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NEW BOOKS REVIEW

BUCHBESPRECHUNGEN

## EDUCATION FOR DEMOKRACY

The Institute for Educational Research in Belgrade published in the first half of 1997 the book *Democracy, education, personality*. I say 'a book', although in a review such as this one it should be more specifically determined in terms of its scientific genre. The editor, Dr. Zoran Avramović, thinks, and in the preface he has written, that this is a monograph, although it can hardly be that, both in its title and in its approach to and the incoherence of the subject matter. It is all this that would rather make this publication a book-collection. The monograph (we stick to the editor's categorization) resulted from the work on the project *Education for democracy* realized at the Institute within the macro-project *Social and moral education*.

The monograph is interdisciplinary in its concept. It, as the editor informs us, considers the issues significant for democratic education and the development of democratic culture from the point of view of various scientific disciplines such as philosophy, psychology, pedagogy, sociology, law, political science, and history. It also considers the issues relevant for the explanation and understanding of democracy and democratic functioning of a society, as well as the issues concerning the very process of the education for democracy, its aims, means, subjects, and effects.

The monograph consists of eleven articles written by eleven authors of various professional profiles. With the preface and summaries in the English language, the book amounts to two hundred and two pages.

'Cultivating for democracy' is the article by Mihailo Marković, the member of the Academy of Sciences and Arts, where he stated his opinion by answering five questions: (1) what is democracy, (2) freedom - a precondition for democracy, (3) is democracy a condition or an ideal, (4) can one be a democrat in one limited area of life, while being a non-democrat in all the other spheres, and (5) how to cultivate people for democracy.

The original classical sense of democracy has been completely lost, and democracy in a broader sense, according to Marković, "means a mode of managing any system other than political: economic, cultural, ecological, church, sport, etc. (p.11). Such democracy is a political system established on the principle of equal freedoms of all the citizens of a country. Marković further points out that it is not difficult to see that in reality, even in the so-called 'democratic societies', democracy is present only to a negligible extent. In mixed societies there are initial forms of economic and cultural democracy, as well as participatory political democracy. Democracy in the broadest sense, as a life style, has not yet prevailed anywhere in reality, and there are very few democratic persons (p.16). Out of the four spheres of life - the sphere of the private life in the family, the work sphere, the leisure sphere, and the sphere of political activity, 'when we speak about democracy (including education for democracy), we usually have in mind only this last area of human

life, which is even not the most important for the majority of people." (p.17). The main problem of education for freedom and democracy is the reconciliation of the two apparently conflicting requirements: "on one hand, removing the limits and barriers to the individual autonomy, and on the other, restricting the autonomy of one person in the name of the autonomy of other people. (p.18.). Another important problem of education for democracy is the forming of the identity of a young human being without negating the identity of the others. Moreover, the cultivation of the dialogue as a method of struggle is a necessary element of the education for democracy.

'Democracy and education' is the title of the article by Jovan Babi}, Professor at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade. Although his text lacks the desirable and necessary methodology, such as was seen in the text by M. Markovi}, a few relevant considerations can be recognized and singled out. Thus, the substantial determination of democracy is very widely spread. It presupposes a fixed, preestablished programme that should be achieved as a description of 'the state of democracy'. (p.23). Education emerges as a kind of a precondition for democracy and its constituent part. Without competent, educated people, there cannot be competent citizens. This makes education very significant politically. "The aim of education in democracy therefore has to be the autonomy of a person, the aspect of maturity which is the precondition or the pillar of political freedom where everyone in a relevant way takes part in decision making. But the opposite also applies - political freedom is the precondition of the possibility of such an education... (p.28). This means that the element of education and the element of upbringing are necessary conditions of the democratic decision-making and the discussion of these issues. 'Democracy as such, therefore, protects from sudden and great changes, but what kind of a state will be produced, and how it will change and in which direction, it will depend on people's ability to make decisions in a competent manner." All this is not possible without sufficiently high quality education, in two senses" "first, there should be an awareness, which means the knowledge of what is possible in a particular social community ... and second, there should be moral and political courage... (p.31). There cannot be a really democratic decision-making, if the majority is uneducated, or, which is perhaps even worse, semi-educated. Therefore the mastering of the competence to think and act in an autonomous way is the aim of the third dimension of education.

'Democracy and education with the Ancient Greeks' is a review article written by Ksenija Maricki-Gadjanski from the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad. It is one of the two longest articles in the book, certainly too long considering the volume of the whole book. The article itself resembles a collage in its nature. It gives thoughts, attitudes and witticisms of many people on many issues, and, naturally, mostly on education and democracy. It is all supported by expressions in Old Greek, Modern Greek, Latin, and several other modern languages, probably in the attempt to give the paper the desirable and necessary academic style. It also gives the unavoidable etymological explanations. Without giving the summary of the article (which does not even seem possible to me) with which I could familiarize the readers, I recommend them to read it for themselves. They will be given many facts, and they might find the answer, which I did not find, to the question raised by the author: What is today's role of education and upbringing in the perspective of the existence of the great power of our time? (p.57)

'Problems of democracy defining and modeling' is the title of the article written by Vucina Vasovi}, Professor at the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade. He starts from

the truism that never in the modern history have there been so numerous and strong reasons as today to reconsider and reexamine the complex and vital concept of the perspective and the state of democracy in the contemporary world from a broader empirical and prospective or critical and humanistic point of view. He gives only six reasons (among the many) why it is so, and the sixth reason argues that "a clearer determination of the concepts and types, i.e. models of democracy, is necessary for the establishment, better to say, development, of a more adequate system of education and the general process of democratic socialization (!?) and cultururation ." (p.61). Unpretentiously, clearly, due to a limited space, in the text he does not consider all the key problems of democracy. In fact, almost as in elementary remarks, he discusses two groups of questions: 1/ of defining and modeling, i.e. the model of democracy, and 2/ of certain basic conditions and preconditions for establishing and functioning of the adequate project-model of democracy. In the section subtitled 'Modeling and models of democracy' he mentions ten elements or features of democracy. Among others they are "the principle of the rule of law, or the restrictions imposed to the state by law, freedom and rights of the citizens, political equality, responsibility of the subjects of political power, political pluralism, election for the organs of political power, the freedom of mass media, etc.

'Unlearnt lessons on democracy' is the article by Jovica Trkulja from the Faculty of Law in Belgrade. The text consists of the introduction, development (three subtitles), conclusion. There is also the list of references. For the motto of his article Trkulja took Monteskie's thought: "it is good to create democracy for people. But there is something even better and more important: to educate people for democracy." Therefore it was expected that the article will deal more with education and upbringing, the one for democracy, of course. That is lacking, but the author speaks of *lessons* , once as unlearnt (in the title), the second time as unabsolved (in the subtitle). The author was obviously not bothered by the unnatural link between a lesson and democracy. Lessons and democracy, in any sense, don't and should not go together. If that happens, it is democracy that loses. In the first part of the article J. Trkulja gives eleven conditions and factors of democracy, which mostly are the same as mentioned by other authors. They are: constituting a citizen, creation of a civil society, legal state and the rule of law, the control of the subjects of political power, establishment of political pluralism, etc. The second part deals with the degrees of development of a modern democratic state, and the third with the course of postcommunist transition between a democratic and an authoritarian political system.

'Social and institutional basis of education for democracy' is the title of the longest text in the book (some thirty pages), written by Milan Nedeljkovi}, Professor of the Teacher Training College in Jagodina. The article consists of the introduction, the body (divided into four subtitles) and the list of references. The subtitles are: The notion, historical development and the meaning of democracy; Modern society and democracy; Modern school and democracy; The role and place of a teacher in education for democracy. Judging by the title, and especially by the subtitles, all the two hundred pages of this monograph would not be sufficient for the adequate treatment of the subject matter, particularly if done at the level of a scientific project. It is certainly difficult, almost impossible, to state the problem in a proper academic manner at five pages, as for instance, 'Modern society and democracy'. I was especially curious to see what place and role the author gave to the teacher in the education process which aims at democracy. I gave up the search for that answer, but I did find the author's opinion on the qualities of

the teachers who will educate for democracy. "For the young generation it can be understandable and acceptable only to have *good, gifted, talented teachers, masters, virtuosi of education, extraordinary personalities, persons who are acknowledged for their inspiration for democracy and other values.*" (underlined by M. I., p.121). My congratulations to the young generation on their taste and my sincere condolences in their disappointment because they are not going to find a teacher *inspired by values, as described above*, at least not in this country.

'Education, democracy, school' is a bulky and diffuse title for the article such as written by Želimir Popov from the Pedagogy Department of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade. Ž. Popov informs us in his introductory sentences that he will try to point to the important relations between education, democracy and school which he recognizes as relevant for the theory of education as an inherently pedagogic discipline. And he did it in a terrific way. The article as a whole exudes theoretical novelties and the freshness of thought, and has been written in a mild, but precise pedagogic style. Due to the limited space, it was done in an encyclopedic way, which only increases the value of the text. The 'entries' themselves - education, democracy, and school, have been dealt with in the same way. Thus, we learn from Ž. Popov that the word education has many meanings, which is one of the reasons why this concept resists simple definition and determination. This, however, does not mean that there are no criteria for defining the concept of education. The author chooses to define education as an activity, but in the spirit of Brezinka's definition according to which education is "... an activity with which people try, in any sense, to permanently improve the structure of psychic dispositions of other people or to detain their components estimated as valuable, to postpone or prevent the onset of dispositions that are estimated as bad. (p.125). The author warns that from the point of view of science of education it is not acceptable to determine political goals as educational, regardless of their content or the motives for their determination, and consequently, the realization of such goals should not be sought for through education. (p.129). Then the author points to the fact that school and education are two different phenomena. In its origin, education is older than school. From the pedagogical angle, "school is an institutionalized form of education, and from the sociological angle, it is a social institution or an institution of a society..." (p.130). At the end the author warns: it should not be expected that a democratic society will emerge solely as the consequence of education. All the attempts to change society through school, with its reformation, did not give the expected results. (p.132). Let us add to this, those who expected this and saw such power in school had a fairy-tale notion of school, but of education in general as well.

'Personality and democratic behaviour' is the title of the article by Bora Kuzmanovi}, Professor at the Psychology Department at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade. The article consists of four parts: Issues of understanding and accepting of democracy, Authoritarianism as a factor which causes non-democratic attitudes and behaviour, Other psychological factors relevant for the acceptance of non-democratic attitudes and decision-making, and An attempt at constructing a democratic character. According to Kuzmanovi}, democracy primarily has to presuppose the autonomy of an individual, his free declaring, and only then his readiness to obey the common 'rules of the game', the procedure of decision making. Education for democracy and the relation between personality and democratic decision-making can be seriously discussed only when the concept of democracy broadens to include "various forms of participatory managing and

group decision-making" (p.136). Further, the author says that it can be reasonably assumed that the number of the adherents of democracy decreases when turning from the general level to particular attitudes. Discussing authoritarian behaviour and non-democracy, the author notes that authoritarian behaviour, among other things, can be not only a characteristic of an individual, but also a value orientation. Therefore authoritarian behaviour is a really important hindrance in the development of democracy and a democratic pattern of behaviour. Having in mind participatory democracy, an important element for the development and efficiency of such democracy is then the motivation of the members of a community, organization or a group to participate in the preparation and making of decisions, what is important is their readiness to take part, to be involved (p.148).

'Education for democracy: the problem of transfer' is the article by Mirjana Vasovi} from the Institute for Social Sciences in Belgrade. Despite lacking the desirable methodology, it is theoretically interesting. According to the author, one of the classic problems in the theory of political socialization is the problem of transfer. It has to do, in fact, with the influence of an early and previous political teaching to the subsequent political teaching, i.e. political behaviour. In the context of theoretical problems of education for democracy, the problem of transfer can be considered at several levels. M. Vasovi} does it at three levels. The first is the most general one, the societal level. The problem deals with the significance of the influence which the previous authoritarian, political culture can have on the process of acquisition of democratic orientations and future democratic behaviour. The second is the individual level. It deals with the relevance of the influence of an early teaching of democratic attitudes, in childhood and adolescence, on a person's democratic awareness and behaviour in his/her adult age. The third is the methodological level. The problem deals with the possibility to project an optimal curriculum for a democratic education that could be applicable in various democratic institutional paradigms. (p.161).

'Development of democratic values in school' was written by Snežana Joksimovi} from the Institute for Educational Research in Belgrade. Judging by the contents and the lack of the usual structure, the paper as a whole could be considered as an introduction into the problem stated in the title. After the usual explanation of a democratic personality and democratic values, the author discusses the role of school in the development of a democratic orientation of young people, starting from those aspects of school life that most directly influence the relationships at school and the school atmosphere. As found in some American researches, as interpreted by the author, schools with a lower number of pupils are more suitable for the development of democratic orientation. (What is that number?) The size of a class, i.e. the number of pupils in a class as well. (What is that number?) However, for the development of a democratic orientation the usual sitting arrangement in a classroom is not suitable, with its rows of desks, where the pupils are on one and the teacher on the other side. To this aim, much better are 'open classes'. (p.168). Further, the social climate in a class and a democratic orientation are highly influenced by the teacher, especially verbal communication between the teacher and the pupils. Also, the method of work in the class. And finally, there is also peer interaction. That is how the things are in America, but I dare to ask: can this simply be applied in our social and school conditions and with our children?

'Knowledge on democracy in textbooks' is the article written by the monograph's

editor, Zoran Avramovi}, with whose courtesy it was published as the last one. There is a quotation from the text, which I think embodies the main idea. "No single text on education for democracy can take the risk of explicating the right and best choice in democracy. In such an attempt there would be a lot of utopia, and little reality. The text aiming at forming education and upbringing for a good choice in democracy, would have scientific justification if it would express a few constitutive elements of democratic consciousness and knowledge: a/ the nature of social conditioning of consciousness and democratic knowledge... b/ the structure of party and political programmes and their values, c/ the identification of the creators of politics, and d/ the institutions that mediate between the individual opinion and the candidates for representative bodies..." (p.185). These are the elements the author deals with in this paper, with the warning that students' reception of democratic contents of the texts in their textbooks is made difficult by the notion of democracy as the ever-changing form of life of an individual and a society.

Giving a detailed review of the monograph and the articles it includes, referring to the original wherever it was possible, I wanted, among other things, to arouse the interest of both academic, professional and general public. To all of them, I can highly recommend this book.

Miomir Ivković