Creating and Managing the Democratic School

Editors

Judith D. Chapman; Isak D. Froumin;
and David N. Aspin

The Falmer Press
(A member of the Taylor & Francis Group)
London • Washington, D.C.

UK The Falmer Press, 4 John Street, London WC1N 2ET
USA The Falmer Press, Taylor & Francis Inc., 1900 Frost Road, Suite 101, Bristol, PA 19007

First published in 1995

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data are available on request

ISBN 0 7507 0396 2 cased
ISBN 0 7507 0397 0 paper

Jacket design by Caroline Archer

Typeset in 10/12pt Bembo by
Graphicraft Typesetters Ltd., Hong Kong

Printed in Great Britain by Burgess Science Press, Basingstoke on paper which has a specified pH value on final paper manufacture of not less than 7.5 and is therefore 'acid free'.

Dedication

To our children and to all those who choose to work together on the journey to becoming inhabitants of the 'Open Society'.

Contents

Acknowledgments

This book was made possible by the generous assistance, cooperation and support of:

- Australian Commonwealth Government: International Division of DEET
- Callina Mining Company
- Institute of Educational Innovations, Russian Education Academy
- Krasnoyarsk State University
- Monash University
- Russian Ministry of Education
- Russian Association of Heads of Innovative Schools
- The University of Western Australia

Special appreciation is expressed to Per Dalin and staff of IMTEC for facilitating the process of interaction between educators in Russia and the western world; Jane Angus for her copy-editing of the manuscript; Colin Moyle and Tanya Putintseva for their careful review of the contents; and Robyn Wilson for her meticulous preparation of the book for publication.

Epigraph

Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.

Reinhold Niebuhr (1892–1971)
The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness – 1944

Chapter 1

Introduction and Commentary

Judith D. Chapman, Isak D. Froumin, David N. Aspin

Origins of this Book

The origins of this book lie in a conference on 'The Educational Reform Process' held in Sochi, on the Black Sea, in what was then the Soviet Union, three weeks after the *coup d'état* in August 1991, when representatives of the former communist regime attempted, unsuccessfully, to reinstate the authoritarian system that had once governed the country and its satellites. The conference had been called by the Soviet Minister of Education, Dr Edward Dneprov, to address the ways in which an authoritarian and highly centralized educational system could be changed, in line with the spirit of democracy that was beginning to animate and find expression in many of the new forms and institutions in which Russian political and civic life was being reformulated. During the course of the conference, delegates were concerned to explore the ways in which a virtually totalitarian approach to school and system organization, management and pedagogy could be reformed to allow the various stakeholders of the nation's and the community's schools a real voice in the selection and prosecution of goals for education, that would be consonant with the principles of openness, democratization, and humanization.

This was a time of immense excitement. Educators in Russia and other states in the former Soviet Union were beginning to breathe the heady air of freedom for the first time in generations. Many had been involved in the demonstrations on the streets of Moscow and on steps of the White House only days before. Such colleagues had been prepared to sacrifice a great deal to realize the ideal of 'democracy'. In September 1991 many of our Russian colleagues believed that they now lived in an environment in which almost any educational innovation and change was possible. The atmosphere was exhilarating, almost euphoric.

Attending the Sochi Conference were fifty-five educators from western countries, who had been invited to Russia to share their visions and experience of educational reform. Western educators came from Europe (including strong representation from the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Belgium), the United States, Canada and Australia.

lines. Colleagues continue 'to toil and not to seek for rest, to labour and not to ask for any reward', to strive and not to yield before they see the end of the road on which they have embarked — to realize the vision that is represented by the institution of democracy in and for education.

In any case, as Popper warned, there never will be a time when educators can expect to reach finality on these matters: there will always be fresh challenges to face, new predicaments to encounter and perplexing problems to be solved. For of such dynamic and evolving character are human beings and human society, and so numerous the imperfections of their processes, that anomalies and irregularities are always going to occur, the appearance of which will cause difficulties and present obstacles to normal functioning and progress. It is only in the open society of institutions that rest upon and incorporate democratic principles that we can hope realistically to tackle such problems and proffer tentative solutions to them, not expecting these to hold good for all time, but to serve at least as our best theories of explanation or programmes of action for the present. This means that we must, for the time being, lay aside the fond hopes we may have had once, at a time when 'Twas bliss in that very dawn to be alive', and to forget for ever our aspirations to replace the outmoded models of the past with an instant calling down of the millennium. 'Sufficient unto the day', observes the democrat, 'is the evil thereof'.

Background to Reforms

As a preliminary to the opening of our enquiry into current prospects, possibilities and problems facing the project of democratizing education, we think it may be helpful at this point to give some account of the background and context within which proposals and programmes for the reform now being instituted have arisen. These may help us see how far our countries' education systems have come towards democracy and enable us to estimate perhaps how far they may still have to go.

Russia

At present more than 20,000,000 children aged 6 to 17 attend one of the 65,000 schools in Russia. There are over 1,4000,000 teaching and administrative personnel involved in the provision of educational services of all kinds. Compulsory schooling is from Years 1–9, although in reality most students remain at school until they have completed eleven years of schooling. There are eleven forms in most schools and, unless a family moves locality, children will attend the same district school for all of their school years. Traditionally, the Soviet system of education was highly centralized and unified. The control exercised from the centre over institutions, curriculum and pedagogy was heavily influenced by ideological considerations and forces. Principally, neither

school-based personnel (students and teachers), nor stakeholders in the community (including parents) were allowed to express or disseminate any opinion on educational matters different from the position pronounced as official by the government. This resulted in the establishment and perpetuation of an extremely rigid hierarchical administrative structure, ruling out the possibility of the introduction of educational or organizational innovations at any level but that of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union Central Committee. It is true that from time to time individual teachers suggested new methods and techniques, but such initiatives encountered almost insurmountable difficulties. With rigid techniques and centrally dictated and approved content and format of textbooks, it is hardly surprising that teachers were dissatisfied with the perpetuation of this state of affairs. As a result we observe that, in 1985 when the period of *glasnost* and *perestroika* was ushered in, teachers were among the first to exercise and enjoy freedom of speech and public discussion.

In the period immediately after 1985, widespread dissatisfaction with the routine character of teaching practices and with the conservatism and monopolism evident in the pedagogic sciences was powerfully and broadly expressed in the newspaper pages and other media and fora of public discussion. It is interesting to note that the protests were articulated overwhelmingly by teachers rather than by education officials or parents. As a result, criticism and proposals for reform centred mainly on teacher interactions and pedagogy.

As an outcome of such discussions on these key matters there arose a movement concerned to develop a 'manifesto' of innovative pedagogy. A document entitled *The Pedagogy of Cooperation* was produced as the first publication devoted to the introduction of democratic reforms in school (Soviet Union, 1988). The most fundamental and far-reaching of its proposals was that concerned to change the nature and form of the relationship between teachers and students.

In this publication, along with the subsequent publication of their educational 'credos' by a number of well-known pedagogues, the emphasis was laid upon altering and improving the learning and educational process in the classroom in accordance with demands exerted by what were regarded as democratic norms. Unlike Australia, the emphasis in these early stages of the Soviet 'reform movement' was not laid on the need for democratic reforms in the administrative system. It is not wholly coincidental, therefore, that in the title of the second platform document, *Democratization of the Individual* (Soviet Union, 1989), the notion of 'democratization' is closely connected with the notion of the 'individual'. In this way the consensus concerning the immediate necessities for educational reform articulated in and by the public and pedagogic movement in the mid-1980s did not concern itself with the attempt to change the whole organization and administrative system of public education. It aimed rather at the introduction of a stress on establishing democratic relations in a school, a classroom or a teaching group.

It soon became obvious, however, that the new democratic approach to

teaching and pedagogy could only be realized in forms of reorganization that necessitated alterations in curriculum, teacher training and the organization and administration of the educational system and the school. It is important to recognize, however, that, while alternative education, school councils, and pedagogic experimentation entailed the granting of increased autonomy to schools and altered administrative functions, such changes in organization and administration were secondary to the renewal of teaching methods and curriculum content.

Concern for, and commitment to, the introduction of reforms in these key areas of student learning and development remained strong throughout the 1980s and the spirit animating innovations in teaching activity and curriculum construction and process continued. These primary concerns were reflected in the proceedings of the All-Union Congress of Educationalists in 1987, where democratization was linked to the humanization of the curriculum. These developments and progressions were set out and summarized in the *The New Pedagogical Thinking* (Petrovosky, 1989).

By the late 1980s in the realm of school organization and management, however, although the institution of the school council was allowed and even encouraged as providing schools with bodies that would function as the basic 'agents for democratization', many school councils failed to take advantage of the opportunities offered them by the new reforms, or gave the impression that they were intending to introduce innovations but did not in fact do so. Moreover, some forms of the experience and practice of educational self-governance, which had been previously offered and made available in the programmes and activities of children's and young people's political organizations, had been quickly laid aside. A more concerted effort to bring about democracy in all aspects of schooling was required.

Against this background, Dr Edward D. Dneprov, who was appointed Soviet Minister of Education in 1990, suggested a more comprehensive and complex approach to the introduction of democratic reforms. He formulated guidelines for, and marks of, the reform of education, based on ten principles. These included concern for: democratization; privatization; regional independence; national and cultural autonomy; openness; alternative forms of education; development education; the introduction of humane values; an emphasis on humanities; and a concern for lifelong learning. Here new directions and guidelines for changes and innovations in organization and administration were linked to new requirements concerning the content and style of education. This link, however, was not to be merely declared; it had to be given a concrete expression in the reforms to be discussed in this volume.

Australia

In Australia schooling is compulsory for all young people aged 6 to 15 years. Constitutionally, State and Territory Ministers for Education have

responsibility for all school education in their respective states and territories. However, the Commonwealth of Australia plays an important role in relation to the broad purposes and structure of schooling and in promoting national consistency and coherence in the provision of schooling. In cooperation with the states, the Commonwealth addresses resource, equity and quality issues through its general recurrent capital and specific purpose programmes. In addition it has specific responsibilities for migrants and aboriginal people, the provision of financial assistance to students, and Australia's international relations in education. There are more than 9000 schools attended by over 3,000,000 students in Australia.

Two basic sectors of schooling operate: a government sector, with approximately 72 per cent of all students; and a non-government sector, with about 28 per cent of all students. Within the non-government sector in each state there is usually a Catholic school system, other non-government systems, and independent schools.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries government schools in Australia were organized in large bureaucratic systems, characterized by a high degree of centralized control and a clearly defined hierarchy of authority, with an extensive set of regulations, designed to ensure fair, equitable and uniform treatment of members of the teaching service and efficient and equitable distribution of resources to schools. The operation of these systems was rarely questioned. School principals, staff, parents and students enjoyed and exercised few degrees of freedom. Structures were in place to enforce compliance in curriculum, personnel, finance, and facilities administration.

Recently however, particularly since the mid-1980s, there has been considerable divergence from this pattern, as school systems, in response to a broad range of social, political, economic and management pressures, have attempted to decentralize administrative arrangements and devolve responsibility for decision-making and the delivery of educational services and programmes to regions and schools. In carrying out these processes, policy makers, system-level administrators, representatives of teachers and parents associations, and school-based personnel, have found it necessary to address the considerable tension between bureaucratic concerns for hierarchy, impersonality, consistency, economy, and maximum efficiency, which characterized 'traditional' practices, and the late twentieth-century concern for democratic decision-making and increased local autonomy in the pluralist society of Australia.

In this reform effort it was believed that a qualitative improvement in education would be a function of improvement in the processes of decision-making at school and system level. This found expression in the creation of school councils and the redistribution of authority from positions residing in the bureaucracy to the authority of the local school community. The fundamental assumption underlying this democratic movement was the view that enhancing the capacities of school-based personnel to participate in decision-making would result in better educational decisions and improvement in the

quality of education. It was believed that empowering the local school community to participate more directly in the processes of school management and direction would ensure that all members of the community would feel a sense of ownership in, and responsibility for, increasing the effectiveness and quality of the educational process and provision. But it is important to emphasize that this was a shift of policy within a set of existing and well-supported constitutional and legal arrangements already in place; school reform, conceived along the lines set out above and for the purposes mentioned, did not have to take place in a radically new context of altered political settlements.

The organizational reform, the strengthening of school autonomy and the emphasis on school-based decision-making entailed the modification of curriculum, teaching and learning styles and programmes. On the whole, however, it was organizational and administrative restructuring that was basic to the democratic reform movement in Australia. This provides an interesting contrast with the driving forces behind the democratic reform movement in Russia during a similar time in history. It is these kinds of contrasts and differences, together with the affinities and similarities, that have provided the material for this book.

The Contents of the Book

The Philosophical Underpinnings of Education in and for Democracy

A philosophical justification for the move towards the increase of democracy in education is provided by David Aspin in Chapter 1. Aspin begins our exploration of 'democracy' with a challenge: if we are to accept democracy as the basis for the operation of our schools and school systems, we must be able to show that it offers a way of institutionalizing and organizing our educational arrangements that is demonstrably superior and therefore preferable to any other. In response to this challenge, and after giving some account of the various ways in which democratic institutions and procedures may be characterized, Aspin proceeds to put forward a justification for democracy in education on the following grounds.

First, he provides a moral justification based on the notion of 'mutual beneficence'. He argues that incorporated in the democratic life are those principles that structure and define our relationships with others. In our idealized way of relating to each other these make possible, allow and regulate the interaction of equal, autonomous, moral agents. The moral foundations of democratic interchange are the principles of equality, justice, tolerance, respect for others and personal freedom. The notion of mutual beneficence, he argues, is the chief moral underpinning of the democratic enterprise.

It is reasonable, he concedes, that these moral underpinnings are built upon in different ways: what is in accord with the values, attitudes, beliefs and

social practices of the Russian people may be different from what is in accord with those of the Australian people. What is important is that there is sufficient common ground to encourage common dialogue about matters of mutual interest and concern. The concept of dialogue and its attendant requirements for conversation, rationality and the peaceful resolution of problems, he argues, provide the framework to apply to democracy in educational institutions. The only way we can get a grip on the problems of policy and delivery is through debate which is rational and objective. We have to talk to each other, and recognize each other as human beings with similar interests and a shared concern to find common ground for the mutually beneficial resolution of our problems. Our first attack on this is through the democracy of conversation.

Second, Aspin suggests an 'epistemic justification' for democracy. This epistemic argument is derived from the work of the Austrian philosopher Karl Popper. Popper is interested in the ways in which 'open societies' deal with their problems: they do so by employing methods that are characteristic of the realm of science: advancing hypotheses about ways in which problems may best be tackled, and then subjecting those hypotheses to the most rigorous scrutiny and wide-ranging criticism. Hypotheses that resist the effort of falsification are then accepted provisionally as tentative theories or policies to apply to our problem situations, with the acceptance of the possibility that even these tentative solutions may have to be modified or abandoned as new difficulties or criticisms appear.

Consistent with Popper's notion of science and his approach to the solution of problems, in which 'truth' functions as a 'regulative principle', we may also classify democracy as one of those 'open societies' which is characterized by its willingness to expose itself and the procedures by which it operates to criticism and refutation. This kind of transcendental justification, Aspin argues, is the special virtue of the democratic form of life. He does not find this capacity and preparedness to tolerate, welcome and indeed seek criticism and refutation in forms of government or systems of organization that are tyrannical, autocratic, oligarchical or plutocratic. What education, democracy and morality are about is finding solutions to practical problems; this involves the production, proving and checking of policies, which in turn necessitates the pursuit of truth in its various forms. And the key part of that search is the concern for the criticism, correction and replacement of the theories with which we operate in addressing our problems and perplexities. This is the special virtue of democracy, which is not evident in other forms of political arrangement. Regrettably the pursuit of truth in all its forms has not been evident in all educating institutions either.

Too often in educating institutions we have been dealing with a 'bestowal' or 'gift' notion of knowledge — the notion of autocratic transmission, the handing over of knowledge to students by the teacher. But the prime function of schools is not the transmission to the student of a body of 'received' knowledge, Aspin argues; it is the initiation of the student into a set

of tentative and objective theories about the world and of critical knowledge procedures, in which nothing is fixed, or absolute. In the 'open society' of the democracy of 'knowledge' everything is open to question.

If then we approach curriculum as giving students an *entrée* into these sets of tentative theories, cognitive and critical procedures, and this 'open society' of the learning community, we realize we are all equal participants and there is no autocracy or pedagogic hierarchy of subordinate–super-ordinate relations existing between 'student' and 'teacher'. If we adopt this approach to learning, we can readily see the implications for the social and political forms of organization that are thereby automatically entailed for adoption in both school and society. Schools as centres of learning and knowing would become agents for democratic being and acting. Induction into the world of knowing thus becomes an induction into the democratic form of life. This justification for democracy is a function of, and tightly tied to, the concept of knowledge; it connects both the epistemological and the axiological concerns of educating institutions. This justification is put forward as a way for examining democracy in schools and school systems in Australia, Russia and around the world.

The Political, Legal and Constitutional Context of Reform

In Chapter 1, then, Aspin has provided us with the philosophical framework within which the rest of this book's attack on the problem of creating and managing a democratic school may be shaped and articulated. But an equally necessary precursor to that attack is sufficient reference to, and analysis of, the political, legal and cultural conditions and context in which recent reform efforts in both Russia and Australia have originated and been essayed. An overview of these developments is presented in Chapters 2, 3, and 4.

In Chapter 2, the former Minister of Education of the Russian Republic, Edward Dneprov, takes the reader into an examination of the social, political and economic context within which current educational reforms have been taking place in Russia. Nearly every institution in Russia is, he maintains, in a state of flux. Russia is moving from 'a totalitarian regime to a civil society, from slavery economics to the market, from spiritual Gulag and the standardization of the personality to freedom and individuality'. The school, he concludes, 'is in the epicentre of a political whirlwind'.

In response to, and as a reflection of, these changes in the broader sociopolitical context, Dneprov identifies major changes taking place in educational philosophy, pedagogy, and the economics and financing of education. The chief principles underpinning changes in each of the areas of educational reform are democratization, pluralism, regionalization, openness and respect for national identity. The approach preferred in Russia for the application of these principles in institutionalized and organizational forms is seen to necessitate realism and independence in policy formulation, a dynamic, accelerated course for educational development, and an outcomes-oriented basis for quality

control. In Russia, Dneprov contends, 'a new society cannot be built on the foundation of an old school . . . the major tasks of reform are to change the system of values, to promote decision making and self-dependence, to awaken active forces within the human soul, to change the mentality of society, and to do away with totalitarianism, communist and social ideology.'

Bringing about fundamental changes in education based on, and governed by, adherence to the foregoing principles will be difficult if not impossible to achieve within any society, without there being parallel and correlative changes in the legislative basis of education. Clearly therefore we need to examine the extent to which the constitutional, political and legal frameworks for education in our countries, Russia and Australia, provide a context conducive to the institution and exercise of democracy in our schools and education systems.

In Chapter 3 Yevgenii Tkachenko, the current Minister for Education, discusses the new 'Law on Education' in the Russian Federation. This law sets down the main priorities of education and lays the basis for state policy. The law is based on the principles outlined by Dneprov in Chapter 2 and provides for: the depoliticization of education; increasing autonomy for the regions; the democratization of education; differentiation and an individual approach to student learning. Tkachenko points out that of special pride to educational democrats in Russia is the fact that the law begins with the Article that 'The Russian Federation gives priority to the education sector'. Tkachenko maintains that the new Law on Education in Russia combines both individual freedom and general order — a conjunction of the autonomy of separate institutions and federal educational policy. This 'lays the foundations for the development of educational policy in Russia, and for the development of democratic consciousness in Russian society'.

The importance of the process involved in the enactment of this new Law on Education in Russia — its conception, promulgation, criticism and refinement, justification and defence, and the determination to see it through on to the Statute Book — cannot be overemphasized. It is one of the most far-reaching laws on education to have been developed in recent times. What is remarkable about it is that it provides the opportunity for a 'law' on education to be developed in the context of dramatically altered new circumstances of a state transmuting its entire political institutions and processes and economic policies, away from the totalitarianism of an autocratic state and a command economy to one of democratic freedom and the economy of the open market. As part of this restructuring politicians and the public see that one of the most crucial elements for reformation is to be found in education. In Russia therefore there is now a profound concentration on the legal reorganization of education in line with modern notions of the relationship between education and the democratic state.

In contrast, the broadly based constitutional and legal framework for education in democracies such as Australia have now been in existence for a century or more. In Australia, Birch argues in Chapter 4, there is a sense in

which it is assumed that the legal and constitutional context of education is one in which democratic values will obtain and prevail. Notwithstanding this assumption, however, 'whatever democratic ideals may be attributed to ideas about the Australian way of life', these are not very apparent in the laws arranging for, and securing, the provision of educational services. Pedagogical concerns and the interests of those for whom primary and secondary schooling is provided — children and their parents — are of secondary importance in Australian educational law, Birch maintains. Instead, in the law on education as currently enacted and maintained in Australia and its states, it seems to be the case that 'the maintenance of the bureaucracy is pre-eminent and democracy and justice in the educational context are wanting'. If principles such as the interests of the child or the participation of parents were really central to education as provided in Australia, Birch concludes, much of the present legislation would require extensive review and replacement.

Democratic Values, Government Policy and System-wide Reform

Having established the conceptual, constitutional and legal bases for the idea of education and democracy, and creating and managing the democratic school, we now proceed to explore ways in which democratic values and principles may be embodied in government policy towards education and given expression in system-wide structural reforms. What emerges strongly from this examination is that different aspects of our understanding of democracy issue in different forms of institutional realization, and that these forms are very much conditioned and affected by the circumstances and contexts in which they arise. We conclude from this that no particular form of realization and application of the democratic ideal is necessarily superior to any other. As far as differences between preferred forms and versions of democracy go, what one has at any one time and in any one country is a situation in which governments are attempting to achieve a balance between different priorities, working in response to different pressures from the external environments and internal circumstances. Thus in Russia, for example, what emerges in the current reform of education and society is a concentration on two key concepts — those of democracy and humanism; in Australia, by contrast, the principal issue has been the tension between democracy, conceived in terms of participation in decision-making, and bureaucracy. These different preoccupations and concerns will obviously result in different types of policies and different forms of system, structure and school curriculum and organization.

In Chapter 5, Yelena Lenskaya begins this examination of government policy and system-wide reform by pointing to the major platform upon which the Russian government has attempted to build system-wide reformation and democratization. Fundamental to the educational reform process in Russia at the present time is the claim that a democratic society grows from the roots provided by a democratic school system: 'if a society wants to make itself free

it gives more freedom to schools'. Russia's 'new society' 'could not be built on the foundation of the old school', claims Lenskaya. 'Every society that wants to become democratic starts with democratizing schools.'

Yet, she argues, there is a danger that some versions of democracy can lead to the total disintegration of a state system of educational provision. Democracy requires that people learn to be responsible for freedom, to accept that democracy is only possible when there is a mutuality of benefit and concern, and where rights and obligations for education are shared by all members of the community. This has implications for system-wide policy and provision in areas such as the curriculum, the financing of education, accountability mechanisms, the provision of parental choice and the existence and availability of alternative or independent schools. The main responsibility of the State and the major task of administrative bodies of education, Lenskaya argues, is to protect the rights of the child for a quality education in whatever conditions provide optimum 'possibilities for individual development'. This is the focus of the development of educational policy in Russia: a concern for the protection and promotion of the rights and freedoms of the individual child.

The challenge facing state systems of education is to achieve the appropriate balance between the promotion of the individual's autonomy and ability to participate in a free and democratic society, achieved as an outcome of education in a democratic school, *and* the responsibility of governments to ensure that priorities, agreed upon by the community and designed to protect the democratic rights of all citizens to equal access to, and participation in, education, are both in place and in effective operation.

Achieving the balance between individual and state rights and responsibilities has also constituted a major task in educational reform efforts in Australia. In Australia, however, less emphasis has been placed on the rights of the individual child in his or her growth towards autonomy. Rather more emphasis has been given to the rights of adult members of the educational community, particularly parents and teachers, to become involved in educational decision-making at the school site. This seems to have been the way in which democracy has been conceived in the development of recent educational policy and in system-wide reform in Australia. Thus, in Chapter 6, Jeffrey Dunstan describes the administrative structures that have been put into place in the state system of education in Victoria in the attempt to address the imperatives for change flowing from the particular conception of the democratization of education as community participation outlined above. He draws particular attention to the tension that may be observed to exist between demands for participation in decision-making at the local school level, which many people in recent times have taken to be the paradigm version of democracy, and the insistence of government and system officials that theirs is the responsibility for administering the system efficiently and effectively from the centre. In so doing they claim they are exercising the right held by elected governments in democracies to intervene, make and dictate decisions from the

centre, on what they see as the peoples' behalf and for the welfare of all members of the community on an equitable basis, justified by their position in the central bureaucracy.

Dunstan examines the way in which resource allocation, review and accountability procedures, governance practices and curriculum and student-welfare provision have been altered in light of the recent focus on rights of the members of the school community to exercise their democratic prerogative and participate in decision-making. Alongside the democratic right of members of the community to participate in school decision making, Dunstan highlights the responsibility of the 'system' to ensure equity in provision of educational services and resources.

In Chapter 7 however, Brian Spicer claims that the real issue in the so-called democratization of Australian schooling in recent times has been one of 'power', rather than democratic rights. In this chapter he confronts the dilemma posed for governments facing the challenge of 'balance' by contraposition of 'the individual' and the 'collectivity'. Spicer urges that, in the pursuit of democratization in education, there should be a far greater mixture of both elements — of the individual freedom of the child to develop in ways that will address their particular needs and interests, and of the need for the whole community, at state and local level, to become equal partners in the shaping of the goals and future direction for its educating agencies.

Reform at the Level of the School

The form that increased democratization can take at the local level, with particular stress on the opportunities offered by school-based reform, is addressed in Chapters 8, 9 and 10. In Chapter 8, Alexander Adamsky argues that democracy is only possible when education is built on democratic values such as free choice, self-determination and the sovereignty of the individual personality. He maintains that these values, in contrast to totalitarian ones, are impossible to impose: they are born of themselves at schools from concentration upon educational practices and experiences that are rooted in the democratic impulse. Adamsky offers an account and provides an analysis of what he sees as the main innovative tendencies in Russian education from the 1950s onwards. He identifies three sources of democratic education in Russia: the Moscow methodologic circle; the Leningrad Frunze commune; and the 'teacher innovator' classes. Adamsky points to the ways in which the values embodied in the work of these reform movements became integrated into the 'brief renaissance of public education' which occurred during that time when Edward Dneprov was Minister of Education.

It is with considerable regret that Adamsky highlights the difficulties encountered by the major reformers associated with this 'renaissance'. He suggests that these difficulties were inevitable in the activity and experience of people working in any public organizations committed to reform, in a system

of education that had its genesis and gained its motivating spirit in a totalitarian regime. He tells us how the reformers 'irritated officials, deputies, the population and they were banished with infamy from the Ministry . . . the official system of education is closed for development'. The only way forward for Russian education now, he contends, is through school-based change inspired by innovative communities of alternative educators in schools and universities everywhere.

Among the front rank of those who have pioneered a school-based approach to educational reform in Russia has been Oleg Gazman. In Chapter 9, Gazman presents an examination of school-based management in Russia, with particular reference to the development of schemes for student self-management. In this connection it is interesting to note the substantial commitment to making and sustaining an advance in student self-management in Russia, in comparison with schemes of student involvement in countries such as Australia, which have been much less clearly conceptualized, instituted or sustained.

Gazman sees the process of democratic reform in Russia as continuing to be fraught with difficulty. He identifies the deteriorating economic circumstances and growing poverty in Russia as major barriers to school renewal, not only in respect of the provision of material resources to schools, but, perhaps more importantly, in respect of the impact they have on the provision and availability of professional development that is so vital a part of reform and so necessary to retrain the existing teaching and administrative workforce and to educate parents into a new way of viewing education. As Gazman argues, the fundamental psychological shifts necessary to bring about democracy in education and in society depend very largely on the possibility of qualitative changes taking place in the social and economic life of the country.

Limited resources for education in Russia are also being used as excuses to justify the creation of large schools. Schools in which 2000–3000 students are being educated create, according to Gazman, problems of resource provision and management of such magnitude that principals have little time for educational and other organizational concerns. As a result there is a deficit of creative solutions to educational problems.

Despite problems such as these, Gazman is optimistic. He refers approvingly to the increasing importance attached to 'cooperative learning' and the creation of a number of pilot schools and experimental sites where school staff have devised their own curricular and distinctive organizational image and avers that these developments give good grounds for optimism. Increasing progress in the democratization of education Gazman sees as being made possible through the emergence of new types of schools, which will stimulate independence and the creative activity of school principals, teachers and pupils.

Such qualities are seen as fundamental to the creation of effective schools, whether they be in Australia or Russia. In Chapter 10, Clive Dimmock shows, with reference to the school-effectiveness research, how many of the core values associated with democracy, such as tolerance and respect for others,

concern for equity and equality, and the ability to make judgments and choices promoting individual satisfaction and community welfare, can be developed and nurtured in effective schools. Effective schools above all promote a learner- and learning-centred culture and these are indispensable prerequisites for any forum in which the lessons arising from the democracy of knowledge-getting are going to be given greatest point of purchase in the development of citizens ready to serve and function in a participative democracy.

Democratization, School Reform and the Life of the Child

The implications of democratization for the life of the child in the school are discussed in Chapters 11, 12 and 13. In Chapter 11, Michael Herriman begins by concentrating on what he sees as the chief value and principal requirement in any form of life claiming to be democratic — that of personal freedom. He shows that this freedom is founded upon the arguments advanced by Locke and Mill that set up individual autonomy as the bulwark of the morality that is supposed to be confirmed by its delivery in the modern democratic state. The continuation of that emphasis, argues Herriman, requires a minimum of government interference in direction and control of individual citizens' lives; and the problem is that there are powerful arguments for emphasizing the necessity of the individual's being subjected to the larger interests, claims and representations of the State. This leads to a situation in which, by the ways in which it chooses to establish and exercise its supposed commitment to open institutions and procedures, the State can end up being profoundly anti-democratic. And if this danger exists with respect to relations between the individual and the State, then how much more must they exist with respect to the role and functioning of the school.

Herriman sees the form in which modern schools are controlled and administered as being bureaucratic, authoritarian and fundamentally conservative. He points out that the modes of teaching, the relations between teacher and taught, and the hierarchic forms of organization and administration all militate against the main value of democracy: personal freedom. From this perspective, there is a real risk that, without profound and fundamental change in the conception of educational institutions, the relations between teachers and students in them, and, above all, in the ways that such institutions are organized and managed, a real democracy will never be achieved. Herriman therefore concludes by arguing forcefully that 'democratic values can only be achieved when the total structure of education is democratic'. Herriman sets out some of the ways and means in which effective conditions of, and for, the increase of democracy may be insisted upon and implemented in the reform of school structures, styles of management, and curriculum. He echoes Aspin's point about the implications arising for education in democracy from its epistemic commitments by adding that, 'This condition includes the need for democratic methods of enquiry and teaching styles.'

The practical implications of this position are discussed in Chapter 12 by Alexander Tubelsky, a principal of one of Russia's most innovative schools. In the attempt to help children to develop the capacity for self-determination — one of the prime prerequisites for the development of a democratic spirit — the school of which Tubelsky is principal is attempting to establish an account of the pedagogical conditions under which both children and teachers are able to acquire and reflect on the experience of democratic behaviour. Tubelsky reports that teachers, parents and students in the school are especially attentive to two guiding principles: first, that all students and teachers are to realize that they are all equally involved in the generation and adoption of the norms and rules of school life; and second, that the laws of the school should be developed gradually as the school community confronts its emerging problems. In Tubelsky's school, problems are to be resolved only by democratic means.

It is interesting to note Tubelsky's observation that in such a school context the children acquire and accumulate the experience of democratic behaviour faster and more effectively than teachers. The reason, he suggests, lies in the stereotypical thinking of adults who have spent all their lives under the conditions of the totalitarian system; to this extent children and young people come to the enterprise of democratic education with visions and preconceptions more untrammelled by the coercive imperatives of the past and with their spirits more ready for the freer opportunities offered by the present. As against the positive effects of this set of starting conditions Tubelsky notes that a further disadvantage arising from the previous stereotypical thinking of the teaching force, brought about by conformity to the norms and standards of a totalitarian state, is found in the pedagogical approach of many Russian teachers 'in which [he or] she transmits knowledge rather than organizes the process of acquiring living knowledge'. As a result of teachers holding this particular view of their pedagogical function, many tend to assume an authoritarian approach in their interpersonal conduct towards the students.

Tubelsky calls for greater cooperation between teachers and academics in order to bring about change in the content of curriculum and the methods and procedures of teaching and learning. In Tubelsky's school we see put into action a philosophy of knowledge in accordance with which the teacher relinquishes claims to absolute truth and in so doing adopts a teaching style which is far more democratic. In this example of institutional pedagogic reappraisal and reorientation we see the practical application of the philosophical underpinnings of the ideals of democratic education, as articulated by Aspin in Chapter 1, and advocated by Herriman for a democratic school.

The volume ends with Chapter 13 in which Froumin considers the child's growth towards becoming a responsible and free member of a democratic society. He maintains that this is not merely a process of socialization concerned with the acquisition of social norms, but a whole pattern of organic development and growth, one which, informed by the work of key theorists such as Dewey, Gessen, Vygotsky and Mead, incorporates democratic values

into deliberate and self-conscious forms of special pedagogical expertise and classroom procedures deployed and in operation at every stage of development towards maturity.

Discussion: A Comparative Analysis of Educational Reforms in Russia and Australia

The Value of East–West Comparisons

A popular quotation from Leo Tolstoy's novel *Anna Karenina* says, 'All happy families are alike, every unhappy family is unhappy in its peculiar way'. There are few models of educational reform which are happy and successful in all respects but there are many troublesome and dramatic ones. And each of them is troublesome in its own way. This analysis of educational reform in Russia and Australia was embarked upon for a number of reasons. The democratic reforms in Russia in the late 1980s, and in Australia from the mid-1980s onwards, appeared to be inspired by a similar concern for democracy and its increase in the educational setting. Educationalists in both countries, working independently on the democratization of their schools and education systems, developed interesting approaches and ideas, that we deemed to be suitable and fruitful for cross-cultural exploration.

A cross-cultural analysis applied to the study of democratization in education has the potential to be illuminating, helpful and fecund, inasmuch as the problems and difficulties of democratization in education are broad, diverse and complex. Only by viewing the whole range of problems and difficulties from different angles and perspectives can one possibly hope to achieve a more fully informed, heterogenous and yet comprehensive understanding. In this way we may be better placed to study the problems, frame hypotheses and generate theories with which to tackle the particular difficulties we encounter in our own systems' and institutions' attempts to create and manage democratic schools.

There is another reason, which makes the comparative analysis important. Some Russian and western policy makers and educationalists suppose that the problem of democratization in western educational systems has been practically solved, and that Russia should merely copy one of the western systems already in place. In recent times, however, some western reforms have been much criticized. A number of problems, which seemed to have been solved, have reappeared and the results of the reforms did not meet the expectations according to which they were instituted. From the perspective of Russian policy makers and educationalists, a study of the western experience of reforming education is invaluable, but it does not present models for replication.

From the perspective of Russian educationalists it was deemed of much greater utility and value to compare their own approaches to democratization

with those of a western country, equally concerned with democratization, and to observe the achievements and failures of systems, institutions and schools in that country, before embarking upon the large-scale educational reform process in Russia.

The democratic reforms in Russia also provide an interesting focus for western study, for Russia is a country in which it could be argued that the gradual, steady and cumulative evolution and development of 'democracy' was interrupted. The democratic reforms in schooling currently under way in Russia are not supported by a lived experience of the democratic mentality in application among the public at large, or by the existence and practices of democratic institutions of popular authority and power in the broader social context. The democratic reforms, which are taking place in education, are perceived to be, and to furnish, the basis upon which it is hoped that democracy will grow and flourish in Russian society at large.

The experiment in which Russian education is engaged is almost 'pure' in the sense that the innovations conceived and implemented to bring about democracy in schools are starting from what is virtually a 'blank sheet' and, from the political/ideological point of view, are unconstrained by the pressures of the existing political norms and conventions, with which institutional change in the West is so often beset.

Similarities and Differences Between Australian and Russian Experiences of Reform

An examination of reform efforts in Australia and Russia highlights some important differences in the nature of the reforms, the reasons for their introduction, and the ways in which that introduction has proceeded:

- Australian reforms were both 'top down' and 'bottom up'; they were initiated from 'the top', and were driven forward and supported by powerful interest groups in the education service, the community and the public at large. Russian reforms were initiated from 'the bottom' by teachers and the teaching profession.
- The primary target of Australian reforms was the democratization of administration and the development of school-based management, in the belief that the empowerment of teachers and parents for participation in decision-making at the school site would in time enhance the quality of education provided for children in the classroom. In Russia the primary target was democratization of the teacher–pupil relationship.
- Russian reforms developed at a time and under circumstances in which there was still total state control of schools. In Australia state schools were already in competition with independent schools, in which over 25 per cent of all pupils were enrolled.

- Australian schools were enjoying the increasing degrees of autonomy that had been granted since the 1960s and 1970s. Russian schools were subject to a rigidly centralized direction and control, and had been so for decades.
- Australian teachers were working primarily for what they believed would be the improvement of their schools and their students. Their Russian colleagues had an ambition to reconstruct their entire society in the democratic vein.
- The drive for the democratization of education took its impetus amongst Russian pedagogues as a reflection of the general exultation over the possibility of political reform leading to democracy. In Australia democratic values were considered to have been embedded in society and its institutions from the beginning.

On the other hand, the following beliefs may be observed to have been held in common by reformers in both countries and may therefore be seen to have been shared as joint starting points for processes of the Russian and Australian reforms:

- a dual interest in offering choice to individuals and to increasing social justice; and
- the impulse to tackle and turn round parents' conservative attitudes towards innovations in school.

Moreover in the reform process the following steps seem to have been taken in both countries:

- the formation of school councils;
- the formation of 'councils for education' or boards at different levels of administration;
- a strengthening of the emphasis on the necessity of diversification in the teaching of gifted and handicapped children;
- the decentralization of the decision-making systems; and
- a strengthening of the independence of the school and individual teachers.

Naturally, however, given the different circumstances, causal background and reasons for the impulse towards education innovation and reform in our two countries, there existed considerable differences in the ways and means by which those reforms were introduced and the procedures and progress of those reforms in practice. Notably:

- The Russian reform makers emphasized the character and style of the changes in teaching methods and programmes. The Australian reformers stressed organizational and administrative restructuring.

- In Russia the movement for the introduction of democracy in education was intended primarily for the work of pupils and teachers in classrooms and schools. In Australia it extended to, and included, parents and the general public. In Russia, therefore, it was new forms of self-government in school councils that were most attractive for pupils. In Australia there was less pupil involvement but far more involvement by parents in the control and management of schools.
- Relative to each other, Australian educationalists were more concerned with the evolution of the 'traditional' system and its improvement. Russian educators expected a revolution in their schools, and saw as indicators and features of the revolutionary move towards democracy in education an emergence of alternative schools and new pedagogic approaches in the classroom.
- Along the road towards, and in the process of, democratization, many Australian schools employed practical improvements and single techniques in classroom curriculum and teaching method. In Russia teachers have attempted to introduce a whole set of, and approaches to, educational-reform measures based on, and incorporating, entire integrated pedagogic systems (such as those of Steiner, Montessori, A.S. Neill etc.).
- The broad thrust of Australian reform was meant for the development of the general public school. The direction democratic reform took in Russia favoured the setting up of, and recourse to, a broad 'alternative' schooling sector.

Notwithstanding these differences in form, process and orientation, however, it is worthwhile noting that the reform strategies and approaches put into effect in both countries encountered difficulties that were very much alike. Mention should first be made of the difficulties encountered in the introduction of participative decision-making into the management of classrooms and schools. For one thing, both in Russia and Australia many teachers were unprepared for the new range, modes and styles of interaction with their students; for another many members of the new schools' councils lacked competence in those areas in which they were now required to be capable of functioning. As a further difficulty, many school-council members lacked qualifications, experience and even the taste for the now necessary participation in decision-making on such difficult, complex and demanding matters as resource distribution, staff selection and the development of teaching programmes. Moreover the facilities and resources of the pre-service and retraining systems available were simply not capable of meeting the demands of reform and the needs of the teachers in developing the ability to respond to them.

Secondly, the increasing independence granted to, and enjoyed by, the school has inevitably heralded the start of a process of disintegration of the united educational system and of the stress on centrally dictated and unified teaching programmes and requirements. In the eyes of some, this development

carries with it the danger of lowering educational standards, of countering the otherwise sound arguments for the movement towards, or continuation of, a 'national curriculum', and of diminishing the possibility of achieving national goals for education.

Thirdly, the relaxation of some traditional requirements for, and marks of, discipline in schools and classrooms has resulted in some members of the community perceiving a growth among young people of school age in what they see as antisocial behaviour, and, along with and as result of that, a certain neglect for the system of values established and held by adults and the community.

We conclude that a number of negative features, difficulties and problems in the introduction and implementation of innovation and reform arising from the impulse towards increasing the democratization of educational institutions, systems and schools can be perceived to be common both for Russia and Australia. Among these may be included:

- the absence of a well-developed theory of the democratization of education;
- the lack of coordination at various levels of the educational system; and
- the lack of resources, programmes and efforts that are required to increase and expand the range and level of the necessary competences that should be expected of all participants in the educational process.

It seems to us in consequence that few positive and constructive lessons regarding the optimum conditions under which there can be effective implementation of educational innovation and reform appear to have been learnt by those trying to overcome the difficulties inherent in, and thrown up by, the reform effort. Both in Russia and Australia attempts are being made to reinforce the integrity of the educational systems by recourse to the imposition of a set of centrally dictated uniform educational standards. Unfortunately, most of the steps in this process are not based on a comprehensive and theoretically integrated analysis of the need for a fundamental and thorough-going restructuring of education, in all its forms and agencies, entailed by the move towards democratization, viewed as both process and outcome. We believe an analysis of this kind to be necessary for giving contemporary educators, determined to introduce and increase democracy in education, the prerequisite insights and solid foundations called for in the planning of new advances in the reform of education.

Problems and Challenges in the Conceptualization and Process of Democratic Reform

Among some of the thornier issues and problems to be faced in creating and managing a democratic school, we have been able to identify the following:

education, democracy and social change; democracy and the market economy; democracy and the life of the child in school; and democracy, the school and the system.

Education, Democracy and Social Change

Issues for consideration:

- Should we endeavour to prepare children in school to live in a democracy which takes the form of the contemporary society in which they live or should we provide them with an experience of democracy in school life, which they can use to develop a better form of that society in the future? What should be done when the experience of democracy in the school actually precedes the democratic experience in society itself?
- How does a community develop an education system when it finds itself facing the larger challenge of responding to changes in the form, structure and direction of society — a society which is not yet sure what form its future identity and preferred direction is going to take?
- Is it right to subject the child to experiments in social and political institutions that are concomitant parts of the school's endeavour to adjust to the organic and dynamic changes in the nature and form of the society of which it is an educating agency?

Democracy and the Market Economy

Issues for consideration:

There are different conceptions of democracy and an open society. Some believe that the democratic state has the right to intervene in its citizens' lives so as to shape them for the best interests of community welfare including individual autonomy; others hold that 'individual autonomy' comes before every other value and that, for that reason, the State has minimal rights to intervention in the private lives of individual free agents, who may use their own powers and resources to secure access to the 'goods' they want.

For the first group, education, health and social-welfare benefits are seen as necessary services which the State should provide in common for all as a public entitlement; for the second group, such 'services' are facilities or utilities which individuals should be able to purchase as though they were 'commodities' on the open market. Both interpretations are effects of the working of powerful ideologies in the current debate about the nature and work of those agencies and institutions we should establish or employ in pursuit of the freedom all might enjoy in a democracy.

But the question may be asked as to whether the ideology and language of the market can be validly employed and appropriately realized in the education field. Given the moral character of education's work as an agency operating ultimately for community benefit and improvement, we may ask whether it is proper to create competition between schools and try to create a real 'market' for educational goods. And in such a case, how does one provide equitable opportunity and real choice for all parents and children? What are the implications for democracy in the delivery of education and for the management of schools and school systems, when education moves from being seen less as a public good and more as a commodity subject to the pressures of the market-place?

Democracy and the Life of the Child in School

Issues for consideration:

- What form shall be taken by the work and experiences in the life of the child in a school which values democracy? Are democratic values and principles the same for adult society and for the society of children? If they are, how shall they be best given institutional realization? If they are not, how shall the school best prepare the student for life as a citizen in the adult form of democracy?
- In all community debates concerning the optimum form and mode of organization of its educating institutions, does democracy demand the question be raised as to who shall have the overriding right to speak on behalf of the child? Shall the child be seen as having rights, and if so, how far shall they extend? How shall the community confer rights on the child and what form and content shall they be given? When do the child's rights emerge and in conformity with what stages of development do they expand until the full range of rights is granted? How shall this be measured? Who plays a role in conferring the rights? What are the correlative obligations that come with the rights and how shall children and young people be taught and expected to exercise them?
- This leads to the larger and more general question of the best form of organization for students in our schools. Where, for example, on the spectrum of control, do we think institutional arrangements for democratic and effective organization and administration to secure quality in education is best placed? With respect to the involvement of students in running schools' internal organization, for example, we might counterpose:
  - (a) the 'traditional' system in which senior students are appointed by the principal and staff to exercise delegated power to organize the behaviour of students (sometimes involving the

use of punitive sanctions of various sorts serving as public marks of their designated authority), such appointments generally being made on the presumption of such students having special wisdom or capacity to conform to what principal and staff perceive or desire to be the dominant culture and ethos of the school;

(b) a system in which all students have equal rights, where each is free to speak and where each student has authority to require of everyone else acceptance of, and conformity to, a set of rules to regulate the effective behaviour, learning and interaction of all members of the school community.

Democracy, the School and the System

Issues for consideration:

- How is it possible to develop and sustain alternative 'systems' of education at the same time as ensuring respect for equity, social justice, access and inclusivity rather than exclusivity, and preferential treatment for a favoured few? How does one provide access to, and enjoyment of, the opportunities offered by a high-class and empowering curriculum to all students (whether male or female, of a majority or minority ethnic linguistic group, disadvantaged or talented, urban or rural), in such a way that all of them emerge with life chances significantly expanded and enhanced as a result of their experiences and achievements within the school?
- How does a government, in its provision of a national system of education, deal with the dual challenge of granting to schools the powers of managing their own affairs and promoting and providing for an increased sense of self-consciousness and self-determination among school-based personnel without letting the system become so diversified that it may lose all internal coherence, consistency and sense of direction, and without compromising, limiting or abolishing other structures, procedures, or goals, that have national relevance, importance and utility?
- How might a school develop a positive sense of community within itself and, in pursuit of its goals, involve itself with members, agencies and representatives of the community more broadly?
- How do we learn to teach, develop and measure the complex and sophisticated abilities and competences presupposed by, and necessary for, a sense of involvement in the community and a commitment to democratic processes and forms of life?
- How do we achieve a consensus on the values a community might require of and expect to see reflected in the operations of its educating

agencies? How might schools work together with the wider community to prepare students for those times and occasions when a national or regional government proposes to introduce changes, some of which may well be alien or even antithetical to those values or structures espoused and cherished by a particular element of that larger society — even to the level of the individual school?

'Touchstones' for Use in Formulating and Implementing Educational Innovation and Reform

In our deliberation on these issues, a number of areas of common agreement and shared understanding have emerged. For example, we are certain that:

- The school should have a clear commitment to the values and principles embodied in a philosophy of democracy as well as to its practices and procedures.
- The pursuit and dissemination of knowledge and understanding are the principal preoccupations of all institutions in a democratic society. This implies that the teacher, the student and other members of the school community are all bearers of knowledge in the learning community, that all have an interest in its transmission and questioning, and are all, in their own ways, contributors to, and responsible for, its claiming, promulgation, extension, refinement, assessment, certification, correction and continuing communication.
- The extension, communication and evaluation of public knowledge, and a commitment to the increase of community welfare and of individual and social justice, are the prime values in education and democracy.
- For these reasons schools need to be aware of their dual function in respect to education for democracy: they need to teach children about democracy and to get them to practise it. In both school and society we have to secure acceptance of the virtues of intellectual uncertainty and tolerance as the prime principles through which the realm of knowledge and the realm of values combine and coalesce. The enterprise of immersion in democratic procedures and contexts needs to be tempered with the realization that we are helping children to deal with human imperfections, on a rational and humane basis.
- In education for democracy we need to balance the competing demands of duty and inclination; internal choice and external force, realizing that we might never see all our students motivated in all their doings by internal choice and inclination.
- Individual liberty is promoted by a commitment to intellectual freedom based on and incorporating the public, objective and impartial character of knowledge and understanding. Associated with this is an

awareness of, and a determination that, the outcome of one's education shall have point and purpose, that it will affect our lives as autonomous individuals and increase our capacity to make a contribution to the welfare of the community. In this way both parts of one's life as a citizen are involved in realizing that one can be effective in one's life in society. Thus there is a need for both an intellectual and a practical evaluation of democratic values and institutions.

- Contemporary educational systems and institutions, if they are to be democratic, need to undertake an appraisal of the granting, suitable ordering and orientation of the rights of children and their parents, and the responsibilities expected of them, and of the ways in which this will impinge on priorities for school reform. These will then provide schools, students, parents and the community with knowledge of the preconditions for the implementation of democracy in educating institutions.
- The State has an important role to play as a guarantor of schools', students', and parents' rights against local pressures, and should provide strong leadership in helping all educational institutions and stakeholders take the question of rights seriously.
- A commitment to the discovery and institution of soundly based approaches to the democratization of education will mean that one cannot democratize just one part of the education system: one must look overall at the content, administrative structures, modes of delivery and means of evaluation, in the whole and in parts, of the system, the curriculum, and the values expressed in the educational programme. Such things need to be interconnected. If one wishes to achieve an integration between all elements and aspects of the democratic process in education, one must have a democratic system, a democratic school and a democratic classroom.
- If we are sincere in our desire to create a democratic atmosphere in a school, we should appreciate the point that part of democratic procedures is a requirement that power should be widely distributed. In a school, this means that thought will have to be given to ways in which it is desirable and possible to distribute powers of decision-making and action.

  Furthermore it will be necessary to provide an arena in which students are given the opportunity to think about change, and be responsible for its implementation and evaluation. If students are not involved in decision-making, there is a danger that they will develop a diminished sense of efficacy and their capacity to be responsible for change, with the consequent risk of their transferring this assumption to their role in the wider society. Just as a person who has played a part in developing a law is likely to have a stronger commitment to the implementation of that law, so a citizen who has come equipped ready, willing and able to take an active part in the governance and

service of the community, and has come to understand the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in a democracy, as a result of being informed, shaped and prepared by previous experience in an educating institution, will be less likely to let others take power and exercise control in their name and on their behalf.

This means that students must be prepared for the exercise of autonomous political judgment and community action by immersion and engagement in a programme of activities, both formal and informal, in school, that enshrines the values, principles and practices of democracy. Thus in all the endeavours of a school that would be truly democratic, the commitment to openness and participation in the acceptance of responsibility and the exercise of distributed power must be real, and not merely token.

- Education should prepare us to cope with the psychological, moral and economic challenges and threats that we may have to face in modern life in a democracy, by equipping us with both the knowledge requisite to meeting those challenges successfully and the competences of a critical intelligence and the skills of practical wisdom (what Aristotle called 'phronesis'). We need to equip students with a brave mind and a brave heart to accept differences, stand up to and be able to deploy criticism without fear, and accept that there are many good ways of doing things and of effecting change in our educating and social institutions.
- We would do well to take, as our motto and our watchword, acceptance of the premise that democracy is both a goal and a means of education.

Some Paradoxes

Arising from our deliberations on such matters, we have come to be aware, amongst the problems and issues to be tackled in this exploration of democracy and education, of the point (raised explicitly in Chapter 1) that paradoxes, both theoretical and practical, remain in the concept of democracy in and for education. These include at least the following:

- In the name of freedom as a part of, and condition for, democracy, some citizens may have to be forced to do certain things or follow certain norms that they would not willingly choose for themselves. This is especially so with the institution of education, where, in the name of democracy, we require compulsory school attendance for all children at school. This raises the question of how one may use compulsion and justify the use of force in helping children to become free.
- Freedom may be a value but it does not guarantee happiness. The sense and functioning of being a citizen in a modern 'free' society

presents us with an agonizing dilemma of existentialist proportions — the awareness that being free in today's society may pose many challenges, threats and even dangers to our psychological and moral well-being.

- Democracy implies the right of the majority to make a decision but the majority may not always be 'right'. One example generally relates to the fact that a majority of voters in some countries continues to demand the reintroduction of capital punishment, yet this is a proposal that their parliament has consistently rejected. As far as education is concerned, we may point to the example that in the USSR in the past women could not be denied the right to an education, whereas in the allegedly more 'democratic' Turkestan of today, female children may be denied the right to attend school. It is certainly paradoxical that, in what was regarded previously as a totalitarian state the 'right' to full female educational emancipation was secured and guaranteed.
- It could be argued that what some people regard as one of the most undemocratic institutions in Australia, the High Court, has played a more determinative role in the democratization of Australian education than many other, more democratic institutions. If this is true, it is certainly paradoxical.
- When we think of the experiences of many members of the community in pre-1989 Russia and other former Communist states — some academics and members of religious orders, for example — we realize that, notwithstanding the constraints of autocracy, authoritarianism and totalitarianism, a person can develop a heightened predilection for, and a commitment to, the values of the democratic form of life 'outside' and indeed far removed from the presence or availability of democratic procedures. Some children in schools may actually develop as passionate democrats in spite of the authoritarian atmosphere that rules their institutions.

Conclusion

It is to the study and attempted resolution of some of these difficult and complex problems, issues and paradoxes that we address the attention of readers of this volume. Certainly the time to do so is never more felicitous than now, when the opportunities for democratic advance are being opened up and expanded, not only in Russia and Australia, but widely across the world. It is even more vital at this time, when the risks and dangers to democracy and openness — from the corporate State, from multinational corporations, from forms of extreme nationalism and religious fundamentalism, from political correctness and fierce ideological convictions of all kinds — in all our societies seem almost daily to be increasing.

As educators we shall do well to remember the aphorism that 'The price

of liberty is eternal vigilance.' It is our view that the impetus towards giving expression to the emphasis a democracy must lay upon the development and deployment of all the various forms of knowledge and skill needed to combat the risks and dangers mentioned in the foregoing paragraph can be nowhere better brought out and deployed than in the endeavour of creating and managing the democratic school. For, as we seek to show, that educational enterprise is vital and indispensable to securing the future of any democracy.

References

PETROVOSKY, A.V. (1989) *The New Pedagogical Thinking*, Moscow, Pedagogika.

SOVIET EDUCATION (1988) *The Pedagogy of Co-operation*, Report of the First Meeting of Innovative Teachers, 30, 56, pp. 30–45.

SOVIET EDUCATION (1989) *Democratization of the Individual*, Report of the Second Meeting of Innovative Teachers, 31, 5, pp. 80–95.

Chapter 14

The Child's Road to Democracy

Isak D. Froumin

Fundamental Contradictions of Education

In modern Russian society, democracy is viewed as an exceptionally positive phenomenon. However, when striving to realize democratic values in all aspects of the education system considerable problems have emerged. No doubt, in every particular reform one can find errors and shortcomings, but in Russia it could be argued that reform leaders were not fully cognizant of democratic ideas and values, or were not quite committed to them. The danger in Russia today is that reforms, if poorly implemented, might lead to disillusionment with democratic values, and a rejection of democratic reforms in education may result. Indeed, a comparative analysis of education reforms both in the West and in the East reveals a cyclic recurrence of 'democratic enthusiasm' and bitter disappointment in its results, as observed by Kirst (1984).

In my opinion the problems encountered in the course of democratic reforms in Russia are due not to any intrinsic defects in democratic ideas but in the contradictory character of the idea of mass education. Inner contradictions and tensions of education are intensified and become urgent each time they are neglected in the course of education system reform.

The factors which create these contradictions and tensions are:

- The complexity of the education process. This is due to a diversity of realities existing in it. In any teaching and learning act, besides a simple transmission of information, there is a person-to-person relationship, or in other words, an interaction of different values.
- Adding a definite place and time to this act, we come to understand that the democratic-education processes operate at several levels. Here we should also speak of the complex interaction among various elements or structural levels of the educational system: the entire mass education system, the subsystem of state-supported education, a group of schools of a certain philosophy, a single school, a group of parents and students interacting in the process of schooling, an individual student. It is obvious that democratic change should entail change at all levels, otherwise the democratic reform may prove fictitious. However, there remains a question: Which of the levels is of greatest importance for realization of democratic values?
- The competition between formal, non-formal and informal education. Hallak (1990) points out that non-formal education is a sort of reaction to the requirement for democratization of school education. But the problem of interaction between these domains still remains insufficiently explored with regard to democratization.

These factors emphasize the complex nature of the system in which democratic values are actualized. To all appearances, complete removal of the discord between elements of the system is impossible, as it is connected with the different roles each element plays in elimination of these contradictions.

Here we deal with the fundamental contradiction between the universal character of culture and education on the one hand, and unique human life on the other hand. In other words, there is a contradiction between the cultural and the spontaneous, the traditional and situational. Speaking of contradictions manifested by culture and education Leo Tolstoy expressed it aphoristically as follows: 'In culture man obliterates himself.' Rousseau also gave much attention to this contradiction in his first work, 'Did the Rise of Science and Art Provide for Improvement of Morals?' This contradiction manifests itself today in the fact that it is impossible to develop creativity or thinking technology; in the fact that children are not prepared fully to realize their aspirations for education, in the infinity of culture to be assimilated by a finite human being, in the discrepancy between the integrity of the individual and the fragmented nature of education. This contradiction is also reflected in the disparity between collective forms of teaching in modern education and the individual character of learning, teaching and development.

From the viewpoint of democratic values this contradiction creates a number of problems and tensions; for example:

- between the social demand for uniform educational policy for all social groups and children, and the individual right to choose a school and a curriculum;
- between uniform educational standards and teaching techniques and the child's personality, and specific style of learning and development;
- between the equal right to education of every child and basic (biologically and socially conditioned) inequality of children; and
- between the two functions of education, i.e., education as a means of social and economic development, and education as an expression of the values of parents, children, and population groups.

The contradiction between culture and spontaneity concerns not only students but teachers as well. Adherent to culture, they still remain individuals and therefore they do not merely transmit information. It is therefore impossible to evaluate with any degree of precision the results of teachers'

work and the causes of their dissatisfaction with rigid methods and teaching techniques. In terms of democratization this contradiction gives rise to:

- the conflict between teachers' attempts to establish a true partnership with pupils and the inequality of their status;
- the discrepancy between the social demand for uniformity of all teachers or for a school as a socially constructed institution which embodies the particular values and techniques of individual teachers; and
- the conflict between the equal rights of teachers who work with the same group of students.

All the above contradictions, conflicts and discrepancies are inherent in education in general, but they become most acute in mass school education and in the controversy between systemically imposed and free education.

Problems of Free Education

Ideas of freedom and the moral autonomy of children have been the most popular issues for the educationists of this century. Children's rights and the value of children's lives have been discussed by Dewey, Montessori, Steiner and many others. Rousseau's ideas about natural and free child raising have been revived and implemented. In his book *Emile*, Rousseau criticized authoritarian child raising and highlighted natural interest as a source of self-education. This position caused him some difficulty as he had to support some 'natural' mechanisms and methods of developing moral consciousness and achieving a level of social education in a free child's life. By such mechanisms, the child completed the task for the pedagogue. In contrast to Komensky, he recognized that the right word said to a child doesn't lead to the right thought or the right action. In this sense he didn't support a direct 'teaching freedom', but he postulated that freedom makes an individual free.

In spite of its attractiveness, Rousseau's ideal of natural pedagogy didn't become a turning point in school history in Russia. This was due to some objective tensions in its implementation. Can children be free if they need our help? Should a pedagogue refuse to help to a child who is in a predicament but doesn't ask for help? What does 'equality' mean for a weak and unskilled child? Rousseau and his followers did not answer these questions in a way that was satisfactory for Russian pedagogues seeking a way forward.

Another contribution to free pedagogy, though not quite as well known in the western world, was by the famous Russian writer Leo Tolstoy. 'Freedom is a necessary condition for any true education,' claimed Tolstoy, as he protested against any punishment and reward in education. Tolstoy organized an experimental school and had a lot of followers. But his network of schools didn't expand in Russia as they didn't coincide with the then current idea of systematic knowledge and rigid cultural norms.

After the October Revolution of 1917, Gessen, a remarkable Russian philosopher, published a voluminous work *Principles of Pedagogy* (Gessen, 1922), in which he followed the best traditions of Russian philosophy. In that work the seeming contradiction between freedom and culture was chosen as the starting point for his analysis. Criticizing the simplified opposition freedom–compulsion he wrote, 'Both Rousseau and Tolstoy considered freedom and compulsion to be facts of bringing up. Consequently they developed a negative concept of freedom being the absence of compulsion, i.e., elimination of compulsion is equivalent to a triumph of freedom. This is the point at which the alternative emerges — freedom or compulsion. For, understood as mere facts or immutabilities, they do annihilate one another and cannot coexist' (Gessen, 1922).

Historically, there are two schools of thought in the debate on free education in Russia. The first opposes the ideal of free education and the priorities of democratic change. For example, any religious educational system emphasizes, not democratic, but religious values. From the viewpoint of programmed instruction the aims of democratic education are not central. This, of course does not mean that any traditional form of instruction, say, in mathematics or biology, is basically anti-democratic or does not contribute to the formation of democratic values and aims in pupils. The so-called specialized schools with an extended curriculum in physics and mathematics which used to be popular in the Soviet period are proof of this. The entire atmosphere in such schools was much more democratic than in regular schools, and the students were more independent in their judgments. Still, the problem of a system of values (democratic values in particular) for school children has not yet been given much attention in traditional pedagogic systems, and no attempts to reveal the pedagogic mechanisms of it have been made so far. Many prominent Soviet educationalists refused to discuss the problems of democratic values in education in order to avoid conflict with the ruling totalitarian ideology; they declared that the school's aim was to provide for instruction in subjects, not to bring up the child. In this connection, a comparison of different instructional methods is possible with regard to their effects on upbringing and the acquisition of a value system. We have reason to believe that such pedagogic systems as the so-called 'developing education' by Davydov (Davydov, 1988) or 'teaching through a cultured dialogue' by Bitler have considerable potential for value-oriented education.

The second school of thought which follows from totalitarian ideology, considers democratic values to be false and unrealistic. Consequently, the school wouldn't develop them. In the Soviet system of education there was a dictatorship of communist ideology. Soviet educational leaders tried to make education value-orientated, in order to transmit the values of group authority and ideological subordination to the Communist Party through school subjects, extra-curricular activities and child organizations.

During every lesson a teacher was required, not only to convey certain information, but also to impart to children officially recognized values. Even

texts of problems in physics and mathematics reflected achievements of Soviet workers and peasants. Meanwhile, traditional or democratic values were either ignored or criticized. So it was only natural that Soviet teenagers were offered, as a role model, the boy who had betrayed his own father to the hands of KGB. According to official ideology, the most serious danger was posed by the people with independent judgment. That is why one of the most important norms for child organizations which involved 100 per cent of children was 'unconditional subordination of minority to majority'. Old Soviet textbooks on pedagogy recorded direct statements that respect for an individual was of minor importance, that the interests of society were more important than those of the individual (society meant communist oligarchy). A good example of this was the special greeting of secondary-school pupils who were members of a child political organization. They held a hand above their head to symbolize that public interests are of higher importance than those of an individual. Even in recent textbooks on pedagogy there are references to 'democratic upbringing' in the sense of collectivism.

For such an educational system the ideas and experience of free education are false and useless. Nevertheless, for our purposes it would be useful to consider free and communist education as two different types of value-oriented education. The comparatively high efficiency of communist methods of upbringing proves that value-oriented education is of more limiting and regulating character than traditional scientific education, and that value-orientated education requires subtler and more integrated techniques. For this reason, many ideas and methods of communist upbringing espoused by Soviet pedagogues (for example, Makarenko) are being used in the West or by contemporary democratic pedagogues in Russia (see the chapters by Tubelsky and Gazman in this book). But it would be wrong to suppose that all those who criticize free education are supporters of communist totalitarian education.

There is one further criticism of free education made by democrats. Why do many good pedagogues who share democratic values not support the ideas of A.S. Neill or Rousseau? Experience of free schools shows that in gaining freedom we lose positive knowledge. Soviet school children normally demonstrate better results in mathematics and science than pupils from traditionally democratic school systems. It is of interest to note that in response to this criticism, the free education system in the course of its history has instituted a number of effective teaching techniques (the projects method, for example) which later on were successfully adopted by the traditional school. Still the problem of effectiveness and evaluation of success in the free school remains unsolved. This criticism is correct, as it deals with the fundamental contradiction between culture and the individual mentioned above. However, the positions of the critics and those of the criticized can be brought closer together in the discussion on the nature of knowledge conveyed through education.

Criticism of free education from an ethical standpoint is of a different

character. Does the refusal to govern a child mean a refusal to take care of it? What kind of adult shall we get, a free individual or a barbarian? 'Isn't abolition of compulsion merely a substitution of one kind of compulsion for another one, and a stronger one, if freedom is understood as an individual's originality but not as tyranny of action?' (Gessen, 1922). We don't think this criticism is connected with different concepts of knowledge or democracy, but with different approaches to the child and childhood. In what way do such approaches disagree with Dewey if they share his understanding of the role of school in the upbringing of a citizen in a democratic society? Arguments that there is no systematic knowledge, or that pupils of free schools have problems with social adaptation, are arguments about the consequences. In fact, the roots of this disagreement are in the different approaches to a child. Are children members of a democratic community? Should they be treated according to democratic laws? Can a child as a free individual cooperate with adults? Are democratic values inherent? Maybe they develop gradually, and by age 7–10 a child is 'ready' to live in a 'democratic school'.

A simple and unambiguous answer to the above questions given by the followers of Rousseau and Tolstoy reflects their wish to find a pedagogical 'philosophical touchstone' valid for any situation. This is typical of modern Russian education. Freed from totalitarian ideology, it turned to another extreme — free school and anarchy in school education (Kerr, 1989). An attempt has been made to directly transfer certain positive facts of adult life into children's lives, although this results in the loss of the school's basic features as an institution where children grow up, change and mature. In fact, there is no one best way of educating. For school, as a social institution, suffers from inner antagonisms. This is the result of an artificial gap in the common natural life of children and adults. School became a place without freedom and independence for the child because of the initial unequal power relationship between teacher and students, and the limiting character of culture. The system of mass public-school education with its standard programmes and methods of teaching seems to stand against human nature. But the unlucky experience of 'more perfect' systems speaks for its stability. Highly relevant also is the stability of the goal of gradual socialization of the child.

Problems in school life and 'teaching' democracy should not be acknowledged only in an abstract way, but also in the practical sense of school types according to the age of students. The following questions arise:

- What democratic values can be assimilated in school life for different development stages, and to what degree?
- In what way does education influence the development of these values?

The dynamic and process-like character of the questions should be emphasized. A fundamental hypothesis is the assumption of a gradual change in a child's position and value mindset in the process of school education. Then the task of a pedagogue is to stimulate and enable this process to develop

through special forms of teaching suitable for each stage of development, using a new content of education dependent on age. This hypothesis was formulated by Russian psychologists Vygotsky (1978), Davydov (1988), and Elkonin (1972).

In my opinion, fundamental democratic values include individual freedom and responsibility for actions. The primary focus is on the dynamic development and implementation of these values. We are to understand what a 'child's freedom' means for every development stage. What mechanisms are responsible for children's enjoying their rights as responsible individuals? How do we ensure that they develop the values of their own freedom and those of life among free individuals?

The Crisis of Childhood and Problems of the Development of an Individual

Modern development psychology considers childhood an historical phenomenon. Anthropology and social anthropology point out to its dependence on a social-cultural situation. The structure, content and the duration of childhood today differ greatly from those in traditional society. According to Mead (1928), Kon (1988), Elkonin (1984) and Gulliver (1968), in traditional society children were quite an isolated group, with no rights similar to those of adults but a certain degree of freedom inside their own group. Moral problems, human relations and social-group interrelations were solved by adults. Obtaining the status of an adult was accompanied by a special procedure of initiation.

Initiation still remains the most stable phenomenon in human history. New periods in a child's life require special new transition procedures. The transition implies a greater emancipation of a child on the one hand, and the establishment of a deeper and more responsible relationship with adults on the other. This change in the child's position is due to two factors: differences in the way of life and activities of different age groups, and the child's rejection of childhood. Any transition from one stage of development to another is related to new potentials, new degrees of freedom and new responsibilities. According to Vygotsky, the rejection of childhood was related to the appearance of ideal form — the image of future adulthood. Growing up was determined by the presence of this image of the whole human age scale. Coming of age was stimulated by special procedures along the whole age scale.

A transition procedure (initiation) marked a new school situation in a child's development; it symbolically crowned the previous stage of life and opened a new one. An important factor in the process of growing up was the community of children of the same age with which a child could identify. At every new stage this community visibly changed. Its composition, age markers, myths, and rituals changed. The key element of every transformation of

a community of children of the same age was the selection accompanying each initiation. Up until the early twentieth century, selection and separation into groups in accordance with the level of maturity was done at the very beginning of schooling.

School, in a sense, was outside the process of growing up. Children came to school to learn because such was the 'ideal form' of their growing up. School reflected a 'natural' age hierarchy which developed in the family. From that came the idea that the older have more rights. It was essential that at every transition stage a selection was made with respect to the education to be received. Not all children were transferred to the next stage, and the procedure had all the characteristics of initiation. But in modern society the traditional structures and markers of coming of age have disappeared. There are a few examples of such changes (Mead, 1970). Radical changes in the family include:

- disappearance of families consisting of several generations; increase in the number of families with one parent, and in the number of working mothers;
- alienation of children from the labour of adults;
- changes in conditions of life which take place more quickly than the change of generations; and
- a long period of responsibility-free childhood (up to ages 10–12) for the majority of children.

With regard to the last point, we should emphasize that in recent decades schooling has become considerably longer. Within an 11–12 year period of schooling the social situation for a child remains unchanged. Students aren't forced to take responsibility for the choices they make. All this leads to an increase in the alienation of the generations. A number of Russian psychologists call this phenomenon 'crisis of childhood'.

One of the features of this crisis is infantilism — absence of the desire to mature, a negative attitude towards the adult world and traditional values. Research shows that most Russian senior-school students use negative, scornful terms to describe adults — parents and teachers included.

School and the Crisis of Childhood

How has the school in Russia responded to infantilism and the crisis of childhood? On the one hand, it gave children freedom, eliminating some limitations, competition and difficulties in learning, but on the other preserving the existing social unequality. Children received rights equal to adults' rights without taking additional responsibility. That is, the school ignored the problems of growing up. The 'ideal form' was not replaced by anything else, and

the child lost the chance to analyse the fundamental values of the adult community, including freedom and responsibility.

It is necessary to mention here the age structure of Russian schools. Unlike most developed countries, isolated elementary and intermediate schools were practically unknown in Russia. Up to the present, almost all schools in Russia have been comprehensive, i.e., children from 7 to 17 study under one roof, often with the same teachers. During all these years, teaching styles, methods of evaluation and the teacher–pupil relationships remain unchanged. Teaching techniques hardly altered — same types of problems to be solved, same types of exercises to be done. And almost all schools in Russia were of the same sort. It meant that there was no selection, no differentiation and no need to make any choices during at least the first eight years. For this reason, most pupils aged 11 to 13 take the maturing process as something natural, something which does not require any effort on their part: 'I'll grow bigger and become an adult.' Only political children's organizations, which involved all children of a particular age, worked with age groups — from 7 to 10 (Young Octobrists), from 11 to 13 (Young Pioneers), and from 14 (Komsomolists).

This crisis of childhood is acute for Russia as it is experiencing a transitional period now. Generational antagonism is destructive. In the eyes of Russian children, the lives of the older generation have proved to be a failure, as well as useless. In many Russian families, children have a better grasp of the new social and economic situation. This means that the experience of the older generations, culture that is transmitted through education, has lost its significance for children. In this context, freedom is understood as individualism and social responsibility as totalitarianism.

Under these circumstances schools are in a difficult situation: out-of-school mechanisms providing for the development of the adult's position have disappeared. Those few mechanisms of growing up, formerly provided by the school, have also disappeared. It is obvious that school has been alienated from the process of developing values of freedom and independence. This situation is most unfavourable for learning. The old authoritarian style has become ineffective, whereas a democratic style requires children to have elementary concepts of democracy. So the school is forced to reconsider ways of developing the values of freedom and responsibility.

Attempts were made to transfer these values through special democracy classes, or courses such as 'Individual and society'. These were ineffective, as they were presented by adults who didn't incorporate democratic values in their pedagogical activity. It is of interest to note that a lot of western experts claiming to be 'teachers of democracy' have visited Russian recently. They lecture on democratic norms and distribute printed matter but the effect (especially with children) is insignificant. And this is quite understandable, as the approach is authoritarian and alien to them. Another approach is to incorporate democratic forms of social organization into the children's community: councils, parliament, court and even police.

School Contributions to Growing Up

We propose that a necessary condition for developing democratic values in school is the mechanisms of growing up. A key question is a problem of 'ideal form', and the image of adults which could be visualized by children as their future. We consider it important that democratic values — freedom and responsibility — be reflected in that image. But this means that independence and freedom, on the one hand, and responsibility and self-limitation, on the other, must be recognized as the essence of growing up.

We suggest a schooling prototype which consists of three areas: one for junior-school children, one for teenagers and one for youths. Important conditions for organizing these areas are:

- the provision of specific forms and content of education for each development stage;
- the provision of change in the conditions and content of children's lives towards more responsibility and independence; and
- the organization of meetings of school children of various ages with adults to develop a concept of adulthood and a way to achieve it.

This prototype covers all spheres of school life from school management to sports. This prototype isn't a model, but rather an approach that will enable a certain school in a certain situation to find its own way (Froumin and Elkonin, 1993).

At present, many schools in Russia are using this approach, i.e., pedagogical mechanisms of growing up. There is a variety of new pedagogical forms and ideas. The characteristics of the developmental stages determine the various forms of teaching. Traditional classes are good for primary-school pupils, laboratory classes and seminars for teenagers. With age, the forms of teaching become freer and require more independent work. A vivid example is the system of evaluation. It changes from marks in elementary school to a system of credits later. Evaluation by marks is a rigid system but it allows a pupil to 'improve' . The system of credits allows a student to plan work, but it requires more responsibility and it is more difficult to correct a mistake.

Choice is essential. Traditionally, freedom of choice is supposed to be a value. But keeping the child in mind we must ask the question: Can he or she make a choice? Does he or she possess certain intellectual capacities for this? Often the choice of subjects and levels of education by school students is formal and ineffective. What is important is the individual's attitude to choice: whether making a choice is perceived as a necessary, significant and desirable act, or not. In view of the latter we find it is doubtful whether primary students could choose subjects for learning at their schooling level.

To overcome this, an approach based on age characteristics gives a range of choice, i.e., it extends the spheres and the possibilities of choice. The pedagogue's task is to develop the skills of analysis, reflection and decision-making

— all the factors that make people aware of the choice they make, and the feeling of responsibility for it. A new domain in which to make a choice, and the process of acquiring this domain, turn into an important procedure for coming of age, and can even constitute a sort of initiation.

In elementary school, specially organized classes help children to overcome their egocentrism (described by Piaget and Kohlberg), and to develop the ability to see different viewpoints. Of special interest is the dynamic of the 'political and legislative' spheres of school life. Primary-school children are involved in decision-making concerning school life: they discuss a working plan of the school, and the main documents regulating school life are explained to them, including those about the school–parent relationship.

Teenagers may participate in social campaigns, for example, elections to the school council. But they cannot be elected. They have a course on legislature and conflict situations. They study the documents which regulate their behaviour and participate in discussions. Youths may be elected to the school council and participate in decision-making directly. But in order to enter senior school they must sign a legal document — an agreement with the school principal. And this implies personal responsibility. They are also involved in working out normative school documents.

The most important element of the above approach is the organization of inter-generation meetings. These could involve direct demonstration, when elementary-school children visit high school, or they could be some sort of cooperation, such as school theatre. One of the most original ideas is to involve teenagers and youths in pedagogical work with small children, as consultants, circle leaders, teacher assistants. All those things help school children to identify their position in the age hierarchy, to get a better view of both the nearest and remote prospects, to form their own image of adulthood.

A special pedagogical task is the organization of the transition from one stage of development to another. This includes: analysis of past experience and the changes which take place; creation of an image of a future life and preparation for it; testing to indicate whether a pupil is ready to move up the age scale.

Conclusion

The experience of Russian schools described above is aimed at the restoration of out-of-school mechanisms of growing up. It is closely related to the characteristics of the social situation in modern Russia. However, some approaches are similar to those taken by western pedagogues. These approaches aim to solve the tension between striving to give a child adult rights and freedom, and the child's lack of opportunity to exercise them. This dynamic age approach to the forms and content of education is important for the formation of a new adult generation which will adopt the values of freedom and responsibility.

References

CHAPMAN, J.D. (1990) *School-Based Decision-Making and Management*, London, Falmer Press.

DAVYDOV, V.V. (1988) 'Problems of developmental teaching: The experience of theoretical and experimental physicological research', *Soviet Education*, 30, pp. 8–10.

DEWEY, J. (1966) *Democracy and Education*, New York, The Free Press.

ELKONIN, D.B. (1972) 'Toward the problem of stages of the mental development of the child', *Soviet Psychology*, 5, 3.

ELKONIN, D.B. (1984) *Psychology of Play*, New York, London.

FROUMIN, I.D. and ELKONIN, B.D. (1993) 'Space of education as a space of maturing', *Voprosy Psychologii*, 1, pp. 16–23.

GESSEN, S.I. (1922) *Foundations of Pedagogy*, Berlin, Slovo.

GULLIVER, P.H. (1968) 'Age differentation', *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, New York.

HALLAK, J. (1990) *Investigation of Non-formal Education*, UNESCO, Paris.

KERR, S.T. (1989) 'Reform in Soviet and American Education: Parallels and Contrasts', *Phi Delta Kappan*, 71, pp. 19–28.

KIRST, M. (1984) *Who Controls Our Schools?* New York.

KON, I.S. (1988) *Rbyonok i obshestvo* (Child and Society), Moscow, Nayka Press.

MEAD, M. (1928) *Coming of Age in Samoa*, New York, Morrow.

MEAD, M. (1970) *Culture and Commitment: A Study of the General Gap*, New York, Natural History Press.

SOVIET EDUCATION (1989) *Democratization of the individual* Report of the second meeting of experimental teachers, 31, 5, pp. 80–95.

VYGOTSKY, L.S. (1978) *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press.

WHITTAKER, C.H. (1985) *The Origins of Modern Russian Education*, De Kalb, Northern Illinois University Press.