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# The education system of the Commission of National Education's Navahrudak Department in the years 1773—1794

**Summary:** This article on the education system in the Navahrudak Department presents various aspects of work of the Commission of National Education's (KEN) institutions and people included in the book of our authorship. This publication is meant to be of an analytical, synthetic nature. On the one hand, it is based on the analysis of source materials, and on the other, it refers to studies depicting the KEN's achievements in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the work of the schools under its authority in this area, including the Navahrudak Department. The Navahrudak Department was formally established by the Commission of National Education in 1783 in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to cover the area of the provinces of Navahrudak, Minsk and part of Polotsk, which had lost part of its lands, captured by Russia, following the First Partition. The department was to be home to an academic department school in Navahrudak, sub-department schools in Babruysk, Khalopyenichy, Minsk, Mazyr, Nyasvizh, Slutsk and Juravičy, as well as monastic schools in Luzki (the Piarist Order), Ushachy (the Dominican Order), Berezvech (the Basilian Order) and Dzisna (the Franciscan Order), all of which received the status of sub-department schools. The Navahrudak Department was also home to parochial schools over which the KEN sought to assume authority that played a certain part in the spreading of education among peasants, as well as in making education available to landless nobles, who were numerous in Lithuania.

**Keywords:** Commission of National Education, Navahrudak Department

The Commission of National Education (KEN) was an institution whose accomplishments became a “symbol of the enormity and effectiveness of educational efforts”<sup>1</sup>. It was true not only in the new organisation of a reformed ed-

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<sup>1</sup> B. Suchodolski, *Komisja Edukacji Narodowej na tle roli oświaty w dziejowym rozwoju Polski*, Warsaw, 1973, 10—11.

ucation system but also in educating new generations of people who carried in their hearts and souls the idea of a restored and free Poland for years of efforts aimed at retaining the Polish statehood. The KEN was a dynamic and flexible institution in different periods of its operation. At the same time, it was resilient and consistent despite the complex reality at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in a state that was gradually losing its sovereignty and was disappearing from the map of Europe. The Commission's ideological concepts and assumptions would for long persist in the regions once under the authority of the Commission of National Education, also in territories that had once constituted the Navahrudak Department.

This publication by Wiesław Jamrożek and Jolanta Szablicka-Żak on the education system in the Navahrudak Department is part of a larger series presenting various aspects of work of the Commission of National Education's institutions and people. It is one of the outcomes of the scientific project *Komisji Edukacji Narodowej model szkoły i obywatela. Koncepcje, doświadczenia, inspiracje* [*The Commission of National Education's model of the school and the citizen: Concepts, experiences, inspirations*], conducted by a team of scholars from different academic disciplines under the guidance of Professor Kalina Bartnicka in the framework of the National Programme for the Development of the Humanities at the Institute of History of Science of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

This publication is meant to be of an analytical, synthetic nature. On the one hand, it is based on the analysis of source materials, and on the other, it refers to studies depicting the KEN's achievements in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the work of the schools under its authority in this area, including the Navahrudak Department.

The source material for this study includes to a great extent printed materials, containing reports of general school inspectors of KEN schools in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, minutes of KEN sessions<sup>2</sup>, as well as other materials obtained in the course of an inventory at the Lithuanian State Historical Archives and at the Vilnius University Library in particular. Especially seminal was the inventory made at the latter institution.

The descriptions of the towns which were the seats of the department, sub-department and some parochial schools were made using geographic and historical studies, tourist guides and various iconographic materials, especially older ones. Although the shaping of demographic and national relations, in-

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<sup>2</sup> See: *Raporty generalnych wizytatorów szkół Komisji Edukacji Narodowej w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim (1782—1792)*, ed. K. Bartnicka, I. Szybiak, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1974; *Protokoły posiedzeń Komisji Edukacji Narodowej 1773—1785*, ed. M. Mitera-Dobrowolska, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1973; *Protokoły posiedzeń Komisji Edukacji Narodowej 1786—1794*, ed. T. Mizia, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1969.

cluding religious relations, has been the subject of studies by multiple scholars, those studies carried out before the publication of the first Russian population census in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (1897) have little statistical credibility. The oldest and scientifically most thorough studies by such scholars as Stanisław Plater, Edward Czyński and Piotr Eberhardt are based on the statistics of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and at that time, the Commission of National Education no longer existed, and neither did a Polish state. The annexed lands in new governorships saw major migrations.

The layout of the book (in five principal chapters) focuses on the work of particular schools in the Navahrudak Department area (also prior to its establishment). The first chapter presents the geographical, historical and societal description of the area that was to constitute this department after 1783 and presents it in the era of the Commission of National Education. The second chapter is an attempt at presenting the department school in Navahrudak along with the description of the town, its organisation, infrastructure, finances, education and the community of teachers and students. The third chapter examines the academic sub-department schools in Babruysk, Khalopyenichy, Juravičy, Minsk, Mazyr, Nyasvizh and Slutsk. The schools' descriptions, except the school in Juravičy, which had existed only till 1783, i.e. the year of the formal establishment of the Navahrudak Department, take into account, like in the case of the Navahrudak school, the surroundings of the school, its organisational base, the didactic and educational process, as well as the teachers and students' community. The fourth chapter examines monastic schools in the Navahrudak Department, especially the Piarist school in Luzki and the Basilian school in Berezvech (accounting for the same aspects as in the case of the secular schools). The chapter also examines, though to a lesser degree, other monastic schools, in Ushachy (the Dominican Order) and Dzisna (the Franciscan Order), which were established at the end of the KEN's authority over this area. Presentation of selected sources concerning the schools discussed in this book constitutes a separate part of the book. The book also contains two indices with a list of names of people and towns, as well as a separate list of teachers working at the department's schools.

It is worth noting that the Navahrudak Department was formally established by the Commission of National Education in 1783 in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania to cover the area of the provinces of Navahrudak, Minsk and part of Polotsk, which had lost part of its lands, captured by Russia, following the First Partition. The department was to be home to an academic department school in Navahrudak, sub-department schools in Babruysk, Khalopyenichy, Minsk, Mazyr, Nyasvizh, Slutsk and Juravičy, as well as monastic schools in Luzki (the Piarist Order), Ushachy (the Dominican Order), Berezvech (the

Basilian Order) and Dzisna (the Franciscan Order), all of which received the status of sub-department schools.

The Navahrudak Province was established in 1507 and incorporated in the Polish—Lithuanian Commonwealth from 1569. It was the heart of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It bordered on the Grodno County of the Trakai Province to the north, the Vilnius Province to the north and Minsk to the north-east. The Neman River constituted a part of the border from the Vilnius Province to the north of Navahrudak. To the south, it bordered in all its length on the Brest Province. The Navahrudak Province's western end nearly edged to the Podlachia region, converging there with the northern tip of the Brest and the southern tip of the Trakai Provinces. It was divided into three counties (Navahrudak, Vawkavysk and Slonim) and the Principality of Slutsk in its eastern part, stretching nearly from the springs of the Neman in the north, all the way to Pietrykaw and the mouth of the Ptsich River into the Pripyat River in the south. The province's northern part, namely the Navahrudak County and the Principality of Slutsk, was one of Lithuania's most fertile regions<sup>3</sup>. That region was the seat of the academic department school in Navahrudak and the academic sub-department schools in Nyasvizh and Slutsk.

Stretching along the Berezina and Dnieper, the Minsk Province bordered in the north-east on the provinces of Polotsk, Vitebsk and Mstsislaw. The southern frontier was based on the Principality of Chernihiv, lying beyond the Dnieper River and the Kyiv Province. The eastern border was based on the Navahrudak and Vilnius Provinces, established by King Władysław II Jagiełło by Pact of Horodło in 1413. But it was not until around the year 1500 that they were eventually organised and divided into three large counties: of Minsk, Mazyr, and Rechytsa<sup>4</sup>. In the Minsk Province, which became part of the Commonwealth in 1569, academic sub-department schools opened in Minsk, Mazyr, Babruysk, Khalopyenichy and Juravičy.

The Polotsk Province was divided into two almost equal parts by the Daugava River. After the First Partition, its northern part was incorporated into Russia. The eastern part to the south and north of the Daugava constituted the Vitebsk Province, the northern part — the Minsk Province and the western part, to the north of the Daugava — the Livonia Province and to the south — the Vilnius Province. Being not very large or populous, the Polotsk Province was not divided into counties<sup>5</sup>. After 1773, in the Polotsk Province, in its southern parts, the monastic Dominican school in Ushachy, Basilian school

<sup>3</sup> Z. Gloger, *Geografia historyczna ziem dawnej Polski*, Kraków, 1903.

<sup>4</sup> Z. Gloger, *Geografia...*

<sup>5</sup> Z. Gloger, *Geografia...*

in Berezvech and Franciscan schools in Dzisna and Luzki received the status of sub-department schools.

The history of the lush forest-covered White and Black Ruthenia had been rough since the beginning of time<sup>6</sup>. The region had been inhabited by tribes that with time came under the reign of dukes. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century, lands that had been governed by separate dukes were incorporated by Mindaugas in Lithuania. Local dukes retained their power but were now brought under the authority of princes from the Gediminids and Jagiellonian dynasties. Their lands and settlements were raided, looted and burnt by the Tatars, Cossacks and Teutonic Knights, who continued their raids despite the 1314 debacle, justifying their actions by the necessity to convert pagans. The personal Union of Kreva made in 1385 with Poland was intended to defend both parties against the Teutonic Knights. In 1569, during the reign of King Sigismund II Augustus, a real union was made at the Sejm in Lublin between the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Poland (the Crown). In the newly created state structure of Lithuania and the Crown, provinces divided into counties assumed new administrative frameworks. The network of towns and settlements continued developing in the economic and commercial aspects from the early 15<sup>th</sup> until the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries<sup>7</sup>. That was connected by the increasing commercial links facilitated by privileges (exemption from *myto*, i.e. travel fees, or customs duties). Towns continued developing in the vicinity of feudal castles, places of worship, transportation routes alongside which inns or trade fairs would be located, as well as owing to more and more populous communities of craftsmen and merchants. In an effort to win the favour of Lithuanian boyars, most of whom opposed the union, Polish kings would confer on them large parcels of land. That way, during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, most of royal lands were transferred into the hands of magnate Radziwiłł, Sapieha, Ogiński, Gasztold, Giedroyć and other families<sup>8</sup>. Over the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the lands belonging to the Navahrudak Department were raided and looted by Muscovite, Swedish, Cossack and Tatar armies who would murder or take captive the local population. The years of the Great Northern War

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<sup>6</sup> In Polish historiography, White Ruthenia, encompassing the territory of the provinces of Minsk and Polotsk had been part of Kievan Rus until 1084, it was under the sway of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, and it was part of the Polish—Lithuanian Commonwealth from 1569 until the Partitions of Poland. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, Black Ruthenia was defined as the region of the Navahrudak Province and a fragment of the Trakai Province near Grodno.

<sup>7</sup> S. Alexandrowicz, "Geneza i rozwój sieci miasteczek Białorusi i Litwy do połowy XVII w.," *Acta Baltico-Slavica* 7, 1970, 48. According to the list of towns and settlements published in Supplement 1 (63—64), the major towns in the 15<sup>th</sup> century included: Polotsk, Minsk, Slutsk and Navahrudak.

<sup>8</sup> T. Sosiński, *Ziemia nowogródzka. Zarys dziejów*, Warsaw, 2001, 20.

(1700—1721) between Sweden on the one hand and Russia and Saxony allied with it on the other were the hardest in the history of the Navahrudak land. Ransacking of the economy, famine, epidemics all decimated the local population, the towns were reduced to ruins and their wooden architecture burnt down. That in turn led to a slow-motion economic collapse of the entire country that persisted until the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Despite that, however, enough force was garnered in the second part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century for implementation of internal reforms: political (bolstering the executive power), social (granting townsmen access to political participation and reducing serfdom) and educational (Commission of National Education)<sup>9</sup>. The years between the first and last partition of the Commonwealth, so the years of the KEN operation, was a period of mutinies, uprisings and wars waged against Russia and ending up in disaster, even though the Kościuszko uprising won support among all social estates, even the Jewish population. That was the only such case in the history of the Commonwealth for Polish Jews to form their own batallion and fight for the independence of the Commonwealth<sup>10</sup>. Unfortunately, the defeat suffered in a very uneven battle due to Russia's enormous military advantage led to the Third Partition of the Commonwealth and incorporation of the lands of the provinces of Navahrudak, Minsk and Polotsk into the territory of the Russian Empire.

Throughout its history, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was multiethnic and multid denominational. Among the nationalities settled in the region were the Ruthenians, Lithuanians, Poles; among those living in diasporas were the Jews, Karaims, Germans, Tatars, as well as, to a smaller degree, the Scots and Italians<sup>11</sup>.

As far as religion was concerned, Orthodox Christianity was the oldest, and its followers (Ruthenians) initially represented the biggest group. Along with the growing numbers of Polish nobles settling down, there were ever more Roman Catholics. The inflow of Jews and Germans began in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. Jews were guaranteed the safety of settlement, freedom of religion, economic and financial rights, as well as the right to self-government in their municipalities, where they would create their own education system. A wave of Protestantism spread around in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, rocking the foundations of Orthodox Christianity and Roman Catholicism. Calvinism came to be the most common denomination, especially among the nobles, while the influence of Lutheranism was smaller, spreading especially among townsmen. The spread of the Ref-

<sup>9</sup> T. Kruczkowski, *Polacy na Białorusi na tle historii i współczesności*, Slonim, 2003, 104.

<sup>10</sup> T. Sosiński, *Ziemia...*, 23.

<sup>11</sup> H. Litwin, "Narody Pierwszej Rzeczypospolitej", in *Tradycje polityczne dawnej Polski*, ed. A. Sucheni-Grabowska, A. Dybowska, Warsaw, 1993, 168—218.

ormation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century saw the foundation of the Lutheran Church and the Calvinist Church. Schools were created by Protestant churches. Orthodox Christianity and Roman Catholicism reached a compromise resulting in the Church Union in Brest in 1596. The Orthodox Christian Church accepted the superiority of Rome and the Catholic dogmas, while retaining the Byzantine Rite. Reinforced by subjugating the Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church undertook to decisively defy the spread of Protestantism. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Uniate Christians represented some 70% of people, Catholics — 15%, Judaists — 7%, Orthodox Christians — 6% and Protestants — some 2%<sup>12</sup>. Orthodox and Greek Catholic churches and monasteries would exist side by side, along with Roman Catholic churches and monasteries, Protestant churches, synagogues and mosques.

During the Counter-Reformation, the Baroque style came to be very richly represented, especially at Jesuit churches and *convictus* dormitories, as well as magnate (*hospodars'*) mansions. Established even in small townships, churches and monasteries were richly ornamented by Italian artists and furnished by their funders. They would impress with their beauty, but they would be particularly affected by the wars as well, destroyed by Orthodox Cossacks and Muscovites and Protestant Swedes. The lush forest-covered landscape of the Navahrudak region was riddled with castles, palaces, magnate courts and nobles' mansions surrounded by parks. Farmlands, meadows and grazing fields spread around them. Nobles' residences were usually connected by hardened roads. Peasant villages would constitute their economic base. What was characteristic of the Kresy borderlands landowners was their conservatism, allegiance to tradition and customs, and hospitality. An average noble would be a good housekeeper and farmer, and a gallant knight defending his land to which he was attached against the attacks by the Tatars, Cossacks, Ottoman Turks and Muscovites. The development of commerce and crafts led to the growth of estates, not only magnate estates. Rich merchants would also build brick-and-mortar houses around the central squares, even though only landowners and officials were eligible to do so<sup>13</sup>. Aside from the offices of the marshal and senators, province and county towns were also seats of municipal and landed courts, as well as borderland and appellate courts, archives and schools. All the offices were filled by voting at the nobles' county parliaments. The elite of each town was made up by its officials, the *horodniczy* (*aedile*), judge, prosecutor, treasurer, bailiff, land surveyor, forester, advocates, legal trainees, physicians, garrison commander, priests, landowners, wealthy nobles and officers<sup>14</sup>. The elite of the authority

<sup>12</sup> N. Roberts, *Białoruś*, transl. D. Uhma-Miechowicz, Warsaw, 2009, 22.

<sup>13</sup> T. Sosiński, *Ziemia...*, 21.

<sup>14</sup> T. Sosiński, *Ziemia...*, 20.

comprised Poles, Lithuanians, Ruthenians (Belarusians) and Germans, united by the idea of a commonwealth. Even though the Poles were a minority, they constituted a culture-forming phenomenon. At the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Navahrudak nobles requested the king that the Ruthenian language be replaced by Polish at the Chancellery of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The Sejm fulfilled that request in 1696<sup>15</sup>.

The areas included in the Navahrudak Department in the 1780s had earlier been part of the so-called “Belarusian” Department under the management of Joachim Chreptowicz, who exercised authority over the province schools in Brest, Navahrudak, Minsk and Pinsk and a number of county schools.

The functioning of schools and other educational facilities, also in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, including the department under Chreptowicz’s authority, was in the 1770s regulated by laws passed during that time: *Przepisy od Komisji Edukacji Narodowej pensjomistrzom i mistrzyniom dane* [Commission of National Education guidelines for dormitory owners], which were passed in 1774, and *Układ nauk i porządku między nimi w szkołach wojewódzkich* [Guidelines for syllabi in province schools] and *Układ nauk na szkoły powiatowe* [Syllabi for county schools], which were passed in 1776 and finally adopted in 1777<sup>16</sup>.

Along with the passing of the Acts, the Commission removed the division of the country into *departaments*, introducing a new administrative division into *wydziały*. The creation of the *wydziały* was followed by the establishment of department schools (as “bigger schools”, being the equivalent of the old province schools in terms of organisation and syllabi, but with the new function of rector as the head of the department).

Initially, six departments were being planned, including Vilnius, Kaunas, Grodno, Brest (covering “the actual Lithuania”), as well as Minsk and Navahrudak (in the so-called “Ruthenian Lithuania”). Department schools with six teachers, the rector and the prefect were to be created, among other places, in Navahrudak and Minsk. Education in them would take seven years. That project was not, however, to be implemented in full. Eventually, in 1783, the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was divided into four departments: Lithuanian with its seat in Grodno, Samogitian with its seat in Kražiai, Ruthe-

<sup>15</sup> D. Michaluk, *Białoruska Republika Ludowa 1918—1920. U podstaw białoruskiej państwowości*, Toruń, 2010, 38.

<sup>16</sup> See e.g.: I. Szybiak, *Szkolnictwo Komisji Edukacji Narodowej w Wielkim Księstwie Litewskim*, Wrocław—Warsaw—Kraków, 1973; *Pierwiastkowe przepisy pedagogiczne Komisji Edukacji Narodowej z lat 1773—1776*, ed. Z. Kukulski, Lublin, 1923; *Ustawodawstwo szkolne za czasów Komisji Edukacji Narodowej. Rozporządzenia, ustawy pedagogiczne i organizacyjne (1773—1793)*, ed. J. Lewicki, Kraków, 1925.



nian (Navahrudak) with its seat in Navahrudak and Polesian with its seat in Brest<sup>17</sup>.

Although the Lithuanian Main School had formally assumed authority over the schools of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania as early as 1780, the local education system was eventually subjected to the Main School in Vilnius much later, as late as 1783, i.e. when the academy selected the so-called general school inspectors. Therefore, it was also when the schools in the Navahrudak Department were subjected to the actual authority of the Vilnius' Main School.

Although it was the Minsk school that accommodated the proper number of classes, the administrative function of a department school in the Navahrudak Department was vested in the Navahrudak school.

The rector of the Lithuanian Main School, Marcin Poczobut-Odlanicki, a renowned Polish mathematician, astronomer and former Jesuit, was appointed head of the academic estate in Lithuania (and the Navahrudak Department), recently created by the Commission. In Irena Szybiak's opinion, it was Poczobut-Odlanicki that deserved credit for efficiently binding with it the former Jesuits, the teachers in academic schools, effectively preventing the expiry of the spirit of the old community. His extensive correspondence on personal matters with the rectors, prorectors and teachers reflects this process, which had originated when he worked as the Commission's treasurer in Vilnius and the rector in the first years of his tenure. In the years 1783—1792, Marcin Poczobut-Odlanicki already possessed the authority and trust of academic teachers who, apart from former Jesuits, included secular priests at first and also secular graduates of the Main School with time.

School prowincji Lithuanian Piarist — odmiennie niż w koronie — nie tworzyły odrębnego department, ale włączono je do department subordinate to rector school akademickich. This way, for example, the school in Luzki, run by the Piarists, operated in the framework of the Navahrudak Department under the authority of the rector of the Navahrudak department school. In 1790, the efforts of the Piarist Order led the Commission to finally establish a separate Piarist department and assume direct authority over their schools (with no mediation on the part of the Main School)<sup>18</sup>.

In order to retain control over schools and exercise supervision, the Commission of National Education emphasised the significance of visitations, also in reference to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Initially, commissioners or sub-delegates were appointed as school inspectors, and next, school inspectors were appointed by the Commission. In fact, systematic and regular visitations (also

<sup>17</sup> See: I. Szybiak, *Szkolnictwo...*, 34—35; *Protokoły posiedzeń Komisji Edukacji Narodowej 1773—1785*.

<sup>18</sup> I. Szybiak, *Szkolnictwo...*, 139—140.

in Lithuania) would not commence until the spring 1782, continued over the following 10 years, until the war with Russia in 1792 and the Second Partition. The last school visitations in the Commonwealth were taking place in arduous conditions and limited areas in 1793; subsequent ones were planned for 1794 but never materialised<sup>19</sup>.

Former Jesuit Franciszek Bieńkowski (Parish priest of Dyvin) was the one who conducted the first visitations in Lithuania in 1782 (May, June and July, also in the Navahrudak Department). He visited schools in Navahrudak, Berezvech, Babruysk, Khalopyenichy, Luzki, Minsk, Mazyr, Nyasvizh and Slutsk. After the visitation, he noted that the undersigned in general gives his credit-worthy and unbiased opinion that in all the schools of the Ruthenian Department he found teachers who were capable, diligent and of good manners<sup>20</sup>. The following year, it was another former Jesuit, President of the Morality College of the Lithuanian Main School Dawid Pilchowski that made visitations to the schools of the Navahrudak Department and awarded superior notes to the Navahrudak teachers. From 1784 onwards, it were school inspectors appointed by the Lithuanian Main School that carried out visitations. Władysław Tautkiewicz (Thutkiewicz) was to be the first Commission-appointed school inspector, who was assigned visitations to the Navahrudak Department's schools of Berezvech, Babruysk, Khalopyenichy, Luzki, Minsk, Mazyr, Nyasvizh, Navahrudak and Slutsk. Due to his illness the following year, he was superseded as school inspector of the Navahrudak Department again by Bieńkowski (who fell ill after his visitations and it is now impossible to access his reports). In 1788, Jakub Jaxa (Jaksa) was the school inspector, in 1789, Jan Erdman, and in 1790, Jaxa again, who was a doctor of theology, liberal arts and philosophy, canon of Smolensk, and who after the 1788 visitation praised the teachers in Navahrudak, Minsk, Nyasvizh and Slutsk and reprimanded those in Mazyr, whereas Erdman in 1789 made positive evaluation of the schools in Navahrudak, Slutsk, Babruysk and Minsk and negative evaluations of the teachers in Nyasvizh, Mazyr and Kholopenichi. Department was visited by Dawid Pilchowski. He praised the teachers in Berezvech, Minsk, Slutsk, Babruysk, Nyasvizh and, most of all, Navahrudak but criticised the teaching staff of Khalopyenichy and Luzki schools. In the following year, from April to July, Jan Erdman, former Jesuit, conducted visitations to the schools and awarded the best grades to the Navahrudak teachers. In Luzki, he marked an improvement, and in Nyasvizh, he found that good teachers instructed in senior classes and poor in junior classes. In 1788, Jakub Jaxa (Jaksa) was the school inspector, in 1789, Erdman again, and in 1790, Jaxa

<sup>19</sup> See: H. Pohoska, *Wizytatorowie generalni Komisji Edukacji Narodowej. Monografia z dziejów administracji szkolnej Komisji Edukacji Narodowej*, Lublin, 1957.

<sup>20</sup> *Raporty...*, 29.

again, who was a doctor of theology, liberal arts and philosophy and canon of Smolensk. After the 1788 visitation, Jaxa praised the teachers in Navahrudak, Minsk, Nyasvizh and Slutsk and reprimanded those in Mazyr, whereas Erdman in 1789 made positive evaluation of the schools in Navahrudak, Slutsk, Babruysk and Minsk and negative evaluations of the teachers in Nyasvizh, Mazyr and Khalopyenichy. In 1791, the Lithuanian Main School delegated Michał Piotrowski to conduct visitations to the schools of the Navahrudak Department; in 1792, Antoni Obrąpalski, doctor of theology and canon of Livonia, became the delegate, which managed to visit the schools in Minsk, Navahrudak and partly in Nyasvizh in the ongoing difficult political situation of the First Commonwealth. As Hanna Pohoska, a renowned researcher of KEN history, argues, “no visitations were carried out in Lithuania in 1793”<sup>21</sup>.

General school inspectors made positive evaluations of many schools existing in the Navahrudak Department. The Navahrudak school itself was to earn the reputation of the best school in the entire Commonwealth. Other outstanding schools (not only in Lithuania but also in the entire Commonwealth) in the opinion of school inspectors included the schools in Minsk, Khalopyenichy, Berezvech, Nyasvizh and Babruysk. Those “better” schools (according to the assessment of Pohoska) constituted in total a majority of the schools in the said department<sup>22</sup>.

The Navahrudak Department was also home to parochial schools over which the KEN sought to assume authority. In the period of the Commission's work (in the area of the prospective Navahrudak Department under the authority of the “Belarusian” Department at first and the Navahrudak Department itself at the later stage), there were 100 schools of this type at different times (!). The existence of parochial schools played a certain part in the spreading of education among peasants, as well as in making education available to landless nobles, who were numerous in Lithuania. However, the lack of teachers and financial resources limited the extent the Enlightenment ideas could be implemented, especially for plebeian children. The Lithuanian Main School also did not express sufficient care about the work of parochial schools, and the Commission of National Education was forced to remind the Main School of the duty to provide reports on the operation of those schools, too.

The authors of this study express their hope that the book on the education system of the Navahrudak Department is yet another voice in the presentation of the educational achievements of the Commission, and that its content may be an inspiration for further reproduction of the model of the school and the citizen postulated by the KEN.

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<sup>21</sup> *Raporty...*, 64.

<sup>22</sup> *Raporty...*, 169—171.

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