

EDUCATION
FOR CITIZENSHIP IN
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Issued by
THE ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION
IN CITIZENSHIP



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FOREWORD

By The Rt. Hon. The Earl Baldwin of Bewdley, K.G.

WE hear on all sides that these are anxious days for the democracies of the world. That is obviously true, but let us at least try and be clear in our own minds as to what we should be anxious about.

We hear much of the "failure of democracy" in so many countries, and it seems to be assumed that it is only a matter of time before these words may be written of us. But democracy is of slow growth. To succeed, it must be a living plant, rising from a favourable soil and adapting itself to its environment in the long procession of the years. Or, to speak literally and not by figure of speech, it is a living spirit, and a spirit that manifests itself to each generation.

Here we believe it to be native to our race: in our blood and in our bones. We make no boast of that. We know how far—how very far—we are from the democracy of our dreams. But that democracy in soils unprepared to receive it should fail in its first attempt, or its second or third, should occasion no surprise, nor should such failure cause a single believer in British democracy to waver for an instant.

I must have spoken on this great subject till people were tired of hearing me. But I have never made a speech on democracy without pointing out how difficult a system it is to work, how ultimate failure

must result unless every man and woman in the country works to bring a great ideal into practice, and how this ideal can only be achieved by an educated democracy. The Association for Education in Citizenship exists, and is publishing this book for the purpose of co-ordinating efforts directed to this end.

What we have to be anxious about is not the failure of democracy in Italy, Germany and Russia; it is simply this. Will those who are ready enough to pay lip-service to democracy be equally ready to prepare themselves and to make sacrifices for it? Will they show that they have no less a faith in their beliefs than the Nazi, the Communist and the Fascist? If their answer is an unhesitating affirmative, democracy will survive, for the spirit of indestructible life will be in it.

FOREWORD

By Kenneth M. Lindsay, M.P.

EDUCATION for Citizenship would be a dangerous phrase if it led people to think that citizenship can be taught like algebra or carpentry. For citizenship, like hygiene or physical fitness, is not so much a subject as a way of life, and it is only gradually that its appeal is realised by the growing child. Any attempt to make good citizens by short cuts will succeed only in arousing a natural contrariness or in creating prigs. Good citizenship, like many other virtues, is not always superficially attractive. The gangster in the film is a shockingly bad citizen, but to immature minds he is more attractive than the sheriff. We shall be wise, therefore, to remind ourselves from time to time of the pitfalls that beset the enthusiast.

Of the importance of good citizenship none of us can be in any doubt. To implant in children a zeal to serve, to make them leave school with the desire to give back in service something of what they owe to their country and mankind—that surely is a paramount task, the value of which we are realising more than ever to-day.

But how to do it: how to plant the seed and foster the growth—there is the problem. For I am persuaded that no education is worth the name that does not preserve and develop the individual talents. Service is seen at its best when it consists in the free

devotion of individual tastes and capacities to the common good.

What, then, can we do in the Elementary School? I believe there is much for which we can already take credit. Little by little the school has been ceasing to be a mere teaching-shop; more and more it is becoming a miniature community. There, in the modern elementary school, the children will have learnt the lessons of communal life, of mutual help and co-operation, and of individual responsibility. In that way are laid the foundations of a spirit of service. When the time comes for them to leave, they will go out, I believe, with a true social sense, an appreciation of the joys of fellowship, and a desire to make each his own contribution to the welfare of the country.

That, to my mind, is the best and truest foundation. For the rest there are lessons to be learnt, in the course of the school curriculum, of the value of citizenship; on that question this book has much to say, and I cannot do better than let it speak for itself. Whatever views they may hold, I am sure that teachers and administrators, as well as the general public, will welcome this contribution to the most urgent problem challenging modern democracies.

PREFACE

THE Association for Education in Citizenship defines education for citizenship as: "Training in the moral qualities necessary for the citizens of a democracy, the encouragement of clear thinking in everyday affairs, and the acquisition of a knowledge of the modern world". In this book consideration is given to some of the many ways in which these aims can be carried out for children under fifteen. The same task with regard to older children was undertaken in the book on "Education for Citizenship in Secondary Schools", published by the Association in 1935. For the most part this book is concerned with the Senior and Central School, as it is recognised that for children under eleven the foundations of good citizenship can best be laid through a good general education alone.

Lively differences of opinion exist among educationists as to how the necessary training, both moral and intellectual, for democratic citizenship can be carried out for older children through the classroom and through corporate activities. In many schools valuable experience has been gained. This book has been mainly written by those who, whether as teachers or administrators, have themselves been concerned with such efforts. The Appendix consists of schemes which are being, or have been, put into practice. The difficulties which those concerned with education for citizenship in school are liable to

find are here faced, and solutions are suggested to the main problems.

Our indebtedness to the many contributors to this book is great. The book has been compiled under the supervision of an editorial committee. Although the individual chapters have nearly all been considered and approved by the committee, this does not carry with it the endorsement of all the opinions and suggestions they contain. Each author is directly responsible for his own.

We shall be most grateful if those who read this book will tell us of any work of the kind they may be carrying out in their schools.

E. D. SIMON.

EVA M. HUBBACK.

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I. THE AIMS AND THEORY OF EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP

I

THE AIMS OF EDUCATION FOR CITIZENSHIP

By A. Leslie Hutchinson, M.A.

The Challenge.

THE phrase "Education for Citizenship" has received sharp criticism from those who believe that to speak of education in terms of limited aims is to lower the whole spirit of English education. Such thinkers proclaim that education is a "whole"; that if it means anything it must imply the education of body, mind and spirit, or, as Mr. M. L. Jacks has put it, "Education deals with the whole man," and not with man as thinker, technician, worker or citizen. Education, like peace, is indivisible, and to attempt to divide it into parts is courting disaster; for the whole is more than the sum of its parts, just as a man is more than the sum of the chemical components of his body. The danger of division is therefore the danger of exaggerating the importance of one aspect of the whole, and this cannot easily be avoided, because in the process of division the glory of the whole is irretrievably lost. The history of our education, it is argued, favours this view; for in the days of payment by results, which were primarily measured by proficiency in reading, writing and

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arithmetic, the true spirit of education was lost by concentrating on mechanical efficiency in so-called fundamentals.

Those who hold this view point out the dangers, but they do not bar the door to thinking about education for citizenship. There is, indeed, an urgency about such thought which is imperative; for citizenship is but man's responsibility to society, and everywhere to-day old loyalties are giving place to new and the organisation of society is changing with kaleidoscopic rapidity. In fact it is this element of change which is the big new factor in the modern world. To the majority of our forefathers change was practically unknown, and, when it came, was generally to be feared. The village society was much the same at a man's death as at his birth; his duty was not to invent new ways, but to conserve the age-long traditions of craftsmanship, of tillage and of social and religious organisation, of his fathers. An innovator was a social outlaw, for he endangered the stability of society; only a fool craved for something new. To-day this stability has disappeared. A thirst for change is universal and is stimulated by every device of industry and science. Advertisements, films, the press, shop windows, modern transport, each to a greater or smaller degree stimulates the thirst for discovery, invention, or just for something new, from a breakfast food to a form of government; the populace think life dull unless a new pleasure or sensation is near to hand. Education is therefore concerned with the whole man in a changing world, and it is the changing world which is the province of education for citizenship. Are we

or are we not fitting our children to live wisely in an ever-changing society? That is the challenge, and it deserves to be answered with conviction and force.

Of all the changes in the modern world, two are of outstanding importance. The first is the changed attitude to religion, the second the changed attitude to government. With the first this book is not primarily concerned, although it should be noted in passing that, in so far as religion concerns social ethics, or, to use the Christian formula, one's duty to one's neighbour, it is a matter which lies at the root of all social action. Good citizenship depends on the growth of a strongly developed social conscience. A man may be a fine worker, a devoted parent, an able musician or athlete, and yet also a bad citizen, who knows nothing and cares nothing about the needs and claims of the society in which he lives.

It is assumed throughout this book that one of the principal aims of religious education is to foster this growth of social conscience, and an attempt will be made to show the various ways by which education for citizenship also helps to achieve this end. The central problem of citizenship is, however, the changed attitude to government. This change has two aspects. First, whereas in the past government has been considered the preserve of a few, it is now nearly universally recognised as being the responsibility of everyone; and secondly, for the first time since the Renaissance, rival political philosophies vie with one another to capture the idealism of civilised communities. The first aspect means that it is necessary for every member of a community to be conscious

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of his responsibility and to possess sufficient understanding to be able to exercise it with wisdom. The second, that every member must understand the spiritual and social values on which his society is based.

Education for citizenship is therefore to-day a universal need, not the privilege of a minority. It must be an education which is suited to a world of change, it must awake in each child the sense of his responsibility for the government and welfare of his community, it must equip each child with sufficient knowledge and reasoning power to be able to exercise this responsibility, and, finally, it must be the means by which the philosophy on which the government of each community is based is handed down from one generation to another. As far as elementary schools are concerned, it must do all this before the child is fifteen, and for children of widely varying intelligence and upbringing. The traditional methods of inculcating social responsibility in secondary schools, methods which have been based on the education of a minority to whom responsibility for government has appeared to be almost a birthright, and who are largely of selected intelligence, need to be adapted to the elementary schools if success is to be achieved in this new task; and new methods for all types of schools need to be worked out.

The urgency of this task arises from the challenge that the post-war world has made to the bases on which our form of government—democracy—rests. No one at the close of Queen Victoria's reign questioned the view that democracy was the final form of government for civilised states. There were,

it is true, profound differences of opinion over the policies which should be adopted on social, economic, and international aims, but it was tactily assumed that every policy lay within the general framework of democratic government. So long as this was the case, education for citizenship was not a live issue, for it was generally thought that to give a good general education and to train a child to become an active member of a school community were sufficient to enable him to become a good citizen. The democratic machine lay to his hand, to right his ills and to preserve his rights; that there was a danger that this machine should fail was unlikely, that it should be taken from him was inconceivable. But it is just these two things which have come to pass. Under the strain of the economic difficulties of the post-war world, democracy in many countries has shown signs of breaking, and in some countries, where its advent had been heralded as one of the few great achievements of the Peace, it has collapsed, to be replaced by dictatorships which, in their appeal to the idealism of youth, scorn all that democrats hold sacred. It is this challenge which makes education for citizenship so urgent. If democracy really is the mark of civilisation, if the philosophy which lies behind the democratic State is of ultimate value, then the growing citizen must not rest content with taking these things for granted, but must be taught to realise their value and to cherish their preservation in the face of every challenge. It is necessary to understand the appeal both of democracy and of dictatorships before the form to be taken by education for citizenship can be determined.