

Editorial. Education and the State: Between Philosophy and Ideology

The link between education and the state has a long history, dating back to ancient times. The education of the young generation is an extremely important part of the life of every human community, regardless of place and time. To emphasise the value of education as a practice focused on educating and nurturing the young generation, it has, at least since the time of the Enlightenment, been assigned the rank of a public matter, an essential part of the common good. The model of absolute power, characteristic of the 18th century, added education to its political projects. Without involvement in this field, it would be difficult for the rulers to call themselves enlightened and present themselves to their subjects as acting in the name of Enlightenment ideas. In turn, in the history of Poland, that century was marked by a strong reformist tone in actions taken by the Commission of National Education, established by King Stanisław August Poniatowski and the Parliament a year after the first partition, out of concern for and saving the Commonwealth in the face of a power crisis.

The 20th century showed a completely different power over education, as it came to bear the stamp of two totalitarian ideologies. After the horrors of World War II and the excesses of the national-socialist ideology, in the people's democracies, the offensive ideology of the state prevailed for many years, building a new socialist or communist society on the ruins of the bourgeois one. This time, the authorities took care to subordinate not only the practice of upbringing, teaching, learning and care, but also the science behind these

processes, i.e. pedagogy. Pedagogy was to implement the political plan of the authorities to form a new human. Similar directives also covered other social and humanistic sciences, including philosophy and history, which had to be practised as per the official ideology of the state, i.e. in a Marxist fashion.

With such baggage of experience, we might think that today we are immune to top-down political pressures from the authorities, but this is not the case at all. The academic community defends itself by emphasising the autonomy of its research and educating students, but the pressure from the authorities, in the name of various policies, depending on the country, does not decrease at all and, to the contrary, keeps increasing. Marxist ideology is replaced by neoliberal or nationalist ideology. The populism and authoritarianism of the ruling parties are also a problem of modern democracies. Combined with extreme ideology, this poses a great threat to citizens and social life. Education is also its victim, provided the state manages to centralise it and subordinate it entirely to itself. This presents researchers with a difficult task and a challenge, which, however, is worth confronting.

The following thematic issue of *Paedagogia Christiana* addresses this challenge. This is one of the recent initiatives of the international academic community of philosophers of education¹ and religion, educationists and philosophers, aiming to defend and argue for education understood as a practice of teaching and learning, as well as upbringing and care, with its internal goods, i.e. as a practice in its own right.² These goods distinguish it from other social practices initiated by people for people. We assume that the voice of experts,

¹ Examples are the Philosophy of Education Society of Poland (PESP), the Central European Society for Philosophy of Education (CEUPES), the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain (PESGB) and the International Network of Philosophers of Education (INPE).

² These initiatives include a monograph published by PESP in cooperation with the Department of General and Philosophical Pedagogy of the Institute of Education of the Jagiellonian University titled *Education and the State*, edited by S. Sztobryn and T. Leś, Kraków: Libron, 2022, and another titled *Defending the Value of Education as a Public Good: Philosophical Dialogues on Education and the State*, edited by K. Wrońska and J. Stern is being prepared for print at Routledge. They are largely the result of the international conference and the 9th Congress of PESP organised in 2021 at the Institute of Education of the Jagiellonian University; see https://edukacja-panstwo.confer.uj.edu.pl/en_GB/start. See also 'On the way to Syracuse... The calling of philosophy and the temptation of political activism', a scientific conference organised by the academic community of philosophers from the Institute of Philosophy of the Jagiellonian University and the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Pedagogical University in Krakow in 2021, addressing a similar problem related to the political activism of philosophers.

i.e. education researchers, should reach the public and political decision-makers who organise and finance the education and science system. We draw our arguments from the heritage of philosophical thought, endeavouring to make philosophical reflection on the meaning of education polyphonic and pluralistic. In this way, we would like to create the necessary counterweight to various political or religious ideologies of education that strive to subordinate the entire pedagogical domain (teaching, learning, upbringing and care) to themselves, treating it as one of the instruments to be implemented at the hands of their promoters or performers of ideological projects.

Calling for a philosophically grounded and deepened sense of education is not aimed at abolishing or negating ideology, which is inevitable. However, breaking through with strong arguments (meeting the criterion of reliability and correctness) has value which increases with the pressure applied by the authorities. This is the much-needed counterbalance of the power of arguments against the force of power, which can dominate, monopolise and subjugate the entire space of education and use it for its own purposes. The philosophy of education allows it to be built repeatedly in the name of humanity, i.e. selflessly. Education should serve human beings; then society, the economy, the state and religious communities will also benefit from it.

In the following issue, this polyphony is guaranteed by experts in the field, representing Polish and foreign academic centres, specialising in the philosophy of education, pedagogy, pedagogy of religion and philosophy, who are invited to co-create it. The whole consists of 9 texts, forming two complementary parts. The first part is grouped around philosophical arguments that are intended to strengthen education, in terms of its theoretical foundations or in its practical dimensions. The second part comprises texts that analyse selected ideologies of education, e.g. political, religious and economic, or indicate how to overcome or become immune to ideologies that push to implement their programmes through education.

In the first part, in the beginning, Pádraig Hogan from Maynooth University presents an in-depth look at education understood as a human practice with inherent purposes that are distinct from those of the state, which every authority should consider and respect when managing it. He describes it

Its result is, among others, 'Philosophical Debate: Is a Return to Syracuse Possible?' published in: *Argument*, 12(1), (2022).

with several examples of the state's dominance over the sphere of education, from the history of our Western civilisation and one positive example from modern times, to finally formulate some general conclusions for pedagogical research and educational practice and on the proper relationship of the state with education.

In turn, Andrej Rajský from the University of Trnava recalls the classic concept of friendship formulated in Aristotle's ethical writings, arguing that this idea can be the basis for implementing a moral and civic education programme at school. Following the development and heritage of this thought in various branches of the neo-Aristotelian ethics of virtue, the author argues that character development with an emphasis on developing the quality of friendship can serve not only as an object of cultivating an individual personality focused on a 'happy life.' Implemented in the context of the community as *politiké philia*, it can be understood and cultivated as a civic virtue, while meeting a political requirement and reflecting the interest of the state.

Continuing the theme of the ethical foundations of the state, Marcin Rebes from the Jagiellonian University considers the tasks facing democratic authorities, also in the context of educational challenges. Drawing on the contemporary philosophy of politics, he examines today's democracies, accusing them of succumbing to populism and ideologies that destroy the symmetry of relations in society. Recalling the thought of phenomenologists and philosophers of dialogue, the author argues that the state must restore rationality in its policy. Concerning education, this would mean intensifying activities supporting creativity, innovation and a sense of responsibility for oneself and others in the young generation and doing this within the framework of civil society and the political community.

Concerning the theme of caring for the mental and ethical competence of learners, another text by Agata Łopatkiewicz from Jagiellonian University presents the issue of epistemic rights in the field of education. The author, referring to the concept of Lani Watson, explains what these rights are characterised by, and then, from a broader theoretical perspective, seeks an answer to the question about the status of the young generation in the context of these rights. Finally, the author formulates the tasks that result from the recognition of the importance of epistemic rights for education and, therefore, for the state that manages this domain.

The first part concludes with an article by Peter Rusnák from the University of Trnava and Marcel Martinkovič from the Slovak Academy of Sciences, devoted to selected threads from the philosophy of Radim Palouš, Jozef Piaček and Jan Patočka, used to justify the sense of teaching philosophy. These authors, referring to the philosophy of free time, syncriticism and consistency, argue that philosophical education based on these threads offers new opportunities and challenges for *homo educandus*, especially in today's era marked by ignorance and even its promotion.

At the beginning of the second part, Renata Doniec from the Jagiellonian University shares the results of her research on the ideologisation of the Polish family, undertaken by the state in the times of the People's Republic of Poland through the official media. On the example of the women's press, the author documents what image of the family the authorities in Poland propagated in the culture of real socialism and what communication mechanisms they used there. The research shows that the family was a tool to serve the communist state and the communication techniques were subordinated to this goal.

The next text covers religious education, which, in Poland, is carried out in the form of school catechesis. Its authors, Mariusz Chrostowski and Ulrich Kropač from the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, draw attention to the growing outflow of the young generation from the Church, which, in schools, is manifested by the resignation of some students from attending catechesis classes. They wonder how the teaching of religion might best be reformed so that this process does not deepen, and the young generation has an opportunity to come into contact with the religious message. For this purpose, they present their proposal of a 'dialogue' as the best path for a religious and pedagogical future.

A further path is proposed in the next text by Bartłomiej Kossakowski-Kisiel from the Pedagogical University of Krakow. Reconstructing the socio-philosophical thought of Leonard Trelawny Hobhouse, representing the New Liberalism school, the author extracts threads therefrom that can serve as a philosophical basis for today's understanding of education, reconciling the good of the individual with the good of society. For the implementation of this ambitious educational project, founded on the ideas of freedom and equality, a prominent role is assigned to the state, which is to take care of this double dimension of education, while maintaining its secular character. According to the assumption that religion is a private matter, the state is not responsible

for the religious education of the young generation; this is in the hands of the Church and the families concerned. The author argues that Hobhouse's thought can be read as a philosophy; and if so, it is part of a three-hundred-year-old tradition of practising the philosophy of freedom, equality, religious tolerance and education in the version of classical and new liberalism.

The closing text by Jacek Moroz from the University of Szczecin is devoted to the relationship between education and the state and thus between philosophy and ideology. It poses the question of whether non-ideological education is possible. The author answers this question in the affirmative, arguing from the perspective of the constructivist paradigm of thinking about education and postulating the development of a deliberative attitude in students.

In handing over this issue to the readers, I would like to thank all the authors of the presented texts for their cooperation, the reviewers for their valuable critical comments and Jarosław Horowski, the editor-in-chief of *Paedagogia Christiana* for the opportunity to work on this issue, his trust reposed in me and his kind assistance. I hope that the subject matter of the texts will attract many of those interested in education understood as an undertaking of high importance in the field of public affairs and serving human beings.

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