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ARE WE, DESPITE THE CRISIS, STILL STANDING...?

INTRODUCTION

The theme of crisis predominant during the eleventh edition of the Pedagogical Congress to return to building a better world within and between us requires macropolitical analyzes with regard to the state of Polish education and academic pedagogy, but answers to “inevitable questions” will probably be formulated (Szczepański, 1999, p. 65). According to sociologist Jan Szczepański – [...] the past time *may be the time of the nation's progress or development, it may also be the time of degradation, and this time is particularly interesting* (ibid., p. 153). He correctly shows in his study that the time of the nation is much longer than that the time of politicians holding power who follow their own interests. Therefore, the time of the nation cannot be recalled or overturned, although it is possible to influence the direction of changes it faces, as humanity begins in each of us with an act of free decision, but also – as Piotr Nowak wrote – [...] *in coexistence with other people. It is never created in solitude or “from below”, from deep inside, from biology* (Nowak, 2022, p. XIII).

For over thirty years, we have been betrayed by the solidarity and political elites, which, having risen to the executive, legislative and judiciary power in 1993–2022, wasted and squandered the commitment made to Polish society to build self-governing and autonomous Republic of Poland, a state with a participatory democracy, the authorities of which will support taking actions for the common good with the participation of various social forces, citizens, including educators and scientists.

We will not escape the historical context of the nationwide uprising of the Polish people, including the educational and scientific groups that demanded necessary changes in education policy, and thus in school education. This time went down in our history as a positively transformative rebellion against the then totalitarian regime, subordination of the political system of the People's Republic of Poland to the interests of Soviet Russia and the imprisonment of education and upbringing in monistic education.

Not without reason [...] *we often talk not only about the past, but also about the present and future of Poland, about the not fully realized ideal of a political community, in which we can see ourselves like in a mirror* (Ciżewska, 2010, p. 7). While conducting research and getting involved in changes in the education policy in Poland after 1989 in the Solidarity movement, they used pedagogical thought, but also social philosophy, sociology of change, political psychology, and social science of the Catholic Church. In a democratic state, it is natural to alternate political formations reaching power, thus the ruling period of right-wing, left-wing, and liberal parties was interrupted or shortened within the 30-year period of the Republic of Poland. The political formation raising to power maintained or changed the structure of the school system and the principles of internal education, putting scientists in a conflict situation with the education policy of the state authorities.

RELATIONS BETWEEN PEDAGOGY AS SCIENCE AND EDUCATION POLICY

Two strategies of mutual relations between science and education policy can be noticed (Śliwerski, 2015). The first one, referred to as a submissive strategy, slavish towards the ruling party, affirming its ideology, denies the fundamental function of science, which should be to investigate the truth and not to proclaim only the correct and state-controlled doctrine. In this approach, in most cases, pedagogy and scientists are part of a servant role in relation to the authority, regardless of whether and to what extent what it announces and implements from a pedagogical, psychological, and ethical point of view is justified and appropriate, therefore – the possibilities and necessity to support the development of a child and society. In this strategy, pedagogy is to serve the effectiveness of exercising power by politicians, and not the didactic and (self)-educational effectiveness of all subjects of education. At this point, I do not explore the reasons for such attitudes and commitment, as they derive from many personal and instrumental interests that have nothing to do with the cognitive and emancipatory (critical) functions of science.

The second strategy is in the strict sense scientific, i.e. discovering, describing, and explaining the essence of the processes of political domination in the state with the use of the school system and science for this purpose. In this perspective, conducting research absolutely places the researcher above political power as relatively objectively investigating the meaning of exercising it not from the point

of view of legal and political doctrine, but scientific – including pedagogical rationality. From scientists conducting research on the changing doctrine of the political system, more bravery and courage should be expected with the accompanying risk of exclusion from various areas of educational and academic life. It is necessary to reveal the truth about the intentions, reality, and effects of the exercised power, to formulate judgments that are a logical form of opposition to politics and thus – to power, i.e. criticism of its irrational decisions, incompatible with the state of scientific knowledge. And even in a supposedly democratic state, not only do those in power fail to like it but also do not wish for it.

Isn't that why, for over two decades, the government has appointed spokespeople at the minister of education and science and public relations offices to hide not only their own ignorance, but also the hidden goals of social engineering, thus manipulating the public (Śliwerski, 2015)? The scientific TRUTH has become an undesirable phenomenon in public space. According to Arendt [...] *truthfulness has never been considered a political virtue. On the contrary: it was bread and butter of naive people and those poor in spirit. Lies have always been told which was deemed as behavior falling within the limits of broadly understood diplomacy, "public relations", in advertising. (...) Authority, whose main issue includes narcissistic concern for their own image, will always resort to lies. And if they trust those lies, it will be their real end* (Nowak, 2022, p. XXI). At the beginning of the systemic change in our country at the turn of 1989 and 1990, the idea of a transformative intellectual was – rightly – being pushed. Unfortunately, some people started to use it to be transformative propagandists acting for their own benefit, and in the background also the educational, worldview or political ideology they favored (Śliwerski, 2009a).

For years, the doctrines of the educational authorities have been adapted to the interests of the ruling party, its ideology, and legal norms and standards. Therefore, as researchers, we should investigate the real, partially hidden sources of premises or inspiration for educational solutions, and reveal those factors that contradict them, while they perfectly serve as a means of a cynical and effective struggle for power (Jagielska, 2014). The period of the emerging democracy of the state under the rule of law, the pluralist state and social justice contradicted the preception of educational and scientific policy understood as rational care for the common good. As it turns out, however, the political and legal doctrine of the state system as well as its essence, sense, including the meaning of the concept and the manner of pursuing the educational policy, can be changed extra-constitutionally (Śliwerski, 2020).

After over thirty years of a systemic transformation of little importance for education and science, maintaining the political control of the ruling formations by means of constant changes in the law, we are experiencing more and more acutely what the semblance of changes and reforms applied by the left-wing party (post-communist), liberals and the right-wing party really involves. Just as there were no purely right-wing or conservative governments, there were no purely

left-wing, liberal or right-wing governments, as each formation tuned the party's program to the citizens' expectations in order to gain their support. In Poland it is supposed to be as it always used to be – with little aesthetics or decorativeness of alleged transformations. After all, everyone attended traditional schools with a model of cultural (ideological, doctrinal), adaptive, instrumental transmission, but no longer emancipatory or alternative to the above (Śliwerski, 2015).

THE ROLE OF PEDAGOGY AS A SCIENCE

General pedagogues, educators and upbringing theorists undertook research in the field of the philosophy of education and upbringing, thanks to which it was finally possible to fill in the gaps on the map of contemporary pedagogical thought, to diversify the theory of upbringing and education depending on the premises and typology of trends in contemporary psychology, sociology, or philosophy. It is undoubtedly a huge success of academic pedagogy that unwritten, as censored or marginalized, various trends, currents, directions of modern pedagogical thought, especially in special and social pedagogy, andragogy, didactics, general pedagogy and even research methodology, have been filled in. Undertaken metatheoretical research made it possible to take a deep breath of freedom in the metaphysical sphere in terms of recognizing various sources of knowledge for pedagogical anthropology, shaping the culture of openness to the pluralism of the world and humanity, also to possible pedagogy, including didactics of individual differences (Śliwerski, 1998; 2009b).

In this respect, research on childhood referring to natural law and this phase of prenatal and ontogenetic life of children and adolescents, which became the basis for the children's rights successively developed in international politics in line with the assumptions of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, began to develop in Poland. However, the mere admiration for the philosophy of natural law does not guarantee anything to creatures naturally deprived of social rights, since they are subjected to exclusion with the use of positive law established in the country, as also within the philosophy of natural law there are their different varieties (Sylwestrzak, 2009, p. 18).

Therefore, the analysis of educational macropolitics should also take account of the diversity of political doctrines that guide the ruling party. Does it follow the 1) revolutionary, 2) conservative, or 3) reactionary doctrine? (ibid., p. 27) The first doctrine assumes the necessity of the victory of the educational revolution as a rational premise for the transformation of the system and/or the dominant or universally binding educational paradigm. The educational revolution understood in this way was the doctrine of Henryk Samsonowicz from the end of 1989, as a derivative of the postulates of Solidarity of the First Wave (1980–1989), under which the Ministry of Education and Upbringing was for just a few years deprived of centralist power, as well as the territorial power of its state-party administrative branches, such as education and upbringing offices and education

inspectorates employing teachers. The minister of education introduced a revolutionary change in assigning autonomous rights in the field of employing teachers to principals of kindergartens and schools, and with the headquarters' support created the emancipation option of teachers in designing, organizing, and implementing author's programs and classes in state schools. It was an evident pedagogical revolution in the history of Polish education. In order to avoid anarchization and excessive individualism as well as differentiation hindering the vertical and internal permeability of education, the balancing factor was to be performed by school councils and their field councils, up to the central structures of social control, the creation of which, however, was to a negligible extent (Gozdowska, Uryga, 2014; Mencil, 2009; Śliwerski, 2009a, 2013, 2017).

The second educational reform of this type implicitly referring to the revolutionary doctrine was the change of the school system in 1999. It was supposed to eliminate the grassroots movement of educational changes, sovereign pedagogical and didactic innovations, also in the field of didactic resources (auxiliary materials, students' books, workbooks, etc.). Secondly, it led to structural, organizational (e.g. a chain of schools, new types of schools) and legal transformations in education, and the introduction of a new path of professional development in the area of professionalization and the academic solutions in the field of teachers' education related thereto. Unfortunately, this reform did not refer to the essence of the education process in terms of its management, as the state-party supervision over education was still maintained. First of all, the class-lesson system from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries was preserved together with the paradigm of behavioral and objectivist education (Gołębniak, 2021; Klus-Stańska, 2018; Nowakowska-Siuta, Śliwerski, 2015; Radziejewicz, 1989; Śliwerski, Paluch, 2021).

Thus, the Handke's reform at the same time included elements of the conservative doctrine, in the light of which the changes should take place in an evolutionary manner, modifying the current state of affairs, and thus – consolidating its unquestionable solutions, which, in the interests of the authorities, include the supervision of education. This penitentiary-constructed supervision is possible in a centralist school system, in which education is adaptive, instrumental, and subordinate to the doctrine of the political formation currently exercising power. The third doctrine is the reactionary doctrine, which aims to restore the educational order prior to the revolution in 1999. *Reactionary political doctrines emphasize the arguments for the need to reverse the events in an extreme manner and get to the pre-revolution order* (Sylwestrzak, 2009, p. 27).

In the case of the populist right-wing educational counter-revolution initiated by the school quasi-reform in 2017 (Śliwerski, 2020), there was no full return to the system prevailing before 1999. Yes – its structure was restored, but an incoherent ideology of the right-wing government, the conservative ideology as the only right and binding one was imposed on the entire school system. The system of education management and pedagogical supervision was not affected but it was strengthened with a strategy of excluding previous organizational, program and

even methodological solutions, supplemented with a normative political and social history. Thus, school reforms in the Third Polish Republic, in an emerging and unconsolidated democracy, are still doctrinally hybrid, mixed, revolutionary-conservative, or counter-revolutionary-revolutionary, and in any case – populist-conservative. *A feature of hybrid educational ideologies seems to be their fluidity, changeability, and vagueness, combining issues that seem to be contradictory in any configuration, which can be seen in the course of politicians' ways of thinking about education. [...] A hybrid appears therefore as an exceptionally insidious manifestation of ideology pulsating in the space of educational policy – which, due to its properties, is not easily subject to reflection and evaluation. Therefore, it is dangerous and unpredictable* (Jagielska, 2014, p. 248).

Since 1993, the ministers of education have maintained a dogmatic position in the field of macropolitical management and supervision over teachers, contrary to formulated declarations about strengthening their authority, prestige, and professional and political autonomy. They also use lies in educational reports about the decentralization of education, which in fact is characterized by self-governance and its socialization. This process is absent as the school system is semi-decentralized. In relation to the systemic and supervisory situation in the People's Republic of Poland, only the entity running educational institutions changed. Although it is local self-governments, the parliamentary majority, which is beyond real public control, decides about allocating funds to educational institutions for their own tasks. Also, the teaching community is still nationalized and proletarianized under the guise of established professional autonomy, as decisions of both salaries, and career advancement are taken by the central government together with equally centralized teachers' trade unions in whose interest the status quo lies.

Piotr Nowak, a republican philosopher, described it as “the compulsion of rationality”, under which: [...] *we hardly accept lying in the public sphere in times of peace. It offends by its obscurity, involving citizens in its circle of influence. Sometimes it is called propaganda, sometimes discursive violence, and sometimes it is called marketing policy, but it is always the same thing: distorting the reality. It turns out that conscious undermining of the reality of facts – the ability to lie – and the ability to change facts – the ability to act – are interconnected* (Nowak, 2022, p. XVIII).

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE POLICY OF SCIENCE AFTER 2018

Finally, a few reflections on the situation in the policy of science of the Third Polish Republic. As early as in 1969, George Wald wrote: *we are dealing with a generation that is by no means certain that it has a future ahead of it* (after: Arendt, 2022, p. 22). The only certain future facing each generation is death. [...] *human development is a form of chronological unfairness, since late-comers are able to profit by the labors of their predecessors without paying the same price* (ibid., P. 33). It is known that it is impossible, but in order not to notice it,

but to play a cynical game of hidden violence, envy, and intrigue towards those whose achievements have entered the world of science, it is amazing, and perhaps today revealing the true face of the Pharisees, alleged collaborators, co-editors, or the so-called friends is crucial.

There is one strange thing in this – as Arendt wrote – it seems that the earlier generations toiled only for the good of the younger generations [...] that only the later generations will in fact have the good fortune to inhabit the building on which a whole series of their forefathers worked (ibid., p. 33). These are the words of Immanuel Kant. Even today, the next generation hears the ticking of a bomb. Dreams of historical justice, the settlement of theft, corruption, crime, and violence do not come true, as each new government does everything possible so that the perpetrators do not face justice.

I have no doubt that the structural manipulation of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, currently: the Ministry of Education and Science, initiated by Jarosław Gowin, which was reduced to the “evaluation” of the alleged value and originality of research based on its publication in a total of four journals or monographs by academicians assigned to the number of N1, resulted in granting rights to doctorate and postdoctoral nominations to those departments which by the end of 2021 had not been able to obtain rights even to award the academic degree of PhD, and had lost them earlier. It has nothing to do with science, except that it is a manifestation of arrogance and the devastation of science by the authority, which is not legally responsible for it. The interest of true science has been superseded by the interest of the ignorant.

We experienced bureaucratic evaluation, which was based on quasi-scientific criteria, strengthened by the minister’s self-will, so it is difficult to consider such activities as concern for the best interest of Polish science. Piotr Sztompke aptly described this state as quantophobia. *It does not matter what the researcher has found. What matters is how many points he/she has earned. Points are only awarded based on the tables established by the ministry. As a result, the quality of the scientific result does not matter. One can publish the greatest nonsense or scientific banality, as long as in the “highly scored” journal and as long as the researcher’s assessment is positive* (after: Tadeusiewicz, 2022). If the department with over 130 scientists that has been educating doctoral students and has habilitated scientists from various parts of Poland in many sub-disciplines of pedagogy for many years falls into B+ category, and another department with many times lower number of staff and partial contribution to science falls into A or B+ category, then the conclusions are obvious.

Self-delight strengthens self-deception, from which scientific pedagogy will have no benefit anyway. Inflated self-esteem derives from self-deception as an unconscious or cynically exposed difference between truth and falsehood, between fact and fiction. Certainly, this does not apply to individual scientists, as the quality of their research is independent of any form of alleged evaluation of science. The quasi-scientific bureaucracy has proved the absurdity of its power by ridiculing

research results, the effects of which we will talk about in three years during the next Pedagogical Congress. This is how quasi-science destroys science.

Pedagogy will be replaced by sociology, the psychology of education and management science, i.e. by those researchers who strive to evaluate research in an absolute manner through the prism of bibliometric indicators and to consider research in the empirical, positivist paradigm only as scientific. Conducting independent metatheoretical, normative and philosophical studies and research will pose a double risk. On the one hand, there is an attempt to eliminate the impartial axionormative investigations conducted by educators only because some place them in the current of the selected direction of contemporary philosophical, sociological, political, theological, psychological, or Polish pedagogical thought.

The second threat is the exertion of pressure on scientists by those in power to subordinate their research and presentation of research results to the ideological interests of the ruling party or the opposition to foster the image of power, ideologization of education and science. Meanwhile, the main function of universities and academies is to maintain [...] *impartiality and independence from social pressure and political power. Power and truth – both perfectly legitimate – are significantly different from each other. The results of their search lead to two essentially different ways of life* (Arendt, 2022, p. 104).

CONCLUSION

However, I do hope that the trustworthy truth about the state of academic pedagogy and the real values of scientific achievements presented by some of them will neither disappear from the public space, nor succumb to many years of play of falsehood and hypocrisy, underfunding and political manipulation. *After all, the problem with lies and deceptions is that their ultimate effectiveness depends on a clearly defined truth that the liar or the impostor wishes to conceal. In this sense, the truth, even if it does not penetrate into the public sphere, has an inalienable priority over any falsehood* (ibid., P. 153). Fortunately, universities and academies have scientists who do their best to prevent any authority from gaining power over their minds, and thus, manipulating their research. When institutions fail, bureaucratic procedures still depend on people. Scientists should not condone iniquity and immoral behavior, and let alone – follow it, or else they will cut the branch on which they are sitting. However, I hope that – as Wojciech Młynarski used to sing – *we are still standing...*

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Summary

The aim of the analysis is to make readers aware of the scope and effects of the relationship between pedagogy as a science and the educational policy in Poland after 1989. In the first part of the article, the author has described the strategies of involving scientists in school reforms and provided their theoretical justification. According to the method of critical research of educational macropolitics, the author has investigated the links between the reform of the school system and the political and social doctrine of pedagogical supervision. In the second part, the author has criticized the policy applied by the authorities of right-wing parties towards the evaluation of scientific disciplines. The author has reached the conclusion that Polish general education and higher education will face a deep crisis both in the area of education and upbringing of young generations, and in the process of promoting and empowering the quality of research results conducted by universities deprived of high-class academic staff.

Keywords: pedagogy, science, education reforms, educational doctrines, right wing parties, education policy.