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## HANNA WENTLANDTOWA (1906–1994) – WOMAN-SOLDIER, PROMOTER OF EDUCATION, PRECURSOR OF HEALTH EDUCATION AND HEALTH PROMOTION

**S u m m a r y:** The article presents the professional, social, and academic profile of Hanna Wentlandtowa. Her work centred around the idea of spreading education and culture, which she pursued from the interwar period to the 1980s. As an ardent patriot, she served in the structures of the Home Army during World War II. Wentlandtowa's achievements in the field of hygiene and health education are part of the development of the modern concept of health education.

**K e y w o r d s:** spreading education, woman-soldier, hygiene, health education

### Introduction

Hanna Wentlandtowa, whose profile is presented in this article, deserves a special credit. She is well recognized as a pioneer of efforts to shape health culture across Poland and a significant figure of the health promotion movement across the country. She features in Poland's history as a promoter of education and culture in

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a turbulent time, from the interwar period to the postwar years. She was a social activist, scientist, educator, but also a soldier in World War II.

Hanna Wentlandtowa<sup>2</sup> was born in Łowicz on July 17, 1906, into an intelligentsia family, as the older of two children of Zofia and Daniel Puczyński. She began her education in Połtawa at the Tadeusz Kosciuszko School, continuing it later at the Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz Gymnasium in Łowicz, from which she graduated in 1924. Immediately after graduating she began her studies at the Faculty of Humanities of Warsaw University, where she received a master's degree in philosophy in 1930. At the same time, she was preparing for pedagogical work at *Wolna Wszechnica Polska* [The Free Polish University], where she completed a pedagogical course of study, supplemented with pedagogical courses, also on education in the social centers known as 'common room'. She also completed a course in military training and in librarianship. In 1961–1964, Wentlandtowa pursued a PhD in Humanities at the Faculty of Pedagogy at the University of Warsaw, which she received on the basis of a dissertation entitled *Cultural and educational activities among adults in a cooperative housing estate and neighborhood ties*,<sup>3</sup> written under the supervision of Professor Kazimierz Wojciechowski. A year later, her doctoral dissertation was published under a changed title.<sup>4</sup>

Wentlandtowa's social work and professional career created her profile as an educator, propagator and promoter of adult education and culture in the interwar period, during World War II and in the early postwar years, as well as a pioneer of health promotion in Poland. The purpose of the article is to introduce her achievements and accomplishments, with particular emphasis on the activities around the issues of health education, which provided the foundations for the theoretical framework of the modern concept of health education and health promotion in Poland.

## Promoter and propagator of adult education and culture

Hanna Wentlandtowa carried out her mission of promoting education and culture during the interwar period and during World War II, in the Polish military and beyond. Her first contacts with the military were during her years of study at the

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<sup>2</sup> The biographical information contained in this study was obtained from the following sources: Janina Sikorska, "Wentlandtowa Hanna [biogram]" [Wentlandtowa Hanna [bio]]. In: *Sylwetki kobiet – żołnierzy* [Profiles of women soldiers], vol. 1, ed. Krystyna Kabzińska (Toruń: Fundacja „Archiwum”, 2003), 359–362; ead., "Hanna Wentlandtowa. Życie i działalność w okresie międzywojennym i w czasie II wojny światowej" [Hanna Wentlandtowa. Life and activities between the wars and during World War II]. *Problemy Higieny* 46 (1994), 8–11; Teresa Maleszewska, "Działalność Dr Hanny Wentlandtowej w latach 1945–1994" [Dr. Hanna Wentlandtowa's activities from 1945 to 1994]. *Problemy Higieny* 46 (1994), 12–17.

<sup>3</sup> Information obtained from the University of Warsaw Archives and from the catalogue of doctoral theses in the Library of the Pedagogical Faculty of the same university.

<sup>4</sup> Hanna Puczyńska-Wentlandtowa, *Działalność kulturalna a więź sąsiedzka w osiedlach spółdzielczych* [Cultural activities and neighborhood ties in cooperative estates] (Warszawa: Zakład Wydawnictw CRS, 1965).

University of Warsaw, during which she joined the Polish White Cross (PBK).<sup>5</sup> Her involvement was an expression of a patriotic response to the problem of rampant illiteracy in the ranks of the army of independent Poland, which was not found in such extensive form in the armies of Western countries. This issue required large-scale educational efforts, the backbone of which were the libraries and soldiers' common rooms organized and run with the great assistance of the Polish White Cross. Its role as a social institution focusing on educational work increased in the 1930s, when PBK employees were entrusted with full control over common rooms, including the soldier libraries which were part of them.<sup>6</sup> As part of her work at the Polish White Cross, in whose headquarters she had been employed since 1928,<sup>7</sup> Wentlandtowa was actively involved in promoting reading and disseminating culture among soldiers in their common rooms and also in inns.<sup>8</sup> In recognition of her competencies, she was entrusted with the position of district educational instructor in the Warsaw district, which she held from 1930 to 1937.<sup>9</sup> It is worth mentioning that thanks to the work of the educational instructors of the Polish White Cross, the guidebook *Świetlice dla poborowych* [Common rooms for recruits] was published in 1938 as a compendium of knowledge on forms and methods of

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<sup>5</sup> The Polish White Cross (PBK) was established in New York in May 1918 on the initiative of Ignacy J. Paderewski as an organization operating on the model of the Red Cross, established to provide assistance to soldiers serving in the Polish Army in France. The creation of a Polish organization under the name of the Red Cross was not possible at the time, because at the time of the formation of the international Red Cross association in Switzerland in 1864 Poland was not a member, as it did not exist as a country on the map of Europe. With the French government's acceptance of the Polish White Cross in July 1918, the organization began its work. Its honorary president, Count Mikołaj Potocki, was the founder of the Polish Army hospital in Le Parray. After Poland regained its independence, with the return to the country of I. J. Paderewski in January 1919, the Polish White Cross was translocated from France to Poland. After World War II, by order of General Anders on September 28, 1946, the activities of the Polish White Cross were resumed in exile; it was dissolved in December 1961 in Great Britain (Elwira Jolanta Kryńska, *Polski Biały Krzyż (1918-1961)* [Polish White Cross (1918-1961)]. (Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersyteckie Trans Humana 2012), 33-44, 263-264; ead., "Polski Biały Krzyż i jego udział w walce z analfabetyzmem w wojsku w II Rzeczypospolitej" [The Polish White Cross and its participation in the fight against illiteracy in the military in the Second Republic.] *Przegląd Historyczno-Oświatowy* 1-2 (2019), 134-152.

<sup>6</sup> Piotr Dobrowolski, "Świetlice żołnierskie – rola i zadania w systemie wychowawczym żołnierzy (1918-1939)" [Soldiers' common rooms - role and tasks in the educational system of soldiers (1918-1939)]. *Acta Universitatis Lodzianensis. Folia Historica* 101 (2018), 147-157.

<sup>7</sup> Maciej Demel, "Dr Hanna Wentlandtowa – wspomnienie pośmiertne" [Dr. Hanna Wentlandtowa - posthumous memory]. *Wychowanie Fizyczne i Zdrowotne* 5 (1994): 232-233.

<sup>8</sup> The role of soldier's inns in the interwar period is evidenced by a reference to one opened in Cracow on Grodzka Street, with the financial support the YMCA Christian Youth Union in the 5<sup>th</sup> issue of *News Illustrated* from 1920: "[...] The Polish soldier is eagerly drawn to this inn because in his off hours he spends his moments there reading newspapers, playing social games, and listening to the lectures and concerts arranged very often by the Union. In addition to spiritual nourishment, the soldier receives food at the inn at an affordable price. The inn also has a book lending library, so our boys are happy to use books. The mood in the inn is extremely cordial and pleasant, thanks to the skillful work of its hosts [...]" [https://jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl/Content/400329/PDF/NDIGCZAS000048\\_1920\\_005\\_0009.pdf](https://jbc.bj.uj.edu.pl/Content/400329/PDF/NDIGCZAS000048_1920_005_0009.pdf) [accessed: 12.01.2023].

<sup>9</sup> Kryńska, *Polski Biały Krzyż*, 326-331.

cultural and educational work in soldiers' common rooms, which was intended to serve as a positive enhancement for conscripts undertaking military service.<sup>10</sup>

Hanna Wentlandtowa's methodological publication entitled *Świetlice żołnierskie. Wytyczne programowe* [Soldiers' common rooms. Program guidelines] was published by Zarząd Naczelny Polskiego Białego Krzyża [General Board of the Polish White Cross] in 1938. The author stressed that soldiers' common rooms were to provide recreation and entertainment and contribute to raising the intellectual level of the soldiers. She pointed to the various forms and methods of common room work: social games, radio broadcasts, concerts, contests and talks, reading, interest circles (choirs, theater), and the promotion of self-education. She also addressed the issue of differentiating the organization of common room work and the subject matter of classes according to the soldier's stage of military service. During the recruitment period, the main emphasis was to be placed on encouraging young soldiers to enrol in particular interest circles; the period after the oath of enlistment was to be geared towards the education of leaders, while the older and more experienced soldiers were to be prepared for social and educational work.<sup>11</sup> In the same year, Wentlandtowa published an article titled "Propaganda czytelnictwa" [Propaganda of reading] in the bulletin issued by the Polish White Cross.<sup>12</sup>

Wentlandtowa's work in the interwar period went beyond her work in the army. While still a student, she was active in *Koło Kobiet* [Polish Women's Circle], where she gave talks on topics related to Polish literature, tourism, hygiene, etc., as well as in the school children's theater "Baj" of the Workers' Association of Friends of Children in the Warsaw district of Żoliborz. She also pursued her passion for spreading education by running evening youth centers for the working-class youth of Warsaw, lecturing on the methodology of educational work at courses on Women's Military Training organized by Instytut Oświaty Dorosłych [Institute of Adult Education], and running courses for employees of the education system, future workers of Polish language and cultural centers abroad, and of the prison system. Her commitment to the dissemination of education and culture in the professional and social areas was honoured in 1938 with the award of the Silver Cross of Polonia Restituta and the Silver Laurel of the Polish Academy of Literature.

With the outbreak of the war, Wentlandtowa engaged in the struggle to regain Poland's independence. In November 1939, she was sworn into Służba Zwycięstwu Polski [Service for Poland's Victory]<sup>13</sup> and assigned to the coders' office in the "Mał-

<sup>10</sup> Dobrowolski, "Świetlice", 155.

<sup>11</sup> Hanna Wentlandtowa, *Świetlice żołnierskie. wytyczne programowe* [Soldiers' common rooms: program guidelines] (Warszawa: Polski Biały Krzyż. Zarząd Naczelny, 1938), 5-17.

<sup>12</sup> Hanna Puczyńska-Wentlandtowa. "Propaganda czytelnictwa" [Propaganda of reading], *Polski Biały Krzyż, Biuletyn* 3-4 (1938), 6-8.

<sup>13</sup> Służba Zwycięstwu Polski [Service to Poland's Victory] - a clandestine independence organization established on September 27, 1939; its personnel and organizational resources were incorporated into

gorzatką” sub-cell, where, under the pseudonym “Gosia”, she worked as a coder until September 1942 together with her husband Mieczysław (pseudonym “Witecki”). Her role changed at the beginning of 1942 with her appointment to work in the Referral Service Pomoc Żołnierzowi (PŻ) [Soldier’s Aid] in the “Roj” Subdivision at the Information and Propaganda Bureau of the Home Army Headquarters. As the statutory objectives of the Pomoc Żołnierzowi organization based on the model of the Polish White Cross included, among other things, running soldiers’ inns at the front, stations, garrisons and for conscripts, Wentlandtowa’s experience in this work was invaluable. In the *Pomoc Żołnierzowi*, she served as the so-called “peżetka” (female soldier’s aide), under the pseudonym *Zofka*, until the very end of the war. From March 1943, *Zofka*, in the rank of captain and as deputy commander-in-chief, worked on developing training programs for female instructors and volunteers, recruiting female candidates, organizing and conducting courses for female soldier’s aides, and taking the soldier’s oath from them. Thanks to her commitment, almost a thousand female volunteers and instructors were trained in more than a hundred courses to work in common room centers and soldier’s inns, including the management personnel for the organizational districts (“okręg”) and areas (“obszar”) of the Home Army. The soldier’s aides have gone down among the many quiet, often unknown heroes of the Warsaw Uprising. Their work in the approximately 30 soldier’s inns organized in all districts of the city consisted of providing food for the army and the insurgents, caring for the wounded, sewing bands for the insurgents, washing and repairing clothing. The overall atmosphere and work of the front inns also served to strengthen the will to fight and provided opportunities for rest and participation in various special and cultural events staged by Warsaw theatrical artists<sup>14</sup>.

Wentlandtowa is remembered fondly by a wartime soldier’s aide subordinate. In the account of Anna Żylicz, transcribed by her brother Andrzej:

[...] the main commanders of the soldiers’ aides., [...] I don’t know where they were quartered, but they came frequently for inspections and visits to the Central Post Office. These were Captain “Ina” (Maria Rorichowa) and Captain “Zofka” (Hanna Wentlandtowa). They always showed up together, one taller, a little stooped and serious (“Ina”), the other tiny and smiling (“Zofka”) [...] They spoke in hushed voices and took a heartfelt interest not only in the “case”, but also in the fate of each soldier’s aide [...] they were extraordinarily caring and remained for me the “ideal” of female youth managers. [...] They enjoyed great respect from insurgents and ordinary soldiers alike.<sup>15</sup>

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Związek Walki Zbrojnej [Union of Armed Struggle], established on November 13, 1939, and renamed the Home Army on February 14, 1942.

<sup>14</sup> Agnieszka Cudała, “W gospodzie u peżetek” [In the Pezetki’s inn], *Kombatant. Biuletyn Urzędu do spraw Kombatantów i Osób Represjonowanych* 6-7 (246-247) (2011), 5-17.

<sup>15</sup> General Elżbieta Zawacka’s Foundation in Toruń. Archives and Museum of the Pomeranian Home Army and Women’s Military Service. File: K-720/1694 Pom., Żylicz Anna ps. “Katrin”. <https://kpbk.umk.pl/>

After the fall of the uprising, Zofka was taken to the Molsdorf IXc prisoner of war camp, where she continued her educational work, and after the liberation of the oflag by General Patton's army, she aided the civilian population residing in the neighbouring prisoner of war camps. In October 1945, she organized the return of 33 women insurgents from the oflag to their homeland.

For her contribution to the Home Army and the Warsaw Uprising, she received the Cross of Valor (1944), the Silver Cross of Merit with Swords (1944), and veteran decorations.<sup>16</sup> Later, in 1990, she joined the World Association of Home Army Soldiers.

After the war, Wentlandtowa accepted a job at the Ministry of Education, the association she kept until 1950.<sup>17</sup> As an inspector in the Department of Adult Education, and later as head of the Department of Reading, Self-education and Distance Learning, she worked intensively to promote education and culture in various social circles. She gave lectures as part of teacher training courses and many other courses organized by various institutions and social organizations, developed educational programs to help adults complete courses interrupted by the war to assist them in getting education, and organized self-education and discussion circles at social centers and libraries. Her commitment to the promotion of reading deserves a special mention. In a monograph published in 1948 under the title *Książka w zabawie i pracy* [Books at play and work], she pointed out that "Influencing the broad masses to spread reading, creating habits of working with books, and the planned organization of reading and self-education - these are the goals that clearly lie ahead of the school and any other organized environment."<sup>18</sup> At the same time, she noted that "Reading is an integral part of cultural life. It is the most democratic form of exposure to beauty and art. [...] a book develops factual judgment, teaches readers to think critically, deepens their knowledge, awakens the desire to learn more, and is the most essential aid to self-education throughout life"<sup>19</sup> and "[...] it conditions the further development of culture and civilization; a book makes available the entire body of truths and experiences of mankind."<sup>20</sup>

In 1950, with her professional work at Państwowy Zakład Higieny (PZH) [National Institute of Hygiene], Wentlandtowa's interests turned to health education.

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Content/194327/PDF/Zylicz\_Anna\_720\_1694\_Pom.pdf [accessed: 27.12.2022]. All quotations have been translated for the purposes of this article by Marta Robson.

<sup>16</sup> Sikorska, "Wentlandtowa", 359-362.

<sup>17</sup> In 1950, Hanna Wentlandtowa, in a gesture of disagreement with demands that her cultural and educational work be subjected to party directives, left the Ministry of Education "at her own request". Maleszewska, "Działalność", 12-17.

<sup>18</sup> Hanna Puczyńska-Wentlandtowa, *Książka w zabawie i pracy. Jak prowadzić czytelnictwo od rozrywki do samokształcenia* [Books at play and work. How to lead reading from entertainment to self-education] (Warszawa: Spółdzielnia „Światowid”, 1948), 14-15. The authorship of this monograph includes the surname Puczyńska-Wentlandtowa - the maiden part no longer features in the author's subsequent publications.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 9-10.

## A pioneer in health education and promotion

Hanna Wentlandtowa's work and scholarship in the field of health education are part of the process of emerging domestic educational thinking on health at the interface of medicine and pedagogy. Its origins lie in the legacy of some of the most eminent representatives of scientific thought of the Enlightenment - Grzegorz Piramowicz (1735-1801), pedagogue, one of the architects of the emerging secular education system in 18<sup>th</sup>-century Poland, and physician and naturalist, Jędrzej Śniadecki (1768-1838). A clear dynamic in the development of the concept of health education is observed with the emergence of hygiene (gr. *hygieinos* - healthy, healthful) as a new branch of medicine in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The hygiene movement of the 1800s, whose proponents promoted the ideas of health education by disseminating the knowledge of it through the pages of textbooks, health primers, journals and periodicals, played the role of a link between the worlds of physicians and educators. Apart from community physicians, such prominent pedagogues as Izabela Moszczynska, Stanisław Karpowicz, Jan Władysław Dawid and Aniela Szykowa are among the most representative authors.<sup>21</sup> Also, the pioneer of school hygiene in Poland during the interwar period, and at the same time an internist and neurologist, Stanisław Kopczyński (1873-1933) deserves a mention as the initiator and editor of a textbook on school hygiene addressed to teachers and school doctors. In the post-war years, Marcin Kacprzak, hygienist physician, educator, university teacher, social activist, and co-organizer of the World Health Organization, went down in the pages of the history of the hygiene movement, particularly in the field of health education. Because Wentlandtowa spent the first years of her work at the State Institute of Hygiene under his guidance, she was able to draw inspiration for her work as a promoter of health education from the achievements and experience of this outstanding hygienist.

Considering the epidemiological situation in Poland in the post-war years, it can be said today that Hanna Wentlandtowa's involvement in this area was a response to the need of the moment. High incidence of infectious, especially childhood, diseases, venereal diseases, tuberculosis, as well as typhoid and other foodborne diseases, which spread with poor personal and environmental hygiene were among the main problems to tackle. To counteract this situation, methods of disease prevention that were innovative for the times began to be introduced to medical practice. Preventive vaccinations were introduced as primary prevention, which from the early 1960s covered the entire population of children and adolescents through the introduction of a program of free, mandatory vaccinations in

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<sup>21</sup> Ewa Syrek, "Od redaktora" [From the editor]. *Chowanna* vol. I (18) (2002), 5-12.

the form of the so-called ‘vaccination calendar’.<sup>22</sup> The use of X-rays as a form of secondary prevention of tuberculosis through the early detection of its symptoms was also popularized. Achieving success in the national expansion of these practices and, consequently, achieving an improvement in the epidemiological situation of the public regarding infectious diseases<sup>23</sup> required an educational process aimed at creating public health awareness. The contribution of knowledge and health beliefs and expectations to the formation of lifestyles and health behavior as an essential determinant of health needs is obvious today, as confirmed by the results of numerous empirical studies.<sup>24</sup> The urgent need for educational work was also part of the already-proven thesis that the state of human health and the occurrence of diseases is conditioned by the material status of society, hygienic and dietary habits resulting from established traditions, patterns of sexual life, or patterns of recreation and leisure.<sup>25</sup> Wentlandtowa’s commitment to education was inspired by her recognition of several deficiencies in this area when she wrote in 1961 that “Lack of hygienic habits, superstition and ignorance in matters of health triumphed in many metropolitan environments, and found their way into schools, community centers and common rooms, and even into community health centers.”<sup>26</sup>

Wentlandtowa’s pursuits are part of the area for which the term ‘sanitary education’ was used in the early years of her work. Defining it, in *Metodyka oświaty sanitarnej* [Methodology of Sanitary Education], published in 1961, she wrote that sanitary education is “[...] educational and didactic work, [...] education in sanitary culture and popularization of health knowledge, especially in the field of social medicine, with particular emphasis on prevention.”<sup>27</sup> It should be added here that the term *sanitary education*, used in the post-war years to refer to the actual practice, as well as in writing on hygiene, began to be replaced by the term *health*

<sup>22</sup> This immunization program has been implemented in Poland to this day. The program is updated on an ongoing basis in connection with the changing epidemiological situation and the development of new vaccines and is announced for each subsequent calendar year by the Chief Sanitary Inspector.

<sup>23</sup> An example of the effectiveness of immunization can be seen in the progressive decrease in the incidence of measles and diphtheria with its use. While in 1950, 39,787 cases of measles and 15,326 cases of diphtheria were registered in our country, in 2020 only 13 children fell ill with measles and diphtheria cases have not been recorded since 2001. *Rocznik statystyczny 1950* (Warszawa: Central Statistical Office of the Republic of Poland, 1951) [https://statlibr.stat.gov.pl/F?func=find-b&find\\_code=SYS&request=000045632](https://statlibr.stat.gov.pl/F?func=find-b&find_code=SYS&request=000045632) [accessed: 12.01.2023]; *Zdrowie i ochrona zdrowia w 2021 roku* [Health and health care in 2021] (Warszawa-Kraków: Central Statistical Office and Statistical Office in Kraków, 2022) <https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/zdrowie/zdrowie-i-ochrona-zdrowia-w-2021-roku,1,12.html?pdf=1> [accessed: 12.01.2023].

<sup>24</sup> Cf. for example: Jane Wardle, Andrew Steptoe, “Socioeconomic differences in attitudes and beliefs about healthy lifestyles”. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health* 57/6 (2003), 440-443.

<sup>25</sup> Beata Tobiasz-Adamczyk, *Wybrane elementy socjologii zdrowia i choroby* [Selected elements of the sociology of health and illness]. (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2000), 71.

<sup>26</sup> Hanna Wentlandtowa, *Metodyka oświaty sanitarnej dla wychowawców, nauczycieli, oświatowców, pracownicy świetlic, domy kultury i służby zdrowia* [Methodology of sanitary education for teachers, educators, community and health workers] (Warszawa: Państwowy Zakład Wydawnictw Lekarskich, 1961), 11.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.



*education* in the early 1950s and was still very popular in the 1970s.<sup>28</sup> This is when the term appeared in Wentlandtowa's publications. Defining the scope of health education, she wrote that "Health education is primarily comprehensive educational work concerning the formation of attitudes towards the value of health and the health behavior of the population in accordance with the contemporary state of medical knowledge in a direction favorable to health culture."<sup>29</sup>

An educational and didactic aspect can be distinguished in Wentlandtowa's proposed view of sanitary (health) education. She stressed that

Education should be carried out in such a way that everyone understands that he or she is responsible for his or her own health and that of his or her loved ones, so that he or she knows how to improve it, protect it, save it and prevent disease, so that everyone is convinced that the health status of the circle of people with whom he or she interacts largely depends on his or her own attitude in his or her personal life, at work and in social life.<sup>30</sup>

The universality of this approach, as developed by the author in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, is noteworthy. After all, the goals of health education outlined in this way are valid today in almost unchanged form in contemporary published scientific works on health pedagogy and in health education textbooks.

Wentlandtowa tied the didactic aspect of sanitary education to the popularization of knowledge about health: "To popularize knowledge of health means to spread it with the aim that everyone is aware of what harms health and what sustains it, what prolongs life, and what shortens it; what contributes to inner harmony and what violates this balance; so that everyone knows how to take advantage of health services."<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, although in her works Wentlandtowa emphasized the importance of educational influences in promoting health education, in Poland, almost until the 1990s, its practice was dominated by "health didactics" with limited support from theoretical foundations. In the last period of her professional work, Wentlandtowa also pointed this out, by saying

[...] practical activity in health education [...] has far outstripped theory. A recurring sequence is observed: from the practice of realizing the growing needs of health education, to theoretical research and the creation of doctrines. The stabilized practice forces us to revise the theoretical

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<sup>28</sup> Zygmunt Jaworski, "Transformacja pojęć: od higieny do kultury zdrowotnej" [Transformation of concepts: From hygiene to health culture]. *Zdrowie - Kultura Zdrowotna - Edukacja. Perspektywa Społeczna i Humanistyczna* vol. IV (2009): 109-122.

<sup>29</sup> Hanna Wentlandtowa, "Oświata zdrowotna - wprowadzenie" [Health education - introduction]. In: *Oświata zdrowotna*, ed. Hanna Wentlandtowa (Warszawa: Państwowy Zakład Wydawnictw Lekarskich, 1976), 7-12, esp. 7.

<sup>30</sup> Wentlandtowa, *Metodyka*, 8.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

foundations that have been adopted in trials and to build new ones, because theorizing that does not consider practical processes and phenomena is of little use.<sup>32</sup>

However, the involvement of scientists in the construction of the theoretical basis for the design of educational activities in the field of health protection and promotion based on the holistic concept of health and rooted in the social sciences (including, in particular, health psychology and health pedagogy) occurred only in the late years of her work at the National Institute of Hygiene. Maciej Demel, a prominent representative of health pedagogy, analysing the development of the concept of health education in this context, points out that

Before [...] the practical 'science of health' was outlined, a verbal 'science of health' was developed, i.e., education that was called 'sanitary', and later health education. [...] In health education, however, a disbelief in the effectiveness of didactics alone began to spread, so programs were created that went deeper into the personality.<sup>33</sup>

In this trend, with the publication of the first Polish textbook on health pedagogy<sup>34</sup> and the penetration of the idea of health promotion into the country, the development of the theoretical basis of health education proceeded dynamically, which resulted in the gradual withdrawal of the term *health education*. However, Wentlandtowa remained faithful to it until the end of her professional life, saying that

In the system of sciences, health education occupies a separate place. It constitutes a discipline that relates to natural sciences, humanities and social sciences. It draws its content [...] mainly from medicine, and its methodological basis: from social pedagogy, psychology and sociology. Ties with pedagogy lie deep in the history of the education and health movement.<sup>35</sup>

As a pre-war enthusiast for spreading educational and cultural activities in soldiers' common rooms and inns, as well as youth centers, in the post-war years, Wentlandtowa promoted the introduction of sanitary education issues into the life of social centers,<sup>36</sup> community centers and so-called public universities. For several years, she also oversaw the provision of sanitary/health education in Polish schools. This involved the transfer in 1952 of school hygiene and medicine supervision from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Health, and the transfer of responsibility in schools for various forms of educational work in this area to employees of the health education departments of sanitary-epidemiological

<sup>32</sup> Ead., "Oświata zdrowotna", 9.

<sup>33</sup> Maciej Demel, "Pedagogika zdrowia" [Pedagogy of health]. *Chowanna* vol. 1 (18) (2002), 13-26, esp. 18.

<sup>34</sup> Idem, *Pedagogika zdrowia* [Pedagogy of Health] (Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1980).

<sup>35</sup> Wentlandtowa, "Oświata zdrowotna", 9.

<sup>36</sup> We are talking here about educational institutions operating in Poland in the post-war years for children (children's common room centers run by social and youth organizations, such as the ZHP, PCK and others), and youth and adults (workplace community centers, military and militia common room centers and others). Ead., *Metodyka*, 15-16.

stations. This situation lasted until the early 1990s, when, with the penetration into Poland of the internationally emerging idea of health promotion the efforts made by educators and representatives of medical and physical culture sciences around the introduction of health education to schools<sup>37</sup> resulted in teachers gradually taking over the role of health educators.

Stressing the importance of health education in the process of educating children and adolescents, Wentlandtowa wrote “The education of children and adolescents in sanitary culture is one of the most essential elements of general education. Raising the level of sanitary culture of the whole society depends largely on preschool and school education, on the influence of the school on children and parents.”<sup>38</sup> She understood the realization of this task very broadly, proposing that, regardless of the introduction of issues of hygiene and sanitary education into the curriculum as a separate subject, the subject of sanitary education should be included in all school subjects. Quite optimistically at the same time, she claimed that “The existing curricula of all types of schools do not yet sufficiently include the subject of sanitary education, which should be regarded as a transitional situation.”<sup>39</sup> Unfortunately, to date, this issue has not yet found a fully satisfactory solution, as efforts made for many years to introduce health education as a separate subject in general education curricula have failed.<sup>40</sup>

Outlining the concept of the school’s participation in the hygienic (health) education of students, Wentlandtowa focused on the professional duty and responsibility of the teacher-educator, since it is “[...] above all the teacher educator, due to her or his social and moral authority and pedagogical and psychological knowledge that can effectively spread education not only in school but also outside.”<sup>41</sup> Her statement to the effect that “[...] only then can school hygiene develop effectively, when the management and the teaching team appreciate the importance of education in the field of sanitary culture” anticipated by more than 30 years one of

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<sup>37</sup> Barbara Woynarowska, “Historia edukacji zdrowotnej w podstawach programowych kształcenia ogólnego 1997-2009” [History of health education in general education core curriculum 1997-2009]. *Zdrowie – Kultura Zdrowotna – Edukacja* vol. III (2009), 29-40.

<sup>38</sup> Hanna Wentlandtowa, *Jak prowadzić oświatę zdrowotną w szkole* [How to run health education in school] (Warszawa: Państwowy Zakład Wydawnictw Lekarskich, 1961), 3.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>40</sup> Formally, the content of health education was included in school curricula in Poland after the structural and curricular reform of the education system in 1999 in the form of the so-called “Pro-health education”, part of inter-subject path. Since 2008, in accordance with the Decree of the Minister of National Education of December 23, 2008 on the core curriculum for pre-school education and general education in particular types of schools (*Journal of Laws* No. 4, item 1 (2009), 7), a solution has been in force that combines two models of education: the model of the leading subject, which is the subject of *physical education*, and the model of dispersed content, within which is the content of health education has been distributed through various other subjects.

<sup>41</sup> Wentlandtowa, *Jak prowadzić*, 4.

the basic assumptions of the Health Promoting School program implemented in Europe since 1991.<sup>42</sup>

We have hardly enough space here to list all the activities undertaken by Wentlandtowa aimed at shaping health awareness in Polish society. In terms of the terminology used today in reference to the objectives of health promotion, one can say that they were part of the formation of *health literacy*,<sup>43</sup> which is considered as one of the basic challenges of public health in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>44</sup> Throughout her employment at the State Institute of Hygiene, Wentlandtowa directed the work of the Methodological and Scientific Center [Ośrodek Metodyczno-Naukowy] (later the Department of Health Education), a scientific, didactic, conceptual and organizational, methodological, supervisory and consulting institution of health education nationally.<sup>45</sup> Her contribution to the development of theoretical and methodological principles for lectures and talks conducted on behalf of sanitary-epidemiological stations should also be mentioned, based as it was on the achievements of social pedagogy, adult didactics and the best traditions of Polish hygienists. No less significant is her contribution to the creation of a system of education and improvement in health education, which, in her opinion, should include “[...] all those who can exert influence on the health behavior of the population.”<sup>46</sup> As part of this group, she mentioned not only specialists working

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<sup>42</sup> The concept of the Health Promoting School program was first presented in the report “Healthy School” in 1989, and after the success of the pilot project (in which Poland also participated in 1991), the European Office of the World Health Organization, the European Commission and the Council of Europe created the European Network of Health Promoting Schools, which in 2007 became the *School for Health in Europe* (SHE) network; 45 countries belong to it. The standards of a health-promoting school currently in force in Poland assume, among other things, that the school’s concept of work, its structure and organization should foster the participation of the school community in the implementation of health promotion activities, and the conditions and organization of learning and work – the health and well-being of students, teachers and other school employees, as well as cooperation with parents. Barbara Woynarowska, “Edukacja zdrowotna i promocja zdrowia w szkole” [Health education and health promotion at school]. In: *Edukacja zdrowotna. Podstawy teoretyczne – Metodyka – Praktyka*, ed. ead. (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2017), 219–227.

<sup>43</sup> The term *health literacy* is translated in Polish health promotion and health education literature as ‘alfabetyzm zdrowotny’, health information literacy and others. In World Health Organization documents, *health literacy* is defined as the cognitive and social skills that determine an individual’s motivation and ability to obtain, understand and use information in ways that enhance and maintain good health. Barbara Woynarowska, “Terminologia, cele i koncepcje współczesnej edukacji zdrowotnej” [Terminology, goals and concepts of modern health education]. In: *Edukacja zdrowotna*, 93–106.

<sup>44</sup> Don Nutbeam, Ilona Kickbush, “Advancing health literacy: A global challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> century”. *Health Promotion International* 15 (2000), 183–184.

<sup>45</sup> Hanna Wentlandtowa, “Wybrane zagadnienia z historii rozwoju oświaty zdrowotnej w Polsce” [Selected issues from the history of the development of health education in Poland]. In: *Kształcenie i doskonalenie pracowników oświaty zdrowotnej* [Education and Improvement of Health Education Workers], ed. ead., (Warszawa: Państwowy Zakład Wydawnictw Lekarskich, 1976), 56–60.

<sup>46</sup> Hanna Wentlandtowa, “System kształcenia i doskonalenia pracowników oświaty zdrowotnej. Formy, metody i badanie efektywności” [System of education and improvement of health education workers. Forms, methods and study of effectiveness]. In: *Kształcenie i doskonalenie pracowników*

on behalf of sanitary-epidemiological stations, but also other health professionals, people outside the health department who work in health education (teachers, educators, cultural workers and others), and social activists associated with health organizations.<sup>47</sup> She was involved in the organization of various forms of education in this area addressed to employees of sanitary-epidemiological stations, physicians, health professionals with secondary medical education<sup>48</sup> and lecturers of medical academies and higher educational institutions. Wentlandtowa's several years of didactic work in health education methodology and social pedagogy, which she carried out at the Teachers' College of Secondary Medical Schools in Warsaw and at several other universities, also must also mentioned in this context. In 1988 she was awarded the order "Meritorious for the Health of the Nation" for her contribution to the formation of health culture.

Hanna Wentlandtowa's publication output is today of historical significance. The publications it contains fall into two areas: adult pedagogy, and hygiene and health education. The former includes, among other things, methodological publications written before World War II, referring to her experience of cultural and educational work in the Polish White Cross, published in 1948, a monograph promoting the dissemination of reading and self-education (*Książka w zabawie i pracy. Jak prowadzić czytelnictwo od rozrywki do samokształcenia*) [Books at play and work. How to lead reading from entertainment to self-education] (1948) and a monograph published in 1965 entitled *Działalność kulturalna a więź sąsiedzka w osiedlach spółdzielczych* [Cultural activities and neighborhood ties in cooperative settlements], which is a book version of her doctoral dissertation. This monograph presents the results of research conducted in selected housing estates in Warsaw on a sample of more than two thousand respondents, which concerned "[...] the needs and possibilities of cultural and educational activities in the education of adults in the culture of neighbourly coexistence, in the social bond of a cooperative housing estate."<sup>49</sup>

The list of Wentlandtowa's publications in hygiene and health education includes items of a methodological nature, among them monographs (*Jak prowadzić oświatę sanitarną w szkole* [How to conduct sanitary education at school] 1956, 1961; *Metodyka oświaty sanitarnej dla wychowawców, nauczycieli, oświatowców, pracowników świetlic, domów kultury i służby zdrowia* [Methodology of sanitary

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*oświaty zdrowotnej*, ed. ead. (Warszawa: Państwowy Zakład Wydawnictw Lekarskich, 1976), 5-19, esp. 6.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> In 1964, she developed a curriculum for a two-year course of study in Health Education for health care professionals with secondary medical education. Education in this field was carried out until 1982; Dr. Hanna Wentlandtowa, as a lecturer, taught praxeology, health education methodology and social pedagogy; she also supervised students' theses.

<sup>49</sup> Puczyńska-Wentlandtowa, *Działalność kulturalna*, 9.

education for educators, teachers, educators, employees of common room centers, community centers and health services] 1960, 1961; a number of edited works (among others, *Oświata zdrowotna w Polsce* [Health Education in Poland] 1976; *Oświata zdrowotna* [Health Education] 1976; *Żywe słowo i pomoce naukowe w oświacie zdrowotnej* [Living word and teaching aids in health education] 1970; *Kształcenie i doskonalenie pracowników oświaty zdrowotnej* [Education and training of health education workers] 1976, and chapters in collected works. She was also the author of the concept of the publishing series Biblioteka Metodyczna Oświaty Zdrowotnej [Methodological Library of Health Education], which included 52 items published under her supervision in the form of methodology manuals addressed to those who work in health education in various environments and areas of health prevention.<sup>50</sup>

Wentlandtowa's publications can now be approached from a certain distance, because according to today's view of health education strategies they present only medicalized models of education – disease-oriented health education and disease risk factors-oriented health education.<sup>51</sup> Maciej Demel rightly comments on the activities practiced by health education practitioners of Wentlandtowa's time by saying that “[...] this trend of health education developed on the negative side of the scale, according to the medical algorithm. The reasoning ran ‘backward’, typically in medical terms: from specific diseases, through specific prevention, to education that is equally specific, i.e., adequate to individual disease units.”<sup>52</sup> Thanks to advances in health promotion and the development of health psychology and health pedagogy as the theoretical basis for health education, biomedical approaches are now being complemented by salutogenetic approaches, aimed at finding and strengthening

<sup>50</sup> The publishing series Biblioteka Metodyczna Oświaty Zdrowotnej [Methodical Library of Health Education] was published in 1955–1988, under the content supervision of Wentlandtowa, by the Państwowy Zakład Wydawnictw Lekarskich, commissioned by the Department of Health Education of the State Institute of Hygiene. The series included the following publications: *Oświata sanitarna w walce z wszawicą* [Sanitary education in the fight against lice], ed. S. Reimowa, 1959; *Oświata sanitarna w walce z błonicą* [Sanitary education in the fight against diphtheria], ed. I. Steckiewicz-Krzeska, 1959; *Pogadanki przeciwgruźlicze (wskazówki metodyczne, przykłady)* [Anti-tuberculosis talks (methodological hints, examples)], ed. J. Grodecka, 1959; *Oświata sanitarna w walce z chorobami wenerycznymi* [Sanitary education in the fight against venereal diseases], ed. A. Koźmińska, 1959, 1962; *Oświata sanitarna w walce z alkoholizmem* [Sanitary education in the fight against alcoholism], ed. S. Reimowa, 1962; *Oświata sanitarna w walce z chorobami zakaźnymi* [Sanitary education in the fight against infectious diseases], ed. M. Jokieli, 1962; *Oświata sanitarna w walce z wypadkami* [Sanitary education in the fight against accidents], ed. T. Maleszewska, 1962; *Oświata sanitarna w przychodniach i szpitalach* [Sanitary education in clinics and hospitals], ed. T. Maleszewska, 1966; *Oświata zdrowotna w szkole* [Health education in school], ed. H. Wentlandtowa, 1970; *Oświata zdrowotna w stomatologii* [Health education in dentistry], ed. Z. Jariczuk, 1980; *Oświata zdrowotna w psychiatrii* [Health education in psychiatry], ed. W. Brodnyak, 1980; *Oświata zdrowotna w ochronie zdrowia pracujących w rolnictwie* [Health education in occupational health in agriculture], ed. T. Maleszewska, 1988 and others.

<sup>51</sup> Andrew Tannahill. “Health education and health promotion: Planning for the 1990s”. *Health Education Journal* 49(4) (1990), 194–198.

<sup>52</sup> Demel, “Pedagogika”, 19.

resources for health. This does not lessen the contribution of Hanna Wentlandtowa's achievements to the formation of the modern concept of health education as one of the essential pillars of health promotion. On the contrary, it can be said that her achievements are part of the theoretical base for the formation of health awareness in society and the related activities that are designed today.

## Conclusions

The paths of Hanna Wentlandtowa's professional and social work revolved around the idea of shaping the intellectual culture of Poles, and she pursued this in historically significant periods of the 20th century. These paths led from combating illiteracy and popularizing literature in the interwar period, through educational work in the Polish army fighting the occupying forces during World War II, spreading readership in the first post-war years, to involvement in spreading health education, to which she was faithful until the end of her professional career. She acquired a thorough education with a doctorate in the humanities, from which she drew as a didactician, scientist, organizer of social life and promoter of work aimed at raising the level of health awareness in Polish society. She was also a soldier in service of the Home Army.

Wentlandtowa holds a distinguished place among Polish hygienists, having played an important role as part of the history of the modern concept of health education becoming one of the pillars of the health promotion strategy. The younger generation of Poles should keep her in their memory as a patriot and a silent heroine of World War II.

*Translated from Polish by Marta Robson*

Hanna Wentlandtowa (1906-1994) – kobieta-żołnierz, krzewicielka oświaty, prekursorka edukacji zdrowotnej i promocji zdrowia

**Streszczenie:** W artykule zaprezentowano sylwetkę zawodową, społeczną, dydaktyczną i naukową Hanny Wentlandtowej. Jej działalność skupiała się wokół idei szerzenia oświaty i kultury, którą realizowała począwszy od okresu międzywojennego po lata osiemdziesiąte XX wieku. Jako gorąca patriotka pełniła podczas II wojny światowej służbę w strukturach Armii Krajowej. Dorobek Wentlandtowej w obszarze higieny i oświaty zdrowotnej wpisuje się w rozwój współczesnej koncepcji edukacji zdrowotnej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** szerzenie oświaty, kobieta-żołnierz, higiena, oświata zdrowotna

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