. 1; cat.no. 851, *Projekt. Uchwała Prezydium Rządu nr [no number] z dn. [no date] w sprawie przyjęcia 1000 sierot koreańskich na wychowanie w Polsce wraz z Uzasadnieniem* [manuscript], pp. 2–3. The letter by Pawuła together with the manuscript and justification was filed at the Office of the Minister of Education on the 19th of August 1953, where it was examined and rewritten on a typewriter.



Officially, in the justification of the draft resolution of the Presidium of the Government on the adoption of North Koreans in Poland, it was stated that 'The Government of the People's Republic of Poland in order to support the People's Republic of Korea has invited 1,000 Korean orphans to Poland, providing them with complete care, upbringing and education. The costs of transport, living, education and upbringing of children in 1953 (the period of July–December) will amount to 16,264,343 zloty, including the wage bill of 1,538,654 zlotys'²³. The purpose of the Korean children's stay in Poland was clearly established – raising the 'new man' and the education of young people. It was calculated that this process would take at least a few years. It seems that the Polish government covered also the costs of transporting the children from Korea to Poland²⁴. On the 21st of August, the Minister of Education sent a letter to the Office of Culture and Education Department in the Cabinet Office (Urząd Rady Ministrów, URM) with 'a request to assert' the approval of the prepared draft resolution from the Deputy Prime Minister and after receiving the approval, to refer it 'directly to the Office of the Presidium (Biuro Prezydialne, BP) in order to place it on the agenda of the Presidium of the Government'²⁵.

It seems that the initiative of the Ministry of Education took there a successful course²⁶, although to definitely determine it, further in-depth research into the sources in the Central Archives of Modern Records is required.

In autumn 1953, the Polish authorities made another step to make life easier for the Koreans. In October 1953, the Secretary of the Embassy of the DPRK, Pan-Ta-Dien, requested Ostap Dłuski, the First Secretary of the Foreign Department (WZ) of KC PZPR for authorization and appropriate disposal that would allow the children and young Koreans to freely join Polish youth organizations: children would access the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association (ZHP), students from high and vocational schools would access the Union of Polish Youth (ZMP), and university students could join ZMP and the Polish Students' Association (ZSP). North Korean authorities acknowledged that participation in those organisations would have substantial educational and political benefits. Ostap Dłuski supported a proposal concerning this issue, submitted to the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party, because the stay of Korean children in Poland was expected to be long. He also called for granting them admission on regular grounds. The annotations on the document state that the request was accepted on the 13th of November²⁷.

²³ Manuscripts of the draft resolution and justification were rewritten on the typewriter on the 20th of August 1953, AAN, Ministry of Education, cat. no. 851, *Projekt. Uchwała Prezydium Rządu nr [brak numeru] z dn. [brak daty] w sprawie przyjęcia 1000 sierot...*, pp. 4–5. The given amount of over 16 million zloty concerned among others the organization of two Korean children's centres in Płakowice and Szklarska Poręba see. *ibidem*, *Uzasadnienie (extended)*. *Załącznik do pisma dyrektora DON D F. Pawuły do Gabinetu Ministra w gmachu*, [August 28th, 1953.], p. 9. Full text of the draft resolution and the justification was published in: Sołtysik, *Dzieci*, doc. 1 and 2. See also Bielecki, *Przedmowa*, pp. 5–11.

²⁴ The sum entered as one-time costs of transport expenses was 1,706,615 zloty. This amount should be regarded as the cost of the children's journey from Korea to Poland. Current transport costs were estimated at 56,242 zloty. Separate sum of money was reserved in the budget for business trips and resettlements (total 70,930 zloty), see Sołtysik, *Dzieci*, doc. 2.

²⁵ AAN, Ministry of Education, cat. no. 851, *Pismo ministra oświaty do Biura Działu Kultury i Oświaty (BDKiO) URM*, August 21st, 1953, pp. 6–7.

²⁶ Cf. *ibidem*, *Pismo poufne dyrektora DON D F. Pawuły do Gabinetu Ministra w gmachu*, August 28th, 1953, p. 8; *Pismo Departamentu Gabinetu Ministra Oświaty do BDKiO URM*, August 29th, 1953, pp. 10–11.

²⁷ Foreigners were not admitted to the aforementioned organizations. The exception to this rule were the children and young political refugees from Greece. AAN, KC PZPR, cat. no. 237/XXII/217, *Pismo WZ KC PZPR*



It seems that the described circulation of documents was a formality, with the positive reply being obvious from the beginning. At the same time, possibly even on the same day, the Foreign Department of KC PZPR prepared another information concerning the young Koreans staying in Poland, together with the draft resolution of the Secretariat of the Central Board (Zarząd Główny, ZG) of the ZMP. It accentuated the fact that the Asians were taken care of by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Higher Education, and the anticipated stay in Poland was to last until they completed their education in high schools and at universities. Admission of Korean children and young people to the membership in ZMP was motivated by their frequent and lively engagement in the activities carried out by the ZMP and other organizations that were operating in the schools which they were attending. Therefore, it was decided to legally regulate the Koreans' membership in these organizations, highlighting the fact that it had been required by the DPRK Embassy ²⁸. The draft resolution of the Secretariat of the Central Board of ZMP, which was in fact written by the employees of the WZ KC PZPR, says:

'Taking into account the fact that as the Korean youth do not belong to the organization of ZMP, they remain detached from political life, making it difficult for the organization of ZMP to have direct educational impact on them, the Secretariat of ZG ZMP states the following:

1. Korean youth shall be admitted to the ZMP (scouts) according to the rules recorded in the statute, and in accordance with the instructions of the ZG ZMP on admitting new members, providing membership cards and keeping records.

2. At homes and schools where the young people from Korea are present, and where there is no ZMP organization, new units of ZMP shall be established and the Board shall be chosen. Children of the appropriate age shall be admitted to the scouts, or new scouting teams shall be created.

3. Prior to the admission of the Korean youth to the ZMP, they shall be made aware of the work of our organization through lectures, talks and invitations to the ZMP meetings.

4. While a larger number of young Koreans is admitted to a given unit, it is advisable that one of them is appointed to sit in the Board.

5. Responsibility for the work with the Korean youth rests with the Board of ZMP on whose territory they reside.

6. Responsibility for the implementation of the present resolution and for the work with the Korean youth rests with: Organizational Department of the ZG ZMP, and Organizational Department of the ZW ZMP (Voivodship Board of ZMP) in the city of Warsaw, Warsaw Voivodship, Łódź, Wrocław, Gdańsk, Stalinogród [i.e. Katowice - Ł.S.]²⁹.

do Sekretariatu KC PZPR na ręce sekretarza KC PZPR towarzysza F[ranciszka] Mazura, Warszawa, October 24th, 1953 – regarding the admission of North Korean children and youth to the Scouts and ZMP, pp. 34–35.

²⁸ AAN, KC PZPR, cat.no.237/XXII/217, *Informacja o młodzieży koreańskiej przebywającej w Polsce wraz z projektem uchwały Sekretariatu ZG [Zarządu Głównego] ZMP w sprawie przyjmowania młodzieży koreańskiej do szeregów ZMP*, [October 24th or 27th] 1953, p. 30; see also Sołtysik, *Dzieci*, doc. 6. According to Ewa Willaume-Pielka, the Korean children were educated in the primary school and high school in Otwock. Cf. <http://www/michalin.pl/swider/?modul=niusy&id=80> (accessed on: April 11th, 2008).

²⁹ AAN, KC PZPR, cat. no.237/XXII/217, *Informacja o młodzieży koreańskiej przebywającej w Polsce wraz z projektem uchwały Sekretariatu ZG [Zarządu Głównego] ZMP w sprawie przyjmowania młodzieży koreańskiej do szeregów ZMP*, [October 24th or 27th] 1953, pp. 30–31.



In the State Archives in Wrocław I have found no reports on this topic. However, the outlined issue requires detailed archival research.

In 1954, the division of responsibilities for immigrants from Asia between the ministries and educational institutions seems quite clear. The Ministry of Education exercised care of pre-school children and those attending primary schools, it financed the maintenance of the centres in Płakowice, Szklarska Poręba and Świder. The Ministry of Higher Education took care of Korean students. The Central Office of Vocational Training (Centralny Urząd Szkolenia Zawodowego, CUSZ) and individual ministries provided for the cost of living and education of young people studying in vocational schools of different specialities (mainly 161 people who arrived in autumn 1953, and the graduates from primary schools in the POW in Świder). The school year 1953/1954 brought new experiences in this regard, which led to drawing conclusions concerning organization. In addition, in the new school year 1954/1955 another group of young Koreans, the graduates from primary schools, were getting through to secondary schools. For these reasons, the CUSZ prepared a draft resolution to the Presidium of the Government for the unification of living conditions of Korean youths studying in vocational schools in Poland, which on the 19th of July, 1954, was submitted to the Ministry of Education with request for approval³⁰. Just like a year before, a draft resolution was being agreed upon and assessed for over a month by various sections and departments in the CUSZ and the Ministry of Education³¹. Then the documents circulated until the 18th of September between the URM, the Presidium of the Government and the Ministry of Education without successful resolution of this issue³². Further course of this issue is unknown.

The suggested draft resolution defined and divided between the ministries and institutions the range of responsibilities that they should have towards the Korean children and young people at different stages of their education. It also clarified the annual cost of living per pupil. An important issue was stated in point 3, which obliged the ministers and the 'heads of central offices', which supervised vocational schools to 'grant Korean students full scholarship in the amount determined for the students of a given type of vocational school, a scholarship bonus in the amount of 100 zloty per month for personal expenses,

³⁰ AAN, Ministry of Education, cat. no. 851, *Pismo CUSZ [Centralnego Urzędu Szkolenia Zawodowego] do Ministerstwa Oświaty*, 19th July 1954, p. 12; *Projekt. Uchwała nr [no number] Prezydium Rządu z dn. [no date] 1954 r. w sprawie ujednoczenia warunków bytowych młodzieży koreańskiej uczącej się w szkołach zawodowych w Polsce wraz z Uzasadnieniem*, pp. 14–16 (for more information see Sołtysik, *Dzieci*, doc. 5 and 6).

³¹ AAN, Ministry of Education, cat. no. 851, *[Odręczne notatki urzędników w Ministerstwie Oświaty]*, August 9th and 21st, 1954], p. 13; *Notatka CUSZ*, August 21st, 1954, p. 24.

³² Most probably on the 21st of August, the draft resolution was sent to the URM. From there on the 9th of September it was sent back to "make aware" the Ministry of Education including the information that it was submitted on the agenda of the Government Presidium by the URM. It was circulating there (probably together with the project) for a few days, and probably on the 18th of September the reply was sent from the Ministry of Education announcing that no comments were filed. However, it was too late: on the same day the seat of the Government Presidium took place, which did not consider and did not take any resolution concerning Korean youth. AAN, Ministry of Education, cat. no. 851, *[Odręczne notatki urzędników kancelarii Ministerstwa Oświaty]*, p. 25. The letter was accompanied by a draft resolution on the Korean youth, which perhaps included some corrections or changes. In the folder there is no such document, cf. handwritten annotations. *Ibidem*, *Pismo dyrektora generalnego [II Zespołu] URM St[efana] Rozmaryna do ministra oświaty*, September 9th, 1954, p. 26; *[Odręczna notatka z 13 IX 1954 r. parafowana przez inną osobę, 15 IX 1954 r.]*, p. 27; *Pismo F. Pawuły z 15 IX 1954 r. wraz z odręczną notatką urzędnika z Departamentu Planowania Ministerstwa Oświaty*, September 15th, 1954, p. 28; *Pismo Ministra Oświaty do II Zespołu URM*, wrzesień 1954 r. *[oraz adnotacja na marginesie, 18 IX 1954 r.]*, p. 29.



free accommodation in a dormitory and full current supply of clothing, shoes, books and school accessories. The scholarship and the scholarship bonus should be paid each month of the year³³. The resolution was assumed to come into force on the 1st of September, 1954. Then, on the 1st of January, 1955, the care over the Korean orphans was to be finally transferred from the Ministry of Education, which had exercised it so far, to the directors of schools attended by the young people, and thus to the ministries and institutions which oversaw and financed the institutions of vocational training³⁴. The idea was justified by the fact that the administration of care over Korean orphans pursuing secondary education performed so far by the Ministry of Education decreased the sense of responsibility for those young people felt by the school management and the ministry financing a given type of technical or vocational school³⁵.

Further changes in the status and funding of the North Korean children and adolescents' stay in Poland remain unknown, because no other documents have been preserved on this topic. Probably since 1956 or 1957, the financing of Korean operation fell on the PWRN (the Board of Voivodship National Council) and the PPRN (the Board of Powiat National Council), which resulted in reducing the budgets for the boarding and education of Koreans³⁶.

One of the main issues to clarify is determining the number and distribution of North Korean children and young people in Poland between 1951 and 1959. The first group of orphans, 200 people in number, arrived to Poland on the 22nd of November, 1951³⁷. They were placed in the State Children's Home (PDD) in Gołotczyzna near Ciechanów, and were transferred to the POW in Świder in the first half of 1953³⁸. It is also known that in the academic year 1951/1952 at least 20 Korean were studying at universities³⁹.

Another group of Korean children, 1,000 people in number, arrived at the end of July 1953. They were placed in Lower Silesia, in POW No. 2 in Płakowice (it included a centre in Płakowice and a PDD in Szklarska Poręba in the powiat of Jelenia Góra – the group from Płakowice)⁴⁰. Between August and October 1953, Poland has also admitted a group of 161 Korean youths to study in vocational schools⁴¹. However, nothing is known about the circumstances of their arrival. According to these data, it appears that in the autumn of 1953, the number of Koreans living in Poland was: 200 Koreans in Świder and surrounding

³³ Sołtysik, *Dzieci*, doc. 5.

³⁴ *Ibidem*.

³⁵ AAN, Ministry of Education, cat.no. 851, *Uzasadnienie [projektu uchwały nr [no number] Prezydium Rządu z dn. [no date] 1954 r. w sprawie ujednoczenia warunków bytowych młodzieży koreańskiej uczącej się w szkołach zawodowych w Polsce]*, [July 19th] 1954 with encl. no. 1 and no. 2, pp. 15–16, 17 (encl. no. 1), 18–19 (encl. no. 2). Full text of the document in Sołtysik, *Dzieci*, doc. 6.

³⁶ Kryswata, *Sieroty*, p. 111. The issue requires further study.

³⁷ "200 sierot...", *TL*, no. 327, November 25th, 1951, p. 1. For a shorter version of this entry, see also GR, no. 306, November 24th–25th, 1951, p. 1.

³⁸ Kryswata, *Sieroty*, p. 100 (the author does not give the precise number of the children who arrived at that time); Brandys, *Dom*, pp. 8–13 (the author states that there were 200 children); Ewa Willaume-Pielka, *Wokół Świdra /Koreańczycy w Świdrze*, September 9th, 2005 (<http://www.michalin.pl/swider/?modul=niusy&id=80>, accessed on: April 11th, 2008) (200 children); "Delegacja rządowa KRL-D odwiedziła dzieci koreańskie w Świdrze", *SP*, no. 160, July 6th, 1956, p. 1.

³⁹ AAN, KC PZPR, cat. no. 237/XXII/217, *Sprawozdanie z postępów w nauce oraz opieki Ministerstwa Szkolnictwa Wyższego nad studentami obcokrajowcami studiującymi na wyższych uczelniach*. Pj pp. 19–13

⁴⁰ AAN, KC PZPR, cat. no. 237/XXII/486, *Notatka służbowa o przyjeździe...*, p. 2.

⁴¹ Sołtysik, *Dzieci*, doc. 6.



areas, at least 20 students, 1,000 children in the POW in Płakowice and the PDD in Szklarska Poręba and 161 young people learning various trades, which gives a total number of over 1,381 people.

The number of Koreans learning in Poland was, however, bigger. At the end of October, 1953, there were 1,631 Korean children and adolescents, including 74 under nursery care, 1,059 attending primary schools, 223 in high and vocational schools, and 275 people studying at universities. The vast majority lived in three places: in Świder, Płakowice and Szklarska Poręba. The others were learning in other towns or studying in various academic centres⁴². Out of the abovementioned 223 high school and vocational school students, 161 arrived to Poland between August and October, 1953⁴³.

Another source states that around 1,460 Koreans resided in Poland in October: 250 students, 1,000 people representing the group from Płakowice, 133 people in Świder, and 67 students in technical schools⁴⁴. After adding up the figures quoted, their total number amounts to 1,450. A group of 67 students from technical schools shall be linked with the children from Świder (133 people) who completed primary school in Poland and in the school year 1953/1954 continued their education at vocational and technical schools⁴⁵. Thus, the cited document did not mention 161 Korean adolescents admitted to study in Polish secondary schools (autumn 1953). Having considered this group, the total number of Koreans was 1,611 people (fewer by 20 people). Comparing data from both documents dated October 1953, it is worth noting the difference in the number of students (25 people), and secondary school students (223 and 228, i.e. 67 + 161). It must also be noted that in the case of the data from the first document, the number of students from technical schools should be increased by 5 people (to 228), thus reducing the number of students (to 270). Therefore, the actual difference between the data is 20 people. The demonstrated difference can be explained by the sudden return of 20 students to Korea, or by their graduation from the studies. What should also be considered are inaccurate records due to removals, considerable dispersion across the country, and long-term absenteeism in schools and universities for health reasons. In conclusion, in the light of the presently known sources, it can be assumed that between 1953 and 1956 the number of Koreans attending Polish schools and universities was between 1,611 and 1,631⁴⁶.

Changes in this matter followed the coming to power of Władysław Gomułka, at the end of 1956 or in 1957. However, the lack of documents makes it difficult to accurately reconstruct the process. It is certain that in mid-1958 1,050 children and young people were still being educated⁴⁷. It is also known that in May 1956, only 300 orphans stayed in Płakowice, and the rest, that is probably about 400 children, were placed in the POW in

⁴² AAN, KC PZPR, cat. no. 237/XXII/217, *Pismo Wydziału Zagranicznego KC PZPR do Sekretariatu KC PZPR na ręce sekretarza KC PZPR towarzysza Franciszka Mazura, Warszawa 24 X 1953 r. – w sprawie przyjmowania dzieci i młodzieży koreańskiej do harcerstwa i ZMP*, pp. 34–35. The same document also: AAN, KC PZPR, cat. no. 2212, *Wniosek WZ KC PZPR do polecenia tow. Mazura do Sekretariatu KC PZPR na ręce Sekretarza KC tow. F. Mazura, Warszawa 24 X 1953 r., załącznik nr 10 do protokołu nr 267 w sprawie przyjmowania dzieci i młodzieży koreańskiej do harcerstwa i ZMP [Związku Młodzieży Polskiej]*, pp. 309–310.

⁴³ Sołtysik, *Dzieci*, doc. 6.

⁴⁴ AAN, KC PZPR, cat. no. 237/XXII/217, *Informacja o młodzieży koreańskiej*, p. 30.

⁴⁵ Sołtysik, *Dzieci*, doc. 6.

⁴⁶ In later documents, the North Korean students were not even mentioned. Imprecise figures concerned only about 1,400 children and young people from a special operation (care and education operation). AAN, TSKCiSP, cat. no. 30, *O dalszy rozwój szkolnictwa mniejszościowego w Polsce*, [mid-1958], encl. no. 2, p. 107.

⁴⁷ *Ibidem*.



Bardo. In both centres, the Koreans lived and were educated together with Polish children. This decision was justified, among others, by the need for faster integration of Koreans with the Poles⁴⁸. It was not possible to determine whether the same strategy was applied in Szklarska Poręba.

At the beginning of July 1956, in the PDD in Świder stayed about 100 primary school pupils⁴⁹. Compared to the state recorded three years before, the number of children in the facility was reduced by about 30 people, which can be explained by the fact that they completed primary school and continued education in secondary schools in different cities, where they were accommodated in boarding schools. It seems that since the end of 1956 at the earliest, the students and then the first graduates of vocational courses (a group of 161 young people), as well as primary and secondary schools could leave Poland. Between 1956 and 1958, more than 350 people returned to Korea⁵⁰. In August 1959, suddenly all the Koreans that had been still studying in Poland returned to their homeland, although their education had been planned to last until 1962⁵¹. The notes and newspaper articles published in those years show that in 1959 a group of Koreans resided also in Soplicowo near Otwock⁵².

Little is known about the circumstances of the arrival of the first group of Korean children who reached Gołotczyzna near Ciechanów on the 22nd of November, 1951. In mid-1953 they were moved to Świder⁵³. Their arrival was reported in the press. They were orphans, 'children of killed soldiers and other victims of American aggression'. They came to Poland by rail. In Warsaw they were officially greeted by the representatives of the Polish Ministry of Education (Deputy Minister Zofia Dembińska), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MSZ), a large group of young people from the ZMP and the employees of the DPRK Embassy⁵⁴.

It may be concluded that the Korean orphans from Gołotczyzna were made famous by Marian Brandys, who depicted them in his two books: *Dom odzyskanego dzieciństwa* ('The House of Recovered Childhood') and *Koreańscy z Gołotczyzny* ('Koreans of Gołotczyzna', being the half-abridged version of the first novel)⁵⁵. It should be clearly

⁴⁸ (Now), "Po zwiedzeniu państwowych Domów Dziecka delegacji Korei z uznaniem mówili o pracy polskich wychowawców", *SP*, no. 129, May 31st, 1956, p. 3; Krysowata, *Sieroty*, p. 111 (carer Edward Figat maintained that also to Wrocław and Katowice), 113.

⁴⁹ "Delegacja rządowa KRL-D odwiedziła", p. 1.

⁵⁰ AAN, TSKCiSP, cat. no. 30, *O dalszy rozwój szkolnictwa...*, encl. no. 2, p. 107.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*; Krysowata, *Sieroty*, pp. 100, 114; "Pierwsza grupa dzieci koreańskich opuściła Polskę", *SP*, no. 183, August 7th, 1959, p. 1; "Żegnamy dzieci koreańskie", *GR*, no. 184, August 3rd 1959, p. 1; Maria Jawornicka, "Odzyskane dzieciństwo. W XIV rocznicę wyzwolenia Korei", *SP*, no. 193, August 15th, 1959, p. 2; Monika Warneńska, "Annionghi kasipsio! Żegnamy koreańskie dzieci", *TL*, no. 210, August 1st, 1959, p. 5; "Delegacja koreańska opuściła Polskę", *TL*, no. 219, August 10th, 1959, p. 7.

⁵² Probably these were young people studying in secondary schools. "Delegacja KRL-D dziękuje za opiekę nad dziećmi-sierotami", *TL*, no. 209, July 31st, 1959, p. 1; Jawornicka, "Odzyskane dzieciństwo".

⁵³ "200 sierot koreańskich przybyło do Polski", *GR*, no. 306, November 24th–25th, 1951, p. 1; Krysowata, *Sieroty*, p. 100. It is not clear when the Korean children began their stay in the POW in Świder. Ewa Willaume-Pielka claims that it was not a one-time operation, but they were transferred in stages during the second half of 1953, see Willaume-Pielka, *Wokół Świdra*. It is certain, however, that the children lived there already in July 1953, cf. Z. Kwiecińska, "Gdy wrócę do Korei, będę budować domy takpięknę, jak w Warszawie". (*Z wizytą u dzieci koreańskich*), *TL*, no. 211, July 31st, 1953, p. 3.

⁵⁴ "200 sierot...", *TL*, no. 327, November 25th, 1951, p. 1. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was represented by the member of the Ministry of Education, Pak Den Chwa.

⁵⁵ Brandys, *Dom*; *idem*, *Koreańscy*. It is worth noting that the first novel was published in 1953 (submitted to text makeup on the 2nd of March, 1953), and its two subsequent editions were published in 1954. Brandys'



emphasized that the events described by Brandys concern Korean children who came to live there in November 1951. It seems relevant to emphasise these two basic facts, because Brandys in his second novel erroneously reported that it was in November 1953⁵⁶ The book *Koreańczycy...* included two supplements (*Foreword* by Marian Bielecki explaining among others the purpose of the orphans' arrival and a note dated the 2nd of December, 1953, mistakenly informing the reader about the truce between the DPRK and the Republic of Korea signed on the 28th of July, 1953⁵⁷), which falsely suggested the readers that the children allegedly came to Poland in 1953⁵⁸ The error is repeated, for example in 1959 by Monika Warneńska in the article describing the official farewell ceremony of Korean children in Świder⁵⁹.

In the context of the analysed issue, it is worth paying attention to some details and observations arising from the reading of the books by Marian Brandys. The stories described in his novels suggest that Brandys had lived for some time in Gołotczyzna and observed the daily lives of Korean children. It was at the turn of March and April, 1952. He mentioned a few times that the children had already been living there for four months, and the action of the chapter called *Spring* in the novel *Dom...* was set in April⁶⁰. In the second chapter (identical for both novels) the reasons and the circumstances in which the children came 'to the countries where there is no war' were inconsistently described⁶¹. Separate chapters are devoted to the team of Polish Film Chronicle working on the newsreel footage and a reporter from Warsaw collecting material for a documentary⁶². These are light, slightly humorous stories set against, as it seems, the real events that have taken place in Gołotczyzna. This might be a clue and encouragement to carry out preliminary research in the press and the archives of film institutions, in Warsaw newspapers and the Masovian archives.

second book was addressed to younger primary school children. Preface to it (pp. 5–11), in the appropriate propaganda tenor, was written by Marian Bielecki.

⁵⁶ Cf. Brandys, *Koreańczycy*, p. 13.

⁵⁷ The truce was signed on the 27th of July 1953, in Panmunjom. It was signed by the Americans (on behalf of the United Nations), China and the DPRK delegation. Rurarz, *Historia*, pp.364–365. It is worth noting that the *Trybuna Ludu* from the 28th of July, 1953, following the Reuters Agency reported that the truce in Panmunjom was signed on the 27th of July at 2:00 a.m. ("Rozejm w Korei został podpisany", *TL*, no. 208, July 28th, 1953, p. 1). However, on the same day a similar article printed in *Gazeta Robotnicza* stated that the armistice agreement was signed on the 28th of July ("Rozejm w Korei został podpisany", *GR*, no. 179, July 28th, 1953, p. 1).

⁵⁸ In September and December 1953, Brandys signed two contracts for the next release of the first novel, that was after the arrival of the second wave of Korean children and young people to Poland. However, giving to print the second novel, which was actually the selection of the chapters from the first novel, took place in February 1954.

⁵⁹ Warneńska "Annionghi kasipsio". The author mentions the book by M. Brandys (*Dom*). She wrote that children from Świder had lived in Poland for 6 years, and in fact they had lived for almost 8.

⁶⁰ Brandys, *Dom*, pp. 215–216.

⁶¹ First, the reader learns that the children hiding in the forests were sent a message by radio from Pyongyang urging the orphans who remained homeless and without adult care to head for Sinŭiju on the border with China, from where they were to be shipped to Europe. Then followed a description of a ten-day journey of 400 little Koreans remaining under the supervision of teachers. In Sinŭiju they were divided into two equal groups – one was headed for Poland, and the second one for Hungary. During the trip to Poland, the responsibility for the entire group of children and their carers was held by the representative of the Ministry of Education of DPRK. For example see Brandys, *Koreańczycy*, pp.13, 25, 31–34.

⁶² *Idem*, *Dom*, pp. 144–155, 158–170.



In the POW in Świder, the Korean children that had previously lived in Gołotczyzna were encountered by Ewa Willaume-Pielka⁶³. Some of the details that she has recalled are especially noteworthy. According to her, the first children transferred to the POW in Świder were those above 10 years old and the older ones, who had already been attending secondary schools in Warsaw and bigger towns surrounding Świder. She remembered that the Koreans had already known the Polish language well. Some pupils from Gołotczyzna went to schools in major Polish cities outside Warsaw Voivodship, for example, the Vocational Technical High School of Construction of Cities and Settlements and a 'technical school' in Wrocław (Construction Technical School?)⁶⁴. In light of the above deliberations, the following press note from Trybuna Ludu of 1986 seem to be inaccurate, indicating that 'on the 29th of September, 1986, [...] Korean guests visited Otwock, whose community is a collective member of the Polish-Korean Friendship Association. The youth of the DPRK has visited the State Children's Home, which was a home for the group of Korean children during the Korean War. [...]'⁶⁵. The Koreans certainly visited Otwock. The press note, however, is not clear about the whereabouts of the aforementioned PDD. Korean children during the war in Korea stayed in Gołotczyzna, and only since June 1953 at the latest, that is at the end of the war, they were gradually placed in Świder, whereas they attended the schools in Otwock and Falenica.

During the school winter and summer holidays the Koreans from Gołotczyzna were leaving for the winter and summer camps, trips and excursions. In August 1953, some of them rested on the international pioneer camp in Cieplice Zdrój⁶⁶. Until the autumn of 1953, they had been taking an active part in the activities organized by the ZHP (Polish Scouting and Guiding Association) and the Pioneers⁶⁷. A serious impact on their beliefs and attitudes had Korean carers who were responsible for discipline and encouraged them to intensive study. They were responsible for the education of the children in line with the guidelines of the DPRK Ministry of Education, and thus for teaching the Korean language, Korean history, geography, culture and the arts. Moreover, their duties included instilling in the children a fanatical cult of Kim Il-Sung⁶⁸.

⁶³ Willaume-Pielka, "Wokół Świdra". The same article: "Żyłam z Koreańczykami", May 3rd, 2006, (http://ewajesienna.blog.onet.pl/1,AR3_2006-05_2006-05-01_2006-05—31,index.html, accessed on: June 19th, 2007). The author has erroneously reported that the children arrived to Gołotczyzna at the end of 1952. However, this is inaccurate reproduction of information taken from the other of Brandys' novels (in the quoted memoir she has indicated that some of the information was borrowed from it). The mother of Ewa Willaume-Pielka was a form teacher (at school?, in the dormitory?) in Legnica, where she was transferred to work in the newly built POW in Świder, which came into use in the second half of 1953. She became tutor of a junior group of Korean boys. See also above, note 53.

⁶⁴ The pupils in Wrocław were Kim Jon-suk and Kim So-ran (who in 1957 passed the graduation exam in the "building school").

⁶⁵ Poland hosted a 120-person group of the members of the League of Socialist Working Youth of Korea. *Młodzież koreańska opuściła Warszawę*, TL, no. 229, October 1st, 1986, p. 2.

⁶⁶ "Teraz inaczej słońce świeci, teraz inaczej jest na świecie – powiedziała Kim Sho-ran na wieść o rozejmie w Korei", SP, no. 181, July 31st, 1953, p. 1, [Note and a photograph by Adam Czelny], SP, no. 210, September 3rd, 1953, p.3.

⁶⁷ "Teraz inaczej słońce świeci"; B. Z., "Lud Warszawy manifestuje solidarność z bohaterską Koreą", TL, no. 216, August 5th, 1953, p. 1; Kwiecińska, "Gdy wróćę.". Although they were not the formal members of these organizations, in fact they actively worked in them. Legal barriers in this issue were lifted probably in the autumn of 1953(AAN, KC PZPR, cat.no. 237/XXII/217, *Informacja o młodzieży koreańskiej przebywającej w Polsce wraz z projektem uchwały Sekretariatu ZG ZMP w sprawie przyjmowania młodzieży koreańskiej do szeregów ZMP*, [October 24th or 27th] 1953, p. 30–31), for more information see above, pp. 8–9.

⁶⁸ Cf. Brandys, *Dom, passim*; idem, *Koreańczycy, passim*; see also Kwiecińska, "Gdy wróćę."



The pupils in Poland were provided conditions for, e.g., artistic development. They formed a song and dance ensemble that performed on many occasions for the Polish audience. The performances took place during the visits of some guests⁶⁹ in Gołotczyzna or because of the events of special political interest. In such events, the children became a tool eagerly used by the Polish propaganda. It seems that this was also the reason why they were moved closer to Warsaw, to Świder. Their presence and artistic performances authenticated the rallies, political meetings and demonstrations and made them more attractive. During several years of Koreans' residence in Poland, the most important international event which gave rise to the greatest focus of attention of the authorities and Polish public opinion on the misery of Asian orphans, was the signing of the truce in Panmunjom (the 27th of July 1953) which marked the end of war in Korea which had lasted for over three years. On this occasion, on the 3rd of August, 1953, the Polish Theatre in Warsaw held a meeting for the citizens of Warsaw. The artistic part included, among others, a performance by a group consisting of Korean orphans from Świder, while the rest of the children from this centre sat at the audience⁷⁰. Their next performance took place on the 14th of August, 1953, in the hall of the State Opera in Warsaw, during the gala concert commemorating the 8th anniversary of the liberation of the DPRK by the Red Army⁷¹. To celebrate the end of the Korean War, appropriate artistic evening events were organized by Korean students residing in the student camps⁷².

Regardless of the group of two hundred orphans placed in the PDD in Gołotczyzna, in 1951 a group of young Koreans of the unknown number came to study in Poland. It has been determined that on the 14th of August, 1951, 10 Korean students arrived to Warsaw⁷³. There had to be more of them, as in the academic year 1951/1952, 20 Koreans studied at Warsaw University. Each of them received a grant in the amount of 540 zloty. First, they had to learn Polish quickly so as to be able to communicate in Polish environment and to study at universities. In addition to intensive classes in the Polish language, they also attended classes in the field of study which each of them had to choose. Two people studied Polish philology, and others chose to study 'foreign trade, mining, light industry, construction, water engineering, ferrous metals, diplomacy, the fishing industry, organic chemistry, non-ferrous metals'⁷⁴.

⁶⁹ Cf. Brandys, *Dom, passim*.

⁷⁰ "Lud Warszawy zmanifestował swą wielką radość z okazji podpisania rozejmu w Korei", *SP*, no. 185, August 5th, 1953, p. 2; B. Z., "Lud Warszawy manifestuje solidarność z bohaterską Koreą", *TL*, no. 216, August 5th, 1953, p. 1; "Lud Warszawy manifestuje swą wielką radość z powodu zawarcia rozejmu w Korei", *GR*, no. 185, August 4th, 1953, p. 2.

⁷¹ In the audience there were the representatives of the KC PZPR, the State Council and the Government, delegations of political parties and other residents of the capital, as well as the ambassador of the DPRK. *Uroczysty koncert w Warszawie w 8 rocznicę wyzwolenia Korei*, *SP*, no.194, August 15th, 1953, p.1.

⁷² St. G., *Uśmiech Li Nam Si na Bursztynowym Wybrzeżu. (own correspondence)*, *SP*, no. 198, August 20th 1953, p. 4.

⁷³ At the railway station, they were greeted by a delegation of ZG ZMP (Main Board), a group of Polish students and a representative of the Embassy of the DPRK. "Grupa studentów koreańskich przybyła do Polski", *GR*, no.193, August 16th, 1951, p.3. They were supposed to spend the rest of summer together with Polish students.

⁷⁴ AAN, KC PZPR, cat.no. 237/XXII/217, *Sprawozdanie z postępów w nauce oraz opieki Ministerstwa Szkolnictwa Wyższego nad studentami obcokrajowcami studiującymi na wyższych uczelniach w Polsce*, p. 12-13.



It can be assumed that the number of Koreans studying in Poland was gradually increasing. In autumn 1953, it was approximately 270 people⁷⁵. Due to the lack of sources on the subject, this process is difficult to trace. Only two press releases relating to Korean students have been found. In August 1953, 16 students (including 12 men) were in Krynica Morska at the student camp. They were resting there after a five-month course in the Polish language. One Korean girl was to begin studying for a degree in geology at the Academy of Mining (in Kraków?), and two of her compatriots in chemistry⁷⁶. On the 31st of August, 14 other Koreans arrived from Warsaw to Wrocław to receive education at the Medical Academy. For eight months they had been intensively learning Polish in the Polish capital⁷⁷. Perhaps a thorough and extensive press research on the issue under discussion will lead to further conclusions.

Most of the preserved archival materials concern the group of Korean orphans from Płakowice. As already mentioned, 1,000 children arrived in two transports: on the 23rd (527 people) and on the 27th of July, 1953 (473 people). The Polish side greeted them already at the railway station in Terespol, and then they arrived to Warsaw. At Warszawa Gdańska railway station they were officially welcomed by the representatives from the Ministry of Education (General Director Franciszek Bielecki and the Director of DOnD Franciszek Pawuła), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the youths from ZMP and the Warsaw children. The ceremony of the arrival of the second transport was filmed⁷⁸. On behalf of the government, the Third Secretary of the Embassy of the DPRK entrusted the children to the Polish authorities. It seems that after the official welcome in Warsaw, on the same day they drove off to the POW No. 2 in Płakowice, where they were to go through quarantine until the 1st of September. It had been planned that on that day 200 Koreans would be placed in the PDD in Szklarska Poręba⁷⁹. Brief information about the arrival of the children from the far-away Asia was published in the national, regional and local press⁸⁰. However, neither the number of the welcomed orphans nor information about their place of residence were provided.

⁷⁵ See above, pp. 11–13: for findings on the number of Koreans in Poland and sources.

⁷⁶ St. G., *Uśmiech*.

⁷⁷ "14 Koreańczyków przybyło na studia medyczne do Wrocławia", *SP*, no. 207, September 1st, 1953, p. 1.

⁷⁸ Perhaps this fact can be connected with the film (a 15-minute documentary) from 1953 titled *Dzieci koreańskie w* reżyserii Władysława Marko (http://www.culture.pl/pl/culture/artykuly/os_slesicki_wladyslaw, accessed on: June 19th, 2007). E. Willaume-Pielka mentions that before leaving for Świder she watched at the Polish Film Chronicle the feature about Korean orphans coming to Poland. This took place in a cinema in Legnica in November 1952. Perhaps she erroneously remembered the year, or saw another film on the subject (<http://www.michalin.pl/swider/?modul=niusy&id=80>, accessed on: April 11th, 2008).

⁷⁹ AAN, KC PZPR, cat. no. 237/XXII/486, *Notatka służbowa o przyjeździe...*, p. 2, 4. Information memo attached to the letter: *ibidem*, *Pismo Ministerstwa Oświaty do WZKC PZPR na ręce tow. Beatu w miejscu*, August 6th, 1953, p. 1.

⁸⁰ Interestingly, the content of the notes was almost identical to that of 1951. It is worth noting that the Silesian newspapers were the first to publish information about the arrival of Korean children to Poland "Liczna grupa sierot koreańskich przybyła do Polski", *TL*, no. 209, July 29th, 1953, p. 1; "Witamy dzieci z bratniej Korei. CAF-Dąbrowiecki", *TL*, no. 210, July 30th, 1953, p. 1; "Liczna grupa sierot koreańskich przybyła do Polski", *GR*, no. 179, July 28th, 1953, p. 1; [*Note and phot. Dąbrowiecki CAF*], *GR*, no. 181, July 30th, 1953, p. 1; "Liczna grupa sierot koreańskich przybyła do Polski", *SP*, no. 179, July 28th, 1953, p. 1.



Table 1. Gender and age structure of North Korean children who arrived to Poland in July 1953 – as of the 4th of August, 1953.

Age (years)	Boys	Girls	Total	
			number	percent
7	1	2	3	0,3
8	90	52	142	14.2
9	105	64	169	16.9
10	119	64	183	18.3
11	69	63	132	13.2
12	96	50	146	14.6
13	83	52	135	13.5
14	52	28	80	8
15	9	1	10	1
Total	624	376	1,000	100

Source: AAN, KC PZPR, cat. no. 237/XXII/486, Notatka służbowa o przyjeździe do Polski 1000 dzieci sierot koreańskich i o aktualnym stanie organizacyjnym opieki nad nimi (Memorandum about the arrival of 1,000 Korean children and about the current condition of their accommodation and care), August 4th, 1953, p. 3.

The group from Płakowice consisted of 624 boys (62.4 percent) and 376 girls (37.6 percent) aged from 7 to 15. The fewest were seven-year olds (3 people, i.e. 0.3 percent), fourteen-year-olds (80 people, i.e. 8 percent) and fifteen-year-olds (10 people, i.e. 1 percent) – the total number of people was 93, that is 9.3 percent of all Koreans. The largest group (over 14 percent) comprised of children aged 10 (18.3 percent), 9 (16.9 percent), 12 (14.6 percent) and 8 (14.2 percent) – the total number of 640 people (64 percent). It is worth noting that, in the beginning school year, the three of seven-year-old children should in fact attend the first division and 90 adolescents (aged 14 and 15) were eligible for vocational and secondary schools (for more information about education in Płakowice see below). The exact structure of the gender and age of the children is presented in Table 1.

The management of the centre was assembled and began the work on the 10th of July, 1953. Upon the arrival of the Koreans, POW No. 2 had at its disposal a complete sanitary and medical team. Among the employees there were, for example, medical assistants, with whom the management had a lot of, rather unspecified, trouble. It might be assumed that due to the lack of appropriate education and experience they were not able to exercise proper care for ill children. It was extremely difficult to assemble administrative personnel. In August, the shortages of teaching and education staff were still being tackled⁸¹. The centre in Płakowice consisted of 13 children's homes, a hospital, a clinic, buildings of the management and accounting, clothing and food stores, canteens, housing for workers, a laundry, a sewing place and school. Overall, it employed 600 Polish workers, including cleaners, cooks, hairdressers, nurses, hygienists, medical assistants and doctors.

⁸¹ AAN, KC PZPR, cat.no. 237/XXII/486, *Notatka służbowa o przyjeździe.*, p. 4. For example, Elżbieta Kromka-Jakubik was assigned to work as a teacher in Płakowice beginning on the 15th of August, 1953, See also Krysowata, *Sieroty*, p. 102.



The largest group consisted of three hundred teachers and educators. Korean staff consisted of only a few people who, just as in Gołotczyzna and Świder, performed the duties of carers, teachers of Korean language, geography, etc., and political educators⁸².

The repairs of the buildings in Płakowice and Szklarska Poręba had not been finished before the arrival of Korean orphans, although, according to the plans, construction works were to be completed by the 25th of August⁸³. The people employed in Płakowice remembered the first year's work as 'really hard'. The big problem appeared to be the language barrier between the Poles and the Koreans as well as the fact that physical work had to be performed by all the staff, without exception. After the summer holidays, the centre was still being renovated, and this required cleaning⁸⁴.

The centre in Płakowice was stocked in advance with furniture, equipment and medications, and the supplies of new equipment and medications kept flowing in. The centre's management also received the previously ordered clothing and footwear for the orphans. Unfortunately, information on the age of the children provided in June turned out to be inaccurate. Moreover, the children from Korea were dainty in comparison with the Polish ones, and the whole supply of clothing and footwear had to be replaced. Some garments had to be made-to-measure⁸⁵.

The functioning of POW No. 2 in Płakowice was of particular interest to the KC PZPR, which oversaw the special operation concerning the Korean orphans. In August, the situation in the centre was studied by J. Grabski, a clerk of the Administrative Department (WA) of KC PZPR, and Fordońska, the deputy director of the Administrative Department of the Voivodship Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (WA KW PZPR) in Wrocław and the First Secretary of KC PZPR in Lwówek Śląski. 2–3 weeks after the arrival of the children, the problems and shortcomings indicated at the beginning of August failed to be fully addressed: 'The centre was totally chaotic. We assessed the anti-sanitary condition. Children [...] did not have adequate clothing and footwear. [...] The health team was badly organized, young medical assistants with no experience. Refurbishment of buildings badly executed. Due to the lack of work force, the buildings were not cleaned after renovation. As far as organisation is concerned, the situation is very bad. The Department of Education of the KC [PZPR - Ł.S] and the Ministry of Health have been alarmed'.

After this notice, Słomczyńska and Biskup, the directors from the Ministry of Health, investigated the matter and tried to improve sanitary conditions and organize health care at the centre. Their efforts did not bring radical improvement, although some positive changes could be observed⁸⁶.

In September, POW No. 2 in Płakowice was controlled twice. On the 21st of September, 1953, the centre was visited by the commission from the PWRN (the Board of Voivodship National Council) in Wrocław and the representatives of the KP PZPR in Lwówek Śląski, the Department of Trade of the PPRN (the Board of Powiat National Council) in Lwówek Śląski and the director of Public Utilities Company (Miejskie Przedsiębiorstwo Gospodarki Komunalnej) in Lwówek Śląski. All visitors were toured by

⁸² Some children knew Russian, and one of the Korean teachers said Kim Dzun Guon spoke poorly English (*ibidem*, pp.100–102, 112–113), AAN, TSKCiSP, cat. no. 30, *O dalszy rozwój szkolnictwa...*, encl. no. 2, p. 107.

⁸³ AAN, KC PZPR, cat. no. 237/XXII/486, *Notatka służbowa o przyjeździe...*, pp. 4–5.

⁸⁴ Krysowata, *Sieroty*, pp. 101–103.

⁸⁵ AN, KC PZPR, cat. no. 237/XXII/486, *Notatka służbowa o przyjeździe...*, p. 5.

⁸⁶ *Ibidem*, *Notatka J. Grabskiego*, Warszawa, October 19th, 1953, p. 7. More information about Słomczyńska and Biskup has not yet been gathered.



the POW's director, Marian Waliński, who had been holding this position from the arrival of the Korean children to the centre. He certainly reported to them the problems faced by the whole team of Polish employees. The POW in Płakowice was inspected and the deficiencies to be removed were identified. On the 25th of September, J. Grabski revisited the centre in Płakowice. He found some improvement in sanitary conditions, although, in his opinion, it still remained insufficient. He also observed that the centre was responsible for 'wanton exploitation of the food section'. It is not known exactly what he had in mind (catering waste, improperly stored inventory, thefts?). The allocation of appropriate clothing and bedding for Koreans had not been resolved in a satisfactory manner yet. Grabski reported all the above-mentioned defects, deficiencies and observations twice to the Minister of Health, the Department of Education of KC PZPR, KW PZPR and PWRN in Wrocław⁸⁷.

Upon arrival to Poland, the Korean children from the POW in Płakowice were in very bad health condition. While the transports with young Koreans were being taken over, it already turned out that one child suffering from pneumonia had been detained for treatment in a hospital in the USSR. Another one, immediately after the arrival to the capital, was referred to the Children's Clinic in Warsaw. Despite these facts, the note said that the children were well-fed and there was no notice of them reacting badly to a two-week journey to Poland by train. Preliminary studies in Płakowice showed that 25 percent of children suffered from tinea⁸⁸. It was also found that a number of them had trachoma⁸⁹ and scabies, and 20 were found to suffer from malaria. Lung diseases, however, had not yet been diagnosed. A team of doctors from the Ministry of Health had just started to conduct comprehensive medical examination⁹⁰. In the second half of August, the health of Korean orphans was rated as poor. 200 cases of tinea were diagnosed, 40 cases of malaria (4 percent of children), 27 of trachoma (2.7 percent), 100 of conjunctivitis (10 percent), 15 patients suffered from mumps (1.5 percent) and 200 children were suspected to have tuberculosis. What is more, they were found to have 'extremely extensive parasitism'⁹¹. These opinions confirm the memories of the people working with the Korean children in Płakowice⁹². Jan Grajek remembered: 'The children arrived [...] ill. They looked terrible. Those who suffered from tinea were subject to head-irradiation and all the hair came out, they were completely bald; then their heads were lubricated with potassium permanganate and they went purple. Many suffered from malaria [...]. There was also helminthiasis. [...] They had tapeworms, roundworms, and some other human worms, unknown in Poland'⁹³.

It seems that of all the diseases and conditions which the Korean children suffered from, the most difficult to eradicate were various parasites and worms. A paediatrician, professor Zbigniew Rutkowski, who was working in Płakowice at that time, admitted years

⁸⁷ *Ibidem*. Grabski mentioned in a note that on the 19th of October Mariański, an instructor of the Department of Education of the KC PZPR, was on his way to Płakowice, and his task was to "eliminate the deficiencies."

⁸⁸ AAN, KC PZPR, cat.no. 237/XXII/486, *Notatka służbowa o przyjeździe...*, pp. 2, 4.

⁸⁹ Trachoma (*trachoma*) – a chronic infectious disease caused by filterable germs, which causes degeneration of conjunctiva and follicles, with characteristic bursting lumps (*jagła*) containing infectious contents, and subsequent scarring of conjunctiva. If left untreated, it causes distortion of the eyelids, scarring of conjunctiva and cornea and leads to vision impairment. It is spread by direct contact with the affected individual. A disease is widespread in Asia and Africa, currently in Poland occurs very rarely. After: *Medyczny słownik encyklopedyczny*, Marian Barczyński, Joseph Bogusz, eds., Kraków 1993, p. 156.

⁹⁰ AN, KC PZPR, cat. no. 237/XXII/486, *Notatka służbowa o przyjeździe...*, pp. 2, 4.

⁹¹ *Ibidem*, *Notatka J. Grabskiego.*, p. 7.

⁹² Krysowata, *Sieroty*, pp. 101, 103.

⁹³ *Ibidem*, p. 103.



later that 'the main problem were parasitic infections'. The state of the children's parasitism amounted to about 300 percent, which meant 'at least three different types of parasites per every child'. The treatment applied various medications and methods that were acceptable in medicine at that time. For example, gasoline was orally administered in doses from 10 to 20 cm³. According to the professor, this kind of treatment was on the brink of tolerance of the human body, and overdosing could have led to acute poisoning⁹⁴.

The most difficult for the doctors to handle were some of the parasites, which in Polish and European medicine were basically unknown. During medical examination of the group of orphans from Płakowice, it was found that some of them had lung paragonimiasis (otherwise known as lung fluke) which is a chronic parasitic disease caused by *Paragonimus westermani*⁹⁵. Establishing an accurate diagnosis was extremely difficult because the clinical symptoms and radiological findings of those affected by this parasite were almost identical as in the case of advanced tuberculosis. The parasite of *Paragonimus westermani* and the disease which it causes, paragonimiasis, were extensively described in a publication by three authors: Izabela Kania, Bohdan Lesko and Roman Marciniak⁹⁶. They admitted that the immediate impetus for research in this area was the discovery in the Department of Children's Diseases in the Medical University in Wrocław of two cases of paragonimiasis in Korean children, published in *Pediatrics Polska* (Polish Paediatrics), and the observations of the disease performed by a team of doctors from the Polish Red Cross Hospital in Korea⁹⁷.

In general, the target of the parasite are the lungs. Researchers emphasize that 'paragonimiasis is an exceptionally chronic disease, with insidious, almost imperceptible beginning and slow development of changes. Characteric are recurring relapses, interchangeable with long periods of weakened symptoms'⁹⁸. For the establishment of the

⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 104. Gasoline without ethanol and lead salts was used in the treatment against gastrointestinal parasites (human roundworms, tapeworms, threadworms). See Aleksander Niemirski, "Benzyna jako środek przeciw tasiemcom", *Polski Tygodnik Lekarski*, 1954, 7, p. 212 (pp. 211-213).

⁹⁵ For a detailed description of *Paragonimus westermani* see Kania, Leski, Marciniak, *Paragonimiazę*, pp. 7-14, 57 (Fig. 2); Piotr Boroń, Jerzy Farner, Edward Kowalski, Dorota Kuźmińska, Stanisław Penar, Janusz Grądzki, J. Lankosz, "Distomiazę płuc (Paragonimiazę płuc)", *Polski Tygodnik Lekarski*, 1956, no. 5, pp. 198-199 (more pp. 197-206).

⁹⁶ Kania, Leski, Marciniak, *Paragonimiazę*. Earlier studies of paragonimiasis were carried out primarily on animals, and only in individual cases on humans.

⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 27; J. Czyżewska, W. Klinowska, M. Rudobielska, "Dwa przypadki paragonimiosis u dzieci koreańskich", *Pediatrics Polska*, 1954, 8, pp. 799-804; Boroń, Farner, Kowalski, Kuźmińska, Penar, Grądzki, Lankosz, *Distomiazę*, pp. 197-206. Lung fluke was also detected in a Chinese sailor at the Medical University in Gdańsk. See also Stanisława Ławińska-Stankiewiczowa, "Przypadek paragonimiazę", *Polskie Archiwum Medycyny Wewnętrznej*, 1955, 2, pp. 361-366. For more information on the activities of the Polish Red Cross (PCK) Hospitals in Korea see Mieczysław Cegielski, "O pracy pierwszej ekipy Szpitala PCK w Korei", *Polski Tygodnik Lekarski*, 1956, 5, pp. 193-195; Józef Daniłóś, Tadeusz Horzela, Jan Oszacki, "O pracy II ekipy Szpitala PCK w Korei", *ibidem*, pp. 195-197. These are interesting testimonies showing the non-military participation of the Poles in the final stages of the Korean War.

⁹⁸ Kania, Leski, Marciniak, *Paragonimiazę*, pp. 14-20; Boroń, Farner, Kowalski, Kuźmińska, Penar, Grądzki, Lankosz, *Distomiazę*, p. 199. However, research has shown that sometimes they nested in other mammalian organs: in the lymphatic system, liver, peritoneum, brain, testes, muscles. Moving through the body of the mature individuals leave empty channels behind, and in the places where they stay longer, lay eggs or die, cysts, edema, hyperemia, and calcification are formed, which gives an X-ray image almost identical to the changes in case of tuberculosis. A man suffering from lung fluke tolerates it relatively mildly and rarely dies from it. Incubation period lasts much longer in humans than in animals, that is from 8 months to 2 years.



accurate diagnosis of lung fluke, the presence of parasite eggs in sputum or stool, radiologic changes in the lungs and haemoptysis had to be assessed in the first place⁹⁹. Medical examination for paragonimiasis was performed on all Korean children (1,000) in Płakowice and Szklarska Poręba. They started not before the second half of 1954, because the arrival of the children had caused the emergence of many other sanitary and epidemiological problems 'absorbing all the attention of the doctors'¹⁰⁰.

First of all, the children had chest X-ray. Then, the sputum of those children who displayed radiological changes in the lungs or haemoptysis, was subject to microscopic tests for the presence of parasite eggs. In addition, another check study of the sputum from 200 children was carried out, which gave a negative result. Next, faecal analyses were repeatedly performed by the team of the National Institute of Hygiene in Warsaw. In addition, the observation of haemoptysis was carried out (all such cases were immediately reported, which was followed by repeating all the tests) as well as hospital observation. As a result of the latter procedure, all the children with detected lung lesions, haemoptysis or parasite eggs in sputum, were placed in a hospital within POW No. 2 in Płakowice (some of them were placed in the infirmary in Szklarska Poręba), in order to repeat the previous tests and carry out new detailed tests, such as morphology, and other. Children suffering from lung fluke were treated with emetine, the effects of therapy were checked periodically¹⁰¹.

After performing radiological procedures, 52 children were found to be affected with paragonimiasis. Laboratory tests of the sputum confirmed the presence of parasite eggs in 45 Koreans (in 36 people after the first study, and in the other nine people after a few months). Seven people were found to have no parasite eggs. The eggs of lung fluke were found in the faeces of 19 children, that is approximately 42 percent (out of the 45 children in whom it was detected in sputum)¹⁰². In 1954, one of the girls suffering from paragonimiasis was also diagnosed with trachoma. For this reason, she was sent for the treatment to the National Centre Against Trachoma in Witkowice near Kraków¹⁰³. Apart from the above-mentioned diseases, in 1955 the girl named Kim Ki Dok was diagnosed with leukaemia and died within three months. In the Wrocław hospital her life was fought for by professor Ludmiła Hirnle and doctor Tadeusz Partyka, a specialist in transfusion medicine¹⁰⁴.

Physical condition, however, is generally weaker. With increased severity, there are, similarly to advanced tuberculosis: fits of cough, hemoptysis, temperature, abdominal pain, swollen lymph nodes, and more.

⁹⁹ Kania, Leski, Marciniak, *Paragonimiasis*, pp. 21–22.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 27. Before that, however, on the 30th of September and the 23rd of October 1953, two Korean boys came to the Children's Clinic in Wrocław. They were diagnosed with lung paragonimiasis. For more information see Czyżewska, Klinowska, Rudobielska, "Dwa przypadki", pp. 801–804. As already mentioned, the described cases were an incentive to conduct comprehensive medical examination of Korean children in Płakowice and Szklarska Poręba for the presence of this parasitic disease.

¹⁰¹ Kania, Leski, Marciniak, *Paragonimiasis*, pp. 28–29.

¹⁰² Polish doctors also stressed that the described disease, apart from tuberculosis, must be distinguished from lung allergosis, bilharzia (caused by worms from oriental countries), porocefalosis and the multiple forms of echinococcus in the lungs, as changes in the lungs are similar to them, and therefore the correct diagnosis is very difficult, cf. *ibidem*, pp. 29–30 (for more information see pp. 29–45), 46–47.

¹⁰³ Kania, Leski, Marciniak, *Paragonimiasis*, p. 42. It seems that in August 1953, the initial diagnosis of trachoma in 27 Korean children could have been erroneous, because the statistics reported by the centre show no loss of pupils. It was a very serious and dangerous disease that would require specialized treatment outside Płakowice.

¹⁰⁴ She was buried in the Osobowice cemetery in Wrocław (Krysowata *Sieroty*, pp.98–99).



In Płakowice, Korean orphans were immediately provided with summer holiday packages (August 1953). They were also provisionally assigned to the divisions I-VII (Table 2), and the teaching loads and the subjects were planned. In this case it was necessary to consult the Embassy of the DPRK, as well as agree with them on the future divisions of contacts with the Ministry of Education¹⁰⁵. Comparing the data gathered in Table 1 and 2, it can be observed that a vast majority (87.3 percent) of Korean children were assigned to divisions I and II, and only nine (0.9 percent) to divisions VI and VII. These could be the consequences of several factors. First of all, the older children were illiterate. Secondly, in the first year of the course most of the time and energy was to be devoted to learning the Polish language and possibly levelling up the differences in school programs, provided that the children had previously received any form of education at all¹⁰⁶. A major factor slowing down the learning process was ill health of Korean orphans (as expanded upon below). They also needed some time to adapt to the new climate, environment and people.

In September, the initial assignment of the Korean students for each division, as of the 4th of August, was modified (Table 3). Some of the children (182 people, i.e. 18.2 percent, instead of the planned 200 people) were placed in the PDD in Szklarska Poręba. Most of this group were boys (74.1 percent). They attended a four-division primary school, where 129 of the orphans (70.8 percent) were assigned to division I and only 4 children (2.1 percent) were admitted to division IV. 818 (81.8 percent) of little Koreans remained in Płakowice. The centre organised on its premises a nursery school and two primary schools. Preschool care was provided for 74 children (7.4 percent) from the Płakowice group, including 35 girls and 39 boys. Among the 818 pupils remaining in Płakowice, preschool children accounted for 9 percent. The rest of the children was divided into two equally large groups of 372 orphans (37.2 percent of the total 1,000 students in each, and 45.4 percent of 818), for whom separate schools were opened in the POW. Primary School No. 1 had seven divisions and Primary School No. 2 consisted of only four divisions. The data in Tables 2 and 3 show a clear shift of students from upper to lower divisions and a transfer of 74 children to the nursery school. At the same time, the number of students in divisions III and IV increased.

¹⁰⁵ AAN, KC PZPR, cat. no. 237/XXII/486, *Notatka służbowa o przyjeździe.*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁶ It is estimated that in the early 1950s, 80 percent of Koreans were illiterate (Dziak, *Kim Ir Sen*, p. 95). The DPRK began to eliminate illiteracy as late as in the second half of the 1950s. In 1956 common primary education was introduced, and in November 1958, an act on common compulsory seven-year education was established. During the fourth session of the second term of the Supreme People's Assembly, a resolution commencing the preparations to introduce mandatory common technical education within 4–5 years was adopted. These were to be incomplete two-year technical schools, see Kim Czhan Man, "Budowa socjalizmu w KRLD", *Problemy Pokoju i Socjalizmu*, 1959, 2, p. 27 (full article: p. 21–27). Perhaps Kim Il-Sung was planning that Korean children and adolescents pursuing education in the European socialist countries were to become the future elite in North Korea.



Table 2. The initial organization of the school year 1953/54 for the North Korean children who arrived to Poland in July 1953 – as of the 4th of August 1953.

Classes/ Divisions	Boys	Girls	Total	
			number	percent
I	388	236	624	62.4
II	154	85	239	23.9
III	48	40	88	8.8
IV	15	9	24	2.4
V	11	5	16	1.6
VI	5	–	5	0.5
VII	3	1	4	0.4
Total	624	376	1,000	100

Source: AAN, KC PZPR, cat.no. 237/XXII/486, Notatka służbowa o przyjeździe do Polski 1000 dzieci sierot koreańskich i o aktualnym stanie organizacyjnym opieki nad nimi (Memorandum about the arrival of 1,000 Korean children and about the current condition of their accommodation and care), August 4th, 1953, p. 3.



Table 3. The organization of education and the number of the North Korean children in government-run centres in Lower Silesia – as of the 30th of September, 1953.

Town	Name of the institution	Total	Girls	Boys	Classes/Divisions						
					I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
Płakowice	Nursery School	74 (7.4%)	35	39							
	SP No. 1	372 (37.2%)	129	243	162	98	69	21	11	8	3
	SP No. 2	372 (37.2%)	163	209	202	91	60	19			
	Total	818 (81.8%)	327	491	364	189	129	40	11	8	3
Szklarska Poręba	SP No. 3	182 (18.2%)	47	135	129	21	28	4			
Total		1,000 (100%)	374	626	493 (49.3%)	210 (21%)	157 (15.7%)	44 (4.4%)	11 (1.1%)	8 (0.8%)	3 (0.3%)

Legend: SP – primary school.

Source: AAN, KC PZPR, cat.no. 237/XXII/486, Pismo poufne do Wydziału Zagranicznego KC PZPR na ręce tow. Ptaszewskiej w/m, Warszawa (Confidential note to the Foreign Department of KC PZPR to the attention of com. Ptaszewska), October 3rd, 1953., p. 9; *ibidem*, Stan organizacji ośrodków akcji koreańskiej w Płakowicach i Szklarskiej Porębie na dzień 30 IX 53 r. (The organisation of the centres for Korean operation in Płakowice and Szklarska Poręba as of September 30th, 1953), p. 10.

Korean graduates of Polish primary schools and the young people who came to Poland to gain vocational and technical education, were not able to make a free choice of the occupation according to their interests or inborn abilities. The Ministry of Education of the PRL together with the Embassy of the DPRK established the list of vocational schools, which were supposed to admit a given number of Koreans¹⁰⁷. In the school year 1953/1954, 228 Korean students were learning 21 trades and professions (mainly industrial branches), offered by Polish vocational and secondary schools. Only four people attended the school which was presided over by the Ministry of Culture and the Arts, and 12 students enrolled in institutions providing medical education. It seems that among them there were 161 people sent to Poland especially for this purpose in the autumn of 1953, and 67 were recruited from among the orphans of the centre in Świder-Gołotczyzna. In the school year 1954/1955, the Ministry of Education planned to refer to secondary schools

¹⁰⁷ AAN, the Ministry of Education, cat.no. 851, Pismo CUSZ do Ministerstwa Oświaty, July 19th, 1954, p. 12; Krysowata, *Sieroty*, p. 113. Between 1953 and 1959 the children from the POW in Świder were attending a primary school on the premises of the centre, and its graduates (as well as the Korean students from the centres in Lower Silesia who were finishing their primary education, and 161 young people who arrived to Poland in the autumn of 1953) continued education in secondary schools in Warsaw, Falenica, Otwock, Soplicowo, as well as in Wrocław, Gdańsk, Katowice. AAN, KC PZPR, cat. no. 237/XXII/217, *Informacja o młodzieży koreańskiej.*, p. 30; *ibidem*, Pismo Wydziału Zagranicznego KC PZPR do Sekretariatu KC PZPR na ręce sekretarza KC PZPR towarzysza Franciszka Mazura., pp. 34–35; "Żegnamy dzieci koreańskie", *GR*, no. 184, August 3rd, 1959, p. 1; Jawornicka, "Odzyskane dzieciństwo"; Warneńska, "Annionghi kasipsio".



another 68 (approximate number) graduates of the primary school in Świder, and only two people were supposed to start education in medical school¹⁰⁸.

In 1958, out of 1,050 Korean students studying in Poland, 753 pupils attended primary schools (in Świder, Płakowice and probably Szklarska Poręba), and 297 attended secondary and vocational schools. Those were, however, young people who had previously completed Polish primary schools. To visit classes in Korean language, a properly prepared Korean language teacher was employed as a consultant.¹⁰⁹

Providing care for Korean orphans in the POW, the Ministry of Education had to spend 810 zloty for each pupil every month. This amount covered the costs of food in the boarding school, part of it was given to the children in cash, and it was spent on clothing, footwear, textbooks and school accessories for each child every year¹¹⁰.

However, the youths (161 people) who came to Poland in 1953 to study in vocational schools, received a scholarship from the school budget in the amount determined for the students of a given type of vocational school, i.e. generally 263 zloty, in the case of mining and metallurgical schools – 288 zloty per month. This money covered the costs of the meals in the boarding school and paid for a monthly scholarship bonus of 50 zloty. Still, the situation of the Korean youth was hard. As much as possible, school management tried to help them in various ways. They used the funds allocated for scholarship grants for Polish students, the money raised by parents' committees, and even organised collection of donations among the teachers themselves. It was noted, however, that the Koreans were thus becoming a 'subject of unhealthy philanthropy'. Some other negative effects were also noticed. Aid activities led to 'significant differences in the living conditions among the young people staying in different schools, depending on the degree of local care'. No teaching aids, lack of cash, poor clothing, especially shoes, had an adverse effect on the results in education, and even on the health of the Korean youth. It was necessary to unify the living conditions of both groups of young people. Since September 1954, the monthly rate of boarding costs of Koreans was scheduled to increase to 710 zloty. In comparison, the scholarship which Korean students received at that time amounted to 750 zloty¹¹¹.

In the records provided by the Lower Silesian Voivodship and powiat administration concerning the stay of Korean children between 1953 and 1956 I have found no documents apart from one mention. At the meetings of the PWRN in Wrocław, the issue of Koreans was not discussed at all, or else they were more vastly discussed off the record. In August 1954, at a meeting of the PWRN, the Koreans were mentioned by Piekarski¹¹², when he was presenting the state of educational work among the national

¹⁰⁸ Sołtysik, *Dzieci*, doc. 6, encl. 1.

¹⁰⁹ The nationality of the consultant remains unknown. AAN, TSKCiSP, cat. no. 30, *O dalszy rozwój szkolnictwa...*, encl. no. 2, p. 107. For example, one boy attended high school in Lwówek Śląski (Krysowata, *Sieroty*, p.113).

¹¹⁰ For more information see Sołtysik, *Dzieci*, doc. 6.

¹¹¹ *Ibidem*. The approximate annual cost of living per pupil was to amount to 8,520 zlotys (for mining and metallurgical schools the sum was 8,820 zlotys). The costs in the first year of stay were calculated at 10,256.70 zlotys, in the second – to 7,382.50 zlotys, in the third – to 9,118.40 zlotys, in the fourth – to 7,382.50 zlotys, i.e. the total sum of 34,140.90 zlotys. On the 1st of September 1954 the Ministry of Education transferred the duty to cover the costs of education for 161 Korean pupils to other ministries and the CUSZ, which involved additional expenses of 255,668 zlotys. It has been suggested that the various ministries should look for the financial means in the reserves for scholarship grants.

¹¹² A member of the PWRN in Wrocław – other information about that person has not yet been gathered.



minorities in the region: 'Speaking of working on the Korean children he mentioned that in the region there are two centres, namely Płakowice and Szklarska Poręba'¹¹³. It is the only trace of the Korean children in the acts of Lower Silesia government. The research in the files of the KW PZPR in Wrocław has not brought any new information.

Excessive confidentiality surrounding the Korean operation in Lower Silesia triggered specific consequences. It shall be assumed that government officials and permanent employees of the PZPR, following the professional instructions and guidelines in this matter, did not prepare too many documents, and any problems were resolved without officially adopted chancery procedures. It may be partly explained by the fact that POW No. 2 in Płakowice and the PDD in Szklarska Poręba were supervised and financed directly by the central authorities of the state. However, many issues and problems were handled through or directly by the voivodship and/or powiat authorities. At the same time, an aura of confidentiality around the Korean children was broken by the management of the centre, who, for example, organized regular and frequent trips to Lwówek Śląski so that the Koreans could see the screenings at the cinema, trips to the mountains, to Wrocław and to many places in the surrounding area¹¹⁴. Moreover, the veil of 'mystery' was also lifted by the powiat and voivodship authorities (probably with the tacit consent of Warsaw), who agreed to organize conferences and meetings in the POW in Płakowice. For example, at the end of August 1954, an educational conference for teachers and educators was held there. In the evening on the 28th of August, the participants could enjoy the artistic performances of the Korean children¹¹⁵.

Better effects have resulted from the research on the acts of the Executive of KP PZPR in Lwówek Śląski. The documents that have been found, have shed valuable light on the relations and sentiments among the Polish and Korean staff in POW No. 2 in Płakowice and on the director of the centre, M. Waliński¹¹⁶. On this basis we can also indirectly draw some hypotheses about the relations between the powiat elite derived from the Lwówek Board of Municipal and Powiat National Council (Prezydium Miejskiej i Powiatowej Rady Narodowej), the KP PZPR and the Powiat Office of Public Security (Powiatowy Urząd Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego, PUBP).

In 1954, on two July assembly meetings of the KP PZPR Executive in Lwówek Śląski (on the 8th and 24th of July), one of the discussed issues was the situation in POW No. 2 in Płakowice. Two issues were taken into consideration: the strained relations between the Polish and Korean personnel and the figure of the centre's director, M. Waliński, and his political activity. Some disputants put part of the blame for bad relations between the Poles and the Koreans on the director. Two groups emerged – one arguing for the dismissal of M. Waliński from the position of director, and the other one against it.

At the first meeting, the guests were Cieśla¹¹⁷, the head of the POW in Zgorzelec, and Wilczyński¹¹⁸, the head of the Department of Education in the KW PZPR in Wrocław. As

¹¹³ PWr., PWRN, cat.no. I/771, *Protokół nr 53 z posiedzenia PWRN we Wrocławiu w dniu 31 VIII 1954 r.*, p. 300.

¹¹⁴ Kryszowata, *Sieroty*, pp. 102, 104–105, 109, 111; see also photographs in this article, pp. 108, 112–113.

¹¹⁵ APWr., KP PZPR Lwówek Śląski, cat. no. 30, *Ocena przygotowań i przebiegu konferencji sierpniowej w powiecie lwóweckim*, 1954, p. 75.

¹¹⁶ APWr., KP PZPR Lwówek Śląski, cat. no. 29, *Protokół nr 27 z posiedzenia Egzekutywy KP PZPR w Lwówku Śląskim z 8 VII 1954 r.*, p. 324–326; *ibidem*, *Protokół nr 29 z posiedzenia Egzekutywy KP PZPR w Lwówku Śląskim z 24 VII 1954 r.*, pp. 373–374. Full text of both documents in Sołtysik, *Dzieci*, doc. 3 and 4.

¹¹⁷ Other information about that person has not yet been gathered.

¹¹⁸ Other information about that person has not yet been gathered.



outsiders, they were to investigate the problem and suggest possible solutions. The first to have a say in a discussion was Wilczyński, who assessed the cooperation between the Polish and Korean teachers as very bad, which urged many Polish teachers to give up their work at the centre. He blamed the responsibility for this state on the Koreans. He described the problem as follows: '[...]]The Koreans, who often demand too much, and what is more they are now under strong influence of serious nationalist and chauvinist views, which in turn badly influence the people in their environment, perceive themselves and Korea as some mythological heroes worthy of the highest recognition. This condition seriously affects the young people whom they educate. Probably there are four people among them who deliberately influence the youth to oppose all the orders. Moreover, educational methods applied by the Koreans are old (military rigour, examples of physical violence), which Polish teachers cannot agree to'.

Improper use of educational methods by the Koreans was confirmed by Cieśla. In his opinion, they were not consistent with the 'socialist pedagogy', which gave rise to serious misunderstandings. Among the Korean carers there were also incidents of displaying very bad attitude towards children, especially those who showed good progress in learning the Polish language. They argued that children did not need this skill. Wilczyński was supported in this opinion by Miłan¹¹⁹, who gave another example. Marta Walińska¹²⁰, the wife of the centre's director, taught classes in the Polish language for adult Koreans. After a few lessons, for unknown reasons, they ceased to participate in them. After a while it appeared that the Koreans continued to learn Polish in their own small group. The teacher was one of them, who, despite serving as a translator at the centre, according to Miłan, had hardly any knowledge of the Polish language, because it was really hard to communicate with him¹²¹.

A different approach to the cause of poor cooperation between the Polish and Korean teams was taken by Stanisław Makuch, the head of the PUBP in Lwówek Śląski¹²², who attacked Waliński at the meeting and wanted his dismissal. According to him, the director was the source of all the misunderstandings in the POW, because at the beginning he highly elevated Koreans, while the Poles were treated by him dismissively in the presence of foreigners. For this reason, Koreans 'became big-headed,' and took advantage of that situation, not listening, and not following at all the observations made by Polish educators¹²³.

¹¹⁹ In 1954, the instructor of the Propaganda Department of the KP PZPR in Lwówek Śląski – other information has not been established.

¹²⁰ The wife of M. Waliński (the director of POW No. 2 in Płakowice) a methodologist, a teacher of Polish language, until 1956 a member of the Communist Party (Krysowata, *Sieroty, passim*).

¹²¹ Sołtysik, *Dzieci*, doc. 3.

¹²² Stanisław Makuch, born December 8th, 1920, in 1945–1949 an officer of the PUBP in Lwówek Śląski, since 1950 in the PUBP in Syców (moved on disciplinary grounds), from October 1st, 1953, to September 1st, 1955, the head of the PUBP and the Beaurreau for Public Security in Lwówek Śląski, then moved to the position of the Deputy Commander for the Powiat Militia for Public Security in Ząbkowice Śląskie. A member of the PZPR between 1953 and 1955, a member of the Executive of the KP PZPR in Lwówek Śląski, and a member of the Executive of the KP PZPR in Ząbkowice Śląskie between 1955 and 1956, a chairman of the POP in the PUBP, see Robert Klementowski, *Urząd bezpieczeństwa w powiecie Lwówek Śląski (1945–1956)*, Wrocław 2006, pp. 37, 39, 101, 251.

¹²³ Sołtysik, *Dzieci*, doc. 3. Military discipline among the children sustained by Korean teachers and educators was confirmed by the Polish employees of the centre (Krysowata, *Sieroty*, p.103).



It was necessary, however, to relieve the tense situation in the POW. Wilczyński suggested that at the beginning a good way out of the impasse would be to organize a meeting of Polish and Korean staff to discuss all animosity. Then, in the agreement with the Ministry of Education and the Embassy of the DPRK, two Koreans, who, according to the Poles, had the most destructive influence on others, should be removed. In addition, he suggested the idea to recall the former secretary of the Korean Labour Party unit, who, according to his knowledge, had no authority among his countrymen, and was under the influence of the two aforementioned resistant compatriots¹²⁴.

Another issue raised at the meeting of the KP PZPR Executive in Lwówek was the behaviour and performance of professional and party duties by M. Waliński. According to Wilczyński, the director was an authority figure among personnel and there were no reservations about his work relations. Some claims against Waliński were only reported by the KP PZPR. They emerged at the election of delegates to the powiat conference of PZPR. According to the decision of the Primary Party Organization (Podstawowa Organizacja Partyjna, POP) at POW No. 2 in Płakowice, he was to represent the centre at the conference, but the choice had been challenged by the KP PZPR in Lwówek Śląski. The exact reasons for this move are not known. Wilczyński mentioned that between Waliński and Abramowicz, the First Secretary of the KP PZPR¹²⁵ there was a conflict that contributed to the lack of permission for the director to attend the powiat conference. As a result of this, the position and authority of M. Waliński in the POW and among the powiat authorities elite became heavily undermined. He was even taking into account the possibility of losing his post¹²⁶.

The head of the PUBP had a clearly negative opinion of the director: 'The director [...] Is [in fact] a drunkard, who has created a clique in the leadership of the party organization, who, even in the most dramatic moments side with him, and regardless of that he has even attempted to lobby some of the officers of the PUBP and MO [Citizen's Militia]. What is more, [...] the director is a drug [sic!] and is willing to take abuse, and because of the fact that he was not admitted to the powiat conference, all the matters should immediately be brought to the end, and therefore perhaps its present condition may have been different'.

Makuch was echoed by Józef Półrola¹²⁷. He reminded everyone that the issue of the director's behaviour had already been investigated by the POP in Płakowice and the Commission of the Ministry of Education, which considered the same allegations (alcohol abuse) as those presented by the head of the PUBP. He recalled an event when Waliński during his business trip in Legnica got drunk and brawled with militia officers. After this event his party mandate was taken and the case was referred for consideration to the KP PZPR. The only measures taken was the talk with Abramowicz¹²⁸.

The situation in the POW in Płakowice was well-known to the first secretary of the KP PZPR in Lwówek Śląski, Jan Stankiewicz¹²⁹. He reported all the problems in the centre to the KW PZPR and PWRN in Wrocław and to the Ministry of Education. Stankiewicz also met with a delegation of Korean teachers, whom he tried to convince to apply Polish

¹²⁴ Sołtysik, *Dzieci*, doc. 3.

¹²⁵ No further information has been found about a woman by that name.

¹²⁶ Sołtysik, *Dzieci*, doc. 3.

¹²⁷ One of the secretaries of the KP PZPR in Lwówek Śląski, a member of the Executive – other information about that person has not yet been gathered.

¹²⁸ Sołtysik, *Dzieci*, doc. 3.

¹²⁹ Other information about that person has not yet been gathered.



educational methods. At that time his impression was that the Koreans probably understood the message well, but as it soon turned out, they still did not change their habits of teaching and upbringing. Therefore, he acceded to the position presented by Wilczyński so as to submit his proposals through the KW PZPR at the Embassy of the DPRK. He also used the opportunity to criticize the attitude and the ideological and moral work of Polish employees, especially the members of the POP at the POW in Płakowice. He pointed out the lack of self-critical analysis of their professional and party work, as well as plotting intrigues at the centre. On the other hand, in the case of Waliński (drunkenness and brawls) he tried to tone down the issue by exposing the director's advantages (good organizer, able to keep order) and his willingness to improve. Closing the subject, he suggested implementation of four tasks in the near future: a meeting of Polish and Korean staff to discuss and clarify the existing problems, persuading the Korean educators to undertake compulsory and systematic learning of the Polish language; Wilczyński in close consultation with the Ministry of Education was to remove the two Koreans who had been most interfering in the work and replace them with a new, 'good' activist; at the next meeting of the KP PZPR Executive M. Waliński should be present, and after demonstrating all his failures and weaknesses, he should be given the possibility of rehabilitation, and eventually be introduced to the Executive of the POP¹³⁰.

On the 24th of July, 1954, M. Waliński was present at the meeting of the KP PZPR Executive, where he submitted a report on the results of teaching Korean children in POW No. 2 in Płakowice. Unfortunately, it was not attached to the protocol. Most likely, he reported it orally and it was purposely not recorded in the minutes even as a summary. The document also did not record the questions that he was asked by the members of the Executive. We only have a general outline of his response to the questions and the record of the discussion. On this basis it can be concluded that the questions concerned the issue of exercising management control over teaching and educational issues, teaching the Polish language among Korean staff, the work of POP, self-development and ideological courses, as well as the content of teaching and educational programs carried out for Korean children. Waliński admitted that the management of the centre had so far focused mainly on administrative work and had devoted too little attention to other issues. Attendance at various trainings was low, and the Embassy of the DPRK recommended one hundred percent attendance. He also informed about the ongoing works on the school program, which was carried out by Polish and Korean educators¹³¹.

The first speaker in the discussion was S. Makuch. He said that the report by Waliński was not comprehensive enough and did not meet the expectations of the audience. After what he had heard, he concluded that the director and the secretary of the POP at the centre 'were not guided by the collective work'. Then he publicly faced the director with the charges that he had already delivered on the 8th of July at the meeting of the KP PZPR Executive. No other statements were recorded in the minutes. Perhaps there were indeed no other. The goal was achieved: the head of the PUBP criticized Waliński's work and attitude, and the latter delivered a self-criticism. It seems that in this way they wanted to use local environment to mitigate the independence of the POW's director, who, because of the nature of Korean operation, was subordinated directly to Warsaw. Finishing the debate, J. Półrola admonished and instructed: '[...] We should base our actions [...] on

¹³⁰ Sołtysik, *Dzieci*, doc. 3.

¹³¹ *Ibidem*, doc. 4.



the work of the collective and be more focused on the educational objective [sic!], and not only on purely administrative matters. [...] Nationalism has spawned because of the fact that the director extolled the progress of Koreans too much, as well as was too little familiar with broader educational activities and bad signs of spreading hostile rumours that originated in part from the Polish personnel during the construction of production cooperative in Płakowice. [...] [This] phenomenon [...] has not been nipped in the bud and to the end. As for training, it should be prepared as well as possible and carried out in order to enable to work better and understand the entire centre, and all the shortcomings of comrade Waliński will not be discussed and hence the conclusion that the management of the KP [PZPR] drew too little attention to the trend and helped to set the management of the POW. Seeing so many shortcomings [...] [KP] after demonstrating to the management and the POP [in POW] the deficiencies and weaknesses, will help to set up to work, which in the future will not happen again'¹³².

The director, an ideological communist¹³³, might have been impressed by the Koreans as the architects of the new and radical communist society and the state. For this reason, the Asians could have been favoured and held up as a model for the Polish team. Creation of the Production Cooperative (Spółdzielnia Produkcyjna) in Płakowice, the building of which was probably supported by Waliński, resulted in the polarization of views among the Polish POW staff and, consequently, created 'opposition', whose attitude to his actions was critical. Definitely he did not respond to widespread anti-cooperative rumours, which was pointed out to him by J. Półroła. The main weakness of the director was certainly his excessive inclination to alcohol. On the other hand, his advantage, in the opinion of his superiors and subordinates, was very good management of POW No. 2. The centre was generously supplied not only in funds and items necessary for normal operation (fuel, food, etc.), but also received many delicacies (chocolate, sweets, cured meat, etc.) which were not commonly accessible to buy in Poland in those years¹³⁴. It seems that the material abundance in the POW could have been the cause of animosity between M. Waliński and the local elite who were interested in exercising greater control over the relations prevailing in Płakowice and gaining illegal financial benefits. For example, a very low level of ethics and knowledge characterized the officers of Lwówek PUBP. Widespread among them were: a sense of impunity, alcohol abuse, corruption, blackmail, theft, extortion and embezzlement¹³⁵. If Waliński rejected the offers of illegal business, which could have worsened the economic and financial condition of the POW, then he undoubtedly offended many people holding power in the powiat. In this context, the attack by Makuch and Półroła on the director at the meeting of the PK PZPR Executive becomes more understandable. Perhaps good political sophistication and better education of Waliński also caused arguments and tensions with the leadership of the KP PZPR and the PUBP. The problems mentioned, however, can be only explained by new sources.

The fragments of interviews with the centre's staff reported by Jolanta Krysowata show that at the time when Waliński worked as a director, the POW functioned flawlessly,

¹³² *Ibidem*.

¹³³ Marta Walińska in an interview by Jolanta Krysowata said that "her husband was a communist and that he learnt it at his home because all his relatives were communists." For the full statement see Krysowata, *Sieroty*, pp. 112-113.

¹³⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 111.

¹³⁵ Klementowski, *Urząd*, pp. 88-96.



and the director himself was much appreciated by the Polish staff¹³⁶. The political atmosphere in the country had been changing since 1955, and after the secret report of Nikita S. Khrushchev at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February 1956, it gained new momentum. The changes also did not spare Płakowice. M. Waliński's wife mentioned that under the influence of reading the weekly *Po Prostu*, she and her husband began to revise their political views. Since March 1956, at the POP meetings there were stormy discussions between Waliński and the members of the party. Consequently, this had caused problems that led to Waliński leaving PZPR and, next, to recalling M. Waliński from his position as a director of the POW. According to her, the POW was run by her husband faultlessly. The entire staff and the Asian pupils observed discipline, and the auditors who were reviewing the accounting found no embezzlement¹³⁷. However, the so far good management of the centre did not save the director's position. On the 21st of April 1956, the members of the KC PZPR Executive in Lwówek Śląski removed him from the ranks of the Communist Party, 'By the resolution of the POP at the POW Płakowice, Marian Waliński is expelled from the party for drunkenness, abuse, use of official car for personal trips, riotous actions. KP Executive approved resolution about his exclusion'¹³⁸. It seems that this decision was tantamount to immediate recalling him from the position of a director of the education centre.

Once again, Korean orphans appeared in the Polish press in May and July 1956. This was associated with the visits of the representatives of the DPRK government in PRL. In the second half of May, Poland was visited by a six-person North Korean delegation led by the Deputy Minister of Education, Czan Ik Han. Its purpose was to become familiar with the organization of the PDD, nursing homes and child-rearing system. The delegation split into three two-person groups who visited Polish care facilities in different parts of the country. On the 27th of May one of them came to Lower Silesia. The guests visited the POWs in Płakowice, Szklarska Poręba and Bardo. In Szklarska Poręba the POW director was Ryszard Janus, and the primary school director was Stanisław Jaworski. Korean pupils organized artistic performance for the delegates from Korea¹³⁹.

Between the 2nd and the 6th of July, 1956, Poland hosted Kim Il-Sung, together with the members of the government and Central Committee of the Korean Labour Party¹⁴⁰. On

¹³⁶ Kryśowata, *Sieroty*, pp. 110, 112.

¹³⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 112–113.

¹³⁸ APWr., KP PZPR Lwówek Śląski, cat. no. 35, *Protokół z posiedzenia Egzekutywy KP PZPR w Lwówku Śląskim z dnia 21 VI 1956 r.*, p. 5.

¹³⁹ Members of the delegation were the representatives of: the Ministry of Education, Kim Hi Kuk [Polish spelling] and the Central Committee of the Korean Labour Party Czon Czi Han [Polish spelling]. (Now), "Po zwiedzeniu Państwowych Domów Dziecka delegacji Korei z uznaniem mówili o pracy polskich wychowawców", *SP*, no. 129, May 31st, 1956, p. 3. *Trybuna Ludu* did not post the information about the visit of the delegation of the DPRK in Poland.

¹⁴⁰ The delegates of the DPRK left Pyongyang on the 1st of June, 1956 Kim Il-Sung first visited Moscow. Then he visited Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania, the USSR again, and at the end to Mongolia (*Kim Ir Sen wyjechał do ZSRR*, *SP*, no. 132, April 3rd–4th, 1956, p. 1). "Końcowy komunikat z pobytu delegacji rządowej KRL-D", *GR*, no. 162, July 9th, 1956, p. 1–2; "Komunikat końcowy o pobycie delegacji rządowej KRL-D w Polsce", *TL*, no. 188, July 8th, 1956, p. 1; "Odjazd delegacji KRL-D", *ibidem*, p. 3; "Depeza Kim Ir Sena", *TL*, no. 189, July 9th, 1956, p. 1. After Warsaw, the next stage of the journey was again Moscow ("Delegacja rządowa KRL-D opuściła Polskę", *GR*, no. 162, July 9th, 1956, p. 2). It was the first visit of Kim Il-Sung in Poland. What was appreciated was, among others, diplomatic support given by Poland in the international arena to the DPRK striving to unite the country, the admission of orphans



this occasion, the press published relevant articles and notes outlining for the Polish readers the Korean conflict and the division of the country, the biography of Kim Il-Sung and the relationship between the two countries. Among the emphasised points there was certainly the support that Poland had provided to North Korea during the Korean War and after its end, admitting the orphaned children to raise them, educating young people at universities and rebuilding the ruined country¹⁴¹. On the 4th of July, the DPRK delegation, together with the Minister of Education, Witold Jaroński, and the Ambassador of PRL in North Korea, Jerzy Siedlecki,¹⁴² visited the PDD in Świder, whose director was St[efan?] Megiel. The meeting was also attended by a group of Korean students¹⁴³.

The decision that the Korean children should leave Poland was taken suddenly, at the beginning of July 1959 at the latest. At the end of July, Poland was visited by a three-person government delegation of the DPRK, which announced to the Polish party at the meetings with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Health and Education that all Koreans with no exception would immediately return to their homeland. At the same time, they 'expressed gratitude for the help and loving care of Korean children received from the government of the People's Republic of Poland'. During the next ten days of their stay, the Korean delegation visited the education centres in which Korean children stayed¹⁴⁴. Since that moment, hurried preparations to the children's departure were made.

On the 30th of July, a farewell ceremony was held in Świder. Thirty Polish carers, educators and teachers were honoured with Korean souvenirs and state awards. Among

left after fallen soldiers, aid in the form of medicine supplies ("Korea Polsce bliska", *TL*, no. 183, July 3rd, 1956, p. 1). For more information see also above, note 16.

¹⁴¹ The North Korean delegation were welcomed at the airport Okęcie e.g. by the members of the Presidium Office and the Central Committee of the Communist Party, the Council of State, the URM, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the employees of the Embassy of the DPRK and their families, delegations from Warsaw workplaces and a large group of young Korean students studying in Poland. "Korea bliska Polsce", p. 1; "Towarzysz Kim Ir Sen. Gość naszego narodu", *TL*, no. 183, July 3rd 1956, p. 2; (D. L.) "Kim Ir Sen przybył do Warszawy", *TL*, no. 184, July 4th, 1956, p. 1; W. Z., "Korea – kraj Polsce bliski", *GR*, no. 156, July 2nd, 1956, p. 3; "Serdeczne powitanie zgotował lud stolicy marszałkowi Kim Ir Senowi i delegacji koreańskiej", *GR*, no. 158, July 4th, 1956, p. 1; M. D., Kim Ir Sen, *SP*, no. 157, July 3rd, 1956, pp. 1–2; "Z oficjalną wizytą przybył do Polski marszałek Kim Ir Sen", *SP*, no. 158, July 4th, 1956, p. 1. The visit of the DPRK delegation was reported by the press. On the 3rd of July the Korean guests toured around Warsaw and met with the members of the Central Board of the League of Women ("Delegacja rządowa KRL-D z marszałkiem Kim Ir Senem zwiedziła stolicę", *GR*, no. 159, July 5th, 1956, pp. 1–2; "Spotkanie Pak Den Ai z kobietami polskimi", *ibidem*, s. 2; for more information see "Pierwszy dzień pobytu delegacji rządowej KRL-D", *TL*, no. 184, July 4th, 1956, p. 1; "Z pobytu koreańskiej delegacji rządowej", *TL*, no. 185, July 5th, 1956, p. 1). During the visit, on the 5th of July, the Korean guests were honoured with the Order of Polonia Restituta class I and class II ("Najwyższe odznaczenia państwowe dla członków delegacji rządowej KRL-D", *SP*, no. 161, July 7th, 1956, pp. 1–2; "Goście koreańscy udekorowani najwyższymi odznaczeniami państwowymi PRL", *GR*, no. 161, July 7th–8th, 1956, pp. 1–2; "Wysokie odznaczenia dla Kim Ir Sena, PakDen Ai i Nam Ira", *TL*, no. 187, July 7th, 1956, p. 1; "Spotkanie ludności Warszawy z delegacją rządową Korei", *ibidem*; "Na spotkaniu z ludnością Warszawy. Przemówienie tow. St. Staszewskiego. Przemówienie tow. Kim Ir Sena", *ibidem*, p. 3).

¹⁴² The ambassador of the PRL in the DPRK, between 1954 and 1959.

¹⁴³ "Delegacja rządowa KRL-D odwiedziła", pp. 1–2; [Press release along with a photo (CAF-Baranowski) of Kim Il-sung signing into the guest book in the PDD in Świder, July 4th, 1956], *GR*, no. 161, July 7th–8th, 1956, p. 2.

¹⁴⁴ The DPRK delegation composed of the Deputy Minister of Education Jan In Sen [Polish spelling], head of the Department of Education of the Central Committee of the Korean Labour Party Kim Czan Hun [Polish spelling] and the employee of the Central Committee, Lin Don Dzyn [Polish spelling]. "Delegacja KRLD dziękuje za opiekę nad dziećmi-sierotami", *TL*, 209, July 31st, 1959, p. 1.



them, there were probably the PDD director St. Megiel and the manager Angela Marczak¹⁴⁵. A memorial plaque was unveiled with the inscription: 'In this house we lived happily between 1951 and 1959. We will always remember the maternal care of the Polish nation. Korean Children – Świder – July 1959'¹⁴⁶. On the 1st of August there was an official farewell in Płakowice.

The Polish authorities were represented by the Deputy Minister Z. Dembińska, the secretary of the PWRN in Wrocław professor Włodzimierz Boerner, the secretary of the Municipal Committee of the PZPR in Wrocław Ryszard Owczarski, and the superintendent of the School District Superintendence in Wrocław Stanisław Dąbrowski. Also present were the scouts and schoolchildren. Representatives of the school superintendence, educators and teachers from the POW in Płakowice were awarded medals by Korean government officials and received gifts¹⁴⁷. It seems that on this day, and not on the 31st of July, a commemorative plaque was unveiled on the wall of the school building in Płakowice, with the inscription: 'Between 1953 and 1959 Korean children, war orphans, were learning at this school. We will never forget the kind and loving care of the Polish nation. POW, July 30th, 1959'¹⁴⁸. On the 6th of August, 1959, the first group of orphans from the centres in Lower Silesia flew back to Korea¹⁴⁹. Representatives of the DPRK government left Poland on the 8th of August, together with another group of Korean orphans. At the airport in Warsaw they were officially farewelled by the Deputy Minister of Education Z. Dembińska, secretary of the Central Committee of Education H. Grabowski and representatives of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Health. Also present was the Ambassador of the DPRK in Poland, Kim Hak In¹⁵⁰. The Korean children from Świder left in the second half of August¹⁵¹.

Koreans were leaving Poland for the whole August. The pupils of Lower Silesian centres travelled to Warsaw in groups twice a week. There, three days prior to departure, they were accommodated in a primary school in Praga [a district of Warsaw]. During their stay in the Polish capital, they took part in organized tours around the city and the Zoological Gardens and in boat trips on the Vistula River. Then followed a dramatic breakup, deeply experienced by all¹⁵². Probably the other Koreans, studying in other cities, also left Poland¹⁵³. Witnesses of this story have no doubt that the sudden recall of the Koreans from Poland and breaking correspondence between the children and their Polish educators which took place around 1962 were of political nature, a result of the changes in contemporary international situation¹⁵⁴.

¹⁴⁵ Warneńska, "Annionghi kasipsio"; Jawornicka, "Odzyskane dzieciństwo".

¹⁴⁶ The Koreans lived in Świder only since 1953, before that they had been placed in the PDD in Gołotczyzna. This centre is also mentioned by the author of the article, see Warneńska, "Annionghi kasipsio".

¹⁴⁷ The Korean side was represented by the above-mentioned members of the delegation of the government and Kim Hak In [Polish spelling], the ambassador of the DPRK in Poland ("*Żegnamy dzieci koreańskie*", *GR*, no. 184, August 3rd, 1959, p. 1).

¹⁴⁸ *An outline of the history [of Płakowice]*, <http://lwowekmos.republika.pl/Link1.htm> (accessed on: April 11th, 2008); Krysowata, *Sieroty*, p. 121.

¹⁴⁹ It seems that every group of children departing for Korea was farewelled by the Deputy Minister of Education, Z. Dembińska. "Pierwsza grupa dzieci koreańskich opuściła Polskę", p. 1.

¹⁵⁰ "Delegacja koreańska opuściła Polskę", p. 7.

¹⁵¹ Jawornicka, "Odzyskane dzieciństwo".

¹⁵² Krysowata, *Sieroty*, p. 115 (for more information see pp. 114–117).

¹⁵³ See Warneńska, "Annionghi kasipsio".

¹⁵⁴ Krysowata, *Sieroty*, pp. 100, 113–121.



This interpretation seems certain¹⁵⁵, but is probably not the only one. We should take into account the perspective of the authorities of the DPRK and consider whether the authorities in Pyongyang could have been satisfied with the effects of the work of Polish teachers, the education in Polish schools and universities. Did the young Koreans, raised and educated in Poland, meet expectations and live up to the hopes that had been pinned upon them? Were they indeed brought up in Poland well enough to be real communists? Were the people with a learned profession employed according to the acquired skills? Did they, after returning to Korea, become the object of special surveillance of the Special Services suspecting them of hostile spy activities for the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of Poland¹⁵⁶? Following the excerpts from the letters of the Koreans to their Polish educators published by Jolanta Kryswata, it seems that the fortune of individual children was sometimes better and sometimes worse. Some of them were not able to adapt and it cost them their lives. One may agree with the opinion expressed by an employee of the POW in Płakowice that 'they eventually returned to poverty they had originated from'¹⁵⁷.

Translated by Katarzyna Hussar

¹⁵⁵ In 1958, there was a significant cooling in relations between the DPRK and the USSR and China. In 1961, the DPRK slightly warmed relations with these countries, but soon after Kim Il-Sung decided to break off the relations with the Soviet Union and its satellites (up to Nikita S. Khrushchev's fall in October 1964). For this reason, as a result of political cleansing, the foreign-born wives of Koreans were expelled from North Korea, see Rurarz, *Historia*, pp. 391–392. There were also other reasons. Already in December 1955 Kim Il-Sung proclaimed the Korean policy of socio-economic development (the so-called Juche Idea), and after coming to power of Władysław Gomułka, he rejected the Polish road to socialism. The consequence of this was an unexpected interruption of Korean operation in 1959, and in 1962 the cooling in relations with the People's Republic of Poland and the termination of correspondence, see Dziak, *Kim Ir Sen*, pp. 76–79; *idem*, *Kim Ir Sen. Dzieło*, pp. 213 (note 60), 217–221.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Kryswata, *Sieroty*, pp. 113–121.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 117.