

Education and ideals: on the supreme values in liberal democracy

Keywords

democracy, liberalism, values, ideals, education

Abstract

Together with the collapse of the communist regime in Poland, the question about a new way of organizing social life arose. Almost the entire political class has opted for a return to the pattern of a liberal democracy. Under the new system, a number of important issues had to be tackled, including the question of the supreme values or ideals presented to students by state schools, including those of higher education. The author notes that putting forward these ideals results from the fact of handing down to the younger generation what in the development of society so far has proved to be most valuable. A model of such education was proposed in the 1960s by the British philosopher of education Richard S. Peters. Since societies develop, their ideals change as well. On the basis of the example of the last hundred and fifty years of development of the Anglo-Saxon culture, the author shows the tension between the two ideals of civil society organization, the first coming from John Stewart Mill and other from John Rawls. Understanding what is most valuable in social life must be reflected in the content and forms used by public education. This is what seems to be the key justification of the need to communicate values and ideals to pupils and students by schools and universities. Concluding, the author poses a number of important questions regarding the specific understanding of a liberal democracy by states such as Poland, which are returning to this economic and political system after decades of enslavement.

The collapse of communism as an ideology organizing and explaining the social activity of people was welcomed by liberal-minded western scholars with great satisfaction. Decades of the two giants, i.e. communism and liberal democracy, being in a clinch resulted in the ultimate triumph of the latter. The two systems did not reach a compromise, no convergence between them, an-

nounced earlier by many serious thinkers, did actually take place. The scale of the triumph of liberalism was so large that comments about the end of history emerged among conservatively oriented western thinkers, that is, about the final confirmation of Hegel's thesis that human history finds its fulfillment in a rationally organized state of equal and free citizens¹. At the same time, observing how the former communist states were breaking free from half a century of political and economic oppression, other philosophers began to encourage liberal elites of these countries to use this favourable situation for a social change and a radical liberal revolution that would implement the principles of liberalism more consistently than it had been done in the western countries².

The direction of development adopted by the post-communist countries after 1989 was clearly liberal and democratic. Communism was completely rejected as a politically oppressive ideology and economically inefficient one. It was rejected in the name of liberalism, and not the so-called third way, which would lead between the two great ideologies. Suggestions other than the liberal organization of society appearing here and there had no effect on the direction of the transformation of the state³. Political pluralism and a market economy permanently marked the framework of the new system. The new Constitution, adopted in Poland in 1997, contains a catalogue of human rights and freedoms as well as civil rights, among which freedom and personal rights, political, economic, as well as social and cultural ones are guaranteed. From this point of view, the foundations of the Polish political system do not differ from the foundations of the political systems of today's other liberal-democratic countries. As a society, we have returned to the road marked out for over two hundred years by thinkers such as John Locke, John Stewart Mill and John Rawls. This is a very general statement, which many philosophers, sociologists and political scientists would introduce a number of objections to⁴, yet it is true and for the purposes of the argument carried out here, it is completely sufficient.

An important issue, which each liberal-democratic state faces, is the problem of axiological interpretation of public education. In my opinion it applies to two things. Firstly, it is the substantiation of the fact that the state is at all involved in conveying to pupils and students the values it considers as universally applicable, and, secondly, the explanation of why at a particular historical mo-

¹ F. Fukuyama, *Koniec historii [The end of history]*, trans. by T. Biedroń, M. Wichrowski, Poznań 1996.

² B.A. Ackerman, *Przyszłość rewolucji liberalnej [Future of liberal revolution]*, trans. by H. Grzegońska-Klarkowska, Warszawa 1996.

³ J. Kuroń, *Polityka i odpowiedzialność [Politics and responsibility]*, Londyn 1984.

⁴ J. Staniszkis, *Postkomunizm [Post-Communism]. Próba opisu [An attempt of description]*, Gdańsk 2001; Z. Krasnodębski, *Demokracja peryferii [Democracy of the periphery]*, Gdańsk 2005.

ment these individuals are provided with some values, while not others. In this strict sense, only the former issue is a subject of the philosophy of education, that is, it allows us to provide a non-empirical answer, to develop a standard or rule that can be applied to any state organizing public education. The latter issue will always be combined with the current cultural entanglements of a given state with the current regimes of its power and ideology, and it will require more description than determining duties. In this text I am going to deal only with the former issue.

The question of the role of the state in conveying values to the young generation is one of the many questions that may be asked in the field of axiology of education. In addition, one can also ask about the role of teachers in this process. Urszula Ostrowska tackles this issue in her considerations⁵. They are not prescriptive in their nature, but rather descriptive, and the question of the right to communicate values to students by teachers is not raised in them, though the reality of such a communication is emphasized. The author is convinced that communicating values is one of the constitutive elements of education. "For regardless of whether and to what extent we become aware of this fact, education in any case cannot be fulfilled outside the axiological realm"⁶.

The fact that the state conveys values universal to the younger generation, in the process of education, is obvious. In order to find out about it, it is enough to read the preamble to the Act on the Polish Education System or the core curriculum for the further stages of education. The reason for this state of affairs is not obvious. It cannot be so, since in a liberal-democratic state, where freedoms, rights and obligations are construed and interpreted individually, and not as a community, the state does not have and cannot have absolute power over the citizen, also such a citizen who is still studying. Therefore, how can we justify the fact of conveying to pupils and students, by the school and university, values considered to be universal, that is, desirable and beneficial to all studying individuals, at least in the area of this country and its culture?

I shall briefly present below two possible justifications of this practice. Both were developed by Anglo-Saxon thinkers. The first one comes from John Stewart Mill (1806-1873), the second one from John Rawls (1921-2002). Both Mill and Rawls created a system of social philosophy based on ethical values. These were respectively the value of universal happiness and the value of jus-

⁵ U. Ostrowska (ed.), *Axiological aspects in education*, Olsztyn 2000; U. Ostrowska (ed.), *Education of the turn of the century in the face of axiological issues*, Olsztyn 2001.

⁶ U. Ostrowska, *Język wartości czy język jako wartość w edukacji – aksjologiczne aspekty problemu* [The language of values or language as a value in education – axiological aspects of the problem], [in:] U. Ostrowska (ed.), *Edukacja przełomu wieków wobec kwestii* [Education of the turn of the century towards axiological issues], Olsztyn 2001.

tice. Rawls's system was a critical response to Mill's system and questioned its usefulness in the organization of social life in the modern liberal-democratic state. On the other hand, the two systems should be seen as two consecutive points on the line of development of the concept of the state. In this way, Mill's nineteenth-century utilitarianism can be understood as an earlier, and Rawls's twentieth-century theory of justice as a later proposal to justify the supreme value in a liberal democracy. Although in either of these systems education is not the primary subject of analysis, it plays a very important role in them – for it is through education that citizens, and more specifically the younger generation, can be introduced to the axiological sphere, that is, the state can provide them with those values that it considers itself to be crucial for the proper organization and prosperity of society. These are the supreme values, they are the ideals which society must pursue, and they are also the justification of the government's involvement in the axiology of education.

The concept of education developed by the Anglo-Saxon philosophy of education, on the one hand, and a few reflections on the difficulties faced most likely by each country breaking free from a long-standing totalitarian rule, and entering the path of liberalism and democracy, on the other, are a complement of the considerations related to these ideals. I shall discuss the former issue at the beginning of the text, and the latter at its end.

The essence of education

The few comments that I present below are situated, regarding their matter, in the concept of education developed by analytical philosophy. For more than fifty years this philosophy has been the dominant trend in Anglo-Saxon philosophy of education. The two philosophers best representing this trend are, respectively in the United States and Great Britain, Israel Scheffler (1923-) and Richard S. Peters (1919-2011). A classic work in this trend of philosophy is the book by Richard S. Peters under the title *Ethics and Education*, published in 1967. In it, the author engaged in an analysis of basic educational concepts in the axiological context. He demonstrated that a variety of complex states of affairs, such as education, upbringing, discipline, which we give the common name of education to, can be understood only in the context of ethical values. Speaking about them outside of that context is impossible. Assuming that language adequately reflects the external world, Peters carried out rational analyses of the educational reality through the analyses of concepts and judgments.

Education is a process by which we hand down, to the younger generation, something of value. Peters writes that education "implies that something of value is or has been deliberately handed down in morally acceptable ways. It would be logically inconsistent to say that man has been educated, but in no

way has he changed for the better, or that educating and bringing up his son man is not seeking anything of value. This results directly from the same concepts that we use"⁷. The ethical sense of education, therefore, concerns two things. Firstly, it concerns what is to be handed down in the process of education, i.e. the subject matter and, secondly, how we hand it down, that is its form. Both of them must be ethical. It is inconceivable to transfer to the younger generation bad things, or even those morally ambiguous, just as it is difficult to accept reprehensible forms of teaching such as manipulation or indoctrination. Of all the activities undertaken by society education seems to be of special nature. Its success depends not only on where we will lead our pupils and students to, but also on following which path will bring them there. Therefore, Peters' deepest conviction is that a prerequisite of educating man is to constantly refer to values. Values constitute a basis of education, determine its essence, and one cannot meaningfully talk about this process and its results apart from them.

Therefore, according to Peters, conscious and valuable educational activity should be distinguished from socialization. What children and young people learn in educational institutions is certainly an element of socialization, however, a special socialization, a noble and sublime one. Education is based on the rational abilities of man, it avoids indoctrination and propaganda, and in particular cares about preserving and enhancing young man's autonomy. One could say that if the whole process of socialization happened within school or university walls, the society which we live in would certainly be better. These institutions are not the only places where the young generation are preparing to enter adult life, adapting to social expectations and requirements. In addition to them, the young generation socialize in the family, among their peers, watching TV, playing computer games, and in a thousand other ways, which there is no need to talk about. In each of these communities, young people faced a number of values and ideals, which are partly identical to each other, and partly different from each other. Socialization introduces young people to both the good and bad practices of social life. They learn to trust, but also to mistrust, how to be honest, but also how to deceive. This ambiguity is not present in education. Whatever we say about education, it is definitely not a process of introducing students to the world of anti-values.

In my opinion Peters would agree with the statement that education is a kind of sanctuary, created by society to protect the younger generation, at least for some time, from all this that is negative in this society. The experience of many centuries argues that such time is necessary in order to strengthen in children and young people the values and ideals that are born in them and

⁷ R.S. Peters, *Ethics and education*, London 1974.

which would easily be destroyed, if they entered social life too soon. It is no secret that society often corrupts young people. It was Plato who already wrote about it in the second book of *the Republic* where he noted that under the influence of religious myths told to children by their mothers, these children come to the conclusion that the most beneficial thing in society is to adopt an attitude of an opportunist, that is, to be fair for show and unjust in reality. Hence Plato's call to reform the educational system of Athens⁸. Contemporary education is largely a response to this appeal. Society isolates students from the whole truth about itself, giving them only what is the most valuable, i.e. the knowledge of its greatest achievements and ideals, which it follows in moments of elation.

It seems that this assumption is made by almost everyone today. The fact that, in a particular case, education can be worthless, be it because it teaches inadequate content, or because it does so in a morally reprehensible manner, is a separate issue. Without prejudging what specific values should be transferred to students, we can agree that these must be positive values, including the supreme ones, i.e. ideals. It would be incomprehensible, if society was in possession of valuable knowledge and skills, and it would not want to hand them down to its young generation.

John Stewart Mill and the ideal of universal happiness

Nineteenth-and twentieth-century Anglo-Saxon liberalism was closely associated with the philosophy of utilitarianism. John Stewart Mill defined utilitarianism as a science, "which takes utility, or the principle of the greatest happiness, as the basis for morality and holds that actions are good, if they contribute to happiness and bad, if they contribute to the opposite. By happiness one means pleasure and lack of pain, by suffering, misery and lack of pleasure"⁹. We realize what happiness is and what misery is for a community of people by tracking the history of these communities. Happiness is the only thing desirable as a goal, but all other things are desirable as a means leading to that goal.

Mill takes the value of education as an axiom. He writes that "no one intelligent would not agree to be a fool, no educated person would want to be an ignoramus¹⁰. When a person is already convinced of what intelligence is, and what education gives them, no one can persuade them that a better thing for them would be to have a lower intelligence or poorer education. Both goods, one natural and the other cultural, are thus appreciated by all of us the more we

⁸ Plato, *Państwo [The republic]*, trans. by W. Witwicki, Kęty 1997.

⁹ J.S. Mill, *Utylitaryzm [Utilitarianism]. O wolności [On liberty]*, trans. by A. Kurlandzka, Warszawa 2006.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

have them. Only a person completely devoid of intelligence or an uneducated one could argue that these goods have no value at all.

Like many thinkers in all places and times, also Mill believed that the educational systems contemporary to him were in pitiful condition¹¹. It is the weakness of these systems that is one of the two main reasons why only a few people are able to live a happy life. If these systems were more perfect, more people could consider happiness not only as a good possible, but also actually available. Thus, the condition of the entire society would improve. Education, therefore, plays a key role in opening up access to happiness for individuals and society.

Devoid of intellectual culture man is dissatisfied with life. This is because the goods that are available for educated people are not available to him. Access to knowledge and the ability to practise one's talents cause the fact that a number of areas of either nature or culture, whose values man recognizes and which he can use, open up before him. Such a person "finds an inexhaustible source of interest in everything that surrounds him or her, in nature, works of art, creations of poetic imagination, historical events, the study of the ways which mankind has so far followed and still does, and its prospects for the future"¹².

What does and can education give us? Mill believes that an important role of education is to develop "in the psyche of every human being an inseparable connection between his own happiness and the good of all, especially between his own happiness and such activities and reservations, which are dictated by reasons of general happiness (...)"¹³. A person who is uneducated or wrongly educated does not see the connection between his own happiness and the happiness of all. For example, he or she can believe that the things good for him or her are always good for others, or that what harms him or her, always harms the community. Such reasoning, however, does not stand the test of experience, because in many cases what passes for good in the eyes of individuals is obviously harmful to society. It is also sometimes the case that what is undeserved harm in the understanding of an individual, is actually a good thing in the opinion of society. These things are well known and there is no need to go deeper into them. As a matter of fact, it is frequently so that the uncontrollable quest to pursue one's own selfish interests is accompanied by ignorance of the consequences to society, and sometimes even cynicism towards these effects. Therefore, Mill emphasizes that education should help to ensure that a motif of the activity focused on contributing to the common good was permanently rooted in man, and the feelings accompanying this motif became the supreme ones.

¹¹ Maria Ossowska, the translator of the essay *Utilitarianism*, translates the English word *education* as 'upbringing'. Today, it is commonly translated as 'education'.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

What is useful to mankind has been confirmed by it in many different ways. We are not talking here about some random institutions and practices, but about verified institutions and practices, that is, those that regularly prove their usefulness in and to society and, thus, also their status as a means of contributing to the increase of overall happiness. Mankind hands down its views on this subject to the youth and instills them with the help of law and the public opinion. If we look at education from this perspective, we will see that it is a process of transferring the values which are important for maintaining and increasing the general level of happiness, which in a given society and time is possible.

Education is needed to ensure that we instill a sense of unity with our neighbours to the extent that "it will become in our minds an integral part of our nature, as it is the aversion to crime in average, well-educated young people"¹⁴. Mill was a great optimist and social meliorist, he trusted that through education we perfect human nature to such an extent that whatever man will do, he will take into account the fate of his neighbours. This point of view is, as Mill wrote, something special, but together with the rise in the general mental level of humans, the motives that relate to our fellow human beings will be increasingly taken into account. Educated man sees more and looks deeper, notices things that are hidden from uneducated people. As a matter of fact, also our neighbours live in the world we live in, and they also have their own interests, needs and desires.

Mill writes that life in a group requires reconciliation of different interests. "The fact of people associating with each other – except where the master-and-slave relationship is the case – is clearly impossible on a plane different than the one of taking account of the interests of all"¹⁵. The more we develop as people, the more we are aware of it. We learn that cooperation with others is essential, that our goals must be agreed with the goals of others, that the interests of others are to be treated often as our own. This is a natural direction for the development of society. Every next age brings along with it the progress consisting in the fact that more and more people are living with each other on an equal footing. This means that, in a natural way, all of them have to take into account the interests of their neighbours.

John Rawls and the ideal of impartiality

John Rawls's *A Theory of justice* published in 1971, is considered to be a thorough criticism of utilitarianism. Rejecting the ideal of universal happiness, however, Rawls does not reject the liberal-democratic belief that social life must

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 37.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 43.

be rationally organized and based on axiological foundations. Rawls questions only the fact that the ideal of universal happiness may be a principle organizing social life. This ideal cannot be accepted because it does not fully protect the acquired rights of the individual. That is, if depriving the individual of his or her due rights would be a condition to increase common happiness, utilitarianism would consent to it. As a matter of fact, utilitarianism ensures that the sum of universal happiness is the biggest, rather than the happiness of an individual human being. If, therefore, a condition to increase this amount would be to make the individual unhappy (for example, by taking away his or her due rights), then it would be justified under John Stewart Mill's system. A modern liberal-democratic state cannot consent to that. "[It] appears doubtful that people treating each other as equals, with a right of mutual claims, have agreed on a policy that can reduce life opportunities of some of them, in the name of some bigger sum of benefits of others"¹⁶.

John Rawls says that the subject of justice is "the basic structure of society". Justice is the first virtue of social institutions. "Truth and justice, as the supreme virtues of human activity, are uncompromising"¹⁷. How to arrange social life, so that it is fair? It was thought all the time that fair means useful, whereas Rawls says that fair is impartial. If public institutions are to be organized fairly, they must remain impartial to different social groups and their ideas of a valuable life. The role of the state is not to instruct people what is good and what is bad, but to create conditions under which everyone would have an equal chance to fulfil their ideal of life. "The primary subject of justice is the basic structure of our society, and more specifically – the way in which major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the distribution of the benefits flowing from social cooperation"¹⁸.

What are the elements of the basic structure of society? Rawls says that they are "the basic economic and social relations". Next, he lists several examples of such elements. These are the legal protection of freedom of thought and freedom of conscience, competitive markets, private ownership of the means of production, a monogamous family. In my opinion public education could successfully be included in these elements. It is for this basic social structure that Rawls wants to propose a theory of justice. Such basic social structures determine the distribution of goods. Depending on what relationships with each other these goods are in, they are distributed accordingly. Rawls wants to point at the basic structure of justice, rather than at what fair action of the individual is.

¹⁶ J. Rawls, *Teoria sprawiedliwości* [*Theory of justice*], trans. by M. Panufnik, Warszawa 1994, p. 27.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

John Rawls interprets justice as impartiality. A just/fair state is an impartial one, i.e., one that keeps equal distance from systems of values competing with each other. Rawls raises a question as to what principles of justice would citizens of a liberal-democratic state accept, if they remained behind the so-called veil of ignorance. According to Rawls' conception, the veil of ignorance is a state in which citizens know that they live in the community of a liberal-democratic state, but they do not know what positions they occupy in this state. They do not know, for example, whether they are rich or poor, old or young, healthy or sick, educated or uneducated. Such a situation is certainly purely hypothetical, as everyone knows in fact what position he or she holds in the community. Yet a hypothesis of this kind is very useful, because it allows Rawls to carry out the analyses of justice independent of individual self-interest. Since we do not know what position we occupy in the state, we will not opt for such a theory of justice, that will be beneficial especially for us¹⁹. Owing to the veil of ignorance, ideal conditions for the development of justice as impartiality emerge. "Together with the concept of the veil of ignorance, these conditions define the principles of justice as ones that people who are rational, and conscious of their interests in the event of equality of persons, i.e. not being aware of anyone's privileged status (or disability) conditioned by the social and natural circumstances, would accept"²⁰.

The first expression of these two principles of justice is as follows: "*The first one*: each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic freedom, possibly compatible with a similar freedom of others. *The second one*: social and economic inequalities are to be arranged in such a way so that (a) one could reasonably expect, that it will be for the benefit of everyone, and (b) they will be associated with positions and offices equally open to all"²¹. On the basis of these principles, rights and responsibilities are determined as well as goods and burdens in society are distributed. The two rules correspond to two separate parts. On the one hand, we have a principle of equal liberties for all, on the other hand, there is a principle specifying social inequality. The latter principle concerns the part of the basic structure of society, which is characterized by inequalities – and, therefore, power, responsibility, wealth, chain of command, etc. It is not possible to speak of equality in terms of equal human and civil rights; on the contrary, the state which we encounter is a state of inequality, and the point is

¹⁹ P. Kostyło, *Wykluczanie jako problem filozofii edukacji [Exclusion as a problem of philosophy of education]. Komentarz do badań empirycznych [A commentary on empirical research]*, Kraków 2008, pp. 99-107.

²⁰ J. Rawls, op. cit., p. 34.

²¹ Ibid., p. 87.

that this inequality should also be managed fairly. Rawls says that fair management is the management for the benefit of everyone and the assumption, that positions and offices are open to all.

Both principles are linear in their nature, that is, the first one is always ahead of the other. Yet the second principle is a more interesting one. Rawls actually allows for inequality in society, but he does not allow injustice. Injustice is a situation in which social inequalities are beneficial to some and detrimental to others. One could say that it is always the case with inequalities. Now, Rawls says, it is not always so. There are many such social inequalities that are beneficial for all, that is to say, in spite of the fact that people are in an unequal situation and occupy unequal positions, the success of some of them is not paid for with the wrongs done to others. Rawls repeatedly emphasizes the linearity of the two principles of justice noting that, in an effort to eliminate inequalities in social life, one can never undermine the principles of the first principle, that is, the equality of rights and freedoms. It is unacceptable to limit anyone's freedom because of strengthening equality in society. This linearity means the primacy of the principle of freedom over the principle of equality. We refrain from such melioristic projects that put into question the principle of freedom. One can imagine the restriction of the individual's freedom in the name of ensuring the equality of many. The restriction of freedom to purchase or sell property is one of numerous examples. Despite this reservation, Rawls presents a melioristic approach; he believes that changes for the better in society are desirable and possible. He talks about improvements. A condition for the fact that these improvements will be fair is that, as a result of them, the situation of everyone will improve. Rawls reasonably assumes that, at the time of proposing the concept of justice as impartiality, societies are already divided. These divisions are a fact and it is irrelevant what their causes are. A society that does not know inequality does not exist.

A difficult return to democracy and liberalism

The return to the liberal-democratic model of the organization of the state is associated with radical changes in the hierarchies of values in the field of education. The model of education, understood as a collective project whose ultimate goal, and also the supreme value, was to reconcile the abilities and expectations of the young generation with the objective requirements of historical rights, has been replaced with a model of individualized education, in which the pupil's and student's autonomy and his or her integral development, which aims at allowing him or her to rationally use the very autonomy, became an ideal. The rights of a social class have been replaced by the rights of the individual, called the rights of man and citizen. The state, which so far has organized

the educational process in great detail, has withdrawn from its involvement, transferring the competencies appropriated earlier to relevant actors – parents, teachers, local community, academic corporation and learners. This process has traditionally been referred to as decentralization and democratization. It is certainly a positive one, since owing to it individuals and institutions, which were previously treated only as transmitters of dogmatic educational ideals of communism, have regained their subjectivity and began to co-shape educational practice, and sometimes even theory, at all levels. Educational values have lost their absolute character, adapting to an ever more complex reality in which one-dimensionality of goals has been replaced by their multidimensionality, a forced monism by pluralism, and apparent conformity by conflicting nature. Educational values have ceased to impose themselves in an authoritarian way, they have diversified and require more and more subtle arrangements.

Challenging collective projects and protecting in different forms and ways individual needs, however, can sometimes lead to a denial of the value of all forms of community commitments. The state may feel exempt from determining axiologically funded directions of the educational progress expected of all pupils and students, contenting itself with the pursuit of local practices. In the name of departing from absolutist practices, otherwise necessary, designating any socially desirable values and general and abstract goals, or determining ideals strengthening the community is omitted. The fear of returning to some form of discredited absolutism may result in adopting an extremely relativistic position, the essence of which is that no value can be considered the most important, even one that shows its special importance in a rational way. In this way, rightly rejecting what was in the previous system a caricature of rationality, what is now truly rational is destroyed at the same time. The old belief, that it is a rational thing to reconcile the abilities and expectations of the young generation with the alleged laws of historical development, is identified with today's conviction that it is a rational thing to reconcile these abilities and expectations with any values. There is a danger that still threatens the countries throwing off the yoke of totalitarian ideologies and joining the liberal-democratic tradition. Moving away from axiological issues in education is a great temptation for them. It may be accompanied by intellectual indolence of rulers, who, pleased with the fact of rejection of the oppressive model of education, do not make enough efforts to develop a theory adequate for the new situation.

The return to the principles of a liberal-democratic state requires an answer to the question of how to justify the axiological commitment of the state in the field of education. The practice of liberal-democratic governments, for example in Great Britain or the United States, has been implemented for several hundred years, and, as we have seen, has been justified in different ways. Democracy

and liberalism may be based on a variety of ethical values. How we understand the organization of the community determines the way we will understand educational ideals. The state can designate a goal of universal happiness or impartiality in education, as well as many other reasonable goals common to all, but it must always designate a supreme goal of some kind. Lack of such a goal means consent to the disorganization of social life, the disintegration of the community. Education that teaches concern for the fate of the biggest number of citizens as well as one that develops the virtue of impartiality in pupils and students, means certain intellectual proposals, which the states coming out of a long period of totalitarianism face today. Would any of them be appropriate for these countries? Maybe they should look for other intellectual proposals or make your own suggestions? These are questions of great importance for the future of these countries. There is no doubt, however, that in every liberal-democratic state, both one with the longest tradition and a newly emerging one, education must be oriented towards some reasonably determined ideals, for the values that education pursues are the values of the community.

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