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Tolerance and patriotism in the educational process of shaping civil society

ABSTRACT: The author analyzes the concept of tolerance and patriotism, drawing attention to the ideas, principles and attitudes of these categories. Presenting various views in this in this field, he refers to the biography and position of Professor Tadeusz Pilch. Patriotism is treated as an effect of following the principles of tolerance and the attitude of tolerance shaped in the educational process. The author formulates numerous questions related to the difficult process of shaping civil society and suggests that education faces increasingly difficult challenges related to the elimination of ideologization of the nation. He draws attention to tolerance and patriotism as a special value in shaping civil society, implementing the principles of heterology.

KEYWORDS: Tolerance, patriotism, education, civil society.

When formulating the title of this text, I had in mind the scientific, research and social activity of Professor Tadeusz Pilch, as well as his interest and determination in defining research areas, problems requiring action and active, creative involvement in solving them. I believe that the Professor has created a specific culture of tolerance and patriotism, which is based on initiating a collective effort of a group of social pedagogues in the process of creating, communicating, implementing and cultivating patterns, norms, values and symbols important for the functioning of man in a complex reality. What was and is important in this educational process is who passed and is passing values and models, what values and models, and how and

to whom are being passed, in what conditions it took and is taking place, what situations and circumstances were created and initiated. In his native village of Bielcza he for the first time experienced stigmatization in the context of classifying his parents' farm as "kulaks". He writes: "I personally experienced the consequences of this political schizophrenia, as in 1952 the school sent the best students to the powiat board of ZMP (Union of Polish Youth) as candidates for members of this "ideological" youth organization. My colleague Marysia H. and I were not admitted, because most of our family farms were exceeding the area of "medium-scale farms", i.e. the border of political correctness, in the imagination of the followers of the ZMP ideology. Ironically, this exceeding of the permissible ideological area of the farm resulted from the lease of abandoned land, of which suddenly there was a lot at that time, because many people took up jobs on "great construction sites of socialism", relieved to lease land to those who had horses, equipment and strength" (Pilch 2019, p. 132). Perhaps it was in this context that the Professor, in his social activity, always cared for the development of places and spaces, so that they were not set aside, so that they would generate and create new solutions, foster the development of man and the culture he created. Maybe that is why he is in possession of a special, natural empathy in creating bonds and building communities, in pointing out what is noble and appropriate, what is not fitting, what cannot be accepted and tolerated, what should be opposed. I perceive the Professor as a person who is equipped and equips others with special axiological and ethical elements. He fully reflects the above indication of Roman Ingarden. In it, he emphasizes that an active and creative person aims to realize a value by vouching for it and emphasizing the merit of that value. "His activity is that he's fighting for the achievement of values. ... and he fights not because of the reward for heroism, but simply as a man aware of the true importance of the value he is trying to achieve". (Ingarden & Węgrzecki 1987, pp. 96–97).

The thesis on which I base my paper is associated with Professor Tadeusz Pilch's giving value to ideas, principles and attitudes of tolerance and patriotism and, as a result, leading to gaining awareness of the importance of values that he continuously seeks to fulfill. The culture of tolerance and patriotism depends on the bearers of culture who have adopted certain values, who have made them important by cultivating and passing them on with full commitment to future generations. We should, as Tadeusz Pilch often points out, remember in all our actions about the dignity of another human being, his sufferings and needs, always looking for a way of mutual understanding and communication. Nationality, race and religion do not

matter at all, what matters is what kind of a person you are. In an interview with Ewa Jarosz Tadeusz Pilch emphasized: "History has given us a blessing of ethnic and religious richness. But we, instead of the art of coexistence, developed a primitive, tribal hatred, irrational Antisemitism, which survived the reality that they fed on and today we have Antisemitism without Jews, intolerance without infidels and contempt for otherness without the others" (Jarosz 2010, p. 43).

In the educational process, we constantly reflect on what values were important in the past, what values are important now, and which of those values created such a specific culture of tolerance and patriotism. I believe that they were, and still are, decency, the preservation of humanity, respect and honor in the context of belonging to and identification with the human species. I think, however, that the problem of exclusion from the community in the process of its shaping has been, and still is, an important issue. This is where I see the unity of ideas, principles and attitudes of tolerance and patriotism. If there is a dominance of strong community ties with the exclusion of others, in the context of formulating clear criteria for belonging to a group, we are directed more towards nationalism, if the created community ties are oriented towards "borderline" and universal, general, human and pro-citizenship values, with kindness and Christian-humanist trust, we are directed towards civic and civilizational patriotism. It has always been and is necessary to have an educational reflection on whether we agree that all nations deserve respect, because there are no good or bad nations, there are people educated in different ways, often appropriated by an ideological system, indoctrinated, brought up in fear of others, "fed" with myths, prejudices, etc. They can therefore grow up to be ignorant towards other people who are different, fail to notice the importance of heterology and direct the development of cultural identity towards separatism and nationalism, constant seeing and searching for the enemy, rather than dialog and peaceful resolution of problems. The essence of contemporary culture of education is, therefore, to shape such attitudes that the bonds and sense of national community do not transform into the attitude of a special mission of one nation, so that there are no values and attitudes that say that one nation is better than others. Therefore, in the complex process of shaping the civil society, an important problem seems to be the culture of remembrance of the heritage of the past related to the principles, frequency and forms of commemorating the figures, events and experiences from the past. In my opinion, it creates floors of patriotism, more or less conscious, starting from family, local or 'private homeland' patriotism,

to national and state, and then to constitutional and civilizational patriotism (Nikitorowicz 2017, p. 171–195).

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The concepts of tolerance and patriotism are difficult to define because of their complex structure and the whole family of meanings. Therefore, they should be considered and defined in the context of stressing their subject or purpose (e.g. family, parish, local, national, state, European patriotism or religious, ethnic, national, political, philosophical, intellectual or moral tolerance, etc.). Tadeusz Pilch emphasizes that intolerance is a term that is easier to define than tolerance “...intolerance is some form of activity, while tolerance does not have to include an action element, does not have to mean action or behavior, or even visible features. It is a kind of intellectual or ethical attitude that does not seem to be visible on the outside, nor does it need to manifest itself through specific actions” (Pilch 1998, p. 118).

Tolerance in the literature on the subject is connected with the right to be different, with positive patience in dealing with otherness, with the ability of coexistence, dialog and negotiation, with openness, respect, understanding, etc. (Jakubowska-Branicka 2005). The essence of tolerance, its first condition, or, as Pilch points out, the first impulse, is a negative opinion of the object of tolerance. It is connected with the perception of certain phenomena and behaviors, the lack of understanding of their differences, which in our opinion threaten us, are harmful to our existence and development. This raises questions such as: should we tolerate them, should there be limits of tolerance, what is the sense of not reacting, should we impose prohibitions and orders, can we be indifferent, not engage, stand aside, etc.?

In all his social, didactic and scientific activities, Professor Pilch has always pointed to, acknowledged and applied the principle of conscious involvement. This is one of the reasons why he initiated the activity of Stowarzyszenie Ruchu Pedagogów Społecznie Zaangażowanych (Association of Socially Committed Pedagogues). He constantly reminds us that indifference does not contain an assessment, an ethical element and thus limits cognitive activity towards the subject of assessment. Therefore, another condition for tolerance is to consciously face the problems of comprehension and understanding in the context of the experienced differences, and not to “escape” from them or pretend that it does not concern us. A simple step would be to establish censorship, prohibitions and orders, or to withdraw from negotiations and from dialog, but in my opinion the implementation of the

third condition of tolerance is a much more difficult task: to prepare the other party for the dialog, to define and express their needs, to be responsible in announcing their values and, at the same time, to allow and mobilize others for the dialog. Tolerance understood in this way does not require to resign from our values, but teaches us to express and present them responsibly and consciously (Nikitorowicz 2018, p. 299–303). I believe that the Professor constantly presents such an understanding of tolerance and points out that “...the most profound goal of contemporary humanities is to develop in people the future tolerance for inevitable and irreversible differences between people, cultures, behaviors and values. Wise, committed and demanding tolerance” (Pilch 2000, p. 11).

I believe that without conscious tolerance in the humanist sense, conscious patriotism and our self-perception as people responsible for cultivating the culture of our ancestors and national traditions will not develop. Henryk Ciecierski, a landowner who lived in the years 1864–1933, wrote in his diaries: “...my father developed in me a Polish soul, for which I am deeply grateful to him, and neither the Russifying and Germanising schools, nor my later, perhaps too frequent, longer wanderings around Europe, Asia and Africa – could not deprive my soul of its national identity” (Ciecierski 2013, p. 15). Tadeusz Pilch, presenting the history of his family, including economic migration to the United States of America, presents the current functioning of his son and daughter. His son went to school and studied in France, Denmark and Germany. He currently works in Munich and feels comfortable in every western European country, so it is futile to look for the stigma of an emigrant in his case. His daughter, on the other hand, has traveled the whole world, not “for bread”, but for cognitive and spiritual needs (Pilch 2019, pp. 149–150). The essence of life of modern man has become the possibility to create and develop a place, space and the choice of lifestyle on the globe, the awareness that we can afford something that was not possible before and did not appear even in our wildest dreams. This, in turn, allows us to notice differences in various dimensions of the functioning of man, making efforts to get to know each other, understand, cooperate, negotiate positions and views, present our own views, in order to conduct a continuous, endless internal and external dialog. Hence, I treat patriotism as an effect of a shaped attitude of tolerance created on the basis of dynamic relations with others, relations characterized by principles, patterns and universal values. A person who does not enter into these relations will not be able to represent open patriotism.

Are we able to create a positive attitude towards “others” without recognizing them, without experiencing them, without comparing them to

our own culture, rules, and values? I don't think so. It is necessary to carry out a long educational process of acquiring cultural competences, preparing for the reception of otherness, of differences which we have the right not to understand, which does not mean giving up the negotiation dialog and the dialog creating the principles of civil society. Quite the contrary, citizenship was and is associated with active participation in the life of the community, with commitment and cooperation with others. Jacek Raciborski points to two types of civil society. In the first one, citizens communicate with each other and associate in order to benefit from the goods that the state has at its disposal or to defend their liberties and goods. In the second one, individuals voluntarily cooperate to more effectively satisfy various needs. In this type there are many ad hoc initiatives, supportive, aid, protective activities, etc. (Raciborski 2011, pp. 39–42). Analyzing the dimensions of democratic citizenship, Raciborski points to nationality, a set of rights and obligations in the context of nationality, participation in civic associations and political communities, and citizenship as a collective identity (Raciborski 2011, pp. 45–56).

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I believe that from an educational point of view, the essence of civil society manifests itself in voluntary cooperation with others, in creating a generational community and in building intergenerational trust. What is the diagnosis of Tadeusz Pilch in this respect? He notes that young people brought up in the People's Republic of Poland have been taught against the tendency to associate. The prejudices of young people towards community activities have transferred into adult life and, as a result, our country that has the lowest rate of membership in social organizations in Europe. He believes that this situation lasts and will last for a long time before Poles recover from the generalized lack of trust in all organizations and social activity. The scholar thinks that socialist education has removed from public awareness the knowledge and mechanisms of creating civil society and radically impoverished interpersonal ties. Currently, Poland belongs to the European societies with the lowest rate of citizens' trust in each other and the lowest rate of social activity for the benefit of the local environment (Pilch 2017, pp. 141–155). He presents the grotesque forms of "socialist" education referring to his article in the *Tygodnik Kulturalny* no. 22 of March 1981 entitled "Pokolenie odwróconych pleców. Młodzi 81" (A generation turned away. Youth 81). In it, as he writes, he drew attention to what led to the fact that young people, as the most dynamic and socially active group, are fleeing into the philosophy of privacy, abandoning ideals and the belief in their sense. He also points out that he now sees an

analogy between the system of education and the impact on young people at that time and today. Today, just as in the past, there is a prevailing attitude that “the virtue and sign of wisdom has become the care for one’s own well-being, a little stability” (Pilch 2017, p. 144). He indicates that the drama is that the governments of the reborn homeland have done almost nothing to change this situation. That is why he believes that the symbolic diagnosis of “upturned back” was accurate.

At present, it is certainly more difficult than before to diagnose the more diverse young generation, but there is also a clear shift towards privacy and consumption, towards behavioral morality. As a result, we tend to see the backs of young people more often than their faces. I would also like to point out a significant problem for the educational process, a dilemma of national and state patriotism. We have not overcome the separateness of these patriotisms and what is happening is a deepening of this conflict, a painful decline in the prestige of the state and its bodies (Pilch 2017, p. 153). The problem is, as Paul Ricoeur (Ricoeur 2006) indicates, that a part of the society worships and honors acts of violence, and the fact that for some people something is a cause for joy and glory, while for others it means humiliation and suffering. Wojciech Burszta points out that “We lived in an illusion that rationality and cool facts can replace the living processes that occur in human memory. We forgot that it is impossible to hide all the demons that are rooted in every society and that cyclically come to life. We are now living in a period when they have all been awakened. What’s more, we are waking them up deliberately!” (Burszta 2016, p. 9). Jacek Hołówka notes that we cannot solve collective problems and that we are still stuck in childish disputes about the left and right-wing ideology, progress and conservatism, democracy and rationality, centralization and decentralization (Hołówka 2016, s. 155). He mentions: “Today, the enemy is the soulless system of market control, with contempt for culture, higher goals, humanistic education, the ability to mobilize for certain ideals” (Hołówka 2016, p. 144).

Are we capable of agreeing upon views and consciousness changes, of creating ideals of understanding and dialog, of finding in ourselves the spirit of resistance and struggle within a civil society, of drawing on culture, tradition, resources of human capital, referring to the virtues of integration, solidarity, to conscience? How to use cultural heritage and criticize it at the same time, how to shape new needs, develop aspirations, create an autonomous and responsible world, how to restore faith in universal values, ethics based on duty and conscientiousness, how to activate collective passions, readiness to make sacrifices for the higher good?

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I believe that we are currently dealing with the dominance of emotions and the marginalization of knowledge, manifestation of views, rather than communication and attempting to understand and respect the views of others. Julia Hartwig notices: "I feel like nobody's curious about anything today. The world looks as if, instead of progressing, it is regressing. Taking the decorations down" (Hartwig 2016, p. 244). Jacek Drozda writes: "Resistance became a matter of universal interest for scientists and publicists, as it not only revealed many important but also to some extent previously hidden aspects of the life of modern and postmodern societies, but also provided an opportunity to reconcile analytical work with personal commitment and participation in collective euphoria" (Drozda 2015, p. 43). The author, referring to Enrique Dussel's *Philosophy of liberation*, points out that the philosophy of liberation is rooted in the conviction based on meeting the Other and openness to the Other, which allows us to approach the possibility of building a fairer social order. The above idea requires us to notice, respect and even promote a different culture, at the same time drawing attention to the issue of the duration, transfer, development and revitalization of our own, inherited culture, protection of specific values. In this context, I note the dilemma of patriotism and the culture of memory. Both phenomena try to notice certain elements in the cultural heritage and revitalize them, give value in the context of the current situation (anniversaries, signs, symbols, monuments in the public space, etc.). Thus the process of creating, inventing traditions, giving a new meaning, important from the symbolic point of view of a given group, creating from scratch so as to satisfy, for example, needs of emerging nationalist movements or activities of political institutions, governmental or non-governmental organizations (foundations, associations) takes place.

The problem is how we perceive ourselves, how we shape the attitude of patriotism in the context of tolerance, how we construct collective identity, do we claim a special treatment of our own group in relation to other groups, states, nations, to what extent and degree our identity is integrated in the perception of ourselves in relation to others?

This situation in the context of the emerging civil society raises many other questions, such as: have we neglected and continue to neglect internal dialog, spirituality, contemplation, reflection on the need and sense of militarization and armament, allocation of large financial resources for this purpose, have we neglected in external dialog the creation of mediation attitudes, elimination of prejudices and stereotypes, and do we still arouse fear

of others, see the enemy, threat, etc., why do we so rarely refer to Platonic “art of wise conversations” or Heidegger’s “questions” about value and meaning, why do we not think in a context of personalism and interactionism?

Maybe we should start with personalism in the endless process of education, the essence of which is to shape the culture of patriotism. It assumes that man is endowed with a conscience and, as Fr. Józef Tischner has frequently emphasized “Conscience is the natural “ethical sense” of a human, largely independent of various ethical systems. We have many ethical systems, but there is only one conscience”. ... Conscience is an independent reality in a human being, a bit like reason and will. A human can exercise will and reason, but can also neglect exercises, similarly, they can listen to their conscience, drown it out or renounce it. Conscience is the voice that calls inside a human. What does conscience call for today? First of all, for making a human willing to have a conscience (Tischner 2018).

Hence, in my opinion, to have a conscience means to think about the consequences of one’s actions and presented attitudes, to remember about selflessness, cognition and doing good. In his publications and social activities, Tadeusz Pilch constantly tries to liberate conscience, indicates how to do good, how to shape sensitivity to various differences in today’s globalized world. As if he wanted us to be aware of the ancient Chinese guideline for achieving a higher state of mind through concentration, silence and inner dialog (to stop, cover our eyes, look inside ourselves). We cannot live in isolation and we should learn how to live in globalization. All the theories of isolationism have collapsed, we are aware of the interdependence of the fate of all nations, hence a dialog became an essence, as an imperative for development and peacekeeping. In my opinion, Irena Wojnar summed up this issue very well, which I connect with the need to create a culture of memory. She writes: “As Poles and Europeans, we are also, or perhaps above all, people living in the common land that the famous writer Antoine de Saint-Exupéry described as the Earth – the planet of the people. This community is designated by a dense network of interests and threats, complex interactions and deepening social contrasts. [...] the identity of a modern human is therefore the identity of the humanistic species of beings living on earth, that is to say, of all those who, whatever their roots may be and whatever their heritage may be, share a common human fate” (Wojnar 2016, pp. 121–122).

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I believe that education is currently facing serious challenges in terms of creating attitudes of tolerance and patriotism, attitudes which are immanently

linked to each other and which are directed towards civil society. I believe that it should take up and carry out these tasks within the scope of eliminating, in my opinion dangerous, process of ideologization of the nation, which Fr. Leon Dyczewski had already drawn attention to: "The ideologization of one's own nation is a transition from recognizing it as a fundamental social and cultural value to elevating it to the highest value, attributing to it perfection and superiority, conviction of being the chosen one and having mission in relation to other ethnic groups. This takes the form of ethnocentrism, megalomania, nationalism, xenophobia and chauvinism. The nation, having achieved the highest social and cultural value in the consciousness of its members, is also growing to the highest political value. It then calls for a strengthening of its position within the state in which it exists as well as among other nations. This is most often accompanied by Manichean division of ethnic groups and nations into good and bad, developed and undeveloped, friendly and hostile" (Dyczewski 1993, p. 24).

Nowadays, in our educational activities, we should pay special attention to the above-mentioned problems in order to give testimony to heterologous way of thinking. A person who perceives and interprets the world heterologously can combine citizenship with national, state, European and civilization patriotism, perceive cosmopolitanism as an idea of equal kindness towards all homelands. Władysław Bartoszewski, during his inaugural lecture at the University of Warsaw, when pointing out the citizen's civic virtues emphasized that: "As the most important of these virtues I would consider a bond with one's own community, society, country, homeland, while respecting other communities. I consider this bond, which I call patriotism, to be a valuable element of human identity, their roots, stability, and their way of thinking about the past and the future. Patriotism is also a concern for the welfare of one's own city and country, active behavior in society, expressed, for example, in participation in local government elections (25 years of self-government) and state elections, but also in the social control of all elected authorities. Conscious patriotism excludes passivity! It is a commitment, not only a declaration, it provokes reflection on the problems of the immediate environment and society as a whole. It enhances the ability to independently organize and solve existing problems to the extent permitted by law and custom" (Bartoszewski 2011, p. 18). Hence, we point out in our educational activities to witnesses who have experienced dehumanization in order to notice and understand the problem of saving humanity, attempts to preserve it, refusal to carry out commands, orders, inconsistent with conscience (von Lehndorff 2013). We analyze the fate of people representing different nations in order to understand and realize what is the essence of human life.

I regard tolerance and patriotism in the educational process of shaping civil society as a high moral value, because the feeling of bond and attachment to one's own country does not go hand in hand with hatred or hostility towards others. It has respect and sympathy for the patriotism of others. We have foundations for building such patriotism, because the Jagiellons sat on four thrones of Europe (Polish, Russian, Hungarian and Lithuanian). The leading policy elements have been the recognition of the rights of peoples and ethnic groups. It was a policy of cultural pluralism, cultural openness, noticing and supporting many minority groups. Polish culture owes a lot to this civilizational borderline, where for centuries people derived from the Latin and Byzantine legacy in the surrounding of and in cooperation with Jews and Muslims who built their temples next to each other and prayed there. The residence in the Republic of Poland of many nations contributed to the formation of natural tolerance. In interwar Poland, within the borders of the Second Republic of Poland, knowledge about Lithuanians, Belarusians, Ukrainians who lived in almost half of the territory of the Polish state was negligible and it was difficult to establish proper relations with these nations. Nowadays, the problems of prejudices and stereotypes that have accumulated can be tackled at a different level, free from the pressures and orders of strong neighbors. It is possible to make a reliable analysis of the common cultural heritage, to verify the strengths and weaknesses of our situation in terms of knowledge of the culture of our neighbors, their plans and aspirations. The main problem seems to be the interpretation of the aspirations of nations with the rejection of nationalistic optics and taking into account the issues of various insecurities, phobias and megalomania.

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