



General Fieldorf „Nil” as a personal model in upbringing towards maturity

Generał Fieldorf „Nil” jako wzór osobowy w wychowaniu do dojrzałości¹

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Abstract: The outbreak of war between Ukraine and Russia motivates us to consider how to preserve dignity in situations where life is under threat. Such a question is particularly relevant in the context of the war's proximity to Poland, a bordering nation to both Russia and Ukraine. War means human tragedies, so it becomes important to have behavioural models for extremely dramatic situations. It is worth being reminded of heroes who had stayed true to their ideals even in the face of death. August Emil Fieldorf „Nil”, a leader in the Polish anti-Nazi resistance movement, was one such hero as he had been killed by the Soviet regime's collaborators after WWII. The General was a Polish patriot who sacrificed his life for his homeland. What is most striking in his biography is his heroism. This qualifies him as a perfect personality model in upbringing towards higher values. In this paper it has been shown that August Emil Fieldorf, a Steadfast Soldier, is a mature personal model, which can motivate the young generation to follow him. Maturity has been defined with a personality approach according to Zdzisław Chlewiński, using the three following criteria: considering a man as a person, autonomy in thinking, ability to assess own motivations. It has been analysed how to motivate the youths to follow the General regarding the maturity. It has been demonstrated that the General's example may motivate if we use one of the three following upbringing strategies proposed by Marian Nowak: dissonance, witnessing, stimulation. The author has used Fieldorf's biographies. It has been emphasized that the process of forming his personality had been very dynamic and lasted his whole life. The author claims that the Chlewiński's concept may be used to select the next mature personal models.

Keywords: maturity, Fieldorf „Nil”, values, personal model, Zdzisław Chlewiński

Abstrakt: Wybuch wojny rosyjsko-ukraińskiej skłania do refleksji nad tym, jak godnie zachować się w sytuacjach zagrożenia życia. W szczególności w kontekście geograficznej bliskości tej wojny, jako że Polska graniczy zarówno z Rosją, jak i z Ukrainą. Skutkiem wojen są dramaty dotyczące niewinnych ludzi, coraz większego znaczenia nabiera więc zapotrzebowanie na określone wzory zachowań w sytuacjach skrajnie trudnych. Warto zatem przypominać bohaterów, którzy do końca, często nawet w obliczu okrutnej śmierci, pozostali wierni najwyższemu ideałom. Jednym z nich jest August Emil Fieldorf „Nil”, Żołnierz Niezłomny, czołowy przedstawiciel polskiego powojennego podziemia niepodległościowego, który zginął z rąk ludzi uwikłanych w zbrodniczy system radzieckiej Rosji. Generał był polskim patriotą, który dla Ojczyzny i jej obywateli poświęcił własne życie. W biografii Generała przykuwa uwagę heroizm, co predysponuje do bycia wzorem osobowym w wychowaniu do wartości. W artykule wykazano, że August Emil Fieldorf jest wzorem osoby prawdziwie dojrzałej, mobilizującej wychowanków do naśladownictwa. Dojrzałość zdefiniowano w ujęciu osobowościowym i za Zdzisławem Chlewińskim przytoczono jej trzy kryteria: traktowanie człowieka jako osoby, autonomia w myśleniu i działaniu oraz zdolność do rzetelnego wglądu w motywy swojego działania. Poddano analizie kwestię dotyczącą zachęcania młodzieży do naśladowania Generała w dążeniu do osiągnięcia dojrzałości. Wykazano, że Generał jako wzór osobowy może mobilizować do naśladownictwa z wykorzystaniem następujących, zaproponowanych przez Mariana Nowaka strategii wychowania do wartości: dysonansu, świadectwa i stymulacji. W artykule posłużono się wybranymi opracowaniami biografii Fieldorfa. Zwrócono uwagę na dynamiczny charakter kształtowania się jego dojrzałej osobowości – procesu trwającego przez całe życie. Podkreślono też, że koncepcja Zdzisława Chlewińskiego może być wykorzystana w kolejnych analizach potencjalnych kandydatów do bycia wzorem osoby prawdziwie dojrzałej.

Słowa kluczowe: dojrzałość, Fieldorf „Nil”, wartości, wzór osobowy, Zdzisław Chlewiński

Introduction

The recent Russian invasion of Ukraine prompts us to reflect. As a country with direct borders with Ukraine and Russia, Poland is also exposed to a similar danger. It turns out that the peace we have experienced for

a long time in Europe was not guaranteed once and for all. It is worth recalling heroes who remained faithful to the highest ideals until the end, often even in the face of a cruel death (Ciostek, 2018, p. 141; Gajderowicz, 2018,

¹ Artykuł w języku polskim: <https://www.stowarzyszeniefidesetratio.pl/fer/2022-4-Jurosz.pdf>

p. 112). They can be an inspiration for next generations. One of them is August Emil Fieldorf “Nil”, the leading representative of the Polish post-war independence underground, who died at the hands of people entangled in the criminal system of Soviet Russia².

The aim of this work is to show Fieldorf’s activity in the context of the maturity of his personality. The General was a Polish patriot, who sacrificed his own life for his country and its citizens. In the General’s biography, heroism attracts attention, which predisposes him to be a role model in upbringing (Sabat, 2018, p. 131).

In literature on the subject, it is commonly emphasised that upbringing cannot exist without values, and the key thing is which values to uphold. In the personalistic approach, the value of the human person, his/her dignity and reasonableness are emphasised above all (Kukołowicz, 1998). Bogusław Śliwerski describing personalism emphasises, that the human persona is unique and superior to material values, economic and socio-political structures (Śliwerski, 2015). In this view, the process of upbringing consists of supporting the pupil in realising his/her humanity.

In the personalistic concept of upbringing, a special role is played by a personal role model. Wincenty Okoń defines this as a description or the image of an individual, whose actions and characteristics are considered worthy of imitation (Okoń, 2007). Personal role models influence, with their behaviour, the emotional and volitional sphere, mobilising to imitation. This fact is of particular importance in the case of the young generation at the stage of formation of ideals (Bakiera, Harwas-Napierała, 2016, p. 118).

In the analysis of the issue of the personal role model, it is impossible to ignore the key importance of the personality of the human model. Personality is a system comprising characteristic, typical behaviours, feelings, thoughts, attitudes and coping mechanisms in difficult situations (Chlewiński, 1991; Oldham, Morris, 2014).

An exemplary personality should be exceptional. This uniqueness is verified during the whole life of an individual, especially in key moments, difficult, sometimes even tragic, connected with life threaten-

ing situations. If in such conditions a person is able to courageously defend ideals, it means that he or she can be a role model for others (Wróblewska, 2021).

The literature emphasises the importance of factors that shape personality. A significant role is played by genes, upbringing in the family, education and socio-cultural influence. These factors do not determine anything, but create conditions for the formation of personality, where the leading role is played out by personal activity (Maj, 2006). It has a continuous, unceasing character. A person constantly, until death in fact, develops his/her mature personality. This process may even take on the character of a fight, when one has to stand up for one’s ideals. In this battle, one can lose one’s earthly life, as Fieldorf’s case confirms. His opponent, personified by functionaries of the People’s Republic of Poland regime, seemingly won this battle. Today, years later, one can see that the figure of General Fieldorf is more and more present in the consciousness of Poles. As Anna Zachenter emphatically points out: “The communist authorities may have thrown the corpse of August Emil Fieldorf into an unnamed pit, but they failed neither to pour concrete over the memory of his deeds nor to kill his memory (Zachenter, 2018, p. 105).

Promoting the figure of General Fieldorf among young people is stimulating for their personal development. The aim of this work is to demonstrate the exemplary character of the General’s personality and the fact that in the process of mobilising young people to imitate Fieldorf, the following value education strategies may be used: dissonance, testimony and stimulation (Nowak, 1999).

1. The biography of August Emil Fieldorf, historical background

The post-war history of Poland is marked by the tragedy resulting from the treaties between the leaders of the so-called Big Three, that is, the heads of the governments of the USA, Great Britain and the

2 The subject of communism imposed on Poland by the Soviet Russia has been described in detail by Krystyna Kurczab-Redlich (2014) and Andrzej Nowak (2022a).

Soviet Union. On the strength of these agreements, which exposed the passivity of Western leaders regarding the fate of Poland, our country found itself in the Soviet sphere of influence (Nowak, 2022a, 2022b). Poles opposed the forcible imposition of a new political system and the loss of their Eastern Borderlands. Within a short period of time, Soviet soldiers massacred Poles who were members of the post-war Polish independence movement and anti-communist underground. After years of being treated as traitors under the policy of the People's Republic of Poland, sources are constantly being discovered in recent Polish history that confirm their heroism and steadfastness in the most difficult situations, including giving their lives for their country. Hence the term “Steadfast Soldiers”³.

The Steadfast Soldiers were often representatives of the Polish intelligentsia, i.e. a social stratum which attached great importance to education and personal culture, nurtured traditions of independence, an engaged in social and patriotic activities. The extermination of this part of the nation caused an erosion of social life in post-war Poland.

This conscious, organised extermination should be remembered and the conditions of Polish patriotism should be analysed from this perspective. It is also worth recalling the history of those people thanks to whom Polishness was preserved against all odds (Pilecka-Optulowicz, 2017; Płuzański, 2015; Sala, 2022)—people who, even under the worst, bestial conditions, remained faithful to their ideals, courageously defending them. One of them was August Emil Fieldorf “Nil”, one of the leading figures of the Polish independence underground.

General Fieldorf was born on 20 March 1895, in Kraków, in what was then Austria-Hungary, to Andrzej Fieldorf and Agnieszka, née Szwanda (Strąk, 2008; Wywiał, 2013). The General's father was a train driver by profession. Both parents unanimously decided to give their children a solid education and did not spare financial resources for this. Emil graduated from a grammar school and a male teachers' seminary in Kraków. Then he started his military career. He joined the “Strzelec”

Society, and then the Polish Legions, where he was promoted to the rank of sergeant. He served in the tsarist army for a short time, but deserted after a mass mutiny. He joined the Polish Military Organisation, which was secret and loyal to Józef Piłsudski. In November 1918, he found himself in the ranks of the Polish Army, which had just been formed by Piłsudski (Wywiał, 2013).

In 1919, Fieldorf married an actress, Jolanta Kobylńska, with whom he had two children, Krystyna and Maria. The marriage lasted until the General's death in 1953 and was considered a happy one.

In the years 1919-1920, August Emil Fieldorf took part in the Vilnius Campaign, and later in the Polish-Soviet War. After the end of the war, in the 1920s and 1930s, he continued his active military service in the Vilnius region, Warsaw and France (as commander of the Riflemen's Association in France). The next stage in Fieldorf's military career in the interwar period was as commander of a regiment of Borderland Riflemen in Brzeżany, in what is now Ukraine (Wywiał, 2013).

After the outbreak of war, he took part in the September Campaign, then fled to France, where he completed staff courses as part of the emerging Polish army and was promoted to the rank of colonel. After the defeat of France, he fled to England, where he was appointed by the Polish authorities as the first emissary of the Government and Commander-in-Chief to Poland (Strąk, 2008). In the years 1940-1945 in occupied Poland, he devoted himself with all his dedication and commitment to conspiratorial work within the Polish Underground State (AK). He was the commander of Kedyw (the Home Army's formation) responsible for assassinations, fights, diversions and sabotages against the German occupant, and during this period he adopted the pseudonym “Nil” (Witkowski, 1984). The most famous action organised under his command was the shooting of Franz Kutschera, a German criminal and SS commander in Warsaw (known as the “Hangman of Warsaw”). In the years 1944-1945, he served as deputy commander of the Home Army, General Leopold Okulicki.

3 Another name is „Cursed Soldiers”.

After the war he was wanted by the police repressive apparatus of the Soviet Union. Arrested under a new name (Walery Gdanicki), he was deported to a forced labour camp near the Urals. After two and a half years of hard labour he returned to Poland, where in 1950 he was arrested by the repressive apparatus of People's Poland (Mierzwiński, 1990, p. 89). After a fake trial, in which he was charged with treason against the Polish state on the basis of false evidence, he was sentenced to death by hanging. The sentence was carried out on 24 February 1953 at 3 pm.

2. General Fieldorf “Nil” as a model of a mature person in the light of Zdzisław Chlewiński’s concept

The General’s biography is certainly unique, especially from a historical perspective, in terms of his services to Poland. However, this paper focuses on the pedagogical aspect of the General’s person and activity. It deals with the issue of personal role model that Emil Fieldorf can be in educating to maturity.

This study adopts an axiological perspective, according to which maturity is something valuable, something worth striving for, growing up to throughout life. Such an approach is characteristic of the concept of personality maturity by Zdzisław Chlewiński (1991).

Chlewiński proposed a three-dimensional concept of personality maturity, which, as he stresses, is one and not the only possible one. In formulating these dimensions, the author referred primarily to Gordon Allport’s theory, which treats in a special way the human capacity for autonomy and insight into one’s own motivation. Other researchers referred to by Chlewiński included Abraham Maslow and Viktor Frankl.

Chlewiński detailed the following determinants of a mature personality:

- treating the other person according to a personalistic approach, i.e. as a person, as a value in itself; the opposite of such an attitude is an instrumental, tool-like approach;
- autonomy in thought and action;
- an honest, unadulterated insight into the motivation behind their thoughts and actions.

In the further part of this work, it is shown that General August Emil Fieldorf perfectly fulfils the above-mentioned criteria of maturity and can be a personal model in upbringing to values.

Chlewiński’s concept is worth using in further analyses of potential candidates for being a model of a truly mature person.

2.1. General Fieldorf “Nil” as a model of a man with a personal, allocentric attitude towards another

A truly mature person aims at sacrificial love, directed towards others, devoid of egoism. “The essential feature of a mature personality is first of all allocentric (the opposite of egocentric) attitude towards people, the ability to treat them as persons, i.e. as unquantifiable, non-exchangeable values, and thus in such a way that eliminates the danger of treating a person as a tool for achieving any personal goals” (Chlewiński, 1991, p. 21).

A mature individual is able to create and gradually creatively implement a project of his/her life taking into account its typically human character (Nowak, 1999). This project should serve not only her, but also other people, which is possible only with the constant activation of such qualities as empathy, generosity, sensitivity to others, altruism, willingness to endure suffering for the good of others, the ability to give up one’s own needs, sharing with others. A mature person is able to “be for another person” (Rynio, 2012, p. 62).

General’s wife, Janina Fieldorf, emphasized that Emil was generous in giving to others and able to share what he had. He helped her mother and siblings when they fell into financial decline after the death of their father. Here are the words of Janina Fieldorf: “He turned out to be an extremely noble and good man (...). Until his siblings became independent, he contributed to the upkeep of such a large family and never let me feel that it was a burden for him” (Zachenter, 2018, p. 107).

The General was capable of sacrifice and of fighting against the odds. He remained steadfast in his duties, even when they seemed to crush him completely. He felt that he had to perform them, despite the pain and suffering. The upbringing of citizens with such qualities is extremely valuable for society, as it gives a chance that, despite the lack of rewards, someone will do this most difficult work for the Homeland (Roszkowski, 2019, 2020; Zwoliński, 2015).

In educating young people to maturity, it is worth being guided by the example of the General, and especially by the way in which he realised the value of sacrifice for the Homeland. This required a great effort from him. The General is an example of a person who sacrificially remains at his post, despite pain and suffering. Such an attitude contradicts the popular today consumerist approach to life, characterised by an unwillingness to overcome difficulties.

The General's ability to fight against adversity was directed towards higher goals and did not rely solely on the development of a strong will as an end in itself. As Zdzisław Chlewiński emphasises: "Life is not only about a strong will. People with an antisocial, egoistic attitude to others are often characterised by an equally strong will and a certain persistence in action" (Chlewiński, 1991, p. 8).

Ultimately, the higher goals are those which serve the other person. For General Fieldorf, homeland, with its long-awaited freedom, was always understood according to the principle of personalism. For Fieldorf, another human being, including his subordinate soldiers, was never a means to an end. In this sense, the General's attitude differed from that of many military leaders, who, even if they were attached to their soldiers, in the end often treated them instrumentally. Przemysław Wywiał, referring to a staff memo containing an opinion on Fieldorf in the 1920s, quotes the following description of the General: "He is distinguished (...) by an absolute lack of careerist traits in the form of nodding to superiors. He knows how to live with soldiers and raise them in the love of discipline and order; he is very popular among his subordinates. Calm, tactful, hard-working; possesses great economic skills. General evaluation: extraordinary" (Wywiał, 2013, p. 5).

Fieldorf's actions were not instrumental or servile in nature. The General also shunned an excessive sense of importance and snobbery. In his approach to others, whether superiors or subordinates, it was evident that he realised the value of the dignity of one's neighbour, where one's position and rank played a secondary role.

2.2. General Fieldorf "Nil" as a model of an autonomous man in thought and action, internally free

A mature person is characterised by inner autonomy. He is able to go beyond his own desires and needs, engaging in pro-social activity that directs his life. Undoubtedly, for Fieldorf such an activity was an active engagement in fighting for a free Poland. Such a Poland was the goal of his life. This goal was formed relatively quickly, already at the age of 17. Until then, young Fieldorf had problems with using his incredible energy. As his wife recalls: "In secondary school he had constant quarrels with teachers, was unruly, regarded school as a godsend, truant and, although very talented, often got failing grades (...). Emil later explained that the atmosphere in Krakow schools was so gloomy, so musty, that he could not stand it and often ran away to play truant" (Wywiał, 2013, p. 1).

In turn, his leadership qualities became apparent quite quickly. As the General's wife further emphasises: "He was the soul and initiator of various pranks, jokes, fights. A whole bunch of his peers in Lubicz Street and adjacent streets, not enjoying the best fame, had him as their leader" (Wywiał, 2013, p. 1).

The teenage Fieldorf's energy was put to good use when he joined the Riflemen's Association, which trained future servicemen and educated them in the patriotic spirit. It was here that Fieldorf finally felt at home, fulfilled, with an increasingly clear vision of what he wanted to pursue in life. He was greatly supported by being with people who thought like him, as reflected in the following words of his wife: "At last he found an outlet for his inexhaustible energy—Janina Fieldorf later recounted—at last he found himself among people who, like him, believed that no one would give independence to Poles, but they

had to fight for it with their weapons. How eagerly he ran to assemblies and listened to lectures, learning to use weapons” (Wywiał, 2013, p. 2).

The General was brought up in a family with a pro-social, patriotic attitude. His parents supported him in his plans, thus shaping his life orientation as a Polish soldier actively fighting for the freedom of his homeland. Seeing his passion for fighting and any physical activity, they allowed him to participate in scouting and shooting organizations. As already mentioned, Emil joined the “Strzelec” Society. He was 17 at the time. This organisation, created by Kazimierz Sosnowski (inspired by Józef Piłsudski), was a non-commissioned officer school, where the future general received military training and completed a lower officer course. Then, as a 19-year-old, in August 1914, he joined the nucleus of the Polish Army that Józef Piłsudski was creating. The words testifying to the attitude of the General’s parents upon hearing of their son’s decision are significant: “The parents did not object. The mother cried, but made frantic searches to properly send her son off, while the father declared briefly: ‘Well, go—I would have gone myself if it weren’t for the family’” (Zachenter, 2018, p. 106).

The content of this quotation confirms that Emil’s parents, despite their fears and anxieties about their son, accepted his choices and supported their implementation. Thus Emil’s upbringing demonstrates his parents’ ability to reconcile two seemingly contradictory tasks: raising their son to be independent and maintaining a sense of community with his parents. This skill is a very important determinant of coping with parental tasks during the child’s adolescence (Boyd, Bee, 2008). The described parents’ attitude contributed to the consolidation of young Emil’s life orientation linked to a specific vision of himself in the future—as a man actively fighting for Poland’s freedom, a brave officer.

Fieldorf was a soldier who had reached the highest military rank in the military hierarchy—that of General. The autonomy of his actions cannot therefore be analysed in isolation from the fact that he was a high-ranking military officer, from whom, by definition, courage and the ability to create far-reaching plans, often later implemented in dangerous, life-threatening conditions, are required.

That Fieldorf was a courageous man is confirmed by the following words of his superior during his military activities in the 1920s: “He is distinguished by his courage, his ability to make quick decisions, his prudence in moments of danger” (Wywiał, 2013, p. 5).

Courage was one of the leading traits attesting to the General’s capacity for autonomy, but it was accompanied by other traits that gave momentum to the actions taken: self-confidence, ambition, ability to take risks. The traits mentioned above are associated with a high concentration on the self. If not tempered by traits focused on others (devotion, generosity), they can lead to selfish actions, domination, excessive control and exploitation of others (Oldham, Morris, 2014). In the General’s case, the uniqueness, magnetism and charm of his personality was precisely this mixture: ambition, panache and confidence, combined with generosity and altruism.

In soldiers, who by definition operate in challenging situations, one can see the trait of adventurism, understood as the willingness to take risks, the desire to experience strong sensations, perceiving danger in terms of a challenge (Oldham, Morris, 2014, p. 239). For the average person in difficult circumstances, there is a fear of what might happen unexpectedly. In contrast, for an individual with a high capacity for risk-taking in a threatening situation, self-confidence and the desire for powerful experiences are activated. As John Oldham and Lois Morris point out, for the strictly adventurous individual the most important things are their own experiences and living in the moment uninterrupted by looking at others (Oldham, Morris, 2014, p. 239).

Some risk-taking tendencies were characteristic of Fieldorf, but never to the extent that he thoughtlessly put others in danger. This was prevented by his other personality traits, such as devotion and self-sacrifice. These are qualities that allow one to see the good in others.

Again, it is worth emphasising that this peculiar mixture of traits is fascinating in the General’s personality: on the one hand, readiness to take risks, bravery, goal orientation and decisiveness. The aforementioned traits are very attractive to those around him, because people who possess them are often so-called successful, intrinsically driven people with above-average

achievements. On the other hand, the General was characterised by altruism and generosity, which helped him to realise the value of love for others.

2.3. General Fieldorf “Nil” as a model of a person having reliable insight into himself

Self-insight involves a realistic knowledge of one’s own motivation, without rigid, excessive use of defence mechanisms. This approach allows one to stand in truth before one’s own limitations and to accept them. A person with a reliable insight into himself is said to be real, not pretending, simply being himself regardless of circumstances. Such an attitude is often met with admiration, sympathy and kindness from those around him, as evidenced by the following opinion about Fieldorf: “He was loved by non-commissioned officers and soldiers because he could never worry too much about buttons or an unbuttoned coat or an inaccurately cleaned shoe. He believed that the attitude of the soldier, his awareness, was more important. He controlled nutrition and required that weapons be properly maintained. He was bored and annoyed by the meticulous garrison regulations. He sometimes had conflicts with officers on duty because he walked in the park without a cap or did not salute someone. He would then come back angry and say that for him the army is good in wartime, but very oppressive in peacetime’ (Zachenter, 2018, p. 5).

Self-insight is about discernment, understanding one’s own most important principles in life, motives for behaviour, ideals. This discernment also concerns the hierarchy of values. Especially in dramatic, life-threatening situations, this hierarchy is subjected to verification. Then, it is no longer possible to avoid the final answer to the question: what is really most important for me? In the case of the General, this answer was given again and again after the end of the war. Fieldorf’s maturity was tested again, because the end of the war was particularly dramatic for him. Many people in the world were celebrating, while for the representatives of the Polish independence underground, the period of roundups, traps, deportation to NKVD camps, and then torture and finally death, began. After the war, the Non-Combatant Soldiers quickly realised that the

worst was yet to come, and that it was coming from the new political system in Poland and its representatives. Immediately after the end of the war, in March 1945, the General, unrecognised and under an assumed name (Walenty Gdanicki), was deported to an NKVD camp deep in the Soviet Union. He spent two and a half years there in inhuman conditions. As it turns out, in this monstrous situation, the General’s hierarchy of values was further consolidated, with the good of others, honour and freedom of the Homeland always at the top. These values were realised by Fieldorf in the context of an encounter with another human being. The General realised the value of humanity by—as Mieczysław Gogacz would put it—remaining in a relationship with another person (Gogacz, 1999). In the circumstances of the Gulag, this was a relationship with fellow prisoners, deportees. What speaks in favour of imitating the General are not only his views, but also his actions realised in relationship with other people. At this point it is worth quoting the words of one of the exiles: “His greatest sanctity is his own and the nation’s honour. His absolute is Poland. His programme was deed for her and constant burning. His everyday style was exemplary comradeship and friendship shown to people (...). He did not let anyone beat him in helping the weak. Where there was a breakdown, he went with a good word, and where there was a fall, he supported and literally carried. If he obtained even a small piece of bread, he did not touch it until he found friends with whom he could share it. The same happened with cigarettes, and it must be admitted that he was a passionate smoker” (Wywiiał, 2013, p. 13-14).

In the most important moments of his life, the General was faithful to the values: Homeland and the other man. This fidelity to professed values protected him from the so-called conflict of conscience and pejorative axiological actions, such as conscious, negative changes in the hierarchy of values, including confusion or conscious rearrangement of their order (Denek, 2010). The value of the highest rank, that of the good of one’s neighbour, was always the most precious to Fieldorf.

In the literature there are many divisions of values, where one of them is the division into declared and realised values. A great challenge for upbringing is to support the pupil in his development in such a way that in his life there is a correspondence between

actions and declared values (Chalas, 2006). On the example of General Fieldorf's life we can see, and this should be conveyed in the process of upbringing, that for living according to the highest values one often pays a high price. In Fieldorf's case, during his stay in the camp, the price was inhuman treatment, starvation, hard labour and irreversible loss of health. Eventually, after returning to Poland, he lost his life in the struggle for the highest values.

General Fieldorf "Nil" as a model of a mature person can mobilize for imitation. In the further part of the work, the question of how to encourage other people, especially young people, to imitate such an extraordinary man was considered.

3. Strategies to help accept General Fieldorf "Nil" as a model of a mature person

Passing on the values in upbringing process requires answering to the following questions: How to communicate values in a fruitful way? Are there any strategies that can help educators? If we assume that General Fieldorf may be a model of a person to whom it is worthwhile to be like, how can we encourage others to do the same, especially the youth? Marian Nowak lists three strategies to help educators in this process: dissonance, certification, and stimulation (Nowak, 1999).

3.1. The dissonance strategy

The dissonance strategy makes use of unpleasant emotional experiences resulting from the incompatibility between the individual's previous experiences and judgements on a particular topic and his current sphere of experiences and judgements. "Being confronted with (...) information that contradicts the previous information, the educated person comes to the awareness of the existence in himself of an internal inconsistency in the system of values, the existence of which he was not aware" (Nowak, 1999, p. 423).

In an era of widespread relativism and struggle for adaptation, the attitude of General "Nil" confirms that one can be a hero and sacrifice one's own

life for other people. This attitude is likely to cause cognitive dissonance in young people who are not yet manicured enough for their conscience not to tell them that the ability to adapt to external conditions, while often useful, cannot be an end in itself. The General's courageous conduct, though it led to his tragic death, must fascinate, terrify and attract at the same time. It confirms that the unquestionable realisation of the highest values is possible. The General's attitude made a shocking impression even on Witold Gatner, one of the prosecutors taking part in Fieldorf's trial. Gatner recounts the final course of the sentence as follows: "I was nervous, tense. I felt that my legs were shaking. The convict was looking me in the eye the whole time. He was standing upright. No one was supporting him. After reading out the documents, I asked the convict if he had any wish. To this Fieldorf replied: "Please inform the family". I stated that the family would be notified. I asked again if he still had any wishes. He replied that he did not. At that point I said: "I order the execution of the sentence". The executioner and one of the guards approached the condemned man. It all happened in a flash. (...) I would describe the convict's attitude as dignified. He made an impression of a very dignified man. One could simply admire his composure in the face of such a dramatic event. He did not shout or make any gestures. After the execution, probably after a few minutes, the doctor ordered the body to be lowered to the ground. Then the corpse lay on the floor for about 20 minutes. We stood nearby, silent. After this time had passed, the doctor looked at the corpse and conducted a brief examination. He declared: I confirm the death. It was 3.25 pm" (Wywiał, 2013, p. 23).

The General's attitude confirms that maturity cannot be seen in narrow terms of good adaptation. This ability, somewhat rightly considered a sign of mental health, treated as an end in itself may ultimately result in extreme conformism. Someone could say that the General had the opportunity to adapt to the changed political conditions and thus avoid death. It is known that Fieldorf resisted this temptation to conformism and remained true to his ideals. Although tormented, he did not betray anyone and, spending the last years of his life in prison, rejected

cooperation with Stalin's security service. This was not without internal struggle, especially when he saw how powerful the Stalinist opponent was. "Knowing in depth the methods of the NKVD, brought alive in Poland, he fell into doubt and powerlessness in the face of the methods of falsehood, hypocrisy and distortion of facts used. With nervous steps he walked from door to window and from window to door, several hundred times until he was exhausted (...). The need for an outlet for such accumulated energy was connected with internal, concealed anxiety; after all, he had left behind a loving wife, a faithful companion and children who loved him. This was not a state caused by fear for himself, for his sentence, or even for the loss of his life. He was tormented by monstrosities, accusations devastating the soldier's honour and, above all, helplessness" (Wywiał, 2013, p. 17).

The content of the above fragment confirms that maturity does not presuppose a permanent sense of peace and psychological comfort. Chlewiński emphasises that maturity cannot be identified with the absence of internal struggle, conflicts and tensions in human life (Chlewiński, 1991). On the contrary, in a situation such as the above, an internal struggle must occur, so as not to commit an axiological offence and, despite the tragic external conditions, to act in accordance with the professed hierarchy of values (Denek, 2010).

3.2. Certification strategy

The personal role model is the highest quality of the testimonial strategy (May, 2006). This strategy uses the mechanism of identification with a person who is presented as a model of certain behaviours (Nowak, 1999). At the beginning it may be only simple imitation, ultimately this mechanism leads to experiencing the presented character in a deeper, more mature way. However, activation of this mechanism is only possible when the presented character genuinely embodies the postulated values, when there is an unquestionable correspondence between the declaration of certain values and actual life. Teenagers in particular are sensitive to any kind of falsity, lack of authenticity. The model must therefore be chosen

with a standard of sincerity and credibility. In the process of upbringing to values, it is fundamental to come into contact with someone truly great, someone who is able to imprint himself in the memory and initiate the process of transformation (Nowak, 1999).

In the General's life, the period in which he ultimately bore the greatest witness was the time of the prosecution. After the war, the General was one of the most wanted soldiers by the secret police. In 1950 he was maliciously arrested. He was accused of absurdity: will of forcible overthrow of the state system. Tormented, he did not denounce anyone. When asked about the role of his significant collaborators in the fight against the German occupier, he explained himself with oblivion, cited insignificant facts, and referred to generally known facts (Wywiał, 2013). All this in order not to give anyone up, despite the violence and starvation he suffered.

In the case of General, it is noteworthy that his activity was characterised by the presence of extremely courageous actions (when intimidated and tormented, he defended his cause to the very end) and actions aimed at realising the value of love for one's neighbour (he would not give anyone away at the cost of his life). His courage was thus realised in the context of a constant readiness to make a sacrifice for his neighbour.

Worth emphasising are the words concerning the lack of concern for his fate, including the loss of life. The General thought more about his loved ones (his wife and children) than about himself.

In the case of the General, the death was as exemplary as it was dramatic and was a testimony to his entire life. The Stalinist authorities offered him to disclose the list of all the former Home Army soldiers he knew in exchange for saving his life. The General resolutely refused. Even in the worst of circumstances, he remained an altruist, for whom the good of others was one of the key values. He paid the highest price for this attitude. It is worth quoting the cruel court verdict, unambiguous in its meaning: "If that's the case, it's all over between us. You did not take advantage of an incredible opportunity. You could have saved lives for almost nothing. Now we no longer need you. You will regret it. You will hang" (Wywiał, 2013, p. 15-16).

3.3. Stimulation strategy

This mechanism requires finding values to which the pupil is already susceptible, which he has already noticed and is not alien to him, but does not know how to embody them in his own life (Nowak, 1999).

Fieldorf as a role model may mobilize the youth to imitate him, especially in the context of his courage. Courage is a conscious, bold attitude towards danger. A synonym for courage is bravery, fearlessness, fortitude, which may impress, in particular, boys and young men.

The General bore witness to his courage throughout his life. As a teenager he was already active in the rifle organisation. The number of battles in which he participated as a 20-year-old is impressive. He fought at: Czarkow, Chyżówki, Budy Michałowski, Łowczówek (here he was wounded), Kozinek, on the Nida River, at Konary, Ożarów, Jastkow, Kamionki, on the Stochód River (Wywiół, 2013). For his bravery in the battle of Hulewiczami, at the age of 23, he was awarded the *Virtuti Militari* order of V class. At the end of World War I, he participated in the process of disarming the Austrians in Malopolska, and fought against the Ukrainians near Lviv and Przemyśl. Then he took part in battles against the Bolsheviks: in Lithuania (for Vilnius), in Latvia, for Białystok, for Berenika and Staworowo, near Sejny, for Lida and Nowogródek, near Korelicz (Wywiół, 2013). At the same time he was promoted to the rank of first lieutenant and then captain. He was assessed by his superiors as an extraordinary officer of incredible courage (Wywiół, 2013).

In the case of a role model, there should be a correspondence between their authentic life and their declarations. How easy it is to be courageous only in words! In today's post-modern times, the ubiquitous verbal propaganda has caused the devaluation of words and any declarations, they mean less and less, and the speakers who proclaim them are not taken very seriously (Nowak, 1999).

General Fieldorf "Nil" cannot be taken unseriously. The number of battles in which he took part and the appraisal given by his superiors speak for themselves and may impress not only young people.

The actions commanded by the General, especially those carried out within Kedyw, are impressive in their momentum, bravura and effectiveness. Here, for educational purposes, it would be worth pointing out that the momentum of Fieldorf's actions was inscribed in his service to his fellow man. The General was not one of those authoritarian people who seek, above all, confirmation of their own self in the actions they undertake. Fieldorf combined bravado with caution in using the lives of his soldiers.

Summary

General Emil Fieldorf "Nil", the representative of the Steadfast Soldiers, is a model of a mature person. He fulfilled the criteria for maturity of personality listed by Chlewiński: he treated other people as an intrinsic value, was autonomous in thought and action, and was characterized by a reliable insight into himself. In order to mobilise other people, in particular young people, to imitate the General, it is worth using the previously described strategies: dissonance, imitation and stimulation.

Emil Fieldorf treated his maturity as a task, as something that had to be constantly worked on. He imposed huge demands on himself, which activated the process of self-education (self-development). General's maturity was particularly evident towards the end of his life, when, as a soldier of the Polish independence and anti-communist underground, he was tortured, unjustly accused of betraying his country and finally sentenced to death by hanging.

If we want to be like him, we should remember that one can never stop working on oneself. Whoever claims to be already formed in his maturity is mistaken, because man continues to grow and develop until death. Death is the last stage of man's life, and the example of the General shows how difficult an exam it can be. The General passed this exam with flying colours. His whole earlier life was a preparation for this final moment. In this sense, Fieldorf "Nil" is a representative of that group of people about whom, several decades later, Cardinal Wyszyński said that they knew how to both live beautifully and die beautifully (Rynio, 2018).

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