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DEMOCRACY, UTOPIA, EDUCATION[1]

The power of religion
depends, in the last resort,
on the credibility of the banners
it puts in the hands of men
as they stand before death
Peter L. Berger

A utopian society without
criminals cannot be achieved,
but only by striving for an
unattainable utopia can
one achieve anything
Piotr Sztompka

INTRODUCTION

In April 1831, Alexis de Tocqueville, a twenty-six-year-old aristocrat embarked on a voyage to the United States on a mission entrusted to him by Louis-Filip, the French king in charge of the government of the July monarchy. Tocqueville was to investigate US prisons. His friend Gustave de Beaumont, also designated for this task, accompanied him both during the ship's voyage and during the several months of wandering around America. On the spot, Tocqueville's attention was

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absorbed not so much by the US prison system as by the whole way of organizing social life, in which he saw the direction of evolution of the modern world. On his return to France, in addition to his report *Du système pénitentiare aux Etats-Unis, et de son application en France*, he published two volumes of an equally comprehensive dissertation on Democracy in America, which will make him famous as one of the most insightful researchers in Western societies. In the *Introduction* to the first volume, published in 1835, he expresses with undisguised passion the feelings that accompany him in creating his narratives and analyses. In a prophetic tone, the philosopher and future politician confesses: "The whole book which is here offered to the public has been written under the impression of a kind of religious dread produced in the author's mind by the contemplation of so irresistible a revolution, which has advanced for centuries in spite of such amazing obstacles, and which is still proceeding in the midst of the ruins it has made"[2]. What Tocqueville means here is the progress of equality and the spread of democracy. As he accounts for his interest in the situation in the United States:

> I have acknowledged this revolution as a fact already accomplished or on the eve of its accomplishment; and I have selected the nation, from amongst those which have undergone it, in which its development has been the most peaceful and the most complete, in order to discern its natural consequences, and, if it be possible, to distinguish the means by which it may be rendered profitable[3].

The enthusiasm of the descriptions and images of the first volume can be compared with the passion with which in chapter two of *A truly golden little book, no less beneficial than entertaining, of a republic's best state and of the new island Utopia* Raphael Hythlodaeus shared with his Thomas More the organisation of its residents' lives. Their country was also the work of the newcomers and the incarnation of ideas as well as the result of violence against the natives, which was mentioned by the interlocutor of the Renaissance thinker. Tocqueville excitedly develops the first element of this parallel:

[2] A. de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Hazleton 2002, p. 16. In the Foreword to the twelfth edition, which appeared after the fall of the July monarchy in 1848, Tocqueville in a way repeats his earlier declaration: "This book was written fifteen years ago under the influence of one thought: the imminent, inevitable and universal advent of democracy".

[3] Ibidem, p. 23–24. See M. Zetterbaum, "Alexis de Tocqueville", [in:] *History of Political Philosophy*, ed. L. Strauss, J. Cropsey, Chicago and London 1987, p. 761–783.

> The emigrants who fixed themselves on the shores of America in the beginning of the seventeenth century severed the democratic principle from all the principles which repressed it in the old communities of Europe, and transplanted it unalloyed to the New World. It has there been allowed to spread in perfect freedom, and to put forth its consequences in the laws by influencing the manners of the country[4].

Both travellers, having traversed the ocean and having scrutinised with their foreigners' eyes American laws, customs, beliefs, upbringing, economic life, etc., bring in a model of a political system written down in full detail in images of everyday life. It is true that the organization of Utopian life from Hythlodaeus' story is fictional, as is the figure of the traveller himself. However, with respect to the United States as accounted for by Tocqueville, one can say that the country was subjected to insightful, factual research and sober analysis. Still, the United States is idealised. In other words, both overseas countries in their book versions resemble what their contemporary readers knew, but are more efficiently and sensibly arranged. In both cases, they provide the imagination with a pretext to compare the imaginary visions to the current condition of indigenous political communities and to create a vision of a possible future. In the *Introduction* to the first volume, the young aristocrat gives vent to this dream of sorts:

> I can conceive a society in which all men would profess an equal attachment and respect for the laws of which they are the common authors; in which the authority of the State would be respected as necessary, though not as divine; and the loyalty of the subject to its chief magistrate would not be a passion, but a quiet and rational persuasion. Every individual being in the possession of rights which he is sure to retain, a kind of manly reliance and reciprocal courtesy would arise between all classes, alike removed from pride and meanness. The people, well acquainted with its true interests, would allow that in order to profit by the advantages of society it is necessary to satisfy its demands. In this state of things the voluntary association of the citizens might supply the individual exertions of the nobles, and the community would be alike protected from anarchy and from oppression [...] If there be less splendour than in the halls of an aristocracy, the contrast of misery will be less frequent also; the pleasures of enjoyment may be less excessive, but those of comfort will be more general; the sciences may be less perfectly cultivated, but ignorance will be less common; the impetuosity of the feelings will be repressed, and the habits of the nation softened; there will be more vices and fewer crimes[5].

[4] A. de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, op. cit., p. 23.
[5] Ibidem, p. 19.

The image of what Tocqueville believed to be a perfect social order and exemplary interpersonal relations, a mature form of crystallization of collective hopes, growing out of dissatisfaction with the present situation and which can function as a model for the future, is not devoid of reflection on the conditions and ways in which it can become a reality. In the first book of *Utopia*, More – the interlocutor of Hythlodeus – considers in the context of criticism of current social relations, the possible ways of reform and at the same time does not hide his scepticism:

> Though it must be confessed that he is both a very learned man and a person who has obtained a great knowledge of the world, I cannot perfectly agree to everything he has related. However, there are many things in the commonwealth of Utopia that I rather wish, than hope, to see followed in our governments[6].

Similarly, the French aristocrat in the Introduction of his book puts forth a path of the right and proper conduct of the local government:

> The first duty which is at this time imposed upon those who direct our affairs is to educate the democracy; to warm its faith, if that be possible; to purify its morals; to direct its energies; to substitute a knowledge of business for its inexperience, and an acquaintance with its true interests for its blind propensities; to adapt its government to time and place, and to modify it in compliance with the occurrences and the actors of the age[7].

The image of a decent society that grew out of Tocqueville's business trip thus reveals a clear link between the utopia of democracy and education. The accumulated excess of expectations that Tocqueville confronts and becomes accustomed to, introduces into the hopes of an era understood by us from the perspective of a distant and unfamiliar history, which knows no repetitions. Nevertheless, the events of the July Revolution and the predictions of the young philosopher bring to mind the situation of the Polish political transformation of the 1990s, along with its horizon of expectations towards democracy, education and upbringing, in which the United States was an important point of reference. In both cases, the utopia was created by the image of a model of an order which had already been embodied and achieved.

[6] T. More, *Utopia*, Stilwell 2005, p. 88.
[7] A. de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, op. cit., p. 16-17.

ON TWO NOTIONS OF UTOPIA

Utopia as a literary genre, frequently practiced by the intellectual elites of Europe since the publication in 1516 of More's A *truly golden little book, no less beneficial than entertaining, of a republic's best state and of the new island Utopia* through to the 20th century, does not seem to produce too many images of sufficiently perfect societies with a democratic system. The link between the two phenomena is therefore not obvious. But the notions of utopia and democracy are not clear and indisputable, either.

In common understanding, the first of them is taken as a synonym for a fantasy, caprice or delusion, which comes close to one of the possible etymologies of the word, according to which the name of the island in More's work refers to a non-existent place (Greek *ou-tópos*). On the other hand, an essential distinguishing feature of the literary genre should be the depiction of fictitious societies developed by their authors in order to imagine the perfect organisation of their entire lives. In this sense, utopia is a peculiar continuation of the main issue of classical political philosophy, developed since the times of Plato and Aristotle, i.e. the shape and conditions of the ideal of the political system. Within this genre, as well as within the tradition of political philosophy, the reported subject of education took a form similar to one of three ideal types: the ideal of upbringing as a factor enabling social reproduction of expected patterns of behaviour and models of social organization, radically innovative pedagogies and elements of education organisation and the principles of education of the future, of revolutionary impact on society. Aristotle's concept from his Politics of upbringing conducive to the needs and aspirations of the citizen of the polis to optimally serve the proper good of the political community, Salomon's House in Bensalem from Francis Bacon's *The New Atlantis*: a university focused on learning through experience and technical progress, or finally a vision of folk education serving the goals of all humanity from Janusz Korczak's Szkoła życia (*School of Life*)[8] are exemplary cases of implementation of each of the above types, although we must bear in mind that in many texts they successfully co-exist.

[8] See Aristotle, *The Politics*, books VII, VIII, London 1992, p. 359-450; F. Bacon, *The New Atlantis*, New York, 1914; J. Korczak, "Szkoła życia", [in:] J. Korczak, *Pisma wybrane*, vol. III, Warszawa 1985, p. 63-199.

Since utopian thinking goes far beyond the convention and form of the literary genre developed since the Renaissance, the term itself is also used more widely to accentuate the link between utopia and political practice[9]. According to Jerzy Szacki, "It is born when a gap appears in human consciousness between the world that exists and the world that is conceivable"[10]. According to the findings of this scholar, in order for the phenomenon to attain its idea, in which the second etymologically-based reading is enclosed i.e. the land of happiness (Greek *eu-tópos*), the split must be radical:

> There is a difference between a utopist and a reformer, i.e. someone who improves the existing world, instead of creating a new one in its place. [...] The utopist does not need to know what to do. His affair is to question the old world in the name of the vision of another one. The reformer accepts the old world as the basis of the new world, seeing in it only another phase or another form of the same order. In the depths of his soul, the latter may sometimes cherish a utopia, but he does not identify with it. His element is compromise, which the utopist flatly rejects[11].

Therefore, utopian thinking is predicated on a strong tension based on the contrast between what Irena Pańków terms the critical and destructive moment and the positive and constructive one[12].

This does not mean, of course, that utopia is a kind of action plan with a predetermined effect, but that it plays an important role in the formation of a social object of aspiration. According to Bronisław Baczko, in their various forms,

> Imaginary visions of a New Society become one of the places, sometimes the most important, of the influence of social imagination. They are a sphere in which social dreams are collected, developed and produced. Thus, these imaginary visions constitute a kind of arrangement of variable effectiveness, enabling the creation of a uniform collective scheme of both interpretation and integration of the field of *social experience* and the *horizon of expectations*, as well as objections, fears and hopes that surround this field[13].

[9] See R. Włodarczyk, "Utopia w perspektywie pedagogiki współczesnej", [in:] *Utopia a edukacja*, ed. J. Gromysz, R. Włodarczyk, Wrocław 2016, p. 66-70, http://www.bibliotekacyfrowa.pl/publication/81184, 29.06.2016.

[10] J. Szacki, *Spotkania z utopią*, Warszawa 1980, p. 28.

[11] Ibidem, p. 31-32.

[12] See I. Pańków, *Filozofia utopii*, Warszawa 1990, p. 171-174.

[13] B. Baczko, "Utopia", [in:] B. Baczko, *Wyobrażenia społeczne. Szkice o nadziei i pamięci zbiorowej*, Warszawa 1994, p. 91.

After Karl Mannheim we can say that utopia is a component of a political conflict, escalating towards the transformation of reality, and its participants can be described as those who, reacting to oppression and orienting themselves to factors that are currently outside this reality, in experiencing, thinking and acting manifest an interest in abolishing and rebuilding the existing social order, perceive at the same time mainly those elements of the situation that they wish to negate. They have to confront those who, in an effort to maintain an arrangement that is beneficial to them, mostly emphasize the links of the vision of the location and circumstances that they wish to preserve in the future[14]. In this way utopias are analytically separate part of political ideologies which, as Andrew Heywood notes, "offer an account of the existing order" and "explain how political change can and should be brought about" and first and foremost "advance a model of a desired future, a vision of the 'good society'"[15]. Therefore, the alternative communities or political and pedagogical experiments follow reactions inspired by utopia; this applies to both whole states[16] and bigger and smaller communities, all kinds of religious orders, associations and all kinds of islands of educational resistance[17]. Ernst Bloch offers a development of this category towards its broad understanding. The author sees "utopia as a characteristic feature of the human being"[18], who is, according to the philosopher, "*per se ipsum* an anticipatory being", marked with insufficiency whose "working will of meeting needs becomes objectivised through planning". In other words, utopia is for human beings a way of "a sensible approach to the future, a rationalization of the content of hope"[19].

[14] See K. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia. An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, New York 1954, p. 173-190. It should be noted that Mannheim, unlike in the further parts of this article, presents the relation between ideology and utopia, which is justified in his theory of political conflict (see ibidem, p. 49-96), but this is not a subject of our interest here.

[15] A. Heywood, "Introduction: Understanding Ideology", [in:] A. Heywood, *Political Ideologies. An Introduction*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, p. 10-11.

[16] J. Szacki, *Spotkania z utopią*, op. cit., 136-151; B. Baczko, "Utopia", op. cit., 135-157; Z. Bauman, *Socialism. The Active Utopia*, London 2009.

[17] On the current examples of societies organised around utopian visiions: see H. Cyrzan, *O potrzebie utopii. Z dziejów utopii stosowanej XX wieku*, Toruń 2004; T. Jones, *Utopian Dreams. In Search of a Good Life*, London 2007; W. Okoń, *Dziesięć szkół alternatywnych*, Warszawa 1999.

[18] E. Bloch, "Rzeczywistość antycypowana, czyli jak przebiega i co osiąga myślenie utopijne", *Studia Filozoficzne* 1982, No. 7-8, p. 52.

[19] Ibidem, p. 49, 50, 52.

ON THE NOTIONS OF DEMOCRACY AND THEIR PEDAGOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The image of Tocqueville's decent society, created after his return from a business trip, placed in the above reconstructed framework of political thinking about utopia, prompts us to recognize the notion of democracy, and then to outline more clearly the role of upbringing in this context. It cannot be denied that all three categories are far from being unambiguous. For the purposes of this article, while escaping from simplifications that go too far, it is enough for us to dispose of their deep and critical understanding.

PASSIONS OF ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE AND JOHN DEWEY – DEMOCRACY AS A WAY OF BEING AND ACTING IN ASSOCIATIONS

The concept used by Tocqueville is the result of readings, interviews, many months of observations and reflections. At the centre of the phenomenon there is the equality of opportunity provided to citizens. He then discusses how it is used by them in everyday life and what the potential risks might be. According to Martin Zetterbaum, who comments on the researcher's achievements:

> Tocqueville's purpose in the *Democracy* is to show men how they might be both equal and free, and by not equating democracy with any institutional form associated with it – government of the people, representative government, separation of power – Tocqueville underscores his fear that the real driving force of democracy, the passion of equality, is compatible with tyranny as well as with liberty. Tyranny may very well coexist with what appear to be democratic institutions. Unlike some of his contemporaries who believed that the gradual development of equality went hand in hand with final destruction of the possibility of tyranny on earth, Tocqueville understood that the democratic principle was prone, if left untutored, to a despotism never before experienced[20].

This worrying consequence is related to the observation of a young aristocrat that a characteristic feature of this type of society is atomisation, loosening social ties. Equality makes everyone become the centre of the private world with his or her aspirations for prosperity, concern for individual success and the tendency to plunge into mediocrity. At the same time, this is accompanied by the softening of morals

[20] M. Zetterbaum, "Alexis de Tocqueville", op. cit., p. 763.

and the development of a spirit of compassion and empathy. Still, according to Zetterbaum: "The gentleness, softening of manners, and air of humanity which characterize democratic societies are apt to be felt most strongly within the family unit rather than between citizens"[21]. Tocqueville demonstrates that "Democracy loosens social ties, but it draws the ties of nature more tight; it brings kindred more closely together, whilst it places the various members of the community more widely apart"[22]. Freedom can be threatened because equality and individualism – by pushing people towards the satisfaction of material needs to which access has been opened to them – open humans up to competition, which prevents them from reaching the expected level of satisfaction comparable to the satisfaction of others. The growing frustration about the failure to achieve wealth, giving rise to envy and attrition of mutual respect, is offset by passing the burden of ensuring comfort and prosperity to the authorities. The authorities, in turn, who developing their caring powers, accept a kind of new oppression and a new pedagogy. At the end of the second volume, published in 1840, Tocqueville evocatively writes:

> The supreme power then extends its arm over the whole community. It covers the surface of society with a net-work of small complicated rules, minute and uniform, through which the most original minds and the most energetic characters cannot penetrate, to rise above the crowd. The will of man is not shattered, but softened, bent, and guided: men are seldom forced by it to act, but they are constantly restrained from acting: such a power does not destroy, but it prevents existence; it does not tyrannize, but it compresses, enervates, extinguishes, and stupefies a people, till each nation is reduced to be nothing better than a flock of timid and industrious animals, of which the government is the shepherd[23].

According to Tocqueville, citizens of a democratic society, in the name of maintaining equality, are willing to give in to this kind of pedagogy and sacrifice their freedom. Their persecutors are becoming stronger and stronger, while they themselves cannot find any consolation.

In the face of these possible dangers arising from the acceptance of the administrative despotism of the caring authorities, which oscillate towards centralisation, as well as the tyranny of the majority over the opinions, intelligence and wealth of those less numerous, the French philosopher notes that the democratic society has

[21] Ibidem, p. 768.
[22] A. de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, op. cit., p. 660.
[23] Ibidem, p. 771.

recourse to certain remedies, which include "local self-government, the separation of church and state, a free press, indirect elections, an independent judiciary, and the encouragement of associations of all descriptions"[24]. They act in different ways but are linked by the fact that they awaken in citizens the awareness of the needs of others, mutual assistance, create conditions in which it is possible to exceed their own interest, help to counteract tyranny and overcome mediocrity. In other words, "men must be taught that out of an enlightened regard for themselves they need constantly assist one another and sacrifice some portion of their time and wealth to the welfare of the state or community", since, as Zetterbaum writes about Tocqueville's approach, "The problem of democracy is to re-create a sense of public morality on the basis of equality and individualism"[25].

John Dewey read the issue of democracy in the first decades of the 20th century along similar lines, seeing it primarily as a way of being a citizen, who is to be provided security by legal and political frameworks[26]. Starting from the classical pluralistic theory and taking the concept of comprehensive growth as a fundamental value and measure as a progressive realisation of human capabilities, he saw the role of the state in improving the operation and regulation of relations in situations of conflicting goals or mutual conflict between various communities: families, neighbourhoods, schools, associations, clubs, companies, enterprises, thanks to which the development expected by the state is achieved by people in general. Moreover, in the case of possessive, criminal and destructive communities which constrain growth as well as inefficient communities, the state should retain the prerogative to evaluate these associations and intervene[27]. In other words, as the critic of Stalinism observes:

> An undesirable society, in other words, is one which internally and externally sets up barriers to free intercourse and communication of experience. A society which makes provision for participation in its good of all its members on equal terms and which secures flexible readjustment

[24] M. Zetterbaum, "Alexis de Tocqueville", op. cit., p. 773. See also: L. Koczanowicz, R. Włodarczyk, *Współczesna filozofia społeczna. Rozmowy i eseje o społeczeństwie obywatelskim i etyce demokracji*, Sopot 2009; *Ani książę, ani kupiec: obywatel. Idea społeczeństwa obywatelskiego w myśli współczesnej*, selection J. Szacki, Kraków 1997.

[25] M. Zetterbaum, "Alexis de Tocqueville", op. cit., p. 776, 778.

[26] See R. Horwitz, "John Dewey", [in:] *History of Political Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 851-869.

[27] See J. Dewey, "The Democratic Conception in Education", [in:] J. Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, Hazleton 2001, p. 85-104.

> of its institutions through interaction of the different forms of associated life is in so far democratic. Such a society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and control, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder[28].

It is true that the state and shape of democracy depend on the level of education and involvement of citizens, but according to the concept of growth, every generation can and should create better conditions for its functioning than before. Therefore, Robert Horwitz notes that

> Uncooperative men would threaten the democracy of Dewey's dream, as would men inclined to grasp coldly for wealth or power and men who do not wish to grow in every direction. Therefore, in their impressionable years children should be conditioned by life in their classrooms to strive without "competing", to study and work cooperatively in groups, and to acquire the expansive habits of self-expression that will fit them for life in ever more perfect democracy[29].

The understanding of democracy, both by Tocqueville and Dewey, emphasizes the special way of life of citizens, shaped and strengthened by participation in associations - families, unions, religious groups, schools, and companies. It seems that in particular their properly organized voluntary forms, as highlighted especially by the 20th century supporters of participatory or association democracy[30], have a major educational potential. They teach cooperation, collective opposition to the will of the majority, the needs of others, the sense and ways of exceeding one's own interest, overcoming mediocrity, developing non-material interests, devoting a part of one's wealth and free time to public matters, understanding and protecting equality and freedom. They moreover develop a habit of mutual assistance, which, according to Tocqueville, is particularly needed by citizens in a democracy. At the same time, he sees the educational role of the state in the fact that by counteracting the atomisation characteristic of this system, it is to create favourable conditions for the restoration of social ties. Both the state acting through its institutions and public associations of civil society can build on and deepen the sensitivity, benevolent customs, humanitarianism and trust generally developed by families. This is because there is a need for educational activities which will help to reduce

[28] Ibidem, p. 104.
[29] R. Horwitz, "John Dewey", op. cit., p. 866.
[30] See D. Held, *Models of Democracy*, Cambridge 2008, p. 209-216; M. Saward, *Democracy*, London 2003, p. 86-96, 163-166.

the focus on satisfying one's own material needs, competition and individualism, as indicated in this concept, and to strengthen cooperation, respect and tolerance towards differences. However, according to Tocqueville, the administration of the state as a provider of services and assistance to citizens and the very development of citizens' demands create a danger of a kind of tyranny, which should also be counteracted. Essentially, a number of Dewey's works, especially his book *Democracy and Education*, published in 1916, can be treated as his vision of the role of education in this type of political system. The American philosopher focuses on what is conducive to individual and collective development of experience, its communication and ability to cooperate. In other words, educational activities are to support the creation of conditions for the emergence of a democracy that is yet to come.

THE CORSET OF JOSEF SCHUMPETER – DEMOCRACY AS A PROCEDURE FOR THE EMERGENCE OF ELITES AND A CULTURE OF POLITICAL STRUGGLE

In 1942, Josef Schumpeter, an eminent Austrian economist who had for over a decade been in the United States, far from the totalitarianisms ravaging Europe, published his influential text *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*. He preceded his findings on the understanding of democracy in the fourth part of the book with a one-sentence description and extensive commentary on the eighteenth-century model of the political system, rooted, as he suggested, in the theoretical foundations of utilitarian rationalism, which, according to his critics, is an awkward mixture of approaches of philosophers really important for the development ideas, such as Jeremy Bentham, James Mill and Jean Jacques Rousseau[31]. Schumpeter observes that the "democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realizes the common good by making the people itself decide issues through the election of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will"[32]. The economist considers the model to be inadequate for the current conditions; moreover, he expresses doubts about the distribution in a given population of the competence to define the

[31] See D. Held, *Models of Democracy*, op. cit., p. 146-157; M. Saward, *Democracy*, op. cit., p. 56-61, 77-86. See also: A. Heywood, "Democracy and Legitimacy", [in:] A. Heywood, *Politics*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, p. 80-107.

[32] J. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, New York 2008, p. 250.

common good, to translate it into problems resulting from everyday life and current politics, and about the relationship between compromises, decisions, opinions, reactions and intentions of voters and the "will of the people"[33]. Still, he believes that the rationality of decisions concerning political matters is debatable, as he finds these matters often outside the immediate field of observation of the voters, their professional or everyday life, where they gain hands-on knowledge, a guarantee of their independence and intellectual prowess. Furthermore, as David Held notes when commenting on the concept of the Austrian economist living in the US,

> First, irrational prejudice and impulse govern a great deal of what passes for the average citizen's contribution to politics, second, the 'public mind' becomes highly vulnerable to groups with 'an axe to grind': self-seeking politicians, business interests or 'idealists of one kind or another'[34].

Schumpeter reverses the order of the "classical theory" he has indicated, making " the deciding of issues by the electorate secondary to the election of the men who are to do the deciding". As a consequence, he puts forth a definition differing from the "classic" one presented earlier: "the democratic method is that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote"[35]. The concept of competition for leadership and the cyclical exchange of elites in elections, proposed by the Austrian economist, reminiscent of the competition for consumers between producers, is indicative, in his opinion, of the procedure that exists in every democracy. The criterion obtained on this basis is so clear that, in the opinion of its author, it makes it possible to effectively distinguish democratic governments. As Held points out,

[33] See ibidem, p. 250-256. On another occasion he writes: "the will of the majority is the will of the majority and not the will of 'the people'. The latter is a mosaic that the former completely fails to 'represent'" (ibidem, p. 272).

[34] D. Held, *Models of Democracy*, op. cit., p. 144.

[35] J. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, op. cit., p. 269. See A. Heywood, "Democracy and Legitimacy", op. cit., p. 101-103. In the assumptions adopted by Schumpeter, we can see the continuation of Max Weber's diagnosis of a modern representative democracy called by him a "plebiscitary leader democracy". According to Weber, it is mainly based on a competitive political struggle between parties that become bureaucratic and struggle for their qualified leaders to be mandated to exercise power (see M. Weber, "Politics as a Vocation", [in:] *From Max Weber. Essay in Sociology*, ed. H.H. Gerth, C.W. Mills, New York 1946, p. 77-128; D. Held, *Models of Democracy*, op. cit., p. 125-141

> Far from democracy being a form of life marked by the promise of equality and the best conditions for human development in a rich context of participation, the democratic citizens lot was, quite straightforwardly, the right periodically to choose and authorize governments to act on their behalf. Democracy could serve a variety of ends [...][36].

Recognising the dependence of his method on the personal freedom of voters, Schumpeter stresses the fragility of the link between politics and the ability of citizens to influence it.

> One could think that the voters both elect to an office and control. Since, however, electorates normally do not their political leaders in any way except by refusing to re-elect them or the parliamentary majorities that support them, our ideas concerning the control could be reduced in a manner shown in our definition[37].

The Austrian economist shifts the focus to the functioning of political elites, parliament, leadership, creating external and internal party policy, which includes e.g. the impact on the choices made by the electorate, awakening group acts of intent and their development. He is aware that the democratic method he indicated does not exclude "the cases that are strikingly analogous to the economic phenomena we label "unfair" or "fraudulent" competition or restraint of competition"[38].

Establishing a feature common to industrial democracies is not yet the "realism" of the concept that Schumpeter is striving for. He therefore points to four conditions which, in his opinion, allow democracy to flourish in social systems and, in principle, enable it to continue despite the consecutive successions of power and crises[39]. The Austrian émigré stresses the importance of creating a quality political stratum, which is a matter of feeling rather than measuring the extent to which the democratic process entails recruitment by means of selection[40]. Its existence and level, he claims, "it will also increase their fitness by endowing them with traditions that embody experience, with a professional code and with a common fund of views"[41]. At the same time, Schumpeter is aware that in a competitive environment, politicians must first and foremost take into account the principles of the

[36] D. Held, *Models of Democracy*, op. cit., p. 142.
[37] J. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, op. cit., p. 272.
[38] Ibidem, p. 271. "A party is a group whose members propose to act in concert in the competitive struggle for political power" (ibidem, p. 283).
[39] See ibidem, p. 289–296.
[40] See ibidem, p. 290–291.
[41] Ibidem, p. 291.

career, the interests of their own social stratum and the rules of political struggle in which they participate in order to win and defend the positions, while in the selection process, intellectual and character issues are not basic criteria. In other words, on the one hand, "a politician who is a good tactician can successfully withstand any number of administrative errors", but on the other hand, "It is not quite true that in the average case political success proves nothing for a man or that the politician is nothing but an amateur"[42].

The Austrian mentions as a second condition for the success of democracy is that "the effective range of political decision should not be extended too far"[43]. He points out that there are areas of state functioning and problems, such as autonomy of judges from political agendas, supervision of central banks, universities, which cannot be dispensed with without independent expert opinions, but which cannot be guaranteed in advance by law. "A rational treatment of it requires that legislation in this matter should be protected from both the fits of vindictiveness and the fits of sentimentality in which the laymen in the government and in the parliament are alternatingly prone to indulge"[44]. In matters of this kind, politicians should make decisions only formally, but this depends on the patterns of political culture.

Another condition for the success of democracy, in which the decisive factor is the difference in the degree, difficult to measure, is related to the administrative base. According to Schumpeter, it is important whether a democratic government in a modern industrial society can have at its disposal "the services of a well-trained bureaucracy of good standing and tradition, endowed with a strong sense of duty and a no less strong *esprit de corps*"[45]. What is more, "It is not enough that the bureaucracy should be efficient in current administration and competent to give advice. It must also be strong enough to guide and, if need be, to instruct the politicians who head the ministries"[46].

The last condition is "democratic self-control" of both the electorate and politicians, with the aim of limiting any kind of hasty reactions, disintegration of the division of labour between them, fierce attacks against opponents, disregard for opposing opinions and for the situation in the country. This condition reveals, more than any other, the

[42] Ibidem, p. 289.
[43] Ibidem, p. 291.
[44] Ibidem, p. 292.
[45] Ibidem, p. 293.
[46] Ibidem.

reversal of roles announced by Schumpeter, indicating the position of the "will of the people" (in which he doubts) vis-à-vis the success of democracy; this reveals as well the utopian nature of its model:

> But even the necessary minimum of democratic self-control – he notes – evidently requires a national character and national habits of a certain type which have not everywhere had the opportunity to evolve and which the democratic method itself cannot be relied on to produce [...] democratic government which will work to full advantage only if all the interests that matter are practically unanimous not only in their allegiance to the country but also in their allegiance to the structural principles of the existing society[47].

Translating the notion of the political system indicated by Schumpeter into educational issues, the forefront of the list seems to be occupied with the task of shaping a proper democratic culture and preparing three types of actors to participate in it in terms of their respective roles: electorate, professional administration and experts, as well as politicians embedded in the political parties. At the core of his concept are decision-making elites, which are only periodically influenced by the voters, and their selection. According to Schumpeter, however, it is not external pressure that is the main factor in increasing the competence of the political class, but its existence and relatively stable membership of individual activists, which enable them to learn through the exchange of experience and the acquisition of professional ethos and may promote intelligence and character among candidates for offices within individual parties. According to the Austrian economist, a test of the internal policy of a party, which shapes electoral lists, does not necessarily mean career advancement; it can create more demanding conditions for learning to make politics than the general public of the electorate. However, voters' understanding of their role and raising their political competence is an important goal of civic education. Above all, it is supposed to reduce as much as possible the submission to superstitions, impulses, demagogues and public sentiments. It can moreover foster the development of positive models and customs of political practice, especially important conditions, which, according to Schumpeter, are patriotism and fidelity to the ideals of democracy. On the other hand, as in the case of politicians, the particular value of experts and employees of public administration is their professionalism, ability to cooperate and influence

[47] Ibidem, p. 295-296.

the decision-makers. Preparation of competent personnel and experts requires access to specialist training, a system of personnel selection and implementation of professional ethos standards. The future of democratic systems - different from the fate of the Weimar Republic, as can be deduced - therefore, according to the Austrian emigrant, requires the creation, support and development in this type of modern nation state by means of education of a proper political culture and an appropriate political division of labour of their citizens.

ROBERT A. DAHL'S POLYARCHIES – DEMOCRACY AS A PROCESS AND THE INSTITUTIONS WHICH FOSTER IT

American political scientist Robert A. Dahl believes that the four most important historical sources which significantly contributed to the shaping of the contemporary practice of democratic states include e.g. the concepts of the idea and institutions of the classical Greek period, the tradition of the Republican Rome and Italian medieval and Renaissance city-states, then the modern idea and institution of the representational government, as well as the logic of political equality[48]. In his book *Democracy and its Critics*, published at the end of the Cold War, in which he collects his theoretical experiences accumulated since the 1950s, he highlights the nature of these sources and the two profound transformations that they underwent before being applied in the context of nation states. After the "unquestionable view that democracy must be representative", which greatly increased the distance between the demos and the government, and also brought with it a new and complicated system of political institutions, which we are only just beginning to understand[49], such as the division of powers described by John Locke and Montesquieu, for example, it is hard not to notice that the same term refers to phenomena very distant from each other. According to the American political scientist, the application of these ideas to large nation states requires their re-development.

Dahl focuses his attention, on the one hand, on indicating the criteria of the democratic process and, on the other hand, on the institutions necessary for its functioning. The model of decision-making

[48] See R.A. Dahl, *Democracy and its Critics*, New Haven 1989, p. 13-33. See also: D. Held, *Models of Democracy*, op. cit., p. 11-95.
[49] See R.A. Dahl, *Democracy and its Critics*, op. cit., p. 29.

in a democratic association or a state as proposed by Dahl assumes[50] that a prerequisite for effective participation in the process is that, firstly, all citizens should be able to participate effectively – expressing preferences for future decisions, influencing the setting of the agenda and making their voices heard. Secondly, while recognising the equality of all votes that will make up the outcome, at the settlement stage, every entitled citizen should be able to benefit without hindrance from this means of expression of preference. Thirdly, the criterion of enlightened understanding requires that each of the parties involved in the decision-making process must be able to obtain information about their subject matter and likely consequences within certain time limits. Fourthly, supervision of the tasks undertaken, control of the agenda requires that the way in which the agenda is set should be a right which belongs exclusively to the entire assembly of citizens. Fifthly, in connection with the temporary acquisition of full rights as a result of the requirements mentioned above, the criterion of adult inclusion is still necessary. Dahl recognises that the five criteria he sets out define precisely which procedure can be considered democratic:

> A political process that meets only the first two criteria, I have suggested, might be regarded as *procedurally democratic in a narrow sense*. In contrast, one that also meets the criterion of enlightened understanding can be regarded as *fully democratic with respect to an agenda and in relation to a demos*. At a still higher threshold, a process that in addition provides for final control of the agenda by its demos is *fully democratic in relation to its demos*. But only if the demos were inclusive enough to meet the fifth criterion could we describe the process of decisionmaking as *fully democratic*[51].

Like Schumpeter's theory, Dahl's apology of democracy also contains indications as to the conditions necessary for the organisation of the democratic process in large nation states. Introducing the term polyarchy, he distinguishes only those of modern countries where the institutions necessary for the democratic process function above a certain minimum threshold of efficiency. Yet, as he points out, they are the highest achievement of democracy from a practical, but not from a theoretical point of view[52]. According to him, they enable the exercise of the rights of a relatively large population, as well as opposing the highest officials and overturning them in the vote.

[50] See ibidem, p. 106-131; R.A. Dahl, *On Democracy*, New Haven 1998, p. 37-40.
[51] R.A. Dahl, *Democracy and its Critics*, op. cit., p. 131.
[52] See ibidem, p. 194.

Thus, "polyarchy is a political order distinguished by the presence of seven institutions, all of which must exist for a government to be classified as a polyarchy"[53]: elected officials – it is a constitutional institution entitled to exercise control over government decisions; free and fair elections during which representatives are elected and where "coercion is comparatively uncommon"; an inclusive suffrage, entitling virtually all adults to participate in them; the right of citizens to run for office; freedom of expression – an institution granting the right to air views on political subjects and criticise the system and the government without fearing punishment; alternative information – an institution granting access to alternative and independent news from legally protected sources; associational autonomy – to exercise one's rights. Pointing out that he means real rather than nominal rights, institutions and mechanisms, Dahl recognises the possibility of creating a ranking of the degree of their satisfaction in individual countries, which offers the above institutions the criteria for proving which of these countries is a polyarchy[54].

Furthermore, the US political scientist provides and discusses in his book five conditions that must be met by a polyarchy that is additionally stable[55]. According to the author, it becomes stable when leaders do not take advantage of the apparatus of coercion – the military and the police – to gain and retain power; there is a modern, dynamic pluralist society; potential conflicts between subcultures do not exceed a certain level of intensity; the political culture of the population, and in particular of the politically active strata, favours democracy and the institutions of the polyarchy; finally, external influences are negligible or, possibly, promote democracy[56].

Although the end of Dahl's work published in 1989 is dominated by the tone of prophecy, the spirit of utopia, as we have seen before, of a decent, sufficiently perfect society is also present in it. He states that the idea of a democratic process which he described in the book sets maximum requirements and may actually be beyond human capacity[57]. In various sections of the book one sees the reiterated motif of

[53] Ibidem, op. cit., p. 221. See also: R.A. Dahl, *On Democracy*, op. cit., p. 83-99 (the list of institutions in the later publication differs from that in Democracy and its Critics).
[54] See. R.A. Dahl, *Democracy and its Critics*, op. cit., p. 221-222.
[55] See ibidem, p. 232-264. See also: R.A. Dahl, *On Democracy*, op. cit., p. 145-159.
[56] See R.A. Dahl, *Democracy and its Critics*, op. cit., p. 314.
[57] See ibidem, p. 322.

opposing authoritarianism by democracy. Defending the moral superiority of the latter, Dahl observes that "Imperfect democracy may lead to failures yet perfect authoritarianism may result in a calamity", yet "At its best, only the democratic vision can offer the hope, which guardianship can never do, that by engaging in governing themselves, all people, and not merely a few, may learn to act as morally responsible human beings"[58]. In his book *On Democracy*, published 8 years later and summarising and extending the selected elements of the previous work, when responding to the question why we should support it, he indicates that it helps to avoid tyranny, the government of cruel and vicious autocrats, guarantees to citizens many fundamental rights, which are hard to come by in non-democratic systems, helps to further their fundamental interests, ensures a broader scope of individual freedom, moral independence, and development[59]. Furthermore, as he observes, modern states of representational democracy do not wage wars on one another and fare better than others economically.

The question of civic education in line with his theory and expectations is addressed by Dahl only in the concluding sections of *On Democracy*[60]. He makes the starting point one of its basic criteria, i.e. an enlightened understanding. For the sake of commitment and effective action, it requires citizens to be able to know what political decisions are important to them and what their consequences are. Thanks to the foundations acquired at school, the mass media, the information campaigns of their parties, associations and interest groups in which they are involved, and the gradual adoption of serious governmental decisions, the citizens of democratic countries, according to the American political scientist, have so far achieved a level of awareness that is generally appropriate to the political challenges. However, the increasing internationalisation, the increase in the number and complexity of public matters requiring knowledge beyond the pace at which the educational system assimilates it, and the development of means of communication, which increase the information resources, according to Dahl, require going beyond these typical solutions. He is convinced that "in the years to come these older institutions will need to be enhanced by new means for civic education, political participation,

[58] Ibidem, p. 79.
[59] See R.A. Dahl, *On Democracy*, op. cit., p. 44-61.
[60] See ibidem, p. 185-188.

information, and deliberation that draw creatively on the array of techniques and technologies available in the twenty-first century"[61]. Taking into account also the specific nature of Dahl's theory of democracy, civic education should focus on knowledge of procedures, knowledge of institutions and rights and the development of the skills needed for self-governance and participation in the democratic process, including knowledge of procedures and preferences, preparation for shaping the agenda and involvement in political struggle, presenting and discussing arguments, criticism, defending freedom, pluralism and power, information on public affairs and their possible consequences, preferable and acceptable ways to control the authorities and participate in a democratic culture. The polyarchy that Dahl expects, which is the highest practical achievement also from a theoretical point of view, assumes the education of citizens who benefit responsibly and honestly from the institutions that determine the proper course of the democratic procedure and their participation in it.

CONCLUSION

Contemporary democratic-liberal societies, which tend to mythologize their ancient sources rather than derive their political practice from them, assume as their main characteristic their orientation towards the change that creates them and their possible participation in it. They put forth a vast number of ideas rationalising the hopes placed in its preservation and improvement, which is reflected in the theories of the political system and the education supporting it, inherited by the 21st century, which however has adopted a different focus. For pedagogy, the important link is that related to education within a given model of democracy, with its specific features. These two dimensions of social practice must be aligned. Depending on the way in which democracy is referred to, there is a different image of what is required to make its educational assumptions come true. In addition to the aforementioned theories, closely tied with the political practice in the US, there are also theories of radical, social, participatory, deliberative or cosmopolitan democracy, which have been widely discussed and criticized for many years[62]. We

[61] Ibidem, p. 188.

[62] See A. Gutman, "Democracy", [in:] *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy*, vol. 1, ed. R.E. Goodin, P. Pettit and T. Pogge, Oxford 2007, s. 521-531; A. Heywood, "Democracy and Legitimacy", op. cit., s. 80-107; M. Saward, *Democra-*

cannot exclude at the same time that all of them are practiced by different groups, regardless of the model prevailing in state bodies, and that different educational ideologies, such as critical, type, humanistic, ecological or personalistic pedagogy, are oriented towards different visions of democracy, and the activities of the groups implementing them, although they cannot achieve the state of the imaginary system, significantly contribute to the democratization of society and its institutions. In the context of the Polish political transformation, a change initiated almost thirty years ago, a question arises about the gap between utopias - the images of democracy and the plexus of pedagogy that creates the future of society - which is special for pedagogy, which informs the future of the society. As a result, it seems that the created democratic reality is socially highly unsatisfactory, so much so that one should expect an eruption of images of a decent, sufficiently perfect society, and of the democracy that is to come.

The dreams of Tocqueville, as well as those of Dewey, Schumpeter or Dahl, were accompanied by a long shadow of tyranny - attempts to reinstall absolutism, thwarted by the July Revolution, an ominous murmur of Stalinism, echoes of the Nazi blaze, and the Cold War rivalry. Morus failed to maintain his independence in the face of Henry VIII's political plans, was accused of treason, tried and sentenced to death, and his head was stuck on the only bridge over the Thames at the time. The first volume of *Marie ou l'escclavage aux États-Unis*, written by Beaumont after his return from a business trip, published in 1835 as an essay-novel and describing racial segregation and conditions of slavery in America, the love of a Frenchman and an American girl with an African background who find a haven from prejudice, humiliation and violence among the Cherokees, was not met with an interest commensurate to that created by the book of his friend, published in the same year.

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Abstract:

"Every discussion of democracy", says Giovanni Sartori, "revolves around three concepts: sovereignty of the people, equality and self-government". In these discussions, the credible linkage of this ideas and their full development, that is to say, adequate to the needs, complexity of functioning and size of a modern nation-state, it creates the image, and at the same time, the political promise of a sufficiently perfect society that will be possible in the future through effective education. This article aims to develop an understanding of the relationship between selected democratic theories, the concept of utopia and education.

Keywords:

democracy theory, utopia, education to democracy, Alexis de Tocqueville, John Dewey, Josef Schumpeter, Robert A. Dahl

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