

## Crisis of democracy and education reforms in Poland after 30 years of political transformation\*

### *Kryzys demokracji i reformy edukacji w Polsce po 30 latach politycznej transformacji*

#### **Summary:**

In this article I explain the reasons for betrayal of elites in the context of fundamental assumptions of the “Solidarity” movement in the years of 1980-1989. As a result, Polish society abandoned the deliberative and participatory democracy. I look at how education as a science and practice of education fits into democratization of the Polish state and society. The key meaning for me has the perception of education as a common good, as environments and entities, institutions or management practices which participate in the democratic society.

In the transition period in Poland from 1989 till 2019 education did not become a source of ongoing changes in the country. I make a critical analysis of educational policy in Poland during the 30 years of the political transformation.

#### **Keywords:**

educational reforms, educational policy, critical pedagogy, school, democracy, contradiction, educational perpetrators, educational policy

#### **Streszczenie:**

W artykule Autor wyjaśnia powody tzw. zdrady elit w kontekście fundamentalnych założeń ruchu Solidarności. Wskutek tego polskie społeczeństwo porzuciło demokrację deliberatywną i partycypacyjną. Autor analizuje jak edukacja, jako nauka i praktyka edukacji, wpasowuje się w demokratyzację polskiego państwa i społeczeństwa. Kluczowe znaczenie dla Autora ma postrzeganie edukacji jako powszechnego dobra, jako środowiska, instytucji i praktyki zarządzania, które uczestniczą w społeczeństwie demokratycznym.

W okresie transformacji w Polsce w okresie od 1989 roku do 2019 edukacja nie stała się źródłem zachodzących zmian w kraju. Autor dokonuje krytycznej analizy polityki edukacyjnej w Polsce w czasie 30 lat politycznej transformacji.

#### **Słowa kluczowe:**

reformy edukacyjne, polityka oświatowa, pedagogika krytyczna, demokracja, opór, nadzór pedagogiczny

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## 1. Introduction

The political transformations initiated in Poland in 1989 enabled the change of the state's political system, including (also educational) administration. The question was raised then whether (and if so – to what extent) it would be possible to elaborate and present a coherent and complex concept of the Polish educational system in its final shape. It is difficult to reform education if, within the state of relatively modern but quasi-democratic authoritarianism, there is no well-organized and efficient system of education, which would remain under social control and public administration service above the level of political parties. Without decentralization and independence of school education as well as without its society based management, Polish education will not get out of its deeply rooted remnants of homosovietism and will not be able to construct modern and effective teaching and moral education of young generations of Poles. Such education will not take up the challenges of post-modernity as the paternalistic role of the state in the educational policy draws back social and individual development by the participation of education, although the next political reform is implemented under the apparent care for children's good.

What has been reached for in my archives is, kept almost as a talisman, Ewa Szumańska's article from 1989 (when censorship was still binding in Poland), cut off *Tygodnik Powszechny* [Common Weekly]. She warned Poles of what is experienced today: "Let's take care not to allow the system which is going away to gain postmortal victory. Let it not stay within us, changed in its way. Within us – little sly dogs, pitiful creeps, unable to work any longer, waiting for others to give, arrange, so that it could get on its own into the hands of – feeble scammers, cowardly informers, clumsy misfits, envious people, bribe-takers, backscratchers, false and conflicted people, people eaten away by ambition and mean-spirited. Then this system – though it will not exist anymore – will settle in and survive and history will burst with mocking laughter and show us the big fig". Really, the system showed us the fig. An unwanted prophecy has been fulfilled.

## 2. The analyses of the political transformation commencement

Undertaking an analysis of the early years of the transformation towards a democratic country and free-market economy in the Polish People's Republic, Edmund Wnuk-Lipiński, a sociologist, was fully aware of the lack of theor-

etical models for conducting social studies in this field<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, sociologists had to apply some available analytical models, out of which each allowed for capturing the typical – of this system of determinants – processes and mechanisms occurring within it as well as their consequences. The totalitarian model enabled the description and explanation of the socialist system in macro-political categories. The structural-functionalist model completed the knowledge concerning the institutional role of the authorities and social structures in the process of taking political decisions by them. The model of political culture facilitated the studies on citizens' attitudes and behaviour patterns in a totalitarian state, whereas the developmental model-oriented researchers towards its evolving, depending on economic, social, etc. changes. Pluralistic models, as the antinomies of some models of totalitarian states, were useful for noticing various groups of interests, for the development of corporationalism, local authorities, etc. Finally, the bureaucracy model allowed for explaining the functioning of the administration apparatus and the structures of political rule in the state, while the model of the "patron-client" relation enabled taking into account in social diagnoses the phenomena associated with reaching the ruling power and developing (within it) various influences, paternalism, corruption, nepotism, etc.<sup>3</sup>

In the late 2000s, while I was taking part in some team studies concerning teachers in post-communist countries as victims and perpetrators of manipulation, the researchers had to elaborate the theoretical assumptions for the diagnosis which would allow them to verify their state of attitudes and experiences as a hypothetical remnant of the homo sovieticus syndrome<sup>4</sup>. At that time, we reached for two theoretical models for diagnosing and interpreting teachers' attitudes in Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia – the psychological theory of manipulation<sup>5</sup> and Jürgen Habermas's philosophical theory of human rationality<sup>6</sup>. If we had wanted to examine teachers' level of engagement into educational changes, innovativeness or creativity, we would have had to reach for different theoretical foundations, which would have allowed for proper interpretation of empirical data. However, the set of available theoretic-

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<sup>2</sup> E. Wnuk-Lipiński, *Demokratyczna rekonstrukcja z socjologii radykalnej zmiany społecznej*, Warszawa 1996.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 17-18.

<sup>4</sup> *Nauczyciel w krajach postsocjalistycznych jako sprawca i ofiara manipulacji. Studium teoretyczno-empiryczne*, ed. A. Wróbel, Łódź 2010.

<sup>5</sup> R. Cialdini, *Wywieranie wpływu na ludzi. Teoria i praktyka*, Gdańsk 1996; A. Grzywa, *Manipulacja. Mechanizmy psychologiczne*, Kraśnik 1997; R.V. Joule, J.K. Beauvois, *Gra w manipulacje. Wywieranie wpływu dla uczuciowych*, Gdańsk 2006; A. Wróbel, *Wychowanie a manipulacja*, Kraków 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in: R. Kwaśnica R. *Dwie racjonalności. Od filozofii sensu ku pedagogice ogólnej*, Wrocław 1987.

al models was limited, because the process of transformation, resulting from grassroots but peaceful revolution, did not find supporters of its exploration within pedagogical sciences. In the debate on the research results, Monika Popow rightly indicated that what could be used for the analysis of macropolitical determinants of teachers' work after the political transformation were the assumptions of post-colonial pedagogy, which undertook the emancipation of teachers in the school system<sup>7</sup>.

Therefore, the researchers' interest was in "decolonization of teachers' minds", until recently dominated by the practices of totalitarian rule. This was aimed at studying the feeling of objectification and of being manipulated or of conscious self-effectiveness or co-effectiveness in manipulating others. "Thus, postcolonial teachers have the task to deconstruct the concepts of eternal fight between various groups – normal citizens and social pathology, the governing and the governed, winners and losers"<sup>8</sup>. In the post-socialist state, teachers should take active part in the process of transformation towards democracy so that both the learners and their parents can recognize the possibilities of participation in co-deciding about the quality of kindergarten and school education as well as become active actors in these processes.

While diagnosing teachers' level of adaptation (submissiveness, being a victim of manipulation) or emancipation (sovereignty) on a sample of 376 people working in all types of schools and with different degrees of career promotion in three post-communist countries, it turned out that: "(...) 12% of teachers presents 0 – 20% of manipulative behaviour patterns. Among the vast majority of teachers (70%), manipulative behaviour patterns constitute 20 – 40% of all the behaviour. Teachers whose majority of behaviour consists of manipulative behaviour patterns constitute 15.2 %."<sup>9</sup>

It was possible to diagnose a significant interdependence between teachers' manipulative behaviour patterns towards learners and all the indicators of job burnout. It turned out that, for instance, the higher teachers' level of job burnout was, the more intensive tendency to manipulation they had. It would be very interesting to find out to what extent teachers present submissive attitudes in relations with educational supervisors or learners' parents, in which teachers become victims of their manipulation. This only confirms that the education-

<sup>7</sup> M. Popow, *Między kolonizacją a dekolonizacją – Zadania szkoły po transformacji ustrojowej w świetle założeń pedagogiki postkolonialnej*, [in]: *Nauczyciel w krajach postsocjalistycznych jako sprawca i ofiara manipulacji. Studium teoretyczno-empiryczne*, ed. A. Wróbel, Łódź 2010.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 53.

<sup>9</sup> A. Śliwerski, *Uwarunkowania zachowań manipulacyjnych nauczycieli. Analiza statystyczna*, [in]: *Nauczyciel w krajach postsocjalistycznych*, ed. A. Wróbel, Łódź, p. 247.

al environment is affected by market – but antagonistic – competition, which causes that: “(...) their common fate was exposed at the mercy of an impetuous game of market powers, making the lack of long-term economic and social policy the only policy”<sup>10</sup>. In the neoliberal state, people have been discouraged from citizen activity and youth is exercised and socialized into faking it. My studies on the lack of socialization of school education, including children and youth, clearly confirm the breakdown and deep crisis of citizen education<sup>11</sup>.

### **3. Lack of democratization in the school education of the Republic of Poland**

In the light of my research, carried out for 30 years, into democratization of public education, it can be confirmed that Poles still live in a centralized state. What is still active in this state are some parts of the ruling elites (aptly called by Leszek Balcerowicz the “soviet activist”) which keep making the law that has remained from the previous system, but the former models of centralism have been replaced by statism, kept hidden by the authorities<sup>12</sup>. The period of socialist statehood must have consolidated the tradition of hostile attitudes to state authorities among Poles for many years. Yet, among a large part of the pedagogical environment, it also enhanced the feeling of omnipotence (e.g. ideological categories: teachers – nation’s educators, or legal categories: pedagogical sovereignty), of the superiority of ruling authorities and institutions over the people they should serve.

When looking back and postponing at least for a while the own interests, animosities and ideological or axionormative differences, it can be noticed that the school system in the Third Republic of Poland (3rd RP) has not been subjected to a deep and politically (in the constitutional and statutory pro-democratic – for education – sense) intentional reform. This results from the elimination by the consecutive ministers from the process of change of the answer to the fundamental (for the type and size of the changes) question of general political nature: Why is the school system not subjected to democratizing (socializing) processes but has had to and will still have to keep the status quo – to stay within the state’s disguised unfulfilled political prerequisites and the assumed functions of Polish education? This process of conservation in

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<sup>10</sup> A. Szahaj, *Kapitalizm drobnego druku*, Warszawa 2014, p. 17.

<sup>11</sup> B. Śliwerski, *Diagnoza uspołecznienia publicznego szkolnictwa III RP w gorsecie centralizmu*, Kraków 2013.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*.

education and with its participation of different types of despotic rule, its monopolizing inner “hardware” reforms (infrastructural ones – ownership relations, economy, management, equipment) and “software” reforms (Heliodor Muszyński’s term), which comprise the curriculum, social relations (untouchable hierarchy and authoritarianism, the antagonized teachers’ environment e.g. by the system of career promotion, penitentiary nature of pedagogical supervision, etc.) and non-participatory cooperation of all actors of education make the society totally disoriented. This takes place within chaos and mutually exclusive solutions, inadequate to the state of knowledge concerning the development of children and youth or the methodologies of their education.

It is not without significance whether educational, transformational reforms are made with the main actors of the change or against them or one of them. As my analyses of the state’s educational policy over the last twenty-five years show, it is not possible to change school and its educational process if the boundary, system-wide conditions of its functioning are from a different political epoch and culture. Undoubtedly, it is possible to consume individually or institutionally the so-called material aid for school education by feigning changes and by their fragmentary exemplifications, which appear and disappear along with the inflow or its lack of financial resources from the EU. Yet, this does not substantially affect the developmental prospects of education that precede what is taking place “here and now”. The EU resources pumped into education improve only the material condition of their beneficiaries, mostly project contractors, but they do not enhance the activation of self-regulative, self-creative and innovative processes, because as regards the system – it still involves supervision and control, standardization and the limitation of the activity of subjects responsible for the quality of education.

Even the project of educational leaders or leadership crashes against the glass pane of bureaucratically executed authoritarianism, which allows the educational authorities to use the school system to manipulate the society. The fundamental cause of this status quo is the educational macro-policy of the Polish state, which involves the control of business and educational authorities acting as the corporation pyramid. It does not surprise that those drawing the profits at the top would not give them up on their own. This is not what they aimed at while climbing for power. For the system of school education, the effects of resigning from a system reform of education as supplementation of the state administration reform were the following:

- maintaining the dualistic public administration, with its division into government and local authority. With the lack of consensus and

a coherent common strategy and tasks for both organs, this brings about unceasing conflicts and a counterproductive policy concerning educational management, executing pedagogical supervision by local authorities (organs running educational institutions). It should not surprise that the educational policy is not coherent and uniform, especially in these voivodships where government and local authorities are from opposing political formations;

- partial decentralization of tasks and competencies towards local authorities but resulting in a war between the territorial administration and government, triggered by increasing tasks and decreasing subventions for them;
- within the system of public administration, restoring the (typical of socialism) policy of statism and suppressing the principle of subsidiarity of tasks and competences in managing education. The recent rule of PO (Civic Platform) and PSL (Polish People's Party) in 2007-2015 confirmed that the ruling authorities did not take into account the social opinion and citizens and that they undertook action against their needs, awareness and expectations (e.g. lowering the obligatory school age, imposing the only possible, so-called "governmental", primer).

Procedural democracy does not allow for distinguishing between democratic and non-democratic systems as it is limited democracy or pseudo-democracy that are situated between the two. An educator can take one of the three positions in the antagonized political world – being an enemy, ally or someone neutral in the relations between the authority and society. It is quite natural that the authorities will strive for allies and people not engaged in the natural social conflict, but fight against enemies. Teachers, as neutral subjects, are important for the authorities only as much as they can be transformed into enemies or allies. This explains the situation which took place after changing the political system in Poland in 1989, as a result of which the educational authorities stopped being interested in teachers as neutral subjects of education.

At first, the authorities acted in such a way in order to free the autonomy of teachers, learners, and their parents as well as to create the foundations for the grassroots process of socializing public education and for strengthening participatory competences of all these subjects in the process of co-deciding about educational quality at schools and transparent solving all problems and conflicts during the course of school education. However, after the return in 1992 of post-socialist political powers (also in education), which were explicitly hos-

tile to democratization and self-governance, the antagonistic relations of educational authorities and representatives of the scientific world were introduced into the political arena and got consolidated there. Since that moment, the ruling authorities have been interested in the restitution of a totalitarian state and in maintaining a centralized educational system. In order to co-manage this system, the focus has been on teachers-allies, mostly from neo-leftist or later neo-conservative formations, with complete ignoring and disdain of the essentially neutral but critically engaged teachers. They have been defined as enemies of the ruling authorities, which – in an unceasing political conflict – needed nothing but allies.

Unfortunately, what still exerts influence in the Polish society is the myth of conflictlessness, avoiding or hiding conflicts so that the rulers would not have to justify their decisions. Yet, such an attitude is typical of totalitarian or authoritarian, not democratic, states. An educator as an enemy in democracy is treated as an alien, who is either tamed, pacified, isolated, stigmatized, excluded, or whose views or research results are maximally neutralized. In the educational system, such teachers enter the non-public sphere, where they can keep their sovereignty – though even there this takes place at the cost of a certain piece of this sovereignty. These teachers' acts are determined by universal, timeless values and norms if they want to keep their independence. Teachers are aware of the distinctiveness of their own existence and profession as well as their consequences for them and the addressees of their activity. They also have the courage to negate the ruling power, which wants – against public interests – to decide what is legally valid and real and what is not allowed in education and social life.

## 4. The position of science in the policy of educational transformations

What should not be practiced is escaping from politics, just the opposite – one should engage in or strengthen the movement of radical change projects which would refer to democracy and the common system of values not to enable the solidification of the political scene of the state and the constant and treacherous manipulation of citizens by the ruling “sly dogs”. In the politics created in this way, people become a means for achieving aims only apparently taking into account their needs and respecting their rights. It is necessary to revalue all values into the new counterculture movement not to allow for the consolidation or advancement of the ideology of merciless social Darwinism.

Not without fault are here the representatives of humanities and social or economic sciences, a part of whom have drifted away from the humanistic sources, being infatuated with mathematical models and the pressure of quantitative approach to (not only economic) phenomena associated with the transformations in the 3rd RP. This is known as the process of categorization, evaluation, accreditation, and parametrization of the sphere which might be approached in the model (idealization) way but in the reality is very distant from it. “Ignoring the complexity of social life and of the humanistic dimension in economy resulted in previous years in expanding arrogance of some economists, especially all kinds of economic experts (mostly of neoliberal and libertarian origin), who lectured their truths as the obvious in the way that allowed no objection and with evident disdain for those who had a different standpoint and a long time before had warned of the approaching crisis”<sup>13</sup>. What can be seen with growing accuracy in education is that the problems of the Polish school system and education of the young are adjusted by state authorities to political interests and goals of international global economic organizations (OECD, World Bank). This can be exemplified in the best way by financing from the state budget the political monitoring of the apparently scientific studies on 15-years-old learners’ skills and knowledge (PISA programme) and even on other age groups of the Polish society<sup>14</sup>. Greed, cynicism, meanness of the rulers can be seen in the distribution of EU resources for development, within such programmes as e.g. “Human Capital”.

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<sup>13</sup> A. Szahaj, p. 54.

<sup>14</sup> B. Śliwerski, Krytycznie o metodologicznych przesłankach udziału naukowców w Międzynarodowym Programie PISA/OECD), „Studia Edukacyjne”, 2016 no. 38, p. 21-42.

It is painful but so true to find out that the elites of the Third Republic of Poland have violated an elementary principle of justice by letting go of guilt the perpetrators of socialist totalitarianism in Poland, by not getting even with the executioners of those times. “The society received a demoralizing signal: no matter what you do in life, if you keep with the stronger, with those who ensure protection and support, you can expect success (...) The beneficiaries of the new system were mostly those who had been well also in the old system. The material success of the representatives of “the only right force” did not result from extraordinary ability or heroic diligence but from the so-called deals and contacts, which turned out to be the most precious economic capital in the new times (many people talked about solidarity so they acted in “solidarity”). Unfortunately, the lesson of “getting of the guilt” and the later success of post-communists has demoralized also the other side of the political arena”<sup>15</sup>.

After 30 years of liberty, demoralization enhanced by the system is still present. A. Szahaj understands this as breaking the fundamental principles of the state of law, democratic state, which is gradually appropriated by interest groups which achieve success owing to certain social arrangements, the access to the office-political and business class, nepotism, bribery, and dishonesty. The demoralization of political classes co-occurs and is supported by treachery of clerks – the part of elites which hope for quick wealth owing to the servile attitude to the authorities. The ruling powers disdain, marginalize, undermine the opinions of critics who do not tolerate the transfer of public money to private hands. What is even worse “(...) academic scholars and intellectualists have disappointed as well, letting themselves believe that without personal wealth they mean nothing, so they took to collecting it with energy, finding neither time nor will to participate in public life; we have all disappointed, being busy with our private matters, ignoring the public sphere, forgetting about a republican principle that good life requires good society – and this can only be achieved when the care for the own good is combined with the care for common good. By turning away with contempt from politics, we have paved the way for people who have turned not worth our trust”<sup>16</sup>.

In cognitive capitalism, *dematerialization of work* takes place – the transition from stable physical or technical work, so far dominating in the economy, to unstable work, without transparent economic relations, and of intellectual, servile nature. This new type of work involves forcing people to act against

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<sup>15</sup> A. Szahaj, p. 72-73.

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem, p. 79.

their interests or values and praising averageness. What is significant here are loyalty, submissiveness, conformism to supervisors and the so-called soft competencies, such as “(...) the skill of manipulating people and their emotions, not manipulating things”<sup>17</sup>. What seems of due significance here is the intervention of the state authority apparatus in deciding what is a science or scientific discipline, in which the authorities are mostly guided by its economic usefulness (lowering the expenses, measurability, standardization, etc). As the author claims: “(...) this is playing according to the imposed rules and using the language that comes from an environment which is hostile to understanding education as a value in itself. (...) subordinating all areas of our life to market logic is a prescription for making it deprived of deeper value (...)”<sup>18</sup>.

## 5. Pedagogy as a servile science

Ever since its beginning, pedagogy – due to its assumed function – has been a part of the sphere of public affairs and goods, associated with the rule of people, institutions and environments over the learning generation, which participates in educational and socializing processes. It is impossible not to refer here, particularly today – in the period of assessing the role of pedagogy in the socio-political transformation of the 3rd RP, to the issue of democracy and its relations with educational sciences and didactic craft. Examining the relations between pedagogy and socio-political processes should be of crucial significance, because without revealing them, without appropriate recognition of their essence and the scope of influence (or its lack) it is not possible to answer the question concerning the direction for which Polish education heads. Therefore, it is necessary for researchers to undertake further macro-political studies on the ruling processes in Poland, including those within education and aimed at it in order to leave Plato’s cave of ignorance and helplessness. Otherwise, what will take place is the process which Jürgen Habermas calls “feudalization” of the public sphere.

Across all the consecutive political formations governing the state, educators as well as representatives of other social sciences in Poland have not used the transformation time which they were offered for strengthening grassroots initiatives and the simulation or protection of socialization processes of the Polish school system and higher education. Education has become an inhibitor

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<sup>17</sup> A. Szahaj, p. 85.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, p. 200.

for Polish democracy and the authorities of the Ministry of National Education have done their best to ruin the efforts of parents and some teachers' and scientific environments aimed at transforming school and introducing into kindergartens not feigned collaboration for the common good. The authorities discourage educational subjects from their authentic participation in decision taking processes, in shaping the educational policy, citizen dialogue and social engagement. The freedom regained by the nation is not given to it for ever. If people want not only to defend but also to consolidate the regained liberties, they – as a society – have to withhold the possibility of violating them, also by the authorities, by civil counterbalance.

What has not changed since the fall of socialism is the situation of educational experts in their relations to the group that makes decisions concerning the implementation of the planned educational change in the Polish school system. Against the statement that it has a public character, in fact the system is still a centralistic structure with a hierarchical organization of rule (supervision). The relations between scientists-experts and the authorities were already focused on in 1987 by Zbigniew Kwieciński, who distinguished three categories: 1) experts who constitute a part of the environment and have been invited or summoned to cooperate (including full time staff of the informational and executive background of the central authorities or some outer specialists treated by them as professional authority), 2) independent specialists, developing the knowledge of education and its changes for the good of education itself, science and society, not for the use of the authorities, 3) critical experts, who in public provide their opinions on the reformers of the centralistic rule and indicate its errors, dysfunctions, pathologies, or who point at the possibilities of alternative reforms, more efficient and functional for the interests of certain large group, or who make attempts to understand what is going on, what has occurred, why and with what effect<sup>19</sup>.

It might be even easier for some scientists to hide behind the manipulated research results (it happens that they are earlier discussed with the authorities of a particular department) to avoid responsibility for political decisions which were based on the so-called scientific expert opinions. A question can be raised whether their silence in the face of the authorities' manipulation – not so much with data (though it sometimes happens too) but mostly with their interpretation – justifies this silence or their excuse that the studies were conducted in compliance with the methodological rigours of social sciences. Who among

<sup>19</sup> Z. Kwieciński, *Wspólnota złudzeń reformatorów oświaty i ich ekspertów*, [in]: [preprint referatu z konferencji naukowej „Badania oświatowe a polityka oświatowa”], Warszawa 1987.

non-experts – average (in the statistical sense) citizens – can find out if this methodology has taken into account all variables, or at least those fundamental for the diagnosed parameter, when scientists themselves hide them behind the fascination with their own interpretations of the obtained data?

Educators who adjust their models, projects or offers to political manipulation with law are servants of political social engineering, they do not serve the essence and quality of the educational process. Often against their own declarations about recognizing multitude and pluralism in the world of ideas, scientists serving political interests of the authorities become fundamentalists, apologists of a one-sided vision of reality which excludes the existence of any other reality. Such an attitude may co-occur with blindness, fanaticism or fervency of the engagement in the only right matter, its promoting and fighting against different ideas. If a political subject is the one who uses the measure required by the current arrangement of powers (someone ready to use anyone to achieve their goals), education – along with pedagogy as a science – can be subordinated to these requirements and be summoned to fight in the public space.

Pedagogy servile to centralistic authority is a kind of pedagogy which instrumentalizes a human being, whose dignity is manifested in being only a means and a certain instrument or “thing” for achieving others’ goals. By creating the educational reality in an antagonistic way, such pedagogy will aim at influencing this reality from the only right and valuable, the own *paidagogia*, no matter whether someone notices, understands and accepts this or not. Its essence is making people dependent, committed to promoting it, making them join the struggle against any other pedagogy, not collaboration with it. Therefore, pedagogy in service becomes also a media and marketing product of contemporary times. It generates its own authorities and ridicules or depreciates others. If educators are unable to persuade others what they need and why this must agree with their ideology, they will cynically create such needs and expectations with the use of social engineering and political manipulation. If such a strategy turns out not to be effective enough, they will start a negative offensive, consisting in triggering fear, anxiety, fearful visions of what can happen if their ideology is not implemented in education.

Pedagogy in service is the pedagogy of submission, of a technical means, a kind of social engineering, which reduces itself or is reduced to utilitarian popularization, to fulfilling direct, instant and clearly defined influence on life. Such pedagogy is aimed at perfect fulfilment of not its goals. Pedagogy in service is the pedagogy of momentariness and present time, it is short-time,

provisional pedagogy typical of primitive tribes, servile to different subjects and interests, it is pedagogy which resigns from its autonomy, constantly seeks the reason for its existence in its outer sources and reacts to problems raised by others in order to solve them effectively. The fascination with effectiveness and the instrumentalization of the indicated goals cause that pedagogy does not notice its “counter-effectiveness” – if achieving particular goals is excessively wanted, the opposite is achieved in fact.

The servile nature of pedagogy as an element of spiritual culture of modern civilization leads to barbarianism by destroying and degrading culture, by decomposing people’s attitude to the world of values. Such pedagogy will always be statist, ideological, subordinated to the interests of the ruling political parties. Unceasingly, the following questions are raised: When will the supremacy (understood in this way) of the ruling party and its ideology over pedagogy end? Why does modern pedagogy formulate a demand to have less state in the Polish state while, at the same time, it gives consent to have more of this state by agreeing the authorities to standardize behaviour patterns and attitudes and to provide procedures as the precaution against the things which they cannot handle? Why professional educators do not contest the overuse of frequent legal regulations in the school system and higher education despite their awareness of the threats and irreversible pathologies which will result from implementing them into educational practice? Does pedagogy have to cover its activities by the principle popular among educators: “as much state and standardization as possible”?

## **6. Pedagogy of society service**

Building pedagogy of society service is based on the counterpoint principle – such pedagogy has to indicate the black side of the opposing pedagogy to evoke objection, rebellion, discord towards it in order to threaten with potential, thus unverifiable here and now, results of its further functioning in society. This pedagogy needs to trigger fascination with itself and rebellion towards any other so that all other pedagogies will fall down, become absent, go out of the stage. It is not possible to be in two systems of ideological reference to pedagogy as this reveals the paradox of human functioning, of being inside and at the same time outside a particular ideology. Pedagogy in service gets limitlessly subordinated to every rule, regardless of its ideology. It is a kind of servile, submissive pedagogy which resigns from its own autonomy.

Researchers should not sell their soul to the devil and undertake action in the name of political correctness or individual aims. This ethical imperative concerns particularly them as they can read and understand, much better than other citizens, the discourse of the authorities which steer the society not always for its good. This is even more important now, when politicians' lies are more and more frequently hidden with the help of subtle public relations techniques – with the use of scientific knowledge. A lie in politics is intentional in the same way as not noticing it by scientists – if they do not reveal it to the society, they support the destruction of both the public sphere and democracy to the same extent as its perpetrators. Unaware of the threats on the part of the authorities, citizens experience not only personal but also social loss, because their sensitivity to dysfunctions and pathologies (developing due to ignoring their real sources) is being suppressed. This sensitivity is a sine qua non for existing in the public sphere in citizen society.

Educators, as neutral subjects in education, who do not impose their standards or research results to make the public debate or decisions their hostage, do not function in the public space, in the educational process, as subjects with the feeling of rightness and moral superiority. Such an educator is someone who is guided not only by the own interest but also by the feeling of the moral value of an act in order to testify the truth. It is much easier to meet such attitudes in deliberative democracy. In the times of brutal intervention of political and economic interests, the need for protecting humanity, its dignity and culture is of crucial significance. Pedagogy of society service should make people aware of the contamination of human minds with falsehood or criminal ideas, it should detoxify human consciousness by unmasking falsehood, bad intentions, ignorance, dehumanizing theories. Such pedagogy ought to enhance the consciousness open to liberty, truth, democracy, good and tolerance, to regenerate the world of social and citizen values, to evoke human conscience and responsibility for the own and others' life. It is a necessity here to protect a person as a free and sovereign being in the relation to the society/state, which is also a sovereign and works for common good.

The role of modern pedagogy of society service should consist in bringing back to life a public human, and – in this way – in the return to building citizen society. Both these categories are destroyed by the ruling group. They do their best, with huge EU financial resources for promotion (social campaigns, locating ideas as products in media) and public relations specialists, not to let content-based arguments clash in the public debate and to substitute this debate

with the “stardom system” in empowering the authorities’ decisions. The more opposing the authorities’ standpoint is (both in terms of public interest and scientific arguments), the more frequent and stronger use of the methods and means of political propaganda takes place – often with the support of celebrities, including some scientists, obedient to this strategy of the rulers. In this situation, educationalists need to join the tackling of numerous myths, constructed and disseminated by the authorities, as well as meaningless statements (announced by intellectual stars), which draw the society’s attention away from many important dangers and damages to which the government’s technocratic politics leads.

As the underground resistance movement against the totalitarian rule in the People’s Republic of Poland, today – in the state with a quasi-democratic school system, there is a new agora. It is a world of virtual protest, parallel to the real world of the authorities’ manipulation, which has the nature of a rhizome and a hyper-text and non-physical structure of the network of interpersonal relations that report the expression of differences from the position of outsiders demystifying the lying and hypocrisy of the ruling authorities. They shift the moral awareness to the elites to make them collaborate apparently within educational modernization and reforms and, in fact, to undertake actions contradicting the values they should serve. Thus, what might be a mistake of educational elites is seeking the chances to join school reforms and the improvement of Polish education within the areas (defined by arrogant and incompetent authorities) of possible activity so that it will not infringe the authorities’ hidden interests which are – as a result of undertaken decisions – contradictory to the national interest.

Yet, scientists can take part in social change staying outside the existing structures of rule, not acting within them, if they are convinced about not only the erroneous assumptions of the designed or implemented reforms but also about their negative consequences. Educators should not keep silent only because some of them have drifted away (for other benefits) from their ethical obligations which they have made (e.g. while receiving the doctoral nomination). What might be taken into consideration is the possibility of “damaging the consensus machinery” if it has been achieved only as a result of political means and economic domination of the ruling authority. Pedagogy should promote shaping competences of children and youth to critical understanding of media and the language of propaganda, including visual texts, which are used by the authorities for excessive control of the society and for not letting

liberation aspirations of various social groups be associated with the dimension of the common “good”.

## 7. Conclusions

In a democratic state, intellectuals should blow up the stereotypes and solutions which limit human sovereignty and public communication, resist and express the fears, views, feelings or opinions of those who fear the consequences of their own courage. A critical educator should take the position of an “uninvited outsider”, independent from the expert’s authority, who will question the imposed appearance and falsehood, reveal “the death kiss from the establishment” acting for the collaboration with the rulers despite considerable differences of standpoints. In the opposite case, by keeping silence, educators accept the state of growing pathology and become its co-perpetrators. In erosion affected democracy, this becomes a consent to develop politically correct nomenclature, which can be fought against only by opposing the attempts to pack the elites into the framework of the authorities’ interests. It is impossible to change the existing pathology by participating in its processes in collaborative activity.

What seems necessary is breaking the consensus machinery to stop citizens’ indifference. Unfortunately, some educationalists, psychologists and, in a growing number, sociologists were degraded (of their own will) to submissive attitudes by yielding to the neoliberal authorities and providing them with selected – thus manipulated – transformations in the last decade. This is the reason why the authorities overuse the terms “collaboration” and “good practices”, washing them away of their right sense, giving them the meanings which slyly hide the truth instead of undertaking actions aimed at genuine transformations. Therefore, what should be the role of pedagogy is equipping the society with theoretical tools so that it could understand the processes which take place within it and with infringing its interests.

Several decades have passed of reliable studies in critical pedagogy. The time has come to broaden the knowledge of macro-political determinants of the educational policy of post-totalitarian countries, reaching for e.g. emancipatory, anti-authoritarian and critical pedagogy. Educators ought to stop being co-perpetrators of pretending democracy and destroying self-governance by consecutive elites of political authorities in the world full of hypocrisy and political lies.

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