

Ludwika Karpińska, “Polish Lady Philosopher” – a forgotten forerunner of Polish psychoanalysis

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Summary

The paper presents the profile of the psychologist, Ludwika Karpińska-Woyczyńska, the first Polish woman who acted for the popularisation of psychoanalysis and experimental psychology. Karpińska belonged to the first generation of the “Polish Freudians”, a group which also involved Ludwik Jekels, Stefan Borowiecki, Herman Nunberg, Jan Nelken and Karol de Beaurain. Karpińska’s difficult path to gain higher education will be presented. The paper lays an emphasis on Karpińska’s contribution to the development of the international psychoanalysis and offers an overview of her most significant psychoanalytic publications (Polish and foreign ones) up to the outbreak of World War I. It demonstrates her participation in scientific conferences and collaboration with the most important psychoanalytical centres in Zurich and Vienna together with their representatives (Jung, Freud, Jekels) drawing simultaneous attention to the broader historical background of the presented events. Karpińska’s post-war work was inextricably linked to the research on intelligence quotient of children and youth and psychotechnical studies. Furthermore, the paper illustrates the activities of the Municipal Psychological Lab in Lodz, where Karpińska was a Head between 1920 and 1930, as well as her scientific achievements in intelligence quotient research, most significant publications of 1921-1930, her collaboration with foreign centres of a similar profile and the efforts she made to establish the Vocational Guidance Service.

Key words: history of psychotherapy, forerunners of Polish psychoanalysis

Introduction

It has been over a century since psychotherapy started to develop intensively as a method of treatment in Europe and Poland. After this time it is worth mentioning that before World War I in Poland, which was under partition at that time, there was a movement which promoted the treatment with psychotherapy, in particular, a psychoanalytical psychotherapy. Political changes that occurred after World War II, especially the condemnation of psychoanalysis by the communist system, contributed to the fact the achievements of the first Polish psychoanalysts and psychotherapists seem to have

been forgotten. One of the female representatives of the first “Polish Freudians” was the psychologist Ludwika Karpińska-Woczyńska.

Origins: Warsaw 1872–1897

Ludwika Karpińska was born in Warsaw on 25th August 1872 or 1875 (the date of birth is not conclusive due to the inconsistencies between the biography written by Karpińska and included in her doctoral dissertation (1875) and the data stored by the University of Zurich (1872)) [1, 2]. Not much is known about the family atmosphere in which she was brought up. The only available information regarding Karpińska’s family is provided by Karpińska herself in the article: “Contribution to Analysis of ‘Senseless’ Words in Dreams”: “I was the youngest in the family and my sister since she was the older one has the priority in receiving sweets or when we were given gifts. She was always allowed to choose first, whereas I was only given what was left. Certainly, nothing was promised to me and I felt left out and hurt. However, I never had enough courage to disagree with my father’s will” [3].

Karpińska started her education in Warsaw where she completed a female lower secondary school with a gold medal in 1892. Afterwards, she became a home tutor. She described this stage of her life as follows: “Then I offered lessons and, from time to time, I would attend lectures on chemistry, geology, mineralogy, botany, psychology, logics, epistemology and the history of philosophy” [1]. It should be remembered that at the time of Karpińska’s youth women’s access to higher education was limited, especially under Russian partition. Consequently, female students from that area would go abroad or attempted to study at the Jagiellonian University under special conditions. From the mid 19th century women could only be auditing students at the faculties of philosophy or medicine at selected universities. Later, some universities (e.g. the University of Zurich or the Sorbonne) allowed women to be enrolled for courses at those faculties.

Unfortunately, the University of Warsaw did not offer such opportunities to women despite the fact that those needs were obvious. The gap was filled by the famous Flying University, a secret school of higher education for women established in 1885, which offered 5 or 6-year courses in four disciplines (social sciences, philology and history studies, pedagogy, mathematics and natural sciences). The school was formally transformed into the Society of Science Courses in 1905. The Flying University was very popular with women and its high level of education was guaranteed by prominent scientists such as Adam Mahrburg (philosophy), Ludwik Krzywicki (sociology) or Józef Nusbaum-Hilarowicz (biology). Ludwika Karpińska also seized the opportunity to gain knowledge at the Flying University, but probably due to the paid employment she had to take up, she could not be a regular participant in the lectures. In her later years of scientific career she will be identified as a “Mahrburg’s disciple” [4].

Adam Mahrburg, the first mentor of Karpińska, settled down in Warsaw in 1890. Having graduated with a philosophy degree in Petersburg, he became fascinated with Wilhelm Wundt’s experiments and was persuaded by a friend, Napoleon Cybulski, to pursue the research in experimental psychology (i.a. at Tarkhanov’s department in

Petersburg and with prof. Wundt in Leipzig). That was supposed to prepare him to take over the Department of Psychology at the Jagiellonian University. Since the plan did not succeed, Mahrburg, feeling disappointed, settled down in Warsaw. In 1891 he wrote about his classes to prof. Cybulski: “For the past three months I have been engrossed in working on my lectures from which I make a living. There is an unusual zeal for philosophical knowledge here: I lecture ethics to one group of 20 ladies twice a week; I teach psychology to the second group consisting of 30 ladies twice a week and finally I deliver lectures on psychology as well to the group of medical students three times per week” [5 p. XLVIII].

Ludwika Karpińska could have attended Mahrburg’s lectures between 1892 and 1897 and it might have been him who encouraged her to start psychological studies at the University of Berlin.

Studies in Berlin: 1897–1899

Karpińska mentioned her stay in Berlin in the following passage: “In April 1897 I went to Berlin where I signed up to be a student at the faculty of philosophy at the university over there. I stayed at the University of Berlin for four semesters and I attended lectures on natural sciences and philosophy, namely physics, anatomy, physiology, psychology, the history of psychology, pedagogy, ethics, aesthetics, logics, epistemology and the history of philosophy. Throughout all that time I worked in a psychological lab and I participated in psychological and philosophical seminars. In 1899 I was made to abort the studies (...)” [1].

During her studies in Berlin, Karpińska demonstrated an avid interest not only in philosophy, but also primarily in experimental psychology, which is corroborated by her work in the psychological lab. Such line of interest was consistent with the development trend of psychology of those days. The turn of 19th and 20th century saw the fascination with an experimental approach in psychological research. Starting with the first psychological lab established by Wundt in Leipzig in 1883, others started to spruce up in the entire Europe including Poland as well. In 1903 from the initiative of Władysław Heinrich (who was, nota bene, a disciple of Avenarius whose work Karpińska translated into Polish [6]) the Experimental Psychology Lab was founded at the Jagiellonian University. It was the first of its kind in central Europe.

The time of studies in Berlin was not only the beginning of her engagement with experimental psychology, but also the origin of her research work. Karpińska started her collaboration with “Przegląd Filozoficzny” (a Polish philosophical, psychological and pedagogical journal) from the time of its creation in 1897. She published mainly summaries of foreign philosophical works in it [4]. She continued the collaboration after 1899 as well when her financial situation made her resign from the studies and return to Warsaw.

Warsaw 1899-1907

The following eight years Karpińska spent working as a home tutor after going back to the profession and she also translated books for the publishers of "Przegląd Filozoficzny". In 1902 Richard Avenarius' (1843–1896) polemic work entitled "On the Philosophy of Science" was published. The work was translated by Ludwika and Aniela Karpińska (probably Ludwika's aforesaid older sister) [6]. It should be noted that the scientific writings of Avenarius are regarded as exceptionally difficult. In 1903 the translation of the German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies' book "Thomas Hobbes: His Life and Science" was released [7].

Studies in Zurich and Burghölzli: 1907–1909

After the break Karpińska carried on with her psychological studies, this time at the University of Zurich. She writes that: "Only after eight years I was able to continue them [studies] in Zurich where I enrolled on the first section of the philosophy faculty and where I stayed the following four semesters. The study curriculum covered the same subjects as the ones in Berlin. Additionally, I attended the lectures on anthropology, psychiatry, psychopathology and the psychotherapy of hysteria" [1]. She reported on the last lecture (the psychotherapy of hysteria) during the first Congress of Polish Neurologists, Psychiatrists and Psychologists in Warsaw by adding that: "Freud's psychology penetrates to broader layers; at universities in Zurich and in Basel his works are dismantled during seminars which are attended not only by medical professionals but also psychologists by profession and tutors" [8].

It is highly probable that the lectures on psychiatry, psychopathology and the psychotherapy of hysteria conducted by Bleuler and Jung at the University Psychiatric Clinic Burghölzli made Karpińska develop interest in psychoanalysis and become its ardent advocate. That might have been a result of Karpińska's belief that "an analytical method demonstrates a close analogy to the method of experimental psychology" [9] which was in her most significant areas of interests.

The University Psychiatric Clinic in Zurich (Burghölzli) was the first academic centre and psychiatric hospital which utilised psychoanalysis. It happened when the institution was managed by the fifth director – Eugen Bleuler (1898–1927). Bleuler recruited the clinic personnel only from persons who were open-minded about new ideas. One of such individuals was Carl Gustav Jung who worked in Burghölzli since 1900. Bleuler drew attention to the significance of "The Interpretation of Dreams" published in 1900 and he recommended that all his associates be familiar with the publication. In September 1904 he started an irregular exchange of letters with Freud, which established his collaboration of several years with the Vienna centre. The collaboration with Freud got even closer when in 1906 C. G. Jung started a regular contact with 'the father of psychoanalysis' and sent him the first volume of his "Studies in Word Associations" [10, 11]. The openness to new trends in psychiatric treatment gave rise to the fact that the Burghölzli Clinic became a very popular centre which attracted young psychiatrists. That was the way in which also many Poles i.a. Herman Nunberg,

Stefan Borowiecki, Ludwika Karpińska and Eugenia Sokolnicka by means of Bleuler and Jung reached Freud and psychoanalysis.

Burghölzli Clinic was a renowned institution also because of the research on the association processes [10]. Bleuler carried out the first experiments in 1901 when he examined patients with psychotic symptoms. The psychological lab and association experiments performed on numerous groups of patients were conducted and improved under the supervision of C. G. Jung from 1903 onwards. Karpińska also joined the efforts of the research team at the psychological lab of Burghölzli (“my experiments seem to corroborate that only complex experiences induce strong deflections [of galvanometer]” [12]). The exact timeframe of the collaboration with Jung is unknown. It might have occurred between 1907 and 1910. On several occasions she presented the research achievements in Polish e.g. on 9th December 1909 at the gathering of the Polish Psychologists’ Association (the presentation entitled “Jung’s Studies of Associations”) [13] followed by a meeting with doctors of the Neurological-Psychiatric Clinic of the Jagiellonian University in Krakow (the presentation entitled “Experimental Studies in Association of Ideas”) [12] and at the second Congress of Polish Neurologists, Psychiatrists and Psychologists which took place on 20th–23rd December 1912 in Krakow (“Experimental Contributions to, so-called, Psychoelectric Phenomenon”) [14]. In 1912 she published the article “Experimental Studies in Association of Ideas” in “Przegląd Lekarski” [12].

During her studies in Zurich she also stayed loyal to experimental psychology, which is indicated by the choice of a subject for her doctoral dissertation: “Experimental Contributions to Analysis of Depth Vision” on stereoscopic vision [12]. The supervisor of Karpińska’s thesis was prof. Friedrich Schumann – a professor of philosophy at the University of Zurich between 1905–1910. His academic activity was noted by C. G. Jung who wrote in 1908: “As to Zurich: professor Schumann is giving a course on Special Psychology and conducting a seminar for advanced students at the University laboratory for experimental psychology” [15]. It is apparent that Karpińska was a student with an extensive knowledge of experimental psychology. She graduated on 8th May 1909 and her doctoral thesis was published in 1910 [1].

Polish and World Psychoanalysis: Warsaw/Zakopane 1909–1914

Between 1909 and 1914 Karpińska’s scientific output and views demonstrate fascination with both Jung’s association experiments and Freud’s theory of psychoanalysis. It can be concluded that due to the contacts with Burghölzli, which Karpińska maintained, she secured her position in the history of Polish and world psychoanalysis.

Karpińska’s first official public speech as a “Polish Freudian” took place at the first Congress of Polish Neurologists, Psychiatrists and Psychologists in Warsaw between 11th and 13th October 1909. At the psychological session she made a presentation “Experimental Contributions to Depth Vision” which summarised her doctoral thesis [16]. However, the most important event of the congress occurred on 12th October 1909 during the session on psychiatry after Ludwik Jekels’ lecture “Psychoneurosis Treatment with Freudian Psychoanalytic Method and Casuistry” [8]. Karpińska was

the only woman who participated in the 'violent discussion' brought about by Jekels' presentation. The views she expressed demonstrate her good familiarity with Freud's writings. Karpińska was convinced that psychoanalysis is an effective method of treatment. She believed that "Freud's psychoanalytic method reaches the deepest as it explains the origins of disease phenomena and their correlations. From a therapeutic perspective it brings the greatest change in an ill individual. The complete cure of psychoneuroses is possible with the psychoanalytic method if the ill individual is not going to be satisfied with the analysis of present complexes by a doctor, but will persist in analysing himself, which will prevent him from developing new pathological complexes" [8]. In the views one can observe a strong influence of the Zurich school on the perception of psychoanalysis, which is demonstrated by the sole use of the word 'complex'. Karpińska also emphasised the significance of Jung's association experiments in the verification of the legitimacy of psychoanalytic theories: "Jung's experimental works on association and the reproduction of ideas associated with signal shed light on theoretical bases of psychoanalysis. Jung offers a list of objective characteristics which allow for complexes to be diagnosed" [8]. Not only owing to the enthusiastic views is Karpińska classified as one of the "Polish Freudians", but also because she was a signatory of the telegrams which resulted from the debate on psychoanalysis and were posted to Freud and Jung on the same day of the congress by a group identifying themselves as the "Polish Freudians" (Jekels, Łuniewski, Sycianko, Karpińska, Kempniński, Chodźko and Rychliński) [17].

The event was not disregarded by Freud who wrote to Jung on 17th October 1909: "A few days ago I received from the first Congress of Polish Neurologists a telegram of homage signed, 'after violent debate', by seven illegible and unpronounceable Poles. The only one of them known to me is Dr Jekels; Frau Dr Karpinska, I hear, has studied with you" [11]. It can be therefore concluded that he had heard of Karpińska before, perhaps during the time of an animated personal contact with Jung and Bleuler. At the end of 1909 upon Jung's recommendation Karpińska initiated a contact with Ludwik Jekels, one of the first promoters of psychoanalysis in Poland and a translator of Freud's works. Jung wrote to Freud on 15th November 1909: "I have recommended Frl. Dr L. von Karpinska to Dr Jekels" [11]. The likely reason for that was a psychoanalytic training or therapy. Karpińska together with Jekels participated in four gatherings of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society at the turn of 1909 and 1910 [18]. She participated in the discussion always making a speech after Freud's presentation. She also had the courage to criticise the members of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society about the ignorance of philosophical theories. Such views made her to be referred to as "a Polish lady philosopher" by Freud [19].

In March 1910 Karpińska was made to return to Warsaw most likely again due to financial reasons. She went back to her work of a house tutor, which was not a very interesting profession for a person with such education and interests. She felt underrated by her employer: "(...) for my employers I was a 'person' who needed only such attention that was required by their business (...) for that reason I felt belittled" [3]. It was also challenging for her to lead a satisfying private life as she split up with a beloved man before she returned to Warsaw: "In both cases [employer and partner]

I was not sufficiently well appreciated and constrained in silent suffering" [3]. What probably helped Karpińska to sort out her life situation at that time was the psychoanalysis conducted then (1910) by an unknown German psychoanalyst ("mein deutscher Analysator", "the only person who drew my attention to the chronic complexity of this kind of situation and spoke to me in German only") [3]. It definitely cannot have been Jekels who was mentioned before as he communicated in perfect Polish and conducted psychoanalysis of patients in Polish. Perhaps, this mysterious psychoanalyst was Sigmund Freud himself but such a claim is not yet corroborated by any documents. The hint might be found in "The Interpretation of Dreams" published in 1919 when a reference to Karpińska's dream could be seen ("a dream of this kind was reported by Dr von Karpinska containing the nonsensical verbal form: 'Svingnum elvi'") [3]. That demonstrated a surprising familiarity with the subject matter unless we establish that it was Freud himself who analysed the dream. Also, Freud's warm views on Karpińska could serve as a circumstantial evidence together with the reference to her person in the 'canonical' biography of Freud written by Ernst Jones [20].

In the years preceding the outbreak of World War I Karpińska acted intensively in support of psychoanalysis by publishing in Polish and German [3, 9, 12, 21, 22]. She also took part in a momentous event of the Polish psychoanalytic movement: the second Congress of Polish Neurologists, Psychiatrists and Psychologists in Krakow on 20th–23rd December 1912. At the congress a separate session devoted to psychoanalysis was arranged ("it made Freud's theories as one of the main points in the congress proceedings") [23]. The session recorded the highest number (as many as eight) of submitted presentations including one by Karpińska "Psychological Foundations of Freudism" [14]. She presented the second paper on association research during the session on psychoelectric phenomena ("Experimental Contributions to, so-called, Psychoelectric Phenomenon") [14].

The first paper let Karpińska leave an eternal mark in the history of the world psychoanalytic movement as the one who established psychoanalysis in the psychological ground. Ernst Jones in Freud's biography pointed out that Karpińska was the first to discover the similarities between the ideas of Freud and Herbart [20] and quoted her German article "Psychological Foundations of Freudism" [22]. The Polish version of the article was published in 1913 in "Przegląd Filozoficzny". The article aimed at "presenting the general overview of Freud's ideas" [9]. Karpińska adopted "a deeply reaching analogy between Herbart and Freud" [9] as a starting point for her reasoning. She pointed out that "both emphasise the necessity to regard unconscious mental states as the mental causative links in the comprehension of the phenomena of consciousness and interrelated events within them" [9]. While explaining Freud's theories concerning the occurrence of symptoms, parapraxes and dreams she also referred to the achievements of Jung and the Zurich school. She reported that "The phantasies of some mentally ill individuals bear a striking resemblance to mythological cosmogonies of the ancient peoples" [9]. Such references and slightly critical comments on psychoanalysis were definitely far from being appreciated by Freud and his circles when Karpińska sent her article to "Internationale Zeitschrift für ärztliche Psychoanalyse". The references to the article could be traced in the correspondence between Freud and Ferenczi, who

was the editor-in-chief of the journal then. On 6th January 1914 Freud posed a question: “is the psychoanalytical paper by the Polish lady philosopher usable?” [19]. On 10th January Ferenczi sent back Karpińska’s article to Freud annotating that “It is very good [underline by Ferenczi]. The few critical remarks can certainly be easily invalidated; they come from the practical inexperience of the writer. Perhaps I will write a small postscript to it. But we also shouldn’t publish the paper without a critique” [19]. Another exchange of letters concerned the journal where the article should be published. Freud suggested “Zeitschrift” as “Jarhbuch für Psychoanalytische und Psychopathologische Forschungen” had already collected a complete set of publications. Ferenczi believed that “the Polish work is not kosher for the ‘Jahrbuch’, too long for the ‘Zeischrift’, very suitable for ‘Imago’” (another psychoanalytical journal) [19]. Eventually the article was published in “Zeitschrift” in 1914 similarly to the aforesaid analysis of Karpińska’s own dream [3]. In that last article Karpińska mentioned that around 1910 she was intending to translate “The Interpretation of Dreams” into Polish and she was considering “not only the way how the examples and the ‘senseless’ words applied in their description should be rendered but also the need to substitute them adequately since they were mostly based on sound associations and as such they could encounter a risk of losing their intended meaning in translation” [3]. In the end, she did not pursue the translation and the Polish version of this Freud’s book was only translated in 1923 by Beata Rank, born in Nowy Sącz [24].

Beata Mincer (later Rank) met her future husband, Otto Rank, during WWI in Krakow. Later she became a prominent child psychoanalyst.

In January 1911 Karpińska relocated to Zakopane for the unknown reasons. The possible reason could be some pulmonary disease as it was the case with the majority of individuals arriving there due to climatic conditions. It was the most likely place where she met her future husband, Dr Marcin Woyczyński, who was a graduate of the Military Medical School in Petersburg. He validated his medical degree at the Jagiellonian University in 1900. Since that time he was a frequent visitor to Zakopane and between 1910 and the outbreak of World War I he ran a medical lab and a medical practice specialising in pulmonary diseases over there [25]. He was an activist of the Polish Socialist Party and a close friend of Józef Piłsudski. His relocation to Zakopane was related to the repressions experienced by the members of Polish Socialist Party under the Russian partition. It is likely that Karpińska as well engaged in independence activities during her stay in Zakopane [26], as a probable consequence of knowing Woyczyński. The Woyczyńskis got married probably during World War I or shortly after it ended.

In 1914 Karpińska’s last pre-World War I article was published in “Ruch Filozoficzny” entitled “On Psychoanalysis” [21]. It featured the development of the International Psychoanalytical Association and psychoanalytic journals. It also summarised the development of the psychoanalytic movement in Poland highlighting the pioneering role of Ludwik Jekels as a promoter of a psychoanalytic method. Karpińska expressed her disillusionment at the Polish publications on psychoanalysis as she believed that “they do not offer a clear understanding of the entirety of Freud’s views and the expansion of psychoanalysis into the field of humanities” [21]. She concluded the article with

an enthusiastic belief that “the psychoanalytic movement is too strong and serious to be discouraged or prevented from its further development by cheap arguments in the mockery of some of its aspects” [21]. Adopting a contemporary viewpoint, the validity of her arguments cannot be denied.

World War I

After the war outbreak Karpińska joined Piłsudski’s Polish Legions as a nurse [26] most likely together with Marcin Woyczyński, who was drafted as a military doctor. She also participated in the defence of Lviv [26]. After the war she was a member of the associations: the “Military Family” and the Union of Polish Associations of Homeland Defenders. She was awarded with the Cross of Independence and the Cross of Valour.

Post-War Activities

After regaining independence, the reborn Polish state had to face numerous urgent matters such as the reform of education system and the drafting of the new law. Highly educated individuals played a significant role in the creation of the new state but at the same time they had to give priority to the social good cause at the expense of personal and professional ambitions. That also applied to Ludwika Karpińska-Woyczyńska when in May 1920 she became a director of the Municipal Psychological Lab in Lodz. Since that time her main work was devoted to the psychological diagnostics of children and youth and the development of psychotechnical research methods. Initially, she carried out the intelligence research by means of Binet–Simon’s method which aim was to “isolate mentally retarded children from municipal public schools” [27] and transferring them to a school for children with special needs. It was established in Lodz in 1919 and was the first such institution in Poland [27–29]. At the school the children “could be taught in a form and at a rate relevant to their poor mental capabilities” [27]. Karpińska did not only rely on psychological tests, but she also collaborated directly with teachers of public schools and special schools and organised, so-called, conferences. The objective of the meetings was to prevent “a child’s automatic qualification for a special school based only on the obtained intelligence quotient result” [30] as she pointed out that “progress is not solely dependent on a pupil’s intellectual aspect and the ‘blame’ for bad progress might be that of the pupil or the school itself” [27]. She was able to adopt a broader perspective when analysing why school children are not successful, emphasising that “ill or sickly, often hereditarily burdened, living in a dark and damp den (...), malnourished, exhausted, anaemic, beaten at home and abused for various household chores, furthermore, left unsupervised to the adventurous influence of a street, dirty, frightened, and lacking self-confidence – child is not capable of learning in a normal manner” [27]. She attributed the blame for the situation to “current conditions of social life which hinder normal child’s progress” and especially to the war that was ongoing for six years (World War I, Polish-Bolshevik War) [27]. She was also perfectly aware of the future negative impact that the long-lasting warfare will have on the development of children. As she reported: “There will be children

coming from desperate mothers exhausted with war and impoverished by it. They will bring to the world babies who are weak and frail as a result of negative conditions in a mother's womb. And it will take many years for the wounds inflicted on our social organism by war to be healed until the wave of its effects which left a thick mud of physical and mental degeneration on our river bank are washed away" [30].

Soon afterwards she expanded her intelligence research onto other groups (deaf-mute children and those with 'moral deficits') selecting appropriate tests for them [28]. Later, she went on to the research of children completing public schools in order to assess their suitability for education in high schools [31]. In 1923 she was the first in Poland to carry out a psychological selection for high schools in Lodz [31]. Her great dream was to open a vocational guidance service which she was not fortunate to achieve during the time when she was in charge [31]. She thought that "above all, a guidance centre should be created. Its influence would reach all the youth from public schools", assisting in the selection of "a profession which would be suitable i.e. in line with the aptitude, labour market requirements and achievable" [31].

Throughout the entire time of post-war work she pursued the improvement of psychological tests for children and youth. What she found of key importance was the selection of suitable tests based on age [27, 28]. She wrote that "(...) only through the improvement of selection and strict calibration for normal children from a specific social group will we obtain some basis for the precise assessment of fluctuations in the mental development of children" [28]. She also stayed in contact with psychotechnical centres abroad (in Berlin, Dusseldorf, Hamburg and Paris) [32]. She attended International Psychotechnical Congresses [26, 33]. Between 1921 and 1930 she published a series of articles concerning children's intelligence studies and the activities of the Municipal Psychological Lab in Lodz [27–33]. One of her most significant scientific achievements was the research on the stability of IQ which led to the conclusion that "in general, a person's IQ is approximately a stable value" [33]. Karpieńska was also a member of the first Editorial Committee of the journal "Psychotechnika" which was published from 1927. In 1928 when a branch of the Free Polish University of Warsaw was opened in Lodz, she was appointed the first associate professor in applied psychology and the head of the Psychotechnics Department at the Faculty of Pedagogy of that school [34]. Apart from her university work Karpieńska made presentations on general psychology, psychoanalysis and psychotechnics to various professional groups, mainly teachers and probation officers [26]. Marta Więckowska, who was Karpieńska's lab associate, wrote about her supervisor that "she was, above all, a prominent man of knowledge", "exceedingly meticulous and diligent in her work", "she loved science and she devoted all her free time to it", "sometimes a sunrise greeted her at work while she was engrossed reading a serious scientific work" [26]. Unfortunately, on 1st September 1930 Karpieńska had to resign from the position due to "a serious illness" the characteristics of which remain unknown [35]. Więckowska in her acknowledgments wrote that "the profound and extensive knowledge of Dr Woyczyńska, her arduous work of 10 years (...) made the Lab reach the level of equivalent European institutes" [35].

One more episode from Karpieńska's life should be noted as well. In 1928 her husband was appointed a personal physician to the Marshal Józef Piłsudski.

The Woyczyńskis resided in Warsaw in the same building of the Inspectorate General of the Armed Forces as Józef Piłsudski. In 1931 they accompanied the Marshal during his holiday trip to Egypt [36]. Despite feeling general antipathy of physicians, Józef Piłsudski had great trust in Dr Woyczyński, possibly because they both engaged in the activities of the Polish Socialist Party for numerous years. The trust was lost on 11th April 1935, a month before the Marshal's death. At that time Piłsudski, who was in a serious condition, declared to his associates that “new strange people visit Mrs Woyczyńska. They look so alien that I do not longer feel at home here. What is more important, the safety of the inspectorate is uncertain” [37]. Karpińska-Woyczyńska was arrested and interrogated for a few weeks at the Pawiak prison, but no allegations of espionage for the Soviet Union was proven to her. Also, no incriminating evidence was found at the Woyczyńskis' apartment. In spite of that, colonel Dr Woyczyński resigned from the post of a personal physician a day after his wife was arrested. Woyczyńska did maintain professional contacts with citizens of the Soviet Union e.g. with the psychiatrist and psychotechnician Dr Rabinowicz from Leningrad [31]. She, as many other Polish psychotechnicians, attended Seventh International Conference of Psychotechnics in Moscow on 8–13 September 1931. She also was in touch with leftist educational activists such as Stefania Stempołowska or defenders of political prisoners e.g. Wanda Wasilewska who still belonged to the Polish Socialist Party then. However, it does not seem very probable and no evidence exists to prove the claim that individuals with such patriotic sentiments as Dr Woyczyński and his wife were communist spies.

Ludwika Karpińska-Woyczyńska died on 30th January 1937 in her hometown, Warsaw [26]. It is not certain if the cause for her death were long-lasting health problems or flu epidemics which was reported daily by newspapers at that time. World War II and political changes that followed made most of her achievements forgotten. There might be scarce references in Polish psychology textbooks about Karpińska's activities in psychotechnics field, but not much can be learnt about her engagement in the development of psychoanalysis. The blame for that could be placed on “a dark period of the fifties which burden psychoanalysis with the tag of an imperialist and bourgeois ideology” [38]. Karpińska is not without ‘blame’ herself as her complex of constraints constituted the basis for, as she wrote, the fact that on numerous occasions “instead of words of gratitude for my efforts (...) I was shown disfavour”, “I pushed myself to the rear position and I let someone else take the first position” as “I was quiet calm and conscientious in my work” [3]. That was the reason why the leading position was awarded to another Polish female psychoanalyst – Eugenia Sokolnicka, who started her training at Burghölzli as late as in May 1910 [39, 40]. Fortunately, in contrast to Polish publications, most foreign publications on psychoanalysis and its development up to contemporary days make references to Karpińska's work “Psychological Foundations of Freudism” [9, 22], which secured her position in the history of psychoanalysis.

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