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Hannibal, William Wallach, Napoleon Bonaparte – the history knows several tragic heroes, who could try the so-called ‘sweet success’ and the “bitterness of failure”. When relating to the social history of Poland, people of working-class origin may be considered as tragic hero (in the situation the hero is a group).

The very special social group, starting with its birth in the XIX century, was gaining greater and greater social meaning – owing to the growing number, and also the political one – as a result of the social working-class movement, one appearing in the political discourse (after 1905). At the same time a great number of its members was forced to cope with the very difficult economic situation, poor working conditions and unemployment (in the period between the two world wars). The bad luck of the social group was to terminate with the beginning of the new social regime which “promoted” it to the “leading class”, transforming it, at the same time into the central social category, and what is more, giving goods to them, ones they were seeking for – it guaranteed job for them, taking part in ‘ruling’ and gave back the dignity to the working people¹. So this is not a wonder that in the period of PRL workers became the most numerous social class. Up till the beginning of the 80s, when because of the economical crisis petrification of the social

¹ J. Tischner, *Etyka solidarności oraz Homo Sovieticus*, Warsaw 1992, pp. 125–129

structure took place, workers belonged to the half of the society (46.6%)². What is worth mentioning is the fact of a continuous growth of working-class members from different social classes, which resulted in an enormous differentiation in the group, which in the 80s contributed to the conflict between the younger and older generation of workers. Having better qualifications the younger generation of workers had a little possibility of development, and experienced their economic and status deprivation. The promotion, they were seeking for by educating at higher schools or the university, had no chances to be real. There happened to be the clash of ideas passed in the process of school upbringing, and the indoctrination with reality, experienced in family and workplace³. The cognitive disharmony of better educated workers resulted not only from unfulfilled aspirations, but also from the ability of making detailed analysis of the mechanisms of social reality, one which differed drastically from the assumptions of the socialistic nation model. The reality seemed to be quite uncomfortable even for those workers of whose authoritarian habits should enable the functioning in the frame of the authoritarian order. The authorities, rising the level of social authoritarianism, got involved in their own net.⁴ The social chaos contributed to the workers feeling unsatisfied, especially the workers who come from the environment of huge industrial factories, which resulted in a radical social awareness of the group, as well as in rebellion⁵.

Different attitude was characteristic for unskilled workers. The group was aiming only at its own economic matters, and did not show any interest in politics, the principles of system functioning, what is more, it even showed conformism as for the authorities⁶. Their mentality may be described as passive, and productive, and anti individual⁷. They were a perfect system product: politically passive, obedient to the authorities, hard-working for their own and everybody's well-being. In order

² E. Jaźwińska-Motyłska, *Klasa robotnicza w strukturze społeczno-zawodowej, demograficznej i przestrzennej kraju* [in:] Wójcik Przemysław (ed.), *Położenie klasy robotniczej*, Warsaw 1984, v. 3, pp. 12,15.

³ W. Adamski, *Dziedzictwo strukturalne socjalizmu* [in:] the book (ed.), *Polacy '95. Aktorzy i klienci transformacji*, Warsaw 1998, pp. 27–35.

⁴ J. Koralewicz-Zębiak, *Autorytaryzm-lęk-konformizm*, Warsaw 1987, pp. 82–83, 148–182.

⁵ W. Zaborowski, *Radykalna świadomość społeczna w przededniu kryzysu* [in:] W. Adamski (ed.), *Interesy i konflikt. Studia nad dynamiką struktury społecznej w Polsce*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1990, pp. 105–125.

⁶ W. Adamski, *Konflikt interesów a przemiany struktury społecznej* [in:] the book (ed.), *Interesy i konflikt. Studia nad dynamiką struktury społecznej w Polsce*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków 1990, p. 235.

⁷ M. Ziółkowski, J. Koralewicz, *Mentalność Polaków*, Poznań 1990, pp. 135–158.

to keep *status quo* they were willing to make outside factors responsible for the crisis.

The workers were the social group which lost the most as a result of social transformation. It had to face several events – privatisation, violent unemployment increase, the restriction of labour qualifications in all types of factories⁸. Subsequently, it resulted in deprivation of the economic situation. The workers, both skilled and unskilled, are a group of poor and losing⁹. It did influence the psychosocial condition of the group. Its representatives belong to the category of disappointed (because they lost meaning and entitlements which they were offered by the former system) or losing, and lost (because they can notice the deprivation of their situation, one which is under the influence of system transformations)¹⁰. It seems that everything tries to prove that the situation after '89 became for the working class uncomfortable. They often feel hopeless, disoriented, and politically isolated. As much as in the period of PRL the country was more open to the issues and perspectives of the lower social groups, as much the system transformations gave privileges to the rich and intelligent social groups¹¹. We should not be surprised that there appears a nostalgia for the past, specially among workers, the main actors of the transformations. It is a nostalgia *Homo Sovieticus*, a man who became imprisoned by the socialistic system, who cannot come to terms with, or it is very difficult for them to let the present direction of the system transformations exist¹², for whom there is no place (or it is difficult to find) in the present system.

The difficulties to suit to the market rules result, to a great extent, from their specific mentality, one which was shaped in the conditions of socialistic system. As I have already mentioned, the unskilled workers represent an attitude which is passive and productive and anti individual, an attitude of which implication is the conformism as for the authorities and system. Whereas in the skilled workers one encounters the type of mentality that is defensive, and preserving, and demanding, as well as industrial and objective¹³. One should notice the fact that these are the

⁸ L. Gilejko, *Robotnicy i społeczeństwo. Szkoła Główna Handlowa*, Warsaw 1995, pp. 5–17.

⁹ L. Beskid, *Wygrani/przeigrani w procesie transformacji* [in:] the book (ed.), *Zmiany w życiu Polaków w gospodarce rynkowej*, Warsaw 1999, pp. 16–19.

¹⁰ K. Milczarek, *Przystosowani? O kondycji materialnej i psychospołecznej Polaków* [in:] M. Falkowska (ed.), *O stylach życia Polaków*, Warsaw 1997, pp. 124–131.

¹¹ J. Reykowski, *System Transformations and the Mentality of Polish Society* [in:] the book (ed.), *Values and Social Attitudes and System Transformations*, Warsaw 1993, pp. 38–39.

¹² J. Tischner, *Etyka solidarności...*, pp. 125–129.

¹³ M. Ziółkowski, J. Koralewicz, *Mentalność Polaków...*, pp. 135–158.

opposite mentalities: the first one is a result of an adaptation to the defective working socialistic system; the second one is like a model of an individual participating in the society of citizens. The first type shows a strong demanding attitude, a tendency to avoid an effort, and risk, sticking to the checked ways of behaviour, then the second type may be characterised by people who are enterprising and active in the social, political and economic lives, people who seek for a complete subjectivity in all spheres of life. On these grounds one may deduct that nostalgia of Homo Sovieticus is going to accompany the unskilled workers and the part of the skilled workers who show the defensive and preserving, and demanding mentality type.

The social and political awareness and mentality of the social class does influence the socialization of the young generation. What type of awareness and attitude towards the present system is the young generation, brought up in the working-class families, going to take? Will the next generation, which derives from the most numerous, one day, social class, find itself in the social reality successfully? Is the young generation going to belong to the category of people who are active, enterprising, and resourceful, or maybe it is going to be the opposite, they will become demanding, and passive, and, what is more, will enter the group of unemployed and the beneficiaries of the social aid? These are the important questions because it depends on the young people what the social structure will look like.

What is obvious, only a small part of the teenagers coming from the working class will inherit an social status of their parents. The economic and social transformations result in the increase of the number of white collar workers at a decrease of the number of blue collar workers. The majority of them will be forced to locate themselves on different levels of the social ladder: higher or lower from the initial position.

In the context of consideration upon the future of the youth coming from the working class, it is worth pointing at the socializing specifics of a family, where the awareness of the young people is shaped. Looking closely at the factors, which influence the way of bringing up, will allow us to differentiate the features of the working-class family which may influence, in a stimulating way, the promotion of the unit, and the ones which will create a barrier in the matter.

Taking into account the fact that the introduction of the market economy resulted, among others, in transformations in the job market, where university education has become necessary factor, but not good enough to receive an attractive workplace, a typical reaction of adaptation, occurred to be acquiring university education. One should check whether such an attitude towards education among children in working-class families stands any chance to educate, whether the par-

ents – workers stimulate the process of children education, bearing in mind their own educational aspirations which were not met?

The aim of the article is, on the one hand to present the group of factors which are included in the specifics of the socializing space, where the youth coming from the working-class is brought up, on the other hand, it is to present the lives of the young people in the context of numerous, social, and economic transformations, which could influence, both positively and negatively, their situation and life chances. The first parts of the article concentrate on the socialization problems, as well as on the aspirations and attitudes of the young people from the working-class, the next ones present the functioning of the youth in the frame of the higher education system levels. This part becomes a reason for thinking over the functionality of the educational system as for the social and economic transformations which took place after '89.

1. A socializing specificity of the working-class family

Family life, similarly to all the other aspects of social life, depends on strong interactions of the macro- and microstructure. Each family has its own place in the class structure of a society, is associated with some local society, with neighbours, and company circles. Its members belong to some specified social organizations, and are employed in their workplace. They are also under the influence of the mass media, and widely named culture. However, depending on the place in the social and professional structure, the family functioning in other conditions is going to have a different character. In this way one creates, specific for other family type, social space, in which its members move. Belonging to some class seems to be a factor influencing significantly the structure and family functioning, the material and cultural aspect of its situation, and what is more, the awareness of its members. It influences the personality shaping and specified way of behaviours of those who live in the family, however one should notice their individual and autonomic features which are also very influential¹⁴.

Taking into account the socialization process in a working-class family in the context of the social promotion problems, one should highlight the features which may have an influence in a stimulating way on the unit promotion, and the ones which will be a barrier in the matter. The characteristics refer to the material and

¹⁴ Z. Tyszka, *Spoleczne uwarunkowania cech rodziny i procesów życia rodzinnego*, [in:] the book (ed.), *Rodzina a struktura spoleczna*, Bydgoszcz 1984, pp. 18–19.

cultural factor, and the way of bringing up children, the kind of values and aspiration passing.

The economical dimension of a family life occurs to be essential because the whole family well-being and the height of the educational costs depend on it. In the PRL period the economical situation of working-class families started to improve. One could sometimes even notice the equality of the salary levels of white and blue collar workers. However, on the basis of the content of working-class diaries from that period¹⁵ one may deduct that in spite of the “advantage” of the workers in the scope of the salary height, the level of living of their families differed significantly from the one of white collar workers. However, there was not such a situation that the children were forced to get a job in order to help the family budget. In this place one has to add that the number of working-class families, which also influences the family wealth, decreased even in the 70s., which could prove that workers leave the traditional family model (a family with a group of several children). However, one must notice that the number of children of these families is higher when comparing with families of different social and professional belongings¹⁶.

After the year '89 the situation seemed to be quite different, the workers became a social group in a material depression. The level of their lives they describe as modest or medium¹⁷. Obviously this kind of opinion of the tested group may only be a result of comparison of the present economic situation with the situation of the past, and also with the level of living of different social classes. The research carried out in 2004 by CBOS prove that the level of life is higher, the higher is the education level of the respondent, which makes one think that the material situation of working-class families is worse than of families with higher social status.

The economic factor of life determines also in some way its cultural sphere. The material situation of the working-class families in the PRL period enabled their participation in culture, but it occurred to be only a ‘home cultural consumption’¹⁸. This kind of culture participation was limited only to receiving some information

¹⁵ “*Oblicza młodości* (ed.) J. Bolek, I. Gajewski, B. Gołębiowski, F. Jakubczak. Warsaw 1974; *Robotnicze pokolenia* (ed.) J. Bolek, I. Gajewski, B. Gołębiowski, F. Jakubczak, Warsaw 1980 – both volumes include the diaries of the workers from the 70s.: *Robotnicze losy* (ed.) Szafran-Bartoszek, E. Kielczeska, A. Kwilecki, J. Leoński, K. Wawrach, Poznań 1996 – the workers’ diaries as of the years 1981–1982.

¹⁶ W. Mrozek, *Górnośląska rodzina górnicza a miejska zbiorowość lokalna* [in:] Z. Tyszka (ed.), *Rodzina a struktura społeczna*, Bydgoszcz 1984, p. 71.

¹⁷ K. Milczarek, *Przystosowani? O kondycji materialnej...*

¹⁸ Z. Tyszka, *Spółeczne uwarunkowania cech rodziny i procesów życia rodzinnego* [in:] the book (ed.), *Rodzina a struktura społeczna*, Bydgoszcz 1977, p. 139.

popularized by the radio, TV, newspapers, and magazines. According to the results of the researches on the cultural life of working-class families, the tendency has not changed much¹⁹.

There was also a dependency between a worker's and his wife's education and the cultural activity. A worker with secondary or higher education used to read the press more often, and at the same time, more often read a book. Contacts with cultural institutions were limited, in majority, to movies in the cinema, more seldom in a theatre²⁰. Also the analysis of the autobiographic materials from the beginnings of the eighties seem to prove that the cultural life of working-class families was rather poor²¹. The content of the diaries²² seem to depict a picture of a worker who is aware of his imperfectness, as for the sphere of culture, but tries to come up with it by means of available to him means, that is: the mass media and a book. He also attempts to know the current political events and technological news. Special attention to cultural life was paid by those workers who were being educated at some courses, studied extramural, or from the very childhood liked reading, but because of several reasons could not allow to educate longer. It was the group of workers who experienced in their lives a kind of promotion through increasing the level of education, or at least intended to do so.

The low level of the participation in high culture often resulted from the place of living, or the difference in perceiving the cultural needs between a wife and husband. At the same time one of them, who thought the cultural life to be vital, tried to pass the passion to the children²³. What is more, also the place where one worked used to be the animator of cultural life, for example, they funded theatre tickets to their workers.

Owing to the researches on the cultural life of the working-class families one may deduct that it was a participation rather in the mass culture, one which also provides some models and stimulates the aspiration, equalizing the differences caused by a lack of the cultural habits and environmental isolation²⁴. Owing to the relations of the workers one can see a picture of a different image of their cultural

¹⁹ The results of the researches that Zbigniew Tyszka refers to (1977): J. Malanowski, *Robotnicy Warszawskiej Fabryki Motocykli* – the researches as of the 50s, F. Adamski, *Hutnik i jego rodzina* – the researches from the 60s.; W. Mrozek, *Rodzina Górnicza* – the researches as of the 60s.

²⁰ Z. Tyszka, *Spoleczne uwarunkowania...*

²¹ A. Kwilecki, M. Łączkowska, *Problemy rodziny robotniczej w świetle najnowszych materiałów autobiograficznych*, "Studia Socjologiczne" 1987, No. 1 (104), pp. 101–132.

²² *Oblicza młodości, Robotnicze pokolenia, Robotnicze losy.*

²³ *Robotnicze losy: The biography of Józef Chmieliński.*

²⁴ M. Latoszek, *Socjalizacja w rodzinie robotniczej*, "Studia socjologiczne" 1978, No. 2 (69), pp. 217–239.

participation. The cultural life (also the participation in the higher culture) plays a vital role among “the ambitious workers”, that is, among those who aim at rising their social position by means of education or active participation in their cultural life. One may deduct that in the families of those workers the set cultural models are not going to be passed to children, but some aspirations towards the participation in the cultural life and the development of their interests and cultural habits.

At the same time one should notice that the willingness of participation in the high culture, either by getting to know it at school or by self-development of interests and habits, occurs to be a failure – a failure in the sense that it can only be a kind of learnt activity, one that needs intellectual effort or even having the inside awareness of the necessary consumption of symbolic goods of the higher culture. It is in the cultural sphere overcoming the barriers that result from the received, in the process of socializing, initial habits²⁵, which seems to be the essential challenge for the units coming from the working-class families (and other lower classes). “Archetypical attitude towards the symbolic goods”²⁶ characteristic for the higher classes, ones which are dominating and imposing the higher culture on other social classes, guarantees to them the freedom as for the relations with culture products, which individuals of the lower classes shall never achieve. Their attitude towards the products of the higher culture will always be “the school attitude”²⁷. What is more, they are forced to choose between “the pleasant culture” with the characteristic for their class “folk aesthetics, and “the legal culture” with the “clean” aesthetics, strange to the educated tastes, abstracting, not connected with life²⁸. The difference created on these grounds may result in experiencing the feeling of “being uprooted” and lack of belonging. By means of their aspirations and knowledge they will be higher than the class they come from, however, as for the manners with the dominating culture, they will not be able to be equal with the class they are aiming at.

The level of education is associated with the culture participation. It makes an individual active in a cultural way, and also influences the values system, and the level of aspirations. It seems that it will depend on parents what kind of life aims, aspirations, and values will be passed on children. At the same time, the mother’s role, as for shaping the future of children, seems to be more vital than the father’s

²⁵ P. Bourdieu, J.C. Passeron, *Reprodukcja. Elementy teorii systemu nauczania*, Warszawa 1990.

²⁶ M. Jacyno, *Iluzje codzienności*, Warsaw 1997, p. 117.

²⁷ P. Bourdieu, *Distynkcja. Społeczna krytyka władzy sądzienia*.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 40–58.

role. In the case when a wife is better educated, it is she who influences, decisively, the level of education of children²⁹. It results mainly from the fact that it is mother who passes on a child a specific language code, and it is depended on the code whether the child will achieve any success as for education.³⁰ Any school uses a developed code, characteristic for the middle class. The code of the working class is limited, which results in the fact that children from the working-class families encounter difficulties at school because they are required to operate the higher form of language they have never met. Whereas children coming from the middle class use the limited kind of code without any problems, one which depends on the context of incidents, and is used in everyday conversations, and the informal one, which is developed (abstractive and universal), and characteristic for the official language of literature, administration or education. A mother who uses both the limited and developed kind of code, characteristic for the official language at school provides the child with instrumentarium in the process of socialization, one which is necessary for adequate functioning in the frame of education system.³¹ This is why the mother's education is so essential in the context of social promotion.

The importance of the factor may be also proved by empirical data. Owing to research carried out by Maria Jarosz in 1980, the mother's education does influence the continuity of child's education after the primary school, and the direction of education. Some percentage of children who learn at secondary schools, of whose mothers graduated from the university is much higher educated than children of whose mothers possess only primary education. The low level of mother's education has an influence also on the fact that their children, more often than children of mothers with higher education, continue their education in the professional schools or technical schools. As for the studies, there is a similar tendency, that is, the higher level of mother's education, the more often children enter the higher studies; the lower level of mother's education, the more likely it is that a child will take a job instead of continuing education³²

According to the analysis of Maria Misztal the lower level of mother's education co-exists with the higher salary and lower meaning of education in the values' system of children. At the same time, people of whose mothers were of the profes-

²⁹ M. Jarosz, *Nierówności społeczne*, Warsaw 1984, pp. 98–99.

³⁰ B. Bernstein, *Odtwarzanie kultury*, Warsaw 1990.

³¹ B. Bernstein, *Odtwarzanie...*

³² M. Jarosz, *Nierówności społeczne...*, pp. 100–105.

sional or basic education, estimated their chances of higher level education as minimal or none.³³

Taking into account the above dependency one may deduct that the chances of the young people who come from the working-class families, as for education at the higher levels, seem to be fewer than those of young people of the higher social status. The education of parents, to some extent, decides also about the fact of how the value of education will be received by their children. However one should not ignore the importance of the influence of the whole complex of factors which are associated with the issue of education, that is the material situation of a family and parents aspirations towards their children. High parents aspirations and high income in the working-class family may compensate the negative influence of low parents education on the social promotion of children.

As for the content of the working-class diaries³⁴, the issue of education seems to be presented in a different way. Above all, one should highlight the fact that some part of workers often notice the gaps as for their education. In such a situation their own aspirations, which were not met, are passed on their children. The example is, the investment in their children's education, concentration on their children's progress when studying. At the same time, it is also symptomatic that in the case of these workers, who aimed at reaching their level of education, and as a result of it were promoted, the issue of their children education was highlighted more often in their autobiographies than in the work of the workers who did not feel like rising their qualifications. A special example may be the diary of Antoni Sikorski³⁵ who as a father, on his own, brought up his daughter aiming at her high education. He learned and, knew, owing to his experience how important is hard-working with oneself, regularity, and patience. He attempted to teach his daughter the same values. He encouraged his daughter, as for education, in spite of the fact that she was not very skilled, to develop interests through conversations, watching films together, and reading books. He took care also of her preparations for studies – she joined the preparation courses for higher studies. Owing to this, he achieved the aim.

However, the examples of the planned child's education were quite rare. Passing the aspirations were not accompanied by activities that would enable its fulfilment by a child. Although a child of a working-class family was exempt from some domestic responsibilities for the benefit of school tasks, and was supposed to have

³³ M. Misztal, *Spoleczeństwo-psychologiczne aspekty reprodukcji struktury edukacyjnej w Polsce*, "Studia Socjologiczne" 1984, No. 2 (93), pp. 87–106.

³⁴ *Oblicza młodości, Robotnicze pokolenia, Robotnicze losy*.

³⁵ Cf. "Robotnicze losy".

good marks at school, it does not inspire the child to any additional activity, which would undoubtedly make it easier to overcome any barriers on the educational “rungs”. A child was given “the best” so that they could achieve more than their parents, and this “the best” could occur not to be enough instrumentarium in order to meet one’s aspirations which were internalized by children in the working-class families.

As for the level of parents’ aspirations in the working-class families, owing to the monographic research of “shipyard” families carried out by Marek Latoszek in 1978, 31% of parents of the tested families wanted their children to study, and only 3% preferred their children to finish their education after the primary school. The number of families who planned to make their children study was quite minimal. The choice of the way they were to acquire education (extramural one or in the evening) may prove that in a working-class family, at the end of the seventies, the education model of parents had a negative influence on their children’s education “path”³⁶.

However, one should notice that the period of system transformations has changed several issues also the issue of educational aspirations of children. Their increase was proved in Polish society in the last few years³⁷, owing to the researches carried out in Poland. The wish that children graduated from the higher studies has grown especially among respondents with fundamental professional education (about 21 percentage points of increase for daughter and 26 percentage points for a son) and the basic one (respectively 15 and 14 percentage points). One should notice also that the highest level of aspirations³⁸ as for one’s children is characteristic for the group of people who have higher education, and it does not change much.

One may ask whether the growth of aspirations among workers (in the above research, people of fundamental and professional education) will contribute to an increase in the number of students of the working-class origin? Taking into account the fact that nearly all parents with higher education plan for their offspring the same, or even higher education, one may assume that the number of people who want to promote as for the social position will increase, and it may turn out that the high educational aspirations of workers as for their children will become a necessary condition, but not high enough to promote inter-generationally. Chil-

³⁶ M. Latoszek, *Socjalizacja w rodzinie robotniczej...*, pp. 229–232.

³⁷ The report of CBOS: “Wzrost aspiracji edukacyjnych Polaków w latach 1993–2004”, 2004.

³⁸ In 2004 100% of parents with higher educations wanted their daughters to graduate from studies; 99% had the same wish as for their sons.

dren from the families of higher social status inherit not only higher education aspirations, but also some economic, social, and cultural capital, one which makes it easier for them to meet their life aspirations.

As I have already mentioned, the social position may influence the way children are brought up. According to the theory of Kohn and Schooler the working situation influences one's life values, ones which are passed to children in the process of their bringing up with the conviction that they will bring a success to them. This is where the similarity of life values of specified social classes is coming from, as they concentrate the individuals who work in a similar profession. Higher position in the class system is associated with the proffered self-controllability because the performed work needs self-controllability and intellectual flexibility. In the case of lower position the conformism is more respected because the situation at work does not allow for the self-controllability, and enforces the obedience, and does not demand the flexibility in thinking (especially in a kind of a routine profession with products). Self-controllability is associated with the conviction on the reality of aim achieving chosen by the individual. The conformism is also associated with the perception of all deviations from the traditional course of events in the categories of danger³⁹.

Passing values to children, values which are associated with self-controllability will provide them with better educational achievements, and will be a stimulator on the way to higher social positions. The values connected with the category of conformism may block even the most skilled individual, because the innovativeness and different behaviour shall be perceived in a negative way.

The parents' position in the stratificational system "determines the self-controllability at work, the self-controllability at work determines the self-fulfilled parents' values"⁴⁰ (Słomczyński and others, 1996:150). The working-class families where the parents' professional promotion takes place, create more possibilities as for their children promotion. The change in the working position will result in a greater approval for the innovative behaviours of a child, or even in the stimulation of such behaviours. There is no doubt that the working-class family may be encouraged to achieve higher social positions in the next generation. However one should pay attention to the fact that it will not be a typical working-class family. It will stand out in its environment where it functions. For sure, it will not be a family which experiences economic deprivation, and what is associated with it, can afford

³⁹ M. Kohn, C. Schooler, *Praca a osobowość*, Warsaw 1983, pp. 29–78.

⁴⁰ K. Słomczyński, K. Janicka, B. Mach, W. Zaborowski. *Struktura społeczna a osobowość*, Warsaw 1996, p. 150.

paying for education. What is more, in the family parents pass to children high (maybe often non-fulfilled in relation to their biography) educational aspirations, and shape personality, one which aims at self-activity and seeking for the aim. Moreover, one should notice the fact that being brought up in the same family does not always have the same effects⁴¹. This is where one more conclusion is coming from: the socialization in a family is only one of the factors which has an influence on shaping an individual's awareness and his or her future. It is one of, as Bourdieu shows, but the most determining one.

2. The values and aspirations of young people with working-class origin

In the era of system transformations teenagers, similarly to parents, have changed their attitude towards numerous values, also towards education. Owing to several statistics, one can see the growth of educational aspirations. Education has become an instrumental value, it is becoming more and more beneficial, and at the same time, the value of a higher studies diploma on the job market is falling ("the effect of a lift going down"⁴²). The social drive towards the improvement of the material conditions by the rise of the educational level may lead to a paradoxical situation, however, it does not put out the aspirations of adults and young people.

Owing to the CBOS report "Plany, dążenia i aspiracje życiowe młodzieży" ["Life Plans, Wishes, Aspirations of Young People] as of 1998⁴³ more than 57% of teenagers want to acquire higher education. Among people of whose parents are of the basic, or fundamental and professional education more than 40% have the aspirations for higher education, whereas among those of whose parents graduated from university – two times more (above 80%). With the general growth of educational aspirations the percentage of young people with working-class origin who want to study is not so high.

A research⁴⁴ carried out in 2003 in higher schools in the region of Toruń proves that there is a huge difference as for the level of aspirations of young people of different status. Among people with lower class education origin 50% has the aspirations for higher education, among people of whose parents are of fundamental

⁴¹ Cf. *Oblicza młodości*, pp.593–607.

⁴² Cf. U. Beck, *Społeczeństwo ryzyka. W drodze do nowoczesności*, Warsaw 2002.

⁴³ The whole Poland sample of the young people of the last year of higher schools.

⁴⁴ J. Domaleski, P. Mikiewicz, *Młodzież w zreformowanym systemie szkolnym*, Warsaw 2004, pp. 89–94.

and professional education – about 60%, and those of whose parents graduated from the university – nearly 96%. There is also a great advantage of the last group of young people as for the aspirations for the diploma studies (so-called master's +). Even one third of them wants to be admitted to studies, whereas only 7% of children of whose parents are of basic education have got such aspirations. In spite of the profound interest of young people of lower status in education, and the wish to rise the formal level of education as for the family origin, the distance between single social groups is still enormous. The educational structure has moved up but has not created any possibilities to overcome the social barrier.

The full picture of aspirations of young people one receives when looking closely at the results of the researches on the planned social status, acquired in 2003⁴⁵. As it turns out, the higher educational aspirations are accompanied by high professional aspirations, and, what is associated with it, planning of rising the social status. Making real such ambitious aspirations would cause a complete change of the social structure shape. However, when analyzing the differentiation of aspirations as for the family status, it is proportional to the growth of the educational level, of which the respondents' parents legitimate. Young people of high family status in a great majority (95%) prefer to copy their parents' status, and at the same time want to keep the advantage over the people of lower class origin, or even aim at better situation than their parents. Among people of lower social status there is a strong over-representation of people with low social and professional ambitions. In the case when parents are of the professional education more than 30% of children have got the aspirations to the highest social positions, to the middle-high status – about one fourth (similarly to the middle status), and to middle-lower 15%. Only 1% of young people of such a class origin plan to have the low status.

The picture presented by the quantitative researches complete the topologic analysis of Barbara Fatyga⁴⁶. In the typology of the urban youth created by Barbara Fatyga, the youth of working-class origin (and the youth of middle-technical and office-intelligence origin) belongs to the category of “normal ones”. They usually educate at secondary technical schools, choose such studies fields which result in acquiring a profession (economics, law, marketing). They got used to the new social and economic conditions, and improve the market transformations. The aim of

⁴⁵ Ibidem, pp. 103–110.

⁴⁶ B. Fatyga, *Dzicy z naszej ulicy. Antropologia kultury młodzieżowej*, The Young People Research Centre – the Institute of the Applied Social Studies of the Warsaw University, Warsaw 1999, pp 50–75.

their life is to acquire competences of market value. Unfortunately they do not always have the chance to achieve it because of some economic conditions. A majority of them do not possess high ambitions: they want to work in firms where they could get a high salary, but they do not aim at working at high positions, they do not want to achieve success at any costs. Their motto is: to cope with but do not cross the borders of “decency” and do not infringe the co-existence rules with other social groups.

The intelligence-class youth treat life in a different way. In their case education also has an instrumental value, as it is necessary to achieve high social positions. The young people possess not only education but also the social capital, one that they inherited owing to their family home, which was multiplied by themselves. They appreciate initiative and individual resourcefulness. They want to preserve their social dominance on the way of economical domination, this is why the professional career is more important than the family life.

Also the material issues play a very vital role for children of entrepreneurs. The very group is convinced that everything is for sale and on these grounds think that education is of neither autotelic nor instrumental value. The hedonistic orientation seems to dominate, and the fact of being clever is the most valuable feature. This is why the youth do not show any aspirations for education. The majority of them become students of fundamental professional schools as well as the technical ones.

The last group is the group of “losers” that is the young people who do not have chances for education and, at the same time, for a job. These are very often students of fundamental professional schools or the students of secondary schools who thought that they could more than in reality. They often become very demanding. In fact having high education is much valued but perceived as “very rare”. The most needed value, in the case of the group, is working which allows them to make real the vision of safe family life. These young people value peace and safety.

The youth typology by Barbara Fatyga presents to us the above mentioned picture of working-class young people, a picture which indicates its acceptance of the transformations in the system. However, the category of “losers” which the young people of working-class origin may belong to, presents the existence of the individuals who, in spite of their young age, inherit the passive and demanding attitude. Obviously, it will result, in future, in moving the young people to the margin of social life.

At the same time it seems to be characteristic that the youth of working-class origin do not aim at achieving the highest social positions. Education is treated by them as a necessary condition for finding a well-paid job, a job which would provide economical safety and would allow to create a family.

At that point one should notice that acquiring high education may not influence an individual's position in the social structure. Undertaking high studies is usually associated with the hope for better existence. In the situation when the job market is not able to provide jobs for every graduate, and a part of them probably will share the same life as the rest of the social group, which have not even attempted to make any effort for the benefit of rising its education level, than one may encounter some pressure. So far the young people with high education blamed themselves for the misshapeness in their lives. This is why there are so many ways of preventing the situation of unemployment in the process of studying. The existence of strong tendency for individualization of one's own educational and life "paths" proves the acceptance of the "games rules" which are required in the system.

3. The youth of working-class origin and the educational system

High educational aspirations, even though very essential in the case of aiming at social promotion, are not decisive as for the achievement of an ambitious target, that is graduation from the university. The selection concerning higher studies, as well as the selection in the course of education verifies effectively the ambitious plans of the youth. At the same time, the access to high education depends, in great extent, on the educational politics of Poland. Presently, the educational sphere is led by the free market principle of supply and demand – those "buy" the knowledge who need it, and have finances for it. In the PRL period the quantity of students at the university was regulated by the proper authority. However, the analysis of the statistics concerning the social composition of higher studies presents a picture to us of the behaviours' dynamics, aiming at the improvement of life situation of young people with the working-class origin.

The beginning of the 50s was a period of an enormous demand for educated office clerks, which gave better chances, for the youth with working-class and peasant origin, for education at higher levels. In the academic year 1952/53 there was admitted for the first year of studies the same number of people with working-class origin (35.9%) as people with higher education (36.4%)⁴⁷. However, the number of it fell down for the benefit of "the youth – intellectuals", and in the academic year 1959/60 there were only 26.2% of student of working-class origin who were admitted to the first year of full-time studies. In spite of the decrease in the number of

⁴⁷ *Statystyka Polski*, 1962 for: "Studenti Warszawy" (ed.) S. Nowak, Warsaw 1991.

students with working-class origin who were admitted to university, the group still outnumbered those of peasant origin. The group was losing the number of its representatives among students in the greatest extent.

Owing to the analysis of GUS as of 1960–1968 the youth of working-class origin constitutes 25% of the whole students⁴⁸, and was a more numerous group than the youth with peasant origin, of which number was still falling for the benefit of the young people with the intellectuals-class origin⁴⁹. Very characteristic seems to be the fact that when analyzing the statistics concerning the social “composition” of students at universities, one may notice an even greater number domination of the last group (more than 50% of students at universities). The second place is occupied by working-class origin young people, the third place by the youth with peasant origin. The above fact may prove that the young people of working-class origin tend to choose technical studies, ones which provide some specified job, rather than universities where one acquires general knowledge. On the other hand, one may interpret it as a greater selection of university in relation to the working-class youth – they lack of competence which is required in order to start high studies, it starts the mechanism of auto-selection.

The year 1968 should introduce essential changes as for the social ‘composition’ of students as in this year the so-called ‘points’ for working-class or peasant origin were introduced. The first part of the 70s may be characterized by a growth of the number of students with working-class origin among students in general, although the group of students with peasant-class origin was still falling. However the number of the intellectuals-class origin students was, consequently rising.

The reason may be found in the fact that these are the data concerning students in general, not only those who were admitted to the first year. In the course of studies one finds the selective mechanisms, which result in the selection of “weaker” students. On these grounds the force of the youth influx in the category of working class will be weakened by the “migration” of the group of young people in the course of studies. The analysis of the social “composition” of students in the year 1978/79 owing to GUS may be complicated by the change of variable “social and professional; group” to the variable “social and professional category”, one which introduces division into the employed on the workers’ position, employed on the non-workers’ position, members of the agricultural production co-operative, who work on their own (also in farming), and the others. In the situation the

⁴⁸ Between the academic year 1960/61 and 1965/66 there was an increase as for the number of students with working-class origin from 24,6% to 27,2%, whereas in the academic year 1967/68 one could note 26,7% of students with working-class origin (*Rocznik Statystyczny Szkolnictwa*, GUS)

⁴⁹ *Rocznik Statystyczny Szkolnictwa*, GUS

comparisons will be limited only to the youth with working-class origin, of whose parents probably belonged to the group of employers who were employed on the workers' positions, and to the intellectuals-class origin youth, of whose parents were employed on the non-workers' positions.

As for the young people of peasant origin, their family could be qualified both to the category of members of agricultural production co-operative, as well as to the category of those who were employed on their own. The approximate evaluation based on the above ideas prove the systematic fall of the number of young people with the peasant origin at the university on the first year in the years 1977–1985.

The number of students of the working-class origin also decreased in the period, however, it was not so dramatic as in the case of the group presented above. Still the working-class young people were placed on the second place (as for the number of students on the first year of studies). The group of intellectuals was growing up to the beginning of the 80s., where one could notice "the phenomena of aspiration cooling" (the notion by Z. Kwieciński), which was characterised by the fall of interest in the higher studies and low value of higher education in the opinion of young people⁵⁰. The chance to fill in the gaps in the place of intellectuals was grasped, to the greatest extent, by the young people who worked on their own and by 'the others'⁵¹ – the general category. One should also pay attention to the fact that in the eighties on the first year of full-time studies, young people coming from the families of white-collar workers constituted about 50% of all students, whereas the working-class youth about 30%. On these grounds the diagnosis mentioned above, concerning the researches on families with shipyard origin⁵², that the fact of acquiring high education by children of workers does not usually take place at the full-time studies may be generalized to the whole working class.

The analysis of the data carried out by GUS concerning the seventies and the eighties is confirmed in the research on students carried out by Mirosława Jastrząb-Mrozicka in 1977, and subsequently, ten years later in 1987⁵³. The 'composition' of students as for their parents education' changed between the first and second research. The number of students of whose parents had lower than secondary educa-

⁵⁰ Look At Z. Kwieciński, *Dynamika funkcjonowania szkoły*, Toruń 1995, pp. 113–114.

⁵¹ The Statistic Annual of Education. GUS.

⁵² Look at M. Latoszek, *Socjalizacja w rodzinie...*

⁵³ M. Jastrząb-Mrozicka, *Student 1987*, Warsaw–Łódź 1990, pp. 4–28. The described research carried out by the representative research sample, takes into consideration the differentiation between the high schools (universities, polytechnics, academies, high schools).

tion decreased, however the number of students of whose parents had high or secondary education increased. As for mothers the proportion of persons with high education, and those who passed the maturity exam increased, as for fathers the same happened with the number of those with high education .

The author has explained the research's results in two ways. Firstly, it may result from the rise as for the young people's parents' education, especially in 1978, taking into account 10 years ago. Secondly, there is a chance that during the selection to higher schools the young people with higher education family origin have stood better chances. However the data gathered above proves that the most effective wishes to get higher education are cultivated in the families with high education origin. Diminishing the role of higher education as a tool to acquire better education in the eighties, and the decrease of people admitted for the I year of studies have resulted in a quick loss of high aspirations among the youth coming from the families of low level of education.

The growth and fall of young people's interests should be found in the social and economical situation of Poland. Presently, when the value of education is exceptionally high, the demand as for education on the higher level is considerable. However, there is no data concerning the social composition of students after 89', but one may think that the popularity of secondary education will bring on the popularity of education on the level of master's studies. And as it results from the studies carried out in Toruń in 2003, a significant percent of secondary school students constitute children with the working-class origin⁵⁴, then the number of them at the university is going to increase. However, there is a huge possibility that they will not be admitted to the studies that prepare to prestige positions. But taking into consideration the above mentioned analysis one may conclude that reaching the social walk of life among young people with working-class origin has always been noticeable, even at the times when the authority decided about admitting students to the university. The situation of regulation took place in order to control the social structure transformations, but, surely, did not prevent from the pressures in the structure. The drive to acquire knowledge by the youth with working-class origin, a very noticeable drive nowadays, is undoubtedly, a signal of significant structural changes. Is the principle: supply and demand regulating the present educational market, one which is functional as for the economical and social transformations? Unfortunately, not. So far, the high studies have become a kind of a deposit for the unemployed, for whom the moment of formal unemployed status has moved temporarily in time. The common belief of high value of education as

⁵⁴ J. Domalewski, P. Mikiewicz, *Młodzież w zreformowanym systemie...*

a catalyst of other valuable social values (income, prestige) is losing its charm when being in contact with the reality of the job market. As it turns out, besides the school knowledge there is a number of other factors which decide as for success in the professional life or the effectiveness of the efforts in improving one's social position. These are so-called: 'out-of-functional' criteria, as for example "the proper appearance⁵⁵ and behaviour, relations, language abilities, loyalty" and all the other features, which may be shaped in the process of school education, but are a result of socialization in specified social environment. The question is, whether the mass of young people with working-class origin is going to share the faith of the described, by Hoggart, grand holder, who got used to, in a perfect way, to the principles of the educational system ("a circus horse for scholarship winning"), but after finishing the education loses its power, "be scared of decision and involvement"⁵⁶, because the world outside the school walls is strange to him, because he feels inadequate, because there is no guide (teacher), who would lead him through his life, and through next social walks of life?

4. The conclusion

One of the features that differentiate the working-class people, as I have mentioned in the introduction, is their inner differentiation. In the question context, concerning the future of the young people with working-class origin, it seems to be essential. The variety of attitudes, different mentality, social and political awareness, as well as the differentiation of the income, educational and cultural among working-class families models must have resulted in the stratification in the next generation. The thing that will differentiate the working youth are probably three processes of social movements, which will decide about their professional fate: promotion, reproduction and degradation.

Social promotion is going to become a part of those who can read out in the correct way the rules of free market, and decide to take part in the game concerning the higher social status. These will be people who in the process of socialization acquire the ability of the self-creation of one's own life path. We shall find them among students who taking into account the requirements of the job market try to individualize their educational careers (additional courses, studies fields, working at the same time as studying), and prepare for new adult life. In their cases one

⁵⁵ U. Beck, *Spoleczeństwo ryzyka...*, p. 132.

⁵⁶ R. Hoggart. *Spojrzenie na kulturę robotniczą w Anglii*, Warsaw 1976, pp. 367–383.

may formulate a thesis that the process of socialization in their homes was functional as for the system, owing to which they are able to cope with pressure at the macro-structural level, and be responsible for their fate.

The second group, undergoing the reproduction, may inherit the status of parents both because of the lack of abilities to educate at the high level, and because of acquiring in the process of socialization the improper (ones which do not enable to achieve a success) life attitudes directed at keeping the present life level at the minimum effort. Students who do not have any idea as for their future lives may also belong to the category (like the grand holder of Hoggart), students who because of their life viewpoint which is not quite reflective, will not be able to react in the proper way to the transformations on the job market.

The young people of working-class origin who are going to lose their low origin status will find themselves in the disadvantageous life situation. It will result from the inheritance of the demanding attitudes, and the early exemption from the system of education. Their lives will be marked with long-lasting unemployment, which in turn will change them into the beneficiaries of social aid. Both the lack of education and competence, as well the lack of willingness to change one's life will lead them to torpor and poverty.

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