



## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

since 1989 the transformation of the post-communist Europe has been referred to as building civic society in particular countries, connected with regaining independence, recreating a sovereign state, rebuilding political community and, above all, making the citizen sensitive to responsibility for the society and common good. The fifty years of totalitarianism in Poland caused that the society, to a large degree, lost the sense of responsibility for the things which constituted and still constitute common property of the nation many generations. Since the time of political changes, the time has come for a serious reflection upon the broadly-understood education in the sphere of social life, for considering the things which make the society live, as well as its aspirations and desires. Therefore, we shall also reflect on how this community perceives its common good and how it wants this good to be realised.

Contemporary man, especially young, seems willing to withdraw into his own world of values, culture, religion, beliefs, neglecting the surrounding world with all the virtues it carries. One can also observe a disturbing phenomenon of lack of sense of patriotism understood as responsibility for the lot of the state, homeland and its goods. Another essential issue requires mentioning at this point, namely cultural heritage and concern for it.

The Enlightenment motto from the time of the Commission of National Education appears still up-to-date: *Takie będą Rzeczypospolite, jakie ich młodzieży chowanie* (*The Republic of Poland depends on the education of young people*). Therefore, in building the new social reality, in educating to the attitude of responsibility and concern for everything that we create in each sphere of life, as well as feeling the sense of historic challenge, in order to take the chance for a better and more dignified future together, special attention has to be paid to proper education of the young generation of Poles.

This issue of „The Horizons of Education” tackles the vital social problem, namely the reflection upon education, especially concerning young people and their attitudes of responsibility for society as well as its cultural and national goods.

In the first article presented, Barbara Niemiec takes up the issue of social responsibility on the basis of philosophical thought applied in educational practice. Social responsibility is defined as a kind of relation linking the doer with his deed, being the answer to some value. Tomasz Homa SJ outlines the shape of man and citizen ideal, desired by society, and brought up by specific cultural and political conditions. The topic undertaken by the author proves essential since he offers several ideas in the context of progressive democratisation in Poland and uniting Europe.

It seems necessary to go back to the past in order to have a closer look at the ways contemporary educational systems were supporting the education of a good citizen. Undoubtedly, the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Poland originated many positive changes in Polish education, especially on account of a Piarist Stanisław Konarski and *Collegium Nobilium*, the Knight's School of the Cadet Corps founded by king Stanisław August Poniatowski in Warsaw and the school reform carried out after 1773 by the Commission of National Education. These topics are carefully presented by Kalina Bartnicka. The same historical issues are undertaken by Kazimierz Puchowski, however from a different perspective. He reports on the establishment of colleges, which were supposed to be the reaction of Jesuits, Piarists and Theatines to the expectations of the state, in order to educate elites capable of introducing reforms necessary at that time. The author makes a brief comparison and analysis of the activity of colleges for nobility run by individual orders, however his special attention is paid to Jesuit colleges. The educational aim observed in Jesuit colleges in the Republic of Poland was training exemplary citizens, full of religiousness and patriotism.

Shifting this train of thought (i.e. education to social responsibility) towards present day, bishop Kazimierz Nycz undertakes this theme from the point of view expressed by common Church, presenting briefly the teachings of the Vatican Council II and Polish Church in the sphere of catechisation and through subject

correlation at school. The author notices that the integrity of civic formation must consist in levelling the discrepancy between faith and life, „spiritual world” and „secular world”. Civic education should be conducted by competent people, critically perceiving the world and its problems, but seeing hope. Responsibility for society and state induces the attitude of patriotism, which, for many people, especially for the young generation, seems slightly archaic. Yet, Paweł Kuglarz in his article tries to present this issue in a spirit of emerging hopes. Taking into consideration the historical changes in the development of this concept, he claims that nowadays patriotism essentially means work at the foundations, work for one’s own, at the same time understood as work for the whole society. Contemporary patriotism has to go hand in hand with conviction that each homeland constitutes a part of a huge world homeland. Therefore, an attitude of openness to others is required as well as awareness that the increase of the ethical level of interpersonal relations takes place in the spiritual and cultural revival of local traditions.

The articles from Great Britain, Israel and the United States provide a substantial enrichment for the analysis of the issue. Firstly, William K. Kay mentions five factors having fundamental importance for social and moral education of young people in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in Great Britain; these are: Churches, schools, families, communities and the process of industrialisation. The key problem is that they can live in integral symbiosis. Then, Zehavit Gross analyses the profile of identity and education in Israel indicating their historical complexity. The contemporary educational system in Israel faces three primary challenges in the ideological, social and administrative spheres. Therefore, educational system is to shape a new, multicultural Jew, able to develop a dialectical approach towards the inherent conflicts, taking advantage of the richness of Israeli history and tradition. In the last article of this issue, Jane L. Curry describes the changes observed in American higher education. One can observe a shift from faculty teaching to student learning, professor being a facilitator for students, assessing them and their learning. The transformation within the student evaluation system has been shifted to professor evaluation done by the students. This leads

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to a more dialogue-like character of educational systems. In the end, the author presents educational assumptions in Jesuit universities in the United States, marked by a high intellectual level, proper professional preparation and sensitivity to social justice and responsibility.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

at the end of May this year we began a series of meetings *Discussions around the Horizons of Education*, aiming at an academic discussion on the topics included in every issue of our periodical. We will share the fruits of our meetings with You, at the same time encouraging the exchange of views and critical opinions.

With the hope that the contents of the fifth issue of „The Horizons of Education” will enable a deeper reflection upon the attitude of responsibility for common good and better future, we wish You a pleasurable reading.

Wit Pasierbek SJ