

liberal matters

Liberal Matters is a publication of Liberal International

December 2009.

etc.

ed•u•ca•tion

of education

Education in
the 21st Century



Liberal International Calendar

2009

December

- 5-6
African Liberal Network General Assembly, Seychelles
- 10
ELDR Leaders and Ministers meeting
- 11- 18
Copenhagen climate change summit
- 19-20
Yabloko Congress, Russia
- 27
Presidential elections in Croatia, first round

2010

January

- Sri Lanka Presidential Elections
- 10
Presidential elections, Croatia
- 26
Opening of LIBSEEN headquarters, Osijek, Croatia
- 31
Mouvement Réformateur : congrès à Bruxelles pour l'adoption du nouveau « Manifeste du MR »

2010

February

- 5-6
Centerpartiet Municipality Days, Gothenburg, Sweden
- 7
Presidential elections in Costa Rica
- 26 - 27
Eastern Partnership conference, Berlin, Germany

2010

March

- LIBSEEN fact finding mission to Albania and Montenegro
- Parliamentary elections in Madagascar
- 3
Local Elections in the Netherlands
- 6
Democratic Alliance Western Cape Provincial Congress, South Africa
- 6-7
V Congreso de RELIAL: "La libertad económica como piedra angular para la prosperidad de América Latina"
- 12
ELDR Council Meeting, Rome, Italy
- 12-14
Liberal Democrat Spring Conference, Birmingham, the United Kingdom
- 13-14
Folkpartiet municipal parliamentary session, Västerås, Sweden
- 19-21
Liberal International Conference: "Liberalism" - 200 years of unique political identity, Cadiz, Spain
- 25
ELDR Liberal Lunch Summit
- 28-29
National VVD Congress, the Netherlands

2010

April

- 11-14
World movement for Democracy General Assembly, Jakarta, Indonesia

2010

May

- Liberal International Executive Committee, Germany
- 1
Mouvement Réformateur: grand rassemblement à l'occasion de la Fête du Travail, Belgium
- 7
D66, Open VLD, CDC and LYMEC event on Youth unemployment, Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- 10
Presidential, Houses of representatives and Senate (Half) elections in the Philippines
- 29
D66 Congress, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
- 29-30
Folkpartiet Party Convention, Uppsala, Sweden

2010

June

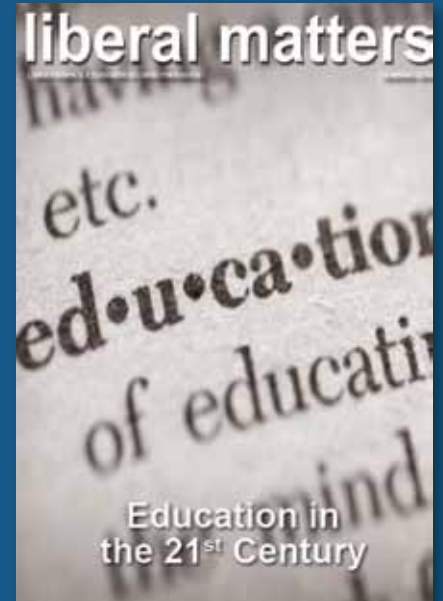
- Mouvement Réformateur : congrès statutaire sur le thème « Le printemps des Réformes ».
- 11-13
Keskusta Party convention, Lahti, Finland.
- 17
ELDR Leaders and Ministers Meeting

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liberal matters

December 2009



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Photographs
Pg. 10, 19, 20, 21, 22,23,27
Antonella Fabiani © Photography
Pg. 11, Jessie Chou © Photography
Remaining photographs Istockphoto.com

Published by
Liberal International
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London SW1A 2HD
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ISSN No: 0968-1884.

Subscriptions
Liberal Matters is published 4 times a year.

For ordering information, claims and any enquiry concerning your subscription please contact us.

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LET US GO FORWARD TOGETHER! LET'S MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

The recent Cairo Congress marked a new year for Liberal International. I am very proud that you elected me by consent as your President and successor to my dear friend and colleague John Alderdice who will to play an important role as our Past President. I will work hard to maintain your confidence and active support. Together with the Bureau, the Executive Committee, Congress and our participating political parties and organisations, I look forward to making LI a more outspoken and a more competitive player in international and regional politics. We should not try to copy others. We should try to set standards and make a difference. We should not look for compliments to be given by our political adversaries but we should be feared by them. In Cairo we made a difference by speaking out on behalf of human rights, civil liberties and the rule of law on the one hand and the free market on the other. Political freedom and the free market go hand in hand. One cannot go without the other. In Cairo we spoke out on behalf of the State of Israel and its citizens and a peace deal with the Palestinians. In that order. In Cairo we had a thorough debate with the Egyptian Democratic Front Party on the position of its Vice President towards Israel and the Jews. I welcomed this discussion, and I truly welcome its outcome in which our host and new member party made clear that it will fight anti-Semitism together with all our members, inside and outside of the Arab world.

Immediately after our Cairo Congress, I had the chance to lead my first foreign mission as your President. Together with Deputy President Juli Minoves, Treasurer Josep Soler and Secretary General Emil Kirjas, I visited Central America. In Nicaragua, we made a difference by speaking out against the unconstitutional and illegal efforts by Sandinista leader Ortega to gain a second consecutive term as President in 2011. We encouraged the signing of the pact of Managua, which brings liberal Nicaraguan forces together to present a strong joint candidate for the upcoming 2011 presidential elections. In Honduras we made a difference by stressing the importance of the Presidential elections on Sunday November 29th, which were and are the only way of securing a return to the constitutional order in that country. Liberal International has acted by sending a team of observers, led by Roger Albinyana from Convergencia, to make sure that the elections were carried out in a free and fair manner.

As your President I call on the LI member parties and the international community to recognize the outcome of the Honduran presidential elections and to support the incoming President of Honduras Pepe Lobo in uniting the country after taking office at the end of January. On Thursday November 26th, the European Parliament adopted an urgency resolution to support the democratic opposition in Nicaragua against Ortega and to acknowledge the efforts of Liberal International in this respect. As Member of the European Parliament, I will make a strong case for the European Union to recognize the incoming Honduran government. Our new LI Vice President, acting President of Honduras Roberto Micheletti and the presidential candidate of the Liberal Party of Honduras Elvin Santos have played and continue to play a vital role in uniting Honduras in the return to constitutionality. They have our respect for their efforts and we welcome them within our liberal family.

Let me assure you that during my Presidency, Liberal International will deepen and sharpen its positions. I will encourage more debates on important and controversial issues which will make a difference. I will do my utmost to strengthen our network. My predecessors John Alderdice, Annemie Neyts, Frits Bolkestein, David Steel, Otto Lambsdorff and Adolfo Suarez will inspire me during this journey. My colleagues in the Bureau will provide me with political counsel. Our staff will make sure that we not only talk but that we will also put our thoughts into practice. I will seek your advice, criticism, encouragement and support.

Hans van Baalen MEP
President of Liberal International



LIBERAL NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

LI Congress elects new President and Bureau

On 30 October, the approximately 300 assembled delegates of the 56th Congress of Liberal International elected the new Bureau of Liberal International. Hans van Baalen MEP (VVD; ALDE) was elected to succeed Lord Alderdice as President of Liberal International. Juli Minoves from Andorra was elected as the successor of Hans van Baalen as Deputy President. Newly elected Vice Presidents on the Bureau include Senator Cristian David (PNL Romania), Jelko Kacin MEP from LDS Slovenia, and Robert Woodthorpe-Browne (Lib Dems, UK). Dzhevdet Chakarov MP (MRF Bulgaria), Wolfgang Gerhardt MP (FDP -Germany and President of the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Liberty), and Bi-Khim Hsiao (DPP Taiwan) will continue to serve as Vice-Presidents.

Treasurers Josep Soler (LiD-Catalonia) and Silver Meikar MP (Reform Party of Estonia) will also continue their mandates. Newly elected President of Liberal International Hans van Baalen commented that "The nature of politics is not analogous to a friendly game of tennis – rather it is like a rugby match, we should not back down from controversy and confrontation. Liberals have to be on the offensive in the rapidly expanding developed world and must emerge as those best equipped to defend civil rights and the free market". For the full speech please refer to the LI website.

LI Welcomes new Member Parties

Liberal International is proud to announce the enlargement of the liberal family with seven new observer member parties. The congress participants at the LI 56th Congress in Cairo approved the applications of seven new member parties to be observer members at the administrative session on 31 October. Liberal International congratulates the Singapore Democratic Party (Singapore), The National League for Democracy - Liberated Areas (Burma), Civic Will Party (Mongolia), El Ghad Party (Egypt), the Liberal Democratic Party (Bosnia and

Herzegovina) and SLS (Kosovo). All new observer members received unanimous support from Liberal International delegates during the vote. Liberal International also congratulates the Democratic Front Party (Egypt), Radicali Italiani (Italy), the Democrat Party (Thailand) and Partido Justicia Nacional (Peru) on confirmation of their new Full Membership status during the administrative session of the Cairo Congress. LI looks forward to a promising partnership with all the new members in the international liberal family.

Prominent Liberal Politicians address LI Congress

Outgoing LI President Lord Alderdice welcomed the approximately 300 delegates of the 56th Congress of Liberal International by providing a framework for the ensuing discussions, 'As we look forward to 'Education in the 21st Century' we can look forward with confidence because we know that the principles we believe in, the policies we develop and the relationships we have with each other are the things that give us hope in a world that is threatened by crisis and conflict.' Delegates of the 56th Congress of Liberal International were also welcomed by a video greeting from the Thai Prime Minister (and leader of the Democrat Party) Abhisit Vejjajiva. 'With the joining of the Democrat Party into the international, liberal family, we hope to engage ourselves with Liberal International in the future even more closely' said Prime Minister Vejjajiva. Anwar Ibrahim, former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia and current leader of the opposition continued in stating that, 'Liberalism equips a citizen to know that in the mixture of beauty and ugliness, virtue and baseness in which a person finds him or herself in this world, he or she must want to be on the side of the beautiful and the virtuous.'

Congress delegates speak on Education at Cairo Congress

Four panels were held at the LI Congress, all with prominent liberal speakers. The Panel 'New Technology, Development

and Education' was chaired by John Tan, assistant Secretary General of the Singapore Democratic Party. Speakers were Dutch MEP Marietje Schaake, the co-founder of the political organization Liberati Alexander Bard and Provost of the Nile University, Egypt Dr. Tarek M. Khalil. 'Media and Education' was chaired by Vice President on the LI bureau Cristian David. Speakers were Rocío Guijarro, Manager of Venezuelan Think Tank Cedice-Libertad and LI Deputy President Juli Minoves-Triquell.

'Religion and Education', was chaired by LI Secretary General Emil Kirjas, speakers were President of the Liberal Party of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Lamija Tanovic and Dr. Kamal Aboul Magd, Vice President of the National Council of human Rights in Egypt. Graham Watson, MEP and former ALDE leader served as chair for 'Education, Decentralisation and Finance'. Speakers were Paul Boughy of the Democratic Alliance in South Africa, Leader of YABLOKO, LI's Russian member Sergei Mitrokhin and Alice Nzomukunda, leader of the ADR party in Burundi. All panels inspired great discussion around the different themes

Prize for Freedom Book launch a great success

In celebration of the 25 anniversary of the LI Prize for Freedom, the book 'Defining Liberty: A look at the first 25 Years of the Liberal International Prize for Freedom,' a collection of speeches and articles by laureates of the past 25 years, was launched at the LI Congress in Cairo. LI President Lord Alderdice who initiated the project during his mandate as Chair of the Human Rights Committee said: 'It says to all of us who read the stories of the laureates that you can fight for freedom in whatever profession, whatever background and country you are in.'

Sam Rainsy, laureate in 2006, gave an enlightening speech to the assembled Congress: 'In my case, the Prize was not given to an individual; it was to honour a just cause in a particular context. The cause is to defend liberal values about all freedoms that we all cherish.

The context for me is Cambodia. I received the Prize on behalf of countless friends and colleagues who had made sacrifices in serving the cause for freedom [...] The LI Prize for Freedom is a most valuable recognition and an encouragement for us to go on fighting for liberal values and ideas.

LI Human Rights Committee Meeting at Cairo Congress

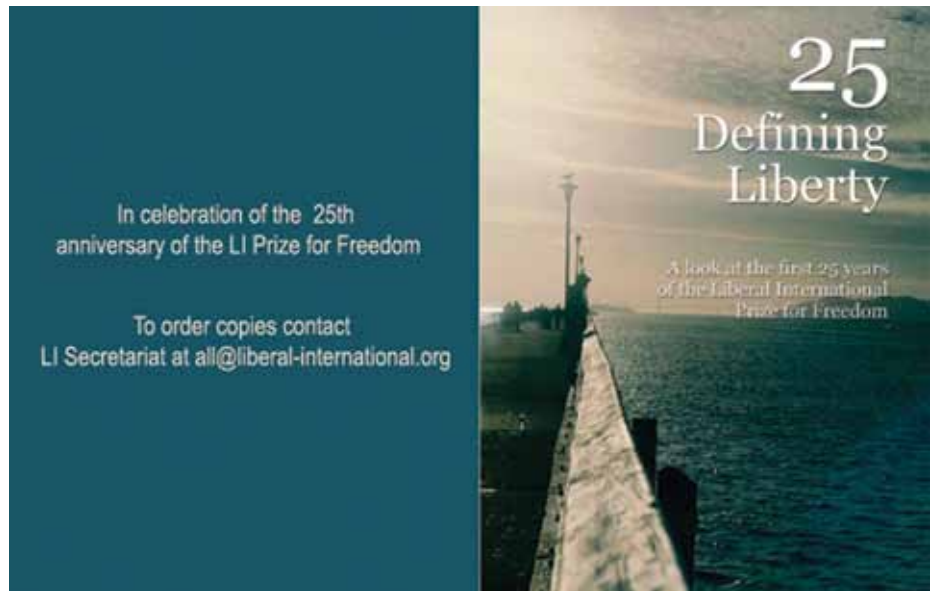
The LI Human Rights Committee (HRC) meeting took place in parallel with the LI Congress chaired by the HRC Chairman Gordon Lishman, the first session consisted of report and review of the work of the Committee. Vice Chair Andy Sundberg spoke about the work and role of LI as a participating member in the UN Human Rights Council and the importance of LI's future contribution in the field of human rights.

The plenary session proceeded with guest speakers including Mohammed Fayek, who addressed the importance and development of human rights and education in Egypt as a member of the Egyptian National Council for Human Rights and former Minister of Information. Human Rights Watch LGBT Program Director Boris Dittrich gave a follow up report on the resolution on the prohibitions of persecution and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation which was adopted at the last LI Congress in Belfast. The last speaker Birgitta Ohlsson, MP of Folkpartiet, Sweden praised the brave Cuban liberals for their continuous fight for liberal values.

Liberal International President expelled from Nicaragua

The new President of Liberal International, Hans van Baalen, MEP, has been expelled from Nicaragua by the populist Sandinista President Daniel Ortega. Van Baalen heard of this action against him shortly after leaving the country for Costa Rica. The LI President confronted Ortega and called on him to respect the constitution which prohibits him from entering a new term as president. Van Baalen also reached an agreement with the leaders of the Liberal opposition parties BND, PLC and ALN, to combine forces against Ortega during the 2011 elections. He told Ortega: "Check out in 2011, Mr. President".

While supporters of Ortega harassed the LI delegation during a press conference, LI sympathisers outside chanted in support. Van Baalen commented on the situation: "Ortega is trying to bypass this article in the constitution illegally. The violation of civil rights is not just a national matter that can be ignored." Van Baalen was in Nicaragua leading a high level delegation to several Central American countries.



You can see coverage of the LI visit on the LI youtube-channel. After the LI mission to Nicaragua the European Parliament adopted a resolution about the situation in the country.

The resolution states that the EP condemns the unconstitutional attempt of President Ortega to seek a new term, deplores the threats, insults and intimidations by the Nicaraguan government to the LI mission, and calls for the EU to exercise greater control over funds given to Nicaraguan projects to make sure that the money doesn't fall into Sandinista hands. Van Baalen was satisfied with the result of the vote and stated that "I am thankful for the support shown in the European Parliament for the Liberal International mission to Nicaragua. I think that the EU should monitor what happens in that country."

LI President speaks to liberal rivals in Honduras and says that election results should be recognized

Finalising the tour in Central America, LI President Hans Van Baalen, MEP, spoke with both Honduran interim President Roberto Michelletti and deposed President Manuel Zelaya in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. During their meetings with Van Baalen, Zelaya and Micheletti both signified to be willing to discuss the political situation in their country 'with each other as liberals'. Zelaya agreed that he would consider accepting the result of the Presidential election on 29 November. Van Baalen condemned the fact that Zelaya had violated the Honduran constitution. Liberal International was present with a delegation of observers during the elections, to oversee if they were conducted in a free and fair fashion. Interim President Micheletti has committed to be internationally active after he has stepped down in favour of the new democratically elected President of Honduras.

Chief electoral observer for Liberal International in Honduras, Roger Albinyana from Convergencia, Catalunya, Spain, concluded that the presidential elections were free and fair. Van Baalen called on the international community and LI member parties to recognize the outcome of the elections and support President Elect Pepe Lobo who will be inaugurated at the end of January. Van Baalen asked former president Zelaya to accept the legality and political significance of the elections and to recognize the outcome. In the coming days and weeks Van Baalen will try to create a majority in the European Parliament to recognize Lobo as new president of Honduras.

LI Deputy President in Paraguay

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall Fundación Libertad in Paraguay, together with the Liberal Network of Latin America, RELIAL, organized an International Forum, Foro Internacional de la Libertad, with prominent liberal speakers present. The participants of the forum discussed the future of liberalism in Latin America and the dangers of the growing socialism on the continent. Representing Liberal International at the event was newly elected Deputy President, Juli Minoves who also addressed the crowd.

He stated "To attend a gathering of Latin American liberals in Paraguay, organized by The Fundación Libertad and RELIAL, is always very energizing. As the new Deputy President of LI, I intend to be present in Latin America and continue the dialogue between that continent's liberals and the whole of Liberal International. Against the danger of populism, Liberal values are more important than ever". From Paraguay Minoves joined the mission of LI President Hans van Baalen in Central America.



LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL MOURNS EDZO TOXOPEUS

Edzo Toxopeus, Former President of Liberal International and LI Patron passed away on 23 of August 2009 at the age of 91 years old. Mr. Toxopeus was a former leader of the LI full member People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) in the Dutch Parliament. During his political career he served as Minister of Home Affairs, Governor of the Province Groningen as well as Member of the Council of State.

During his years as Minister, Toxopeus played an important role in the construction of the post-war Netherlands and in setting up social laws for government officials. Next to being an LI Patron, Toxopeus was also an honorary member of the VVD and Dutch Minister of State, which is one of the most exclusive honorary titles awarded by the Dutch state. LI President Hans Van Baalen and LI former President John, Lord Alderdice paid tribute to Mr. Toxopeus and said: "Mr Toxopeus was not only a very prominent

liberal and former leader of our international liberal family, but also a statesman who was wholeheartedly devoted to strengthening liberal democratic governance through his various posts in the Dutch Parliament and the Dutch government."

Edzo Toxopeus played an important role in the global movement for freedom and democracy, and in recognition was accorded one of our highest honours when he was appointed a Patron of Liberal International.

Even though he is gone he will continue to be recognised, appreciated and valued in our liberal family and well beyond.

Short biography

1949-1959
VVD Member: Municipal Council of Breda

1956-1959
Member of the House of Representatives

1959-1965
Minister of the Interior

1965-1969
Member of the House of Representatives

1966-1969
Leader of the VVD Party

1966-1970
President of Liberal International

1970-1980
Queen's Commissioner to Groningen

1980-1988
Member of the Dutch Council of State

1985-2009
Minister of State



PRESIDENTIAL SPEECH

“Liberals must embrace power politics to define the 21st century.” - says LI President Van Baalen

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the American philosopher Francis Fukuyama concluded that the only remaining viable ideology was Western liberalism. In “The End of History and the Last Man”, Fukuyama predicted an end to history, continued economic improvement and global prosperity. Poverty, oppression, environmental pollution and religious strife would be problems of the past. We would be living in a constant present.

Besides the question of whether or not this would be desirable, the past decade has proved Fukuyama wrong. Although the danger of a massive global conflict has decreased with the fall of the Iron Curtain, threats to international security have increased significantly. Liberalism has lost its defining characteristic of engagement, and is now on the defensive. Liberalism, with its emphasis on civil liberties and the free market should be, by all rights, the defining ideology of the 21st century.

During the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union as the two global superpowers coexisted in a state of carefully constructed equilibrium. Conflicts were fought by proxy on the fringes of the two power blocs: in Cuba, Chile, Korea, Vietnam, Africa and Afghanistan. These two superpowers prevented the Cold War from turning from a conflict of détente to a full scale military clash. There were policies of containment from both sides. With the implosion of the communist bloc led by the Soviet Union, only the United States remained powerful enough to prevent global conflicts, fight

organized crime and combat international terrorism. In “The Rise and the Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000” Paul Kennedy wrote, just before the Berlin wall came down (1987), how previous world powers had faced the same problem of being overstretched. This was one of the torments of the Soviet Union in its final phase, and now looms large as a serious problem for the United States. The United States has taken on the role of international police officer after the Cold War, and has overextended its resources rendering the country less effective.

The Europeans have left efforts of stabilizing the world (Iraq, Afghanistan and the international struggle to fight terrorism) to the United States itself. The European Union restricts itself to using soft power policies, like international development and peace management; mostly in places where peace has already been achieved. The EU does not use hard power, nor is it strongly committed to peace enforcing and peacekeeping. This means that the united West is not able to fulfill an exemplary role to the rest of the world. The rivals of the West do not advocate the adherence to universal rights such as human and civil rights, freedom and democracy, good governance and rule of law. Russia and China are at best authoritarian regimes, who deny their citizens basic and fundamental human rights and engage in outdated 19th century power politics to reach their goals. China has enshrined the control of strategic resources for its

industries a central tenet of its foreign policy. For China, dealing with dictatorships and weak states is easy. Africa is essentially being colonized a second time. Russia uses its enormous potential of energy resources as a political weapon. The increasingly important economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China, the so called BRIC-countries, are either authoritarian like China and Russia, or fail to reach a more equal distribution of wealth, leading to the inability of great segments of their society to take part in the economy and the governing of their countries. Economically speaking, liberalism seemed the sole remaining dominant force after the Cold War. Privatization and liberalization thrived throughout the world, but the notion that the open market economy needs rules and mechanisms of control was not fully realized. Reaganomics and Thatcherism have broken the backbone of unions and bureaucracy, but have at the same time weakened the basis of the economy. The current financial and economic crisis has not been caused by liberal free market policies, but by failing legislation and a lack of control. A strong economy is a structured economy that offers opportunities for many instead of riches for few. The structuring of markets has to emphasize individual responsibility by having room for private initiatives and calculated risk taking; both serve the general interest, and not short term self interest. The political elite carries a great responsibility for the functioning of the government and markets. Noblesse oblige: this is what the

barons of the port of Rotterdam knew when they rebuilt their city after the devastation of the Second World War.

Not to make short term profits, but for long term stability. The encouragement of scientific education and the construction of public works in Rotterdam were made possible with the help of private initiatives. Exactly these notions of serving the public interest and of social responsibility were lacking on Wall Street, in the City of London and the Damrak of Amsterdam in the nineties. The power of liberalism is the combination of civil rights, social responsibility and the free market. In short: freedom in its broadest sense. The liberalism that created the social laws of the nineteenth century, realized universal suffrage and that emphasizes private initiative offers solutions for international stability and economic prosperity. The West, consisting of the United States, Canada, the European Union, New Zealand, Australia and Japan, should not sit quietly while human rights are being trampled and countries become increasingly protectionist.

It needs to conclude new alliances with developing countries that are moving towards democracy in Latin America, Africa and Asia. African countries like Zimbabwe, Senegal, South Africa and Morocco are at crossroads between democracy and autocracy. In Latin America Chavism is on the rise, but there are still numerous civil society actors and political parties who resist that tendency. The Arab world is fixated on Israel and uses the country as an excuse to oppress their own populations and deny their people freedom and prosperity. The Arabs have a lot to offer to the world if they decide to enter the 21st century with an unconditional embracing of freedom, instead of continuing to play the role of global victim. It is not coincidental that in all before mentioned countries and regions liberal political parties play an important role. Liberal politicians in the free West have to support their colleagues in these regions. The construction of democratic constitutional states has to be our biggest export product once again. Only democracy and free trade can bring stability and prosperity. A lot will depend on the German FDP that finds itself presently at the center of European power, and of the American Democratic Party, that has to start using power politics. The eloquent words of President Obama cannot be the only tool of the United States in an increasingly chaotic world. Liberalism is unique in its combination of civil and economic freedoms.

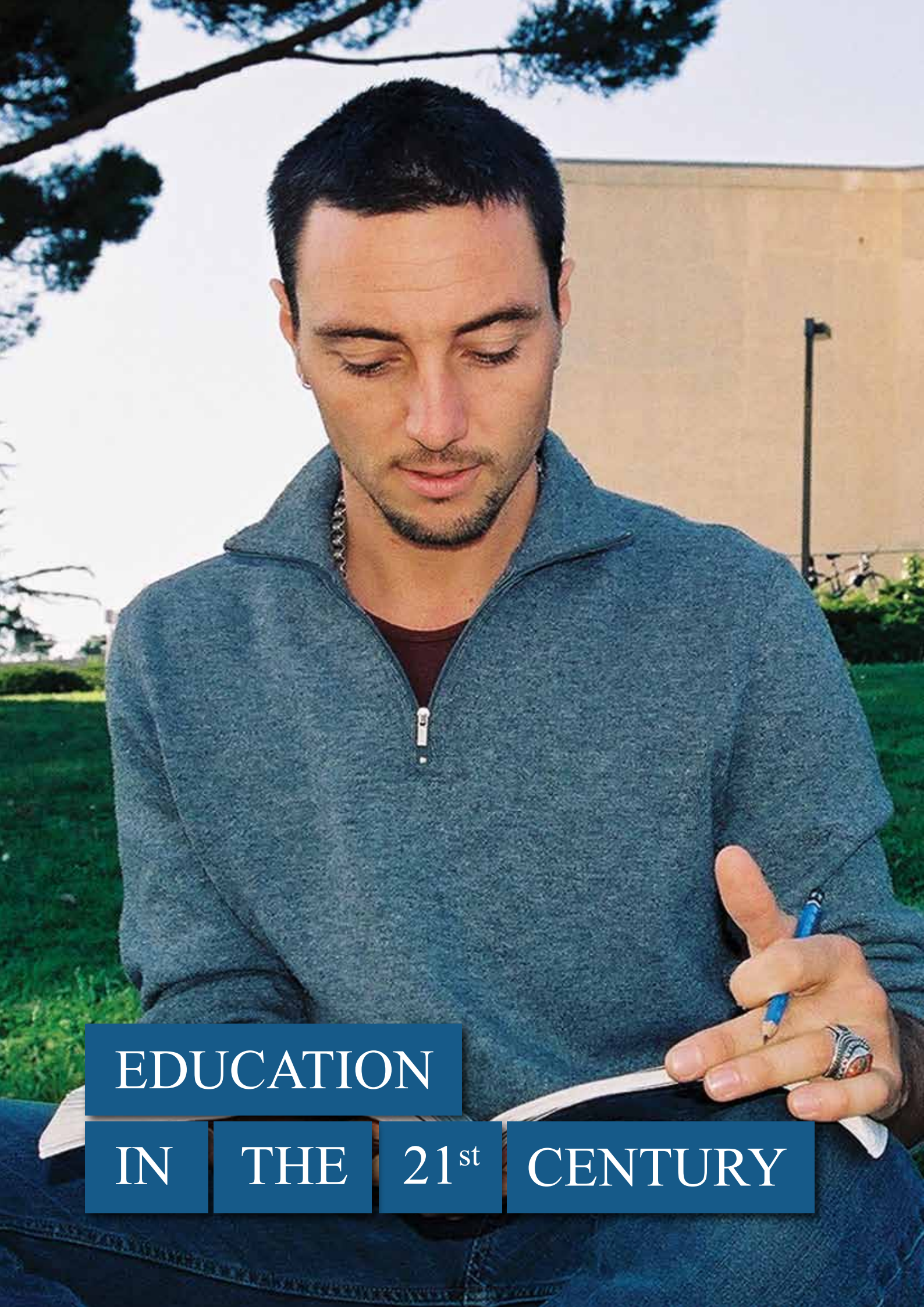
The Liberal International has to be at the forefront of freedom and must strive for the separation of church and state, freedom of expression and freedom of the press, education and quality health care and free access to the market for all. Liberals should not want to be admired by their opponents, but should want to be seen as integral political actors. Politics is not a game of tennis. Liberals have to take the initiative again when it comes to financial and economic recovery on the basis of the free market.

Liberals have to be prepared to defend their values with strong defense policies, a strong constitutional state, an emphasis on education, fair health care and an efficient state that dares to make choices. The defense of the separation between church and the state creates an environment

which can fight against extremism, and intolerance without the oppression of religious groups as a whole. The law is equal to all and all are equal to the law. Discrimination is unacceptable to liberals. Emancipation of minorities and their rise to free citizenship is our right of existence. Liberalism has a long journey ahead to establish itself as a valid and enduring ideology on a global level. Liberalism has to seize the public arena again.

When Frits Bolkestein was elected President of Liberal International in Noordwijk 1996, he stressed his ambition that liberals would regard politics as a game of rugby, and would be prepared to fight. Political correctness should not be a liberal issue. As President of Liberal International I want to continue with this ambition of Frits Bolkestein.





EDUCATION

IN

THE

21st

CENTURY



OPENING SPEECH AT THE 56TH LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS IN CAIRO, EGYPT

Anwar Ibrahim, Opposition leader and former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia

The poet John Donne's famous musing:

*"No man is an island/entire of itself;
every man is a piece of the continent,
a part of the main;*

was a meditation on mortality, but it could equally serve today as a reminder of the inter-connectedness of humanity. As we are in the intellectual heart of the Arab world, I find it a great testament to the enduring values of liberalism that we can meet in Cairo to talk openly about freedom and human rights. Some quarters have attempted to bully us into thinking that the principles of liberalism are borne exclusively in the domain of the West. They claim audaciously that these values are foreign to the Muslim world, that they are incompatible with Islam. They say they we are on a collision course, that civilizations so deeply divided cannot coexist lest one yields to the other. I think this is hardly the case – yet we must concede that a war has been waged to drive a wedge between these two worlds and the cacophony of voices that have emerged in the post 9/11 era to obfuscate the issue. While this issue has already been debated ad infinitum let us risk flogging the dead horse and revisit the landscape of liberalism and democracy as it applies to our experiences on both side of this presumed divide. Let me begin by reiterating the three pillars upon which a liberal democracy is built and these are liberty, social pluralism and political constitutionalism. These values as we know are also central to liberalism itself. But in the context of

democracy, our focus lies more with Voltaire's concern for fundamental freedoms, and with the practice of constitutional government. By extension we would benefit from a deeper appreciation for what Locke articulated as the parameters of modern constitutionalism in its democratic formulation. The intent of these values and the institutions that are constructed to mediate the relationship between the citizen and the government is to guard against the exercise of tyranny. Lord Acton was right when he spoke of the corrupting influence of power.

When bestowing upon a political entity the power to make laws and to coerce citizens to obey those laws, safeguards must be put in place. Herein we look at Constitutions to delineate the extent of the government's power to impose laws, and also at the edifice built around the exercise of that power so that there is adequate protection from its abuse. This refers to the law making powers of the legislature and the role of the executive to see that laws are implemented and not violated neither by the people nor by their leader. The dangers of unfettered Executive power are well known to all, but a strong legislature is a sword that can cut both ways as well. Tocqueville said, "the concentration of power [in the legislature] is at once very prejudicial to a well conducted administration and favorable to the despotism of the majority."¹ There is some truth to that. We teach computers today as if the world could not function without them. Hardly a generation ago computers were the fodder of science fiction, or at the very least

space programs beyond the reach of ordinary people. And that leads us to the position of the judiciary in a democracy. Without a doubt what comes to mind in an instant is the paramount importance of not contaminating justice with politics, the judiciary must remain independent. Under no circumstances should it be under the control or influence of the Legislature, let alone the Executive. There is a saying that when the law is subjugated to the chicanery of politics and when judges are subservient to the political masters, the administration of justice becomes perversely farcical. We have seen what happened in Pakistan not too long ago. We see it happening in sham democracies masquerading as liberal democracies. And of course we see it being played out ad nauseam from where I come. Until now what I have said is all fine and good if I was speaking in Washington DC or London or Paris. But here in Egypt one must contend with the presumed civilisational fault line if one hopes for the message of engagement permeate into the ground. I commend President Obama for making such a clarion call for engagement based on universal values and shared principles that have been buried in recent years, in no small measure due to the criminal acts of some fanatics and the heavy handed response that has put so many in peril and created so much hatred and mistrust. Let us be clear that while some of democracy's greatest articulators may have come from the West, there is no monopoly on the principles of political freedom and liberty. What Locke said in the 18th century we can find explicit precursors in the

Muslim tradition. Consider the Prophet's Last Sermon where he asserts the importance of property rights and the sanctity of contracts, women's rights and racial equality. Remember this was 1400 years ago! The narrative does not stop there. al-Shatibi, the Andalusian legal scholar, articulated more completely the maqasid al-Sharia, the Higher Objectives of the Islamic Law, which sanctify the preservation of religion, life, intellect, family, and wealth; objectives that bear striking resemblance to Enlightenment ideals that would be expounded centuries later. Many Muslim scholars have further explained that laws that contravene the maqasid must be amended to bring them into line with the higher objectives, ensuring that they contribute to the safety and development of the individual and society. Notwithstanding the current malaise of authoritarianism plaguing the Muslim world, there can be no question that several crucial elements of constitutional democracy and civil society are moral imperatives in Islam. The truth of the matter hits even closer to home. We know that the Egyptian Rifa'i al-Tahtawi spent five of his intellectual formative years in Paris during which he was swept by the tide of the French Enlightenment. While he is criticized for having been intoxicated with his exposure to the West, those were indeed crucial years without which he could not have become one of the earliest progressive reformists in Islam. It was only natural that one already steeped in the tradition of Islamic political thought could find affinity with some of the Enlightenment's leading ideas - man's role in society, the principle of justice being essential for a good society, and welfare as the guiding purpose of government. After all, what was so incompatible about Rousseau's conception of the lawmaker with the Muslim view about the nature and function of the Prophet? Admittedly, this similarity must necessarily be confined to the realm of Islamic philosophy. As for the idea of *hubb al-watan*, Montesquieu's influence is writ large - in particular that the love of country is the basis of political virtues - *l'amour de la patrie conduit a la bonte des moeurs*. In short, a Constitution provides the framework for the Rule of Law. Aristotle aptly stated that while laws are meant to be followed, those in power are servants of the same law. We would be remiss however if we relegated such matters of political philosophy to mere theorization or academia. Some great liberal thinkers have described these principles as self-evident truths, so that they must course through the veins of society. At a very basic level this means that basic freedoms and rights are sacrosanct.

The freedom to speak and think according to one's conscience so long as that expression does not threaten or harm the physical being of another. It means that human dignity is a fundamental right and that property rights are not to be meddled with by some arbitrary dictate of the state. At the heart of this political liberalism lies the need for a social contract that enables such liberty. Such a contract, needless to say, must be rooted in a deal that legitimises power and holds accountable all those who exercise it. In this regard, there needs to be a vibrant opposition that demands accountability and transparency in all government actions and dealings, leaves no stone unturned in its quest for a fair and free media and constantly guards against the rise of despotism and tyranny. The latter as we know go hand in hand with abuse of power and corruption, that being the scourge of most developing countries and emerging economies even without the Corruption Index telling us so. I think here we can confront the theory of clashing civilizations at its very core. Nothing in the recent or distant history of the Muslim world suggests an inherent incompatibility between Islam, Muslim people and liberal values. While the expression of those values would certainly take the shape of the cultural and religious milieu, the fundamental principles ring true.

The fact that elections were held in Indonesia and Iraq and Iran in the 1950s and democratically elected governments came into power is one substantial bit of proof. What is happening today in places like Turkey and Indonesia is no less remarkable. I would challenge any voice that described the democratic transformation of these two countries as an imposition of Western influence. Time and again we have seen Muslim people, when given the chance, cast their vote in support of governments that restore freedom, tend to the common good and pursue economic policies that are more fair and equitable. Those who fail to do so play the bogey of the West, but only to divert attention from their own failures to serve the interests of the people. Power, in these cases, is nothing more than an iron fist. Allow me to shift gears for a moment and give mention to the topic of our gathering, which I believe is integral to the question of building liberal democracies. A glance at the title suggests that the underlying intent of education is different in this century from what it may have been some time ago. Therein lurks the suggestion that education is a commodity that requires updating with the times in which we live, like the mechanical appurtenances of our civilization, constantly innovated and adapted to fit new needs. There is some truth to that. We teach computers today as if the world could not function without them. Hardly a generation ago computers were the fodder

of science fiction, or at the very least space programs beyond the reach of ordinary people. In my time as education minister in Malaysia in the late 1980s and 1990s, we felt that at the basic level, an emphasis on reading, writing and arithmetic - called the three 'Rs' - was absolutely necessary for imparting enabling degrees of literacy and numeracy in our youth. But once that objective was achieved, the question arose about what the aim of the entire schooling and university process is? What were we to educate them for? The obvious answer was for citizenship in society. But that obviously begged the question - of what society? And here the debate grew contentious... For the essential tools of this education no one puts it better than Sidney Hook who said education should aim to develop students' capacities to write and speak clearly and effectively, to deal competently with number and figure, to think critically and constructively, to judge discriminatingly and observe carefully, to appreciate and respect personal and cultural differences, to enjoy with trained sensibility the worlds of art and music, and to enrich the imagination and deepen insights into the hearts of men by the study of literature, drama and poetry. In sum those are the tools that equip a student to know the best that has been thought, said and created in this world. If we can reach this as an ideal then perhaps we can realize what Orestes Brownson envisioned as a society in which the government looks to its people for inspiration and wisdom.³ As such Muhammad al Ghazzali believe that citizens trained to be real participants in civil society are no doubt resolved to affect the quality of the day and bring reform wherever needed; and this, as Thoreau said, is the highest of all arts. When citizens feel that they can affect the quality of the day, it means that they do not succumb to education as adaptation to environment. This latter type of education would make them incapable of any change or improvement. When citizens are made to feel that they can affect the quality of the day, they must bring to that effort two qualities - a tentativeness of outlook and a firm commitment to chosen values. A tentativeness of outlook presupposes that we do not possess certainty, an all-knowingness that precludes discussion and debate and leads to authoritarianism. It enables one to be ready to examine all dogmas and allow our lines of thought to be scrutinized. One would think that this attitude precludes religious belief. It does not and it can not because the highest purpose of education raises the question of ultimate purpose. In sum, liberalism equips a citizen to know that in the mixture of beauty and ugliness, virtue and baseness in which a person finds him or herself in this world, he or she must want to be on the side of the beautiful and the virtuous. Thank you.



EDUCATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY: A ZIMBABWEAN PERSPECTIVE

Senator David Coltart, Minister of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture of Zimbabwe.

When I took office in February 2009 I knew that the education sector was in a mess but could not anticipate just how bad it was. My first day in head office was an education in itself! When I first arrived at the reception area of the 18 story head office building I was confronted with the spectre of several female members of staff standing around waiting for the lift with buckets of water on their heads. It was reminiscent of a typical rural African scene where women have to convey water for kilometres to clean and feed their families. I was told that the reason they were carrying water was because there was no water in the entire building and there had not been any for over a year.

Only one of the three lifts was working; when I finally got to my office on the 14th floor I found that I had no computer, no internet and no access to any computerised database within the ministry. To compound matters the first order of business was a message lying on my desk that I should immediately go to the government transport ministry to collect a brand new Mercedes-Benz limousine! My first act in the ministry was to decline the offer. On the day I took office almost 7000 schools were effectively shut because over 80,000 teachers were on strike. I was aware that government coffers were bare and it was incomprehensible to imagine how I could negotiate in good faith with the unions if my first act was to continue the profligate behaviour of my predecessors. What I found in the head office was emblematic of virtually every school and other educational institution in the

country. It is now clear to me that the education sector has been seriously underfunded for two decades. Whilst it is true that historically Zimbabwe had a reputation for high educational standards and high literacy rates, but the reality is that educational standards and literacy rates have been plummeting for almost 2 decades. In truth I have inherited the mere shell of an education system, a situation which has been compounded by the fact that there have been minimal resources available to me to remedy matters since taking office. In the eight months since I've taken office, up to the end of September 2009, the entire ministry received from Treasury the princely sum of 1,9 USD to run over 7000 schools and educate some 3 million children.

Because of deep concern in the international community about the slow pace of implementation of the GPA the international community has been extremely reticent in providing any assistance, even to the education sector. In that context you will appreciate why as I approach this topic I have set some very modest goals for education in the short term such as the restoration the basic education. Accordingly my view of education in the 21st century is predicated on vastly different assumptions to those that most of you present here today will have. The silver lining for me is that in some respects I have a clean slate to work with. Accordingly as we consider in this conference our collective vision for education in the 21st Century, and the role that education should play in a modern society, I believe that I have a unique

opportunity to entrench certain liberal principles in the transformation of the Zimbabwean education sector. **The application of liberal principles in formulating education policy**

Tolerance/Democracy

Despite the current chaos in the Zimbabwean education system it still has one of the best infrastructures in Africa. In addition the Zimbabwean education system has generated thousands of highly talented people during the last five decades who have achieved magnificently in the fields of science, business, agriculture, medicine and other disciplines throughout the world. Until recently we still had one of the highest literacy rates in Africa. However during the same five decades Zimbabwe has lurched from one form of authoritarian rule to another. The use of violence to attain political objectives is still widespread.

There are high levels of intolerance in political parties against those who hold different views. In short we have a deeply rooted culture of violence and intolerance. What pertains in the political sphere is reflected in the personal and in the schools. A recent Zimbabwean study reveals that there are alarmingly high levels of bullying and sexual abuse taking place within our schools. In our wider society there are unacceptably high levels of domestic violence. A positive aspect of our schools is that most children are generally well behaved. However my fear is that discipline has been taken to excessive levels in our

education system; that the unquestioning respect for authority over several decades has resulted in a society which has allowed this culture of impunity and violence to become the norm. Furthermore the way that history has been taught in Rhodesian and then Zimbabwean schools over many decades has contributed to the notion that political leaders are demigods. That was certainly what was taught in white Rhodesian schools: Cecil John Rhodes and Ian Douglas Smith were elevated to the status of cult heroes. Little has changed since the advent of independence saves for the fact that these political leaders have been replaced by Robert Gabriel Mugabe and other nationalist leaders. In other words I believe that one of the principal reasons why Zimbabwe has degenerated is because of serious flaws in our education system. The problem goes beyond the content that is taught in the classroom. The method of school governance is as important as what is taught. School children imitate in their adult lives the ways in which Headmasters and teachers and prefects conduct themselves in school. In fact the role that prefects are handed in schools where they are present is not that of leadership apprentices; prefects are handed the role of discipline, and all too often are allowed and even encouraged to be cruel and brutal, victimising younger children.

Although corporal punishment is in theory illegal except under strictly controlled conditions, it is widespread at all levels of primary and secondary education. Our schools, instead of developing ideas of democratic leadership, are breeding a new generation of tyrants and bullies. Furthermore we have inherited a colonial system of classroom learning practice which we have not seriously attempted to change. The teacher and the textbook are the authority and children are taught not to question, not to think creatively or imaginatively. Fear does not just govern issues of discipline – it governs the very learning process and rote learning still holds sway, discouraging children from taking responsibility for their own learning or attempting to think for themselves.

In an effort to reverse this trend I am in the process of implementing two policies:

1. I am working in conjunction with human rights groups in Zimbabwe to develop a new curriculum which will teach schoolchildren democratic principles, their rights as enshrined in the constitution and UN conventions,

the virtues of tolerance and the use of non violent methods to resolve conflict.

2. I am in the process of revising subsidiary legislation to democratise the governance of schools. In terms of this legislation, school heads will be compelled to be more transparent in their work. The same legislation will encourage greater parental involvement in schools with the aim of opening up more debate regarding, and community participation in, the way in which schools are run. We need to create a school environment in which children are encouraged to develop whatever potential they have in an open atmosphere which will produce the best results both academically and developmentally I should stress that my intention is not to lessen the amount of discipline in our schools. My objective is to achieve the fine balance between maintaining orderly, disciplined schools and allowing freer debate and democratic practices. It is my hope that if these policies are successful we will spawn an entirely new generation of Zimbabweans who will cherish democratic practices and ensure that Zimbabwe never again goes through the horrors it has experienced in the last five decades.

Small Government/ Devolution of power

I have inherited a ministry of education which is highly bureaucratic and top-heavy. As indicated above we are headquartered in a large 18 story building. In the past the bureaucracy housed there tightly controlled all aspects of education in both government and non-government schools. Indeed my predecessor waged a virtual war against private schools and in the process severely undermined confidence of the business sector in our educational system. That in turn accelerated the flight of professionals and other highly mobile citizens. The high level of control extended beyond elite private schools. Excessive bureaucracy was used to prevent the emergence of private schools for poorer people. The maintenance of these controls in turn has resulted in a top heavy budget. Since taking office in February I have noted that the bulk of the little money that we have received from Treasury has been spent in maintaining the work of head office and there has been very little trickle-down of resources to schools themselves. The problem does not appear to be confined to Zimbabwe; Australians complain of a “top heavy, inefficient, and self-serving system”¹. It is also clear that given the collapse of the Zimbabwean economy even with the best will in the world, the Zimbabwean government is not going to be able to educate everyone. In the last few years the dropout rate, especially in the transition from primary to secondary

schooling, has reached alarming levels. The infrastructure in most government schools is crumbling and textbook/pupil ratios are appalling. In short in the next decade it is going to be very difficult for government to expand education and our work is going to be cut out simply maintaining what we already have. In these circumstances it seems to me that the only way we are going to be able to educate all our children is if we liberalise the education sector and allow parents to establish their own private schools at village level, subject of course to compliance with certain basic standards.

In this regard I have been inspired by James Tooley’s book published this year called “The Beautiful Tree”². Tooley describes his book as a personal journey into how the world’s poorest people are educating themselves. The “beautiful tree” refers to the system of village schools set up by Indians prior to British colonial rule, uprooted by the British when they came to India, as described by

Mahatma Gandhi in a speech he delivered at Chatham House, London on October 20, 1931. In that speech Gandhi concluded: “And the schools established after the European pattern were too expensive for the people. I defy anyone to fulfil a programme of compulsory primary education of these masses inside of a century. This very poor country of mine is ill able to sustain such an expensive method of education. Our state would revive the old village schoolmaster and dot every village with a school both for boys and girls.” Tooley points out that the concept of village schools was not confined to India: Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of independent Kenya, published Facing Mount Kenya in 1938 in which he argued that African society had its own tradition of universal education that “begins at the time of birth and ends with death. The parents take the responsibility of educating their children until they reach the stage of tribal education... there is no special school building... the homestead is the school”. Kenyatta believed that this education system had some advantages over the British system in that, for example, it emphasised acquiring practical knowledge in its context.³ In many developing countries many parents are turning to small private schools to educate their children. As Buckingham points out even in developed countries such as Australia there has been a steady drift out of the public sector. Research has shown that providing parents with the means to send children to the school of their choice has significant academic benefits for children and private schools overall outperform public schools consistently in academic achievement. In the Zimbabwean context this does not mean the end of government education.

However if we are going to extend a quality education to as many children as possible the following policies are necessary:

- 1 "Schools must be truly public." Contained in "Schools of Thought" a book published by the Centre of Independent Studies in July 2008 authored by Jennifer Buckingham.
- 2 Published by the Cato Institute 2009.
- 3 Tooley at page 241.
- 4 Buckingham at page 2.

1. A reduction in the size and scope of the Ministry of Education which should concentrate on the administration of funding, providing professional support to education providers, and being responsible for developing and administering minimum standards and public examinations.

2. A devolution of power to all schools, both government and non-government, to enable them to operate virtually autonomously according to the wishes of the parents and communities that support them.

3. Legislation that will allow and facilitate parents to establish their own independent schools without having to go through the many bureaucratic hoops present today.

4. A change in budgetary policy which ensures that a much greater percentage of government funding is spent in schools themselves rather than in a top-heavy administration.

National and International Budgetary priorities

For all the rhetoric about the Zimbabwean government's commitment to education the fact remains that during the last two decades there has been a steady reduction in the amount allocated to education both in real terms and in terms of a proportion of GDP. Sadly even since the formation of the transitional inclusive government in February the amount of money allocated to the Ministry of Education has been much lower in percentage terms, and in some respects in real terms, than many other ministries. For example the Office of the President and Cabinet and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce have both received more money in real terms since February this year than the Ministry of Education has. have merely paid lip service to the notion that it is important to invest heavily in education. I suspect that this is the case in many countries throughout the world. In other words successive governments. There are some exceptions. Finland for example has arguably the best education

system in the world; but to achieve that Finland has invested heavily in education for decades. One of the most remarkable aspects of the Finnish education system is that the minimum qualification for all teachers in both Primary and Secondary schools is a Masters degree - the cost of achieving that standard must have entailed a massive investment and cut backs in other areas. In Zimbabwe during the last two decades we have spent heavily on our defence forces, the secret police, excessive foreign travel, luxuries (such as Mercedes-Benz vehicles) for Cabinet ministers and other leaders and a bloated bureaucracy including a Reserve Bank with a voracious appetite. During the same period, education has been starved of funding. If we are to restore a quality education in Zimbabwe we are going to have to cut back drastically on the spending mentioned above and reallocate the money saved to education. Even if we do so in the short to medium term we will not have sufficient resources to provide even a quality basic education to all our children. In this regard the international community itself needs to decide whether education for all is a fundamental prerequisite to international peace, stability and development. For example if we move away from Africa and Zimbabwe for a moment it would be interesting to know what proportion of the money spent on Iraq and Afghanistan by the international community has been invested in the education sectors of those countries. It seems to me that only a tiny proportion of the billions of dollars spent on Iraq have gone to education. It seems self evident to me that the best guarantor in the medium to long term of world peace and stability is a well educated new generation of people in every country in the world. This will only be financially possible if defence budgets are slashed throughout the world and swords converted into laptops and textbooks.

The environment

The threat presented by environmental degradation and climate change to man's very existence is not only global; it exists within our region of Africa and it exists within every nation including Zimbabwe. In the last 50 years Madagascar, for example, has experienced a 10% increase in its mean average temperature and a 10% decline in its rainfall. There has been so much erosion that the sea is coloured red around all its river mouths. It is perhaps one of the starkest examples of the effects of global warming and poor land management and farming practices; nevertheless many other countries' environment is under severe threat and Zimbabwe is no exception. Aside from the chaotic land reform programme implemented in Zimbabwe in the last decade, crop yields

in communal areas, which have been unaffected by the land reform programme, have been steadily declining. Much of that is due to massive erosion and the depletion of nutrients in our soils. Dams are silting up and the Kalahari desert is rapidly encroaching in the south west of Zimbabwe.

The situation is further compounded by the rapid deforestation of indigenous trees caused by the shortage of energy in communal areas and the wanton chopping of trees by "new farmers" who have stripped the land they acquired of resources for sale rather than engage in the hard work of farming. Despite this gloomy scenario there have been some encouraging developments in the last two decades. In particular an organisation called Foundations for Farming has been spearheading the concept of conservation farming and zero tillage agricultural practices in Zimbabwe. The organisation's work has been focused on the poorest communal areas and they are achieving remarkable results. For example last year whilst the average crop yield countrywide was 275 kg per hectare, the average crop yield in plots using conservation farming practices was 3 tonnes per hectare. Aside from the increased crop yields erosion has been dramatically reduced and these farming practices do not need imported tractors, diesel and vast numbers of plough oxen. Indeed if we can persuade the coming generation to embrace these farming practices Zimbabwe will be transformed in a variety of ways; not only will our pastures be restored but Zimbabwe will once again become a net food exporter - irrespective of what happens in former lands owned by white commercial farmers. The challenge is to teach the coming generation about these remarkable farming practices.

With the environment in mind I am now implementing the following policies:

1. A new conservation farming curriculum is being developed and the first training programme for teachers from throughout Zimbabwe has already been held. In the course of the next five years our intention is to roll out the conservation farming programme which will result in every single rural school teaching a four-year curriculum and every school having its own plot which will at the same time supplement the food requirements of these schools. Our intention is to include local communities so that the schools spearhead much more widespread knowledge of conservation farming.

2. As and when funding is available our intention is to work with local industry to manufacture solar cooking apparatus which will be installed in every rural school. Once again the intention is to use

good practices in schools to inspire entire communities in an effort to reduce deforestation and to promote the use of alternative and sustainable means of energy.

3. As and when funding is available our intention is to work with local nurseries to develop indigenous tree nurseries in all schools. Once the nurseries have been established, schools will embark on the planting of indigenous trees throughout Zimbabwe with the same hope that surrounding communities will adopt similar practices. In this regard, real business opportunities exist through carbon credit schemes now being promoted in the West. If the programs can be implemented on a large scale throughout Zimbabwe my hope is that income which can come through participation in carbon credit schemes will be used to subsidise education costs.

Practical basic education/Vocational education

Several mistakes were made in Zimbabwe in the development of education after Independence. One was to think that we could do everything at once; many educationalists at the time of great expansion in the 1980s who had some knowledge of the relationship between education and development knew that it was wrong to expand without adequate resources, mainly human but also physical. Standards were bound to fall drastically even if the economy had not collapsed.

Donors themselves did not appear to appreciate the problem. Hundreds of millions of dollars of Western aid was poured into erecting an educational infrastructure most of which has fallen into disrepair and in some cases into complete disuse. Government had a "can-do" attitude, believing when there were few teachers that failed school leavers could be let loose in the classroom without any training, little maturity and minimal interest.

Numbers became the Holy Grail and quality of education was overlooked. A second serious mistake was to embark on an almost exclusively academic educational curriculum. This approach arose from a misinterpretation of the idea of "equality" to mean that everyone must have the same education and that must be academic. Very little attention was paid to vocational, practical training, and existing facilities were actually dismantled and abandoned. Once again in this regard I am struck by the Finnish education system which pays equal attention to academic and vocational education facilities. Zimbabwe did not do this and in the last two decades has

generated several hundred thousand school graduates with academic qualifications who stand no chance whatsoever of getting appropriate jobs within Zimbabwe. This problem is further exacerbated by the fact that these same graduates have come out of school with no practical skills which would enable them to become self-employed. While we will aim at educating every child, the nature of their education must be altered to ensure that it is relevant to economic development; especially within their own communities. Children must learn skills that are needed by the economy or can enable them to create their own work. Then the money put into education becomes a genuine investment rather than a costly consumption item. In an effort to address this issue the following policies are necessary:

1. Our emphasis, in honouring every child's right to education, must be to teach children the basics of literacy and numeracy. Every child should receive a basic education which in my view should enable every child to speak, read and write their mother tongue and English, to have fundamental numeracy skills and to come out of school with at least one practical skill.

2. An important curricular theme must be to teach survival techniques - at the personal, family, societal and global level. Children must learn individually and collectively to survive - this means practical learning in areas of productivity for food security and employment, health, care for the environment, strategic thinking and planning, adaptability, co-operation and imagination. Good "survival teaching" should take place in a specific physical environment and education must help children to relate to that environment rather than dreaming about being somewhere else.

3. Whilst technology is an important component of a modern education system, appropriate technology is more important than rushing for the latest from the developed world.

4. To carry out these policies we will need to aggressively expand the number of schools offering vocational education.

Identifying and nurturing talented disadvantaged children/The Girl Child

One of the dangers of focusing almost exclusively on the provision of a basic education for all children is that talented children from disadvantaged backgrounds may be lost in the mediocrity of a basic education. Whilst Zimbabwe has exceptionally good church and independent schools they are beyond the financial reach of the vast majority of Zimbabwean parents. One of my deepest concerns as I seek to stabilise and rehabilitate Zimba-

bwe's education system is that an entire generation of highly talented potential academics, sports persons and artists will be lost.

If this happens Zimbabwe will not get the necessary throughput of these talented children to our universities, sporting, artistic and cultural institutions. Without that throughput, Zimbabwe's economic development will be severely retarded. Private schools simply do not generate a sufficient number of talented students which the country will need in future.

This problem is apparently not only confined to a developing country like Zimbabwe. Buckingham notes that in Australia the emphasis on identifying and assisting children at risk of failing to achieve basic education may be necessary for valid personal and public reasons; but it has resulted in children who have the potential to excel rarely getting a look in.

The concern is that in all levels of government and in most schools, interest in underperforming students eclipsed the need to provide a high-quality education for highly capable students. In America, Charles Murray in his new book *Real Education: Four simple truths to bring American schools back to reality* argues that more effort needs to be expended on thinking about the kind of education needed by the young people who will in future run a country.

5 Another very troubling development in Zimbabwe is the disproportionately high dropout rate of the girls, especially in the transition from primary schooling to secondary schooling. Research the world over shows that when the girl's education is neglected birth-rates continue to soar and development is severely retarded.

With these problems in mind I am implementing the following policies:

1. We have entered into a public private partnership agreement to initially rehabilitate 20 Government secondary schools, one boys' high school and one girls' high school in all of Zimbabwe's 10 provinces. The schools targeted already have extensive infrastructure and boarding facilities which have however deteriorated over the last 20 years. At the same time a program will be initiated to identify academically, athletically or artistically talented children in the poorest rural and high density urban schools. A scholarship fund will be created which will ensure that these children can then be channelled into the rehabilitated government schools which will become known as Academies. Some of the Academies will have particular centres of excellence to teach particular academic, athletic or artistic disciplines.

It is envisaged that approximately 40% of the intake at these Academies will be reserved for talented disadvantaged children. The balance of places will be filled by children whose parents/guardians can afford to pay higher fees than those pertaining at standard government schools. It should be emphasised that there will be strict gender equality in granting scholarships to ensure a steady throughput of girls.

2. Government budgetary policy is being reviewed to ensure that as many government resources as possible are directed to programmes that encourage girls to go to school and that at the very least all girls obtain a basic education.

Conclusion

I am aware that these are lofty and highly ambitious goals. Our human and financial resources are severely depleted and as a result we have limited

capacity to implement most of these policies successfully. Indeed without substantial international support most of these policies will remain stillborn. However it is vitally important that we succeed. Zimbabwe, as is the case in so many African countries, is a land of great potential. It is richly endowed with natural resources; it is a stunningly beautiful country with wonderful people.

Despite these great attributes, Zimbabwe has been a drain on the entire region in the last decade. That does not need to be the case; indeed Zimbabwe has the potential to contribute significantly to the wealth of southern Africa. Arguably the most important element in achieving this is the re-establishment of a quality educational system. This can only happen if, firstly, the Zimbabwean government takes education seriously and invests heavily in the sector, secondly, if the international community joins suit and does the same, and thirdly if we get the content and management of

education right. Whilst Zimbabwe's challenges in education are unique in one sense, many of the issues raised today affect us all.

Education has an important role in moulding the 21st Century and in dealing with the challenges presented by it. If we do not educate the coming generation to be tolerant, to cherish democracy and to find practical solutions to issues such as poverty, environmental degradation and global warming which threaten the very existence of mankind, the future will be bleak.

However if we transform this generation then the great technological advances of the 20th Century may be matched by a more humane and earth friendly 21st Century.



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KEY TO EQUALITY IN GENDER AND WEALTH

Annette Lu, Former Vice President of Taiwan and member of the Democratic Progressive Party

Education is important and even more important than ever in this century, as it is an era of knowledge and technology. In modern civilization, knowledge and technology are essential to life. No knowledge, no wealth, nor power. Education is the key to knowledge and key to a better life. When I was little, twice in my childhood, I was nearly given away to a wealthier family, simply because my parents wanted to see their youngest daughter growing up in a better household. An incident only prevented by my brother, who hid me in my aunt's home when they came to adopt me, to whom I remain thankful. Finally, my parents decided to keep me and to allow me to receive the same education as my brother. My brother patiently taught me what he learned from school and books. He also trained me in public speaking. In fact, it was from him that I learned all the stories about great people in history, many of them politicians, and most of them men, of course. Subconsciously, I was educated to become a politician, despite that I am not a man. Education happens everywhere and at anytime, not necessarily in school. Textbooks are a good source but so are life experiences. Not only do boys need education, but girls need it even more. In fact, to educate a woman means to educate a whole family. It is ironic enough, in many societies that girls are not encouraged to receive education, and yet the responsibility of educating children relies heavily on women, both at home and in school as well. Had women been educated better, the human world would have developed better in a more harmonious way. Just as women need more education, so do

the poor; it is only when the poor know how to utilize their knowledge that they can improve their lives. While the well-developed countries already have sound education systems, the under-developed countries are still allocating their state budget to military expenditures. For a country and for a family as well, there is no better or worthier investment than education. The most fundamental way to help the developing countries and to help the minorities is to promote educational facilities for their children, in particular, their women. According to a 2004 survey, in my country- Taiwan- the entry rate to post-secondary education is 4.369% which is quite high, as compared to 3.2% in the USA and 0.46% in China. In terms of gender equality, Taiwanese women receive nearly as much education as men do. During DPP's 8 years administration, special budgetary allocations were made for scholarships, tuition waiver and student loans in order to provide equal and quality education to minority groups. Also, an allowance is offered by the government to low-income families, so that they can enroll their children in kindergarten. Outside the governmental framework, I have launched a campaign to raise private funds to set up nationwide free-evening classes for children from single-parent families and minority groups, to tutor them and help them with their their homework. What are the major elements that the education in the 21st century should stress on? I would recommend the following:

1. Humanitarianism and universalism.

Be it in the East or West, from the South or North, all human beings are the creatures

of the universe on Earth. Let everyone be educated to respect the great Nature, to care the earth and to love the people.

2. Science and Technology.

Science and technology have become fundamental instruments in modern society. To enhance education in science and technology therefore is important for the developing countries as much as for the developed ones.

3. Human rights and democracy

Human rights are the core value for universal human society, and democracy based on rule of law is the most progressive system to manage a modern government. The better a people is cultivated with the education of human rights, democracy and rule of law, the more a country and its people will be benefited from its practices.

4. Globalization.

The 21st century is a century of globalization. Just as no any single person can live without friends, no single country can survive develop on its own. Global view helps to lift up the obsolete, outdated concept of territorial boundary. It also helps in fostering global cooperation and human development.

To sum up, good education should include both science and humanitarian studies. A good scientist must also be a good artist. A good politician must also bear a good heart. Moral and ethical philosophies are as essential as technology for a good education. May I wish success for this conference and also wish the success of today's conference to lead to the success of tomorrow!



THE EDUCATION SYSTEM - A CULTURE OF LEARNING

Wolfgang Gerhardt, Member of the German Bundestag and Vice President on the Liberal International Bureau

Let us be clear: we are at the beginning of a new millennium, in the midst of an era of major upheaval; in the midst of a process of globalisation which not only impacts on companies, but makes every job subject to international competition. At a global level, a new debate on distribution of resources and opportunities is unfolding in front of our eyes. Long-established positions have ceased to exist. Some people are calling for a new protectionism, others do not want to put the open markets at risk. A balance is being sought to allow a society characterised on the one hand by market forces and on the other by protection against economic risks. For political and economic stability migrates to knowledge societies. The decisive factor is being competent in dealing with an ever-changing situation.

Learning is our infinite resource. Excellence is our greatest opportunity. Freedom, democracy, social market economics and competition are the bedrock of prosperity in our society. An international orientation - with Europe and in the transatlantic alliance - is our *raison d'état*. Education is the magic word. Education is our passport to the future. Successful countries owe the added value they generate to people willing to learn and to work hard. Tomorrow belongs to those who are already preparing for it today - be they self-employed or salaried employees, managerial or non-managerial staff members. Alongside lifelong learning, skills like creativity, risk propensity and the ability to assume responsibility will be the most competitive advantages. High quality education and training require enthusiasm and effort.

Learning means, means a responsibility towards oneself and towards society. The will to achieve is the ethos of solidarity. This is our greatest asset. It is our passport to the future. We need to learn where we came from and who we are and know what we need to be able to do. We must reconnect with the cultural knowledge and skills which we have, from where we are today.

We need points of orientation. Neither more lessons nor new curricula nor quality-enhancing programmes are sufficient. It is about skills. It is about teachers and parenting. It is about the way in which knowledge is communicated at school, but also about attitudes, values and beliefs which children see lived out at home. It is about the culture of learning. It is not just about talent, though talent does have a role to play. It is about willingness to learn, enthusiasm, interest and ambition. Teachers need to see communicating a culture of learning as their core task and parents must support them in this.

People need something worth working towards; they need a limited number of tools to teach them how to learn and allow them to practise learning; they need practice in vital life skills. They need to learn about precision and a sense of order, about creativity and perseverance; the ability, left to one's own devices, to achieve one's aim and the talent to cooperate with others in order to achieve great things - this used to be called general education. Later, people began to talk of "secondary skills" and now people talk of key skills. I shall continue to call it

general education. This means that a degree of autonomy is needed in the choice of teaching material with a view to develop these skills.

Great teachers have always known that school should not be about knowledge and speeches, but about character-building and decision-making; and that one thing is only ever a foundation for something else. I recently read the conclusions drawn by a young person about what he believed he had learnt from school: "the goal of our work is always freedom.

This requires the will and ability to set oneself a goal, to base this goal on values and ensure that it is in harmony with one's own life and to pursue this goal with self-discipline and rigour". It cannot be put better than that.

None of this can be achieved at the touch of a button - neither creativity nor social skills, neither the ability to deal with conflicts nor the ability to assert oneself, neither team skills nor lateral thinking. The link to the intended result is never immediately obvious.

Yet originality and willingness to take risks, curiosity and creativity, resourcefulness and courage and open-mindedness are not things learnt equally at all stages of life; the foundations are laid very early on. Two hundred years ago, Pestalozzi wrote that "the first hour of [a child's] teaching is the hour of its birth", stressing that it was therefore the task of the parents to provide elementary instruction for their children. Hartmut von Hentig says that parents should give their children the best

that they have: themselves. There are limits to what schools can do. They cannot act as substitute parents. Quite rightly, the German constitution, the Basic Law, gives the right of care and upbringing of children to the parents. Yet rights always go hand in hand with responsibilities. You can't give children the sack. Children have to be taught a minimum of civilised behaviour by their parents. Otherwise society loses its link to the cultural tradition of freedom, to the ability to accept responsibility and to a sense of community and becomes lacking in conviction.

The more achievement-orientated we make our schools, the more pronounced and obvious the differences in skills provided by different social and cultural backgrounds become. Knowledge is becoming increasingly important, the skills needed to acquire knowledge are becoming ever more decisive, people's ability to organise themselves, their ability to cooperate with others and live with others in a community are becoming vital. Yet the idea that inequalities in the extent to which opportunities are taken advantage of could be evened out through education or social policy is simply out of touch with reality - no matter how much effort we make or how much we strive for equal opportunities. Sloterdijk writes that there are people who have had nothing taken away from them, but who failed to make the most of the opportunities available.

Thomas Jefferson wrote in the United States Declaration of Independence in 1776 that "all men are created equal". Yet this does not mean that all people are identical - otherwise we would only really need one person! Equality freed citizens from the constraints of aristocratic privilege.

Equality abolished differences in voting and electoral rights based on income and land ownership. It created equal rights for men and women. It renders differences in skin colour irrelevant for human rights. Yet the way in which the freedom it provides is taken advantage of depends on criteria which are themselves distributed unequally. The chance occurrence leading to our particular genetic makeup renders each of us unique - and uniquely different (Udo di Fabio, Hubert Markl). The diverse and particular talents which children have must be discovered and encouraged early on; these talents should be developed rather than written off. Education must never mean lowering standards. Education requires pupils to be confronted with challenging material and with strong personalities, from kindergarten to

school, to vocational training, to university. Fairness and equality of opportunity do not mean equality of outcome. The extent to which a society is civilised, free and just can be measured in particular by the way in which it deals with talent. Yet we will remain dependent on a culture of recognition of differences and inequalities which simply cannot be abolished. It is important to have more confidence in people's potential to use freedom. A democratic society must make identifying and cultivating talents one of its tasks. We therefore need an open and competitive education system which provides for ease of movement within the system. After all, it is obvious that only through creating an enabling environment for the whole range of students can the highly talented be reached.

Without the mainstream, there can be no elites. The very best also need an accepting environment. Preventing hard work and the cultivation of talents does not make people freer or increase the level of democracy. It only prevents those who



are able to achieve more from doing so and makes society intellectually and economically poorer. The question is not whether societies need elites. Societies have elites and will always have them. If a society wishes to distinguish itself from an egalitarian society, it must ensure race, origin, gender and religion play no role in access to elite positions, but that ability and achievement do. And it must equip the education system to cater to individual needs; it must foster the diversity of talents and aptitudes and allow them to develop in a productive way.

Teaching people to achieve always means teaching them to accept responsibility within society; very old fashioned, yet correct; it means teaching those qualities which determine the quality of a society. It means teaching them about credibility and about setting an example, enabling them to strike a balance regarding civilisatory standards. Konrad Adam stresses that none of this can be achieved by a kind of thinking in which obtaining qualifications is the only goal, in which

certificates are acquired allowing qualifications to be achieved, which then allow a particular profession to be taken up - and that this type of thinking strangles any culture of autonomy. In the countries at the top of the league table according to the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), schools were given greater autonomy. In Finland, the school supervisory board has been scrapped completely. The Finnish believe in regular tests which tell the schools how they are doing. In Sweden, the school supervisory board was abolished at the end of the 1980s. Every school there has its own budget, employs its own teachers and negotiates salaries. We are not talking about pseudo-autonomy, where schools now have to deal with bureaucratic matters themselves.

Problems are an important asset for the future. "Problems are our friends", says Michael Fullan, an expert on education and educational change from Toronto. With this approach, he led the way for the extremely successful Canadian schools.

We need an achievement-oriented and pluralistic education system, in which private and state schools compete with each other. The bodies running schools should have a very high degree of decision-making autonomy - they must be able to hire new teachers. They should not be mere subtenants in the system. Liberal education policy is based on the idea of creating the right framework for successful schools. Rather than stipulating teaching methods and school structures, we believe in competition between all forms and approaches. Diversity always enhances achievement. Yet framework provisions have to exist to ensure that families are able to move to different regions without problems and that teachers can choose freely where in Germany they want to work. Centralised responsibility for education and a centralised Abitur are not needed, however. Uniform provisions at federal level which stipulate minimum standards are sufficient and ongoing quality enhancement should be mandatory even without the results of the OECD PISA study.



RELIGION AND EDUCATION IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Lamija Tanovic, President of the Liberal Democratic Party of Bosnia-Herzegovina

With a small population of approximately four million citizens my country, Bosnia-Herzegovina, is one of the most diverse as well as politically divided countries in Europe. The existing education system (Confessional Religious Education - CRE) in many ways reflects the internal divisions which, to a large extent, also exist in education generally and in religious education as well. Confessional Religious Education (CRE) reinforces segregation and ethnic divisions, discriminates against minorities hence threatening social cohesion, and ultimately the future of our fragile state. Unfortunately, the current policy of religious education enjoys wide social and political acceptance. The transitional period of our society from communism towards capitalism is marked by deep social cleavages which were cultivated in the disastrous recent war during the 1990s and also manifested in different ways in the postwar period. Religion(s) also have an important role in these social divisions since the main differences between the three constituent peoples directly involved in conflicts are based on religion. In fact, religious determination is almost synonymous with ethnicity. After the recent war religious determination in this multicultural society with people that have lived side by side for centuries has become a dividing point rather than an element of connection between the cultures. Segregation in schools is believed to be deepened by the religious education subject. This does not need to be so. Despite the fact that religious education in BH is based on Constitution guaranteed rights, there is a recognized need for a review of existing approaches to defining

relationship between religion and schooling. There are two concepts of religious education that in my view are not mutually exclusive: on one side is confessional religious education as the study and a practice of a certain religion; on the other side there is non-confessional religious education also known as the study about the religions. A confessional model of religious education in the Bosnian public schools constitutes one of the major disintegrative forces in the education system. Therefore, I believe that such a system is not appropriate for the circumstance of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Religious education must be based on holistic approaches and should foster integration and peace. This will be a difficult task to execute but it is crucial for the future of the country. Religious studies without confessional religious education are needed in this situation. This approach would avoid the pitfalls of segregation and discrimination. Inclusive religious education would contribute to social, religious and political tolerance and informed understanding, and would serve as a tool in overcoming the divisions in the education system, as well as in society at large. Religious education became part of the BH public school system in complete silence. No public debate ever took place and neither parents nor pupils were given the opportunity to openly discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the current model of mono-religious learning. Apart from the absence of public debate there was little research conducted within the area. The current model of religious education must be reconsidered and critically debated. All relevant stakeholders such as parents,

students, teachers, politicians and NGOs must be included in the debate and listened to. We are advocating for an integrative and holistic religious education for all students in B&H. In reconsidering religious education in Bosnia and Herzegovina the following guidelines should be included:

1. Initiate an open public debate,
2. Provide support to more in-depth research and analysis on the issue,
3. Do not let religious communities take control over the issue of religious education,
4. Make decisions that will strengthen integration of the country, and counter segregation and division,
5. Initiate the changes in the current legislation on religious education.

There is a Culture of Religions initiative in Bosnia and Herzegovina that has designed a school subject that teaches students about the four major religions practiced in the country. Different than the traditional, confessional religious classes which provide a doctrinal point of view, the Culture of Religions course teaches all students to explore the four religions, with an emphasis on their history, culture and society. Culture of Religions provides complementary education to the existing confessional religious education, without challenging and/or affecting the existing practice or right to confessional religious education. This kind of religious education would also contribute to annulling current exclusion of religious minorities. Small religious communities - religious minorities encounter specific form of social exclusion mostly due to small number of adherents.



BUDDHIST MONASTERIES AND EDUCATION IN BURMA

Moe Zaw Oo, Secretary of the Foreign Affairs department in the National League for Democracy -Liberated Areas

Buddha once said, "Life is a learning process". The people of Burma have grown up under the teachings of Buddha since the historic period of the Kingdom of Pagan. Buddhism not only provides religious sanctuary but also secular education to Burmese people. In this way the Buddhist monks have played a very important role in the moral and intellectual life of Burmese throughout history. Since Buddhism reached the ancient Kingdom of Pagan during 11th century, Burma has become a country where the majority of people have been devoted to Buddhism. The history of education started from the Buddhist monasteries where ordinary citizens and the Royal family studied

Burma's Kingdom and its feudalism ended when the country became a colony of the British Empire in 1885. In general, Buddhist monasteries were the only source of education in Burma in the pre-colonial period and the curriculum was mainly extracted from the Buddhist teachings, focusing on giving lay people the foundation of moral disciplines. In British Burma, Christianity influenced the country's modern education. One prime example was the establishment of a Baptist college known as "Judson College" in 1918 in honor of Dr. Adoniram Judson, an American missionary. Moreover, many elementary and secondary missionary schools run by the Christian priests emerged in Rangoon and a few other major cities. The British Burmese education policy was based on two key reports entitled "Macaulay's Minutes 1835" and "Charles Wood's Dispatch 1854." The reports described ideas including the promotion of the English language and the

production of a western-influenced educated middle class to play a middle role between the British administration and the Burmese people. The policy recommended not to teach religion at school. For the first time, Burmese students had to learn English as a foreign language and needed to have an English name at school and dress like an English student. However, the education was very limited to the children from a few upper and middle class families due to its primary purpose of supporting the smooth functioning of the colonial administration. After the introduction of the new western style education, the role of Buddhist monasteries diminished in the colonial regime. In 1892 - 93, there were 4916 monastic schools registered in Burma, but the number sharply decline to 928 in 1933 - 34. Some key reasons behind the decline were the popularity of western education and the very limited job market after the monastic schooling. Burma became independent in 1948. The legacy of the British education system continued at the core of independent Burma. The democratic governments in 1948 - 62 promoted the re-establishment of monastic schools with the assistance of the government and the schools were integrated into the government education system. The number of monastic schools increased to 5545 and the Buddhist monks who taught at school numbered 7441. When Burma was under the military authoritarian regime and the subsequent socialist authoritarian governments in 1962-88, the dictator General Ne Win introduced the socialist education under the Burmese "Way of Socialism". As a result, the monastic school became irrelevant under this system. In 1982, Ne

Win completely abolished monastic education. After the State Peace and Development Council (formerly known as State Law and Order Restoration Council) came to power in 1988, the country's socio-economic situation has declined for two decades and poverty has increased to its extreme level across the country. Buddhist monasteries have again taken a role in providing basic education to the poor people. There are now more than 1300 monastic schools providing education for about 200, 000 children in Burma according to some data. Monks have been both the spiritual teachers of the people and responsible for the basic literacy of lay people - although they are not technically supposed to take on this second role. The monastic schools now provide basic education for the country. The schools provide ethical and moral foundations for children, especially in the rural areas. However they use the same curriculum as in the government elementary schools. Generally, monastic schools accept children from needy families in the nearby community. Most of the students are orphans who are sent by senior monks from their villages and small towns. They mostly depend on donations and assistance from civil society. These monastic schools reflect the severe deterioration in economy of the country. It visibly proves that people cannot afford to send their children to school even to finish their elementary education. Religious organizations become important again in order to supplement the government's failure in education. In this way, Buddhism very obviously continues to play an important role in the education of the Burmese people.



CUANDO DE EDUCACIÓN HABLAMOS

Hugo Vera Ojeda, Director de la Fundación Libertad de Paraguay

En el último congreso de la IL en Egipto, paseando por uno de los mercados más antiguos del mundo, uno de los mercaderes ofreció en un cerrado lenguaje árabe a Emmanuel, el amigo que me acompañaba, un lindo recuerdo. Como no comprendimos que decía, Mamut, nuestro amigo Egipcio, nos dijo: “les esta ofreciendo un regalo para la suegra”.

Enmanuel, en tono de broma y convencido de que jamás entendería nuestro idioma dijo: Yo a mi suegra la quiero hacer desaparecer! El perspicaz vendedor respondió tenemos lindas bombas! Antes de que nos den tiempo de reaccionar, casi todos los vendedores que nos rodearon soltaron una carcajada. ¿Como rayos todos entendían español? Fue la pregunta que quedo flotando para nosotros.

Sin animo de que se disocie esta anécdota de lo que leí en una pequeña monografía distribuida en el mismo Congreso, me ha llamado muchísimo la atención el prologo de dicho material, donde la sentencia inicial era que la educación, es causa y no consecuencia del desarrollo económico.

La discusión en si, es muy parecida a la del huevo y la gallina, pero al intentar profundizar el concepto que tienen muchos sobre lo que es la educación, es que surgen los problemas para sostener una idea y en especial, que esta idea no se aparte de un principio general.

Si sostenemos que la educación es muy importante para el desarrollo de un país, es muy difícil que nos equivoquemos. La discusión se centra más bien en el rol que ocupa la educación como punto de partida o como consecuencia del desarrollo, como

ya vimos mas arriba. Si partiéramos de la base de que es la causa del desarrollo económico ¿como se explicaría que países con analfabetismo casi nulo como en Cuba, sigan en donde están? La otra parte del prologo que cité mas arriba, quizás intentaría refutar esta tesis, en donde sostiene que “no hemos sido capaces de proveer a nuestra gente (en los países no desarrollados) una educación de calidad, que sea útil para cada quien y para la sociedad toda” Lo cito porque la principal crítica a Cuba, es la baja calidad de la educación allí y básicamente que es por eso, que este país no se desarrolla.

Sin dudas proveer una educación de calidad porque si nada más, es un concepto muy idealista, pero precisamente estos tipos de conceptos tienden a resistir muy poco a los análisis y peor aun, al ser llevados a la práctica, las consecuencias son poco favorables. Bajo la misma tesis idealista, es que ese “alguien que provea esa educación de calidad” deba ser un ente colectivo, que por excelencia siempre se abroga el Estado.

Y es hartamente sabido que este ente, no ha sido el más eficaz en esa tarea, es mas, ni aun cuando se ha intentado utilizar a la educación en interés propio a través del Estado como centros de adoctrinamientos, ha funcionado. Evidentemente el tema en cuestión no es fácil de explicar y quizás, aun más difícil sea comprender, bajo riesgo de que al intentar explicarlo, uno quede como un troglodita que desprecie la educación. En realidad es todo lo contrario. En sentido amplio, el conocimiento humano es un cúmulo de estudios que abarca toda su existencia en distintos ámbitos. La forma de transmitir

esos conocimientos, estatal o privada, no es necesariamente el punto determinante, sino la utilidad que tengan.

La necesidad es la madre de todas las ciencias y en consecuencia, es la utilidad que produce esos conocimientos, la que hace mejorar a su vez la forma de adquirirlos, es decir la educación. No es que no seamos capaces de ofrecer educación de calidad, sino que esa capacidad se define por la demanda. En Cuba, un abogado sirve tortas en un bar porque la utilidad de su servicio profesional, es prácticamente nula y en consecuencia, la profesión va en declive. Sin embargo, existen lugares en donde la demanda por un bien o servicio es muy alta y la necesidad de facilitarlos es determinante para que quienes los ofrezcan desarrollen mejores aptitudes.

Estas aptitudes, pueden venir desde la propia vivencia, como los oficios, como el caso de los comerciantes egipcios del ejemplo, que aprendieron todo tipo de idiomas porque la demanda principal es el turismo o de centros de estudios, que perfeccionan cada vez más su producto, o sea la educación, a medida que sube la demanda. Pero esta utilidad, al igual que los precios en general, jamás pueden ser fijados por el Estado y a lo sumo lo que hará es actuar en forma referencial a los que lo hacen bien. Esto explica además porque siempre cualquiera, menos el Estado está siempre varios pasos mas adelante en todo y son los estadistas que se fijan en ellos para intentar copiarlos. El desarrollo de un país en consecuencia depende mucho de las cosas que produce y está comprobado que cuanto menos se meta el Estado, mucho y

mejores productos se obtienen, incluso la educación. Generalmente el rol que se le asigna a la educación, hace que se caiga en un grave error: que el Estado invierta desmesuradamente en ese sector, convirtiendo la intervención estatal, que debería ser una excepción, en una regla. Países como Paraguay, han incrementado notablemente la

inversión es total en los últimos años, con resultados poco halagüeños; ha bajado muchísimo la calidad de la educación y el nivel de analfabetismo no ha bajado en absoluto. Si bien el destino que se le asigna a la inversión estatal es más bien burocrático, como salarios y prebendas, es muy difícil no caer en estos vicios desde el Estado y mucha inversión desde allí, denota

decadencia de una nación antes que fortaleza. En síntesis, la educación tiene un rol muy importante, que no es justo que tenga que caer en juegos dialécticos.



La Fundación Libertad del Paraguay

Visión:

Ser la institución no Gubernamental Liberal más importante de referencia del pensamiento liberal, canalizadoras de ideas y programas que busquen el fortalecimiento de las instituciones democráticas. Que se construya en el formador de las nuevas generaciones y los actores políticos e intelectuales, que ejercen un gran protagonismo en el acontecer nacional

Misión:

Motivar la participación de los jóvenes en la actividad política, con un criterio propio basado en los valores, principios y conceptos liberales. Promover las ideas liberales en todos los ámbitos de la actividad humana, para construir la cultura de la libertad con responsabilidad. Influir convincentemente en la orientación liberal de las políticas públicas

Mandato:

Desarrollar una estrategia para hacer de la Fundación Libertad la institución no gubernamental, referente liberal, más importante del Paraguay, financieramente independiente, internacionalmente reconocida y con un eficiente impacto en la formación y educación política Liberal de los Ciudadanos, antes del 2020.



L'ÉDUCATION AU XXI SIÈCLE - D'UN POINT DE VUE BURUNDAIS

Alice Nzomukunda, Président du Parti Alliance Démocratique Pour le Renouveau, Burundi

Nous vous remercions de nous donner la parole sur des sujets de nature aussi vitale pour notre pays : l'éducation, les finances et la décentralisation.

Les trois thèmes sont d'autant plus importants pour notre pays que les deux premiers sont dans le cœur de la marche de tout Etat tandis que le second est une méthode d'organisation de la plus grande importance pour une société qui a l'ambition de bien s'organiser.

Qu'il nous soit permis de développer les trois secteurs tels qu'ils sont conçus et organisés dans notre pays et chaque fois suivi du commentaire tel que l'ADR voit les choses.

S'agissant du secteur de l'éducation, le système éducatif burundais est actuellement réparti sur deux ministères : le Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieure et de la Recherche Scientifique et le Ministère de l'Enseignement Primaire et Secondaire. A côté de cette structure, il existe un Ministère de l'Enseignement des Métiers, de l'Alphabétisation et de la Formation Professionnelle. Le Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche Scientifique coiffe les universités publiques et privées. A proprement parler, le titulaire de ce ministère est collé au Recteur de l'Université publique qui fait à peu près la même chose, tandis que son rôle par rapport aux universités privées et quasiment inexistant. Théoriquement, il devrait avoir un regard sur la création des dites universités et leur

fonctionnement. Ce n'est pas le cas. Ces institutions fonctionnent de manière anarchique et sont sans moyens. Les universités privées qui ont des budgets dérisoires reposent sur les professeurs et la bibliothèque de l'université publique. La recherche scientifique fait défaut, en raison principalement de l'absence de budgets. Il y a juste une administration ainsi dénommée.

Il faut relever que l'Université du Burundi, naguère de niveau élevé, a sombré faute de budgets et de la fuite des cerveaux vers l'Europe et le Rwanda voisin.

Sous le contrôle du Ministère de l'Enseignement Primaire et Secondaire, il y a des écoles publiques et privées.

Le Ministère de l'Enseignement des Métiers, de l'Alphabétisation et de la Formation professionnelle a presque exclusivement le rôle d'encadrer les enfants qui n'ont pas réussi les caps de concours qui conduisent aux filières classiques. Il y est administré une formation rudimentaire, qui s'efface quand le bénéficiaire ne devient pas un fonctionnaire sans mission précise.

A y apporter un regard critique, l'on constate que le désordre est généralisé, et la fuite en avant la règle. Les problèmes essentiels sont les effectifs, la faiblesse des ressources humaines et financières. Ajoutez à cela que les lauréats qui s'orientent dans le métier d'enseignant au primaire comme au secondaire sont pour la majorité les moins bons et que le métier

d'enseignement est dévalorisé. De plus, les meilleurs des enseignants ne sont pas toujours mis en avant. Les plus expérimentés et les plus actifs n'ont pas résisté aux vagues de remaniements des équipes gouvernementales et à la politisation de la fonction publique.

Il en a résulté au cours des années une gestion hasardeuse de ce secteur, livré continuellement à des expériences et à des contre expériences. Tous les gouvernements repoussent les problèmes au lendemain. La conséquence, c'est la baisse continue du niveau et l'accumulation des problèmes. A ces problèmes devenus chroniques sont venus s'ajouter ceux liés à la gestion actuelle de ce secteur. Voici un pays livré à la démagogie, où le Gouvernement actuel prône sans discernement l'enseignement gratuit, gratuité qui en réalité bénéficie aux seuls enfants des plus nantis orientés dans les écoles les mieux équipées et les mieux encadrées. Au même moment, les enfants issus des milieux modestes sont entassés dans des salles de classe étroites et dépourvues d'enseignants qualifiés. L'enseignement gratuit est devenu un slogan vide de sens. Au niveau supérieur, l'Etat n'assure pas de réelle orientation, ne procède à aucun contrôle : les universités, les instituts supérieurs et les écoles secondaires poussent comme des champignons dans les quartiers, sans l'outil pédagogique le plus élémentaire. N'importe qui peut créer une école, un institut supérieur ou une université. L'éducation est devenu un vulgaire produit commercial, mais un produit au

rabais dont l'unique raison d'être est de générer des revenus pour l'initiateur. On assiste depuis quelques temps au Burundi à l'arrivée sur le marché du travail d'une jeunesse à la fois diplômée et analphabète.

Tous les ingrédients sont réunis pour faire exploser le pays et l'éloigner davantage des équilibres indispensables déjà précaires. En effet, le chaos du système éducatif n'est pas un phénomène isolé. Il est nourri en amont et a ses prolongements en aval.

Quand l'on pense que le BURUNDI a déjà un taux de natalité de 42,2 %, et que le Gouvernement a introduit une politique de primes à la naissance, par le biais de la gratuité de soins aux femmes enceintes et à l'accouchement et aux jeunes enfants, il ne relève pas du génie de comprendre que le poids démographique ne va pas tarder à annihiler tout effort de développement. Déjà qu'aujourd'hui les terres cultivables sont saturées et que la violence autour de l'enjeu foncier accapare à elle seule l'administration et la justice. C'est dire que si l'éducation est mauvaise aujourd'hui, elle sera catastrophique sous peu.

Et dire qu'au bout d'un cursus scolaire tronqué l'enfant burundais est promis au chômage perpétuel. L'appareil économique étant en arrêt, puisque la machine de production a été détruite ou paralysée par la corruption et les flux financiers pompés de l'extérieur affectés au fonctionnement et à l'entretien de l'administration, les lauréats des universités n'ont pas la moindre chance d'intégrer la classe active. Il est inutile de décrire davantage la chaîne : le manque d'emploi, la pauvreté, l'insécurité, l'instabilité, la guerre et ses corollaires.

Pour l'ADR, le problème de l'éducation passera par une réflexion de tous les acteurs, intérieurs et extérieurs. Il est hypocrite de prétendre réussir le pari de l'éducation sans aborder les problèmes de l'économie et de la pauvreté, de la démographie et de l'emploi. On a beau perfuser l'éducation et repousser l'explosion, celle-ci n'en reviendra que plus imparable. Qu'on appelle cela « états généraux de l'éducation » ou autrement, cela n'a guère d'importance.

En clair, une refonte du système éducatif, orienté vers la qualité et l'équité et au bout duquel se trouve l'emploi s'impose. Rien ne nous empêche de profiter des facilités qu'offrent les technologies de l'information et de la communication. Toute pertinente qu'elle puisse être, la question de gratuité doit être gérée avec

circonspection. Au regard des effectifs concernés par la scolarisation et des possibilités de l'Etat, la politique de gratuité absolue est vouée à l'échec. Non seulement elle s'arrêtera tout de suite faute de budgets, mais elle va paralyser toute l'économie. Il faudra identifier, sur base de critères bien étudiés, les enfants vulnérables, ceux qui sans l'Etat ne pourraient aller à l'école et laisser se prendre en charge ceux qui en ont les moyens.

S'agissant du secteur des Finances, il porte le nom du Ministère des Finances. Nous disons aujourd'hui parce qu'il change souvent de dénomination, au gré des circonstances et parfois de la personne à laquelle l'on veut le confier.

Le Ministère des Finances comprend trois directions générales : (1) Office des Recettes, (2) Marchés Publics et (3) Budget et Comptabilité.

Les finances publiques sont mal gérées, soit que les recettes n'arrivent pas toutes à destination, soit que les dépenses sont mal orientées, injustifiées, gonflées à bon escient. L'opacité dans la gestion des fonds publics est la règle. Le Président de la République distribue à sa discrétion et sans compter les fonds publics. La gestion des marchés publics est tout simplement devenue un vaste champ de corruption. Pour ce qui reste des détournements, les finances publiques n'ont pas d'autre finalité que d'entretenir la bureaucratie. Il n'y a pas de véritable investissement vers la production.

Les finances publiques sont gangrenées par des déficits budgétaires chroniques accentuées par des malversations économiques, la gabegie à travers les missions injustifiées à l'étranger ainsi que les fêtes et le détournement de deniers publics. L'existence d'une assemblée nationale, d'une cour des comptes, d'une inspection générale de l'Etat et de l'appareil judiciaire est sans aucun effet sur la gestion des fonds publics.

La corruption est telle qu'aucun service ne peut être obtenu de l'administration sans pots de vin, principalement dans les services de la douane, les impôts, la police et la justice. Les recrutements et les promotions à la fonction publique sont monnayés. Les immeubles de l'Etat sont délaissés au profit de la location des immeubles des particuliers, avec des commissions sous table. La corruption comme mode de gouvernement est arrivé à un tel point que des assassinats sont commis sur les juges, les membres des associations de lutte contre la corruption, tandis que l'intimidation est chose banale. Sur ce terrain, l'ADR considère qu'il faut mettre de l'ordre. Ce qui veut dire : collecte des recettes et

versement effectifs dans les caisses de l'Etat, instauration d'une inspection des finances de l'Etat digne de ce nom, mise en place de mécanisme légaux et administratifs de contrôle. Mais derrière cet exercice de gestion, il faudrait instaurer la culture du respect de la chose publique. S'agissant de la décentralisation, il s'agit d'un mode de gestion quasi-inexistant au BURUNDI. S'il est vrai qu'on en parle dans la Constitution et dans la loi communale qui attribuent à la Commune un rôle de pôle de développement, et même s'il y a sur papier décentralisation dans le secteur de l'éducation, il n'y a pas de décentralisation dans la vie réelle. Au contraire, le BURUNDI pratique la centralisation à outrance. Pour ce qui est de la prise des décisions, tout se passe en haut, au Gouvernement particulièrement, puisque même l'Assemblée Nationale lui est subordonnée. L'autorité administrative locale comme l'élu local est un simple exécutant. Elle ne pense pas plus qu'elle ne prend d'initiative, ni ne décide. Ainsi, un grand pourcentage des élus locaux de 2005 a été relevé des assemblées locales par décisions administratives. Pour ce qui est de la gestion des ressources, les impôts et taxes collectés à travers tout le pays sont remis à la tête de l'Etat qui les affecte en priorité à son fonctionnement. Il y a de simples ponctions du bas vers le haut, avec de très faibles redistributions. Voilà une des raisons qui explique l'appauvrissement continu des collectivités. Le pays a beau recevoir des prêts et dons, il ne change pas de visage. Pour le parti ADR, cet état des choses se traduit par l'absence de responsabilité que l'on observe à travers tout le pays. Les collectivités attendent tout, les ressources comme les initiatives, du Président de la République, avec comme résultat l'immobilisme. Pour y remédier, notre parti est d'avis que les collectivités locales doivent, sur les plans politique et administratif, disposer de pouvoirs réels de décision pour certaines matières, ainsi que d'un pouvoir de gestion sur au moins une partie des ressources de leur ressort. Au bout du compte, le pays ne pourrait se développer au niveau national sans que l'économie n'évolue au niveau local, notamment par la création de richesses.

S'agissant particulièrement de la création des richesses au niveau local, le parti ADR pense notamment à :

- la spécialisation des régions dans la production selon leurs potentialités naturelles, suivies de la mise en place de petites unités locales de transformation.
- l'installation d'institutions financières de proximité (micro finances).
- la mise en place de banques de crédit spécialisées.



L'ÉDUCATION AU XXI SIÈCLE

Arthur Bodson, Administrateur délégué du Centre Jean Gol

J'ai, dans cette assemblée, un grand privilège, mais c'est aussi un triste privilège. C'est que je suis probablement le doyen d'âge. L'espérance de vie moyenne de ma génération, dans mon pays, aurait dû m'empêcher de fêter l'an 2000. Or me voici, en 2009, participant à l'ouverture d'un colloque sur l'éducation au 21ème siècle. Suis-je bien sérieux ?

Je vous fais une autre confidence : je suis né dans une école, dans la partie logement que la commune mettait à la disposition de l'instituteur, mon père. Il y a trois autres enseignants dans ma famille et j'ai moi-même enseigné toute ma vie. Enseigné quoi ? Le latin et le grec ancien, deux langues dites mortes. Je suis donc un pur produit du cocon scolaire, dont on sait qu'il est étranger à la vraie vie et, de surcroît, je m'occupe d'antiquités. Que puis-je donc apporter dans un congrès politique qui analyse la société contemporaine et veut peser sur l'avenir ?

Ce que je viens de vous dire explique pourquoi j'ai renoncé à apporter ma contribution à l'un ou l'autre des quatre sous-thèmes que vous allez traiter et qui vont l'être par des personnes dont la jeunesse, le dynamisme, la proactivité me rendent jaloux. Cela dit, ces quatre problématiques sont importantes, parmi les plus importantes qui puissent mobiliser les partis politiques en matière d'éducation et on ne pourra pas les esquiver dans les années qui viennent.

On pourrait y ajouter d'autres questions incontournables. Je songe en particulier

au rôle de l'Etat dans l'éducation, question évidemment interpellante pour les libéraux. L'Etat doit-il être organisateur de l'enseignement et seul maître à bord, ou simple bailleur de fonds, ou encore régulateur prévenant les dérives potentielles d'une privatisation générale ? Autant de questions essentielles qui ont préoccupé récemment l'UNESCO. (1)

Mais j'ai choisi un autre thème. C'est celui de la nécessaire et difficile évolution des contenus de l'enseignement. Il me convient mieux, parce que j'ai beaucoup de recul pour mesurer combien le monde a changé. J'espère en outre qu'il est adapté à vos préoccupations prospectives.

L'enseignement ne cesse de susciter, en tout cas dans l'ensemble des sociétés européennes, et particulièrement en France et en Belgique, des débats incessants sur ses aspects les plus divers et à tous les étages de l'institution scolaire. C'est devenu l'affaire de tout le monde (sciences humaines, patronat, syndicats ou organisations professionnelles, parents, étudiants (même en bas âge), presse, etc.).

On remarquera qu'aucune question, si dérisoire qu'elle soit, ne fait l'unanimité. C'est un domaine où toute proposition déclenche automatiquement contre-proposition ou refus. Les affrontements, crises, grèves, se répètent à l'infini et je n'apprendrai pas à notre assemblée que le portefeuille de Ministre de l'Education est devenu l'une des patates chaudes des majorités gouvernementales. On la réserve même parfois à un homme ou une femme

à abattre...et ça marche! Je n'évoquerai pas ici toutes les questions qui agitent les forces en présence, depuis le poids des cartables ou les restaurants scolaires jusqu'au rêve d'arriver au Grand Soir par l'école en passant par les revendications salariales ou l'âge de la retraite des enseignants.

Dans cette vaste cacophonie, le monde politique, si bavard d'habitude, parle au total assez peu d'un sujet que l'on pourrait croire essentiel, central, et qui cependant fait rarement l'actualité. Je veux parler des contenus de l'enseignement.

Il y a pourtant, dans le monde où nous vivons, un véritable paradoxe entre, d'une part, la rapidité et l'importance des changements que vivent nos sociétés et, d'autre part, la permanence, la forte stabilité, pour ne pas dire la résistance au changement, des contenus de notre enseignement.

Pour illustrer, faire mieux saisir le premier terme du paradoxe, je me permets encore une fois une allusion personnelle. Mon père, instituteur, que j'ai évoqué tantôt, est mort en 1940, alors que j'étais encore très jeune. Si quelqu'un lui avait annoncé ce que verrait, ce que vivrait son fils, bien qu'il fût pour l'époque un homme instruit, je crois qu'il aurait crié à la folie ou à l'imposture. J'éprouve ainsi combien la plupart d'entre nous mesurent mal l'énormité de la mutation vécue en un demi-siècle, mutation non seulement matérielle, scientifique, technologique, mais aussi, comme tout se tient, sociologique,

métaphysique, éthique, etc. Bref, nos rapports à l'espace, au temps, au monde, aux autres, ont été profondément élargis et bouleversés.

En Europe, il faut remonter à la Renaissance, avec les grandes découvertes, la Réforme, les humanistes, pour trouver un phénomène d'une telle ampleur. Une révolution européenne de l'école a d'ailleurs été nécessaire et inévitable pour digérer ce changement et adapter l'institution scolaire aux temps nouveaux. Notons qu'elle a pris beaucoup de temps.

Aujourd'hui, c'est le monde entier qui, à des degrés divers, est concerné par la révolution qui se déroule. Je n'insiste pas davantage sur cette évidence.

Toutefois, dans ce paysage changeant, les matières enseignées dans l'enseignement obligatoire restent, comme je l'ai dit plus haut, d'une remarquable stabilité. A ce propos, je m'en tiendrai à l'enseignement secondaire général, celui qui, une fois acquis les outils fondamentaux – du moins en principe –, ouvre les esprits au monde et prépare à la fois à la poursuite des études et à la vie. C'est aussi celui qui alimente le plus les controverses.

Que constate-t-on ?

Les grandes rubriques, les matières soigneusement cataloguées qui structurent les activités des classes ne changent guère. Elles ont d'ailleurs traversé l'histoire depuis les premiers collèges fondés par les Jésuites. La part du lion et le prestige restent l'apanage de quelques disciplines avec une seule exception en Europe : la perte d'hégémonie – mais pas la disparition – des langues anciennes, latin et grec.

On me dira que ces disciplines éternelles sont incontournables. On me dira encore que ces secteurs traditionnels sont des étiquettes et que les contenus ont évolué.

Est-ce bien vrai ?

Il faudrait ici entrer dans de menus détails et mon temps est limité.

Je ne puis que vous apporter des questionnements, tout en vous invitant à observer au quotidien sur quoi on fait travailler vos enfants et petits-enfants en 2009 et à mettre ce travail en relation soit avec leur vie future, soit avec leur formation générale. Quelle place est réservée, par exemple, à l'économie, aux arts, à la formation citoyenne, à la construction européenne – je parle ici pour mes compatriotes –, à la mondialisation, aux grandes questions scientifiques, aux loisirs, aux nouvelles techniques de l'information et de la communication, à l'envahissement de l'audio-visuel, à

l'écologie, à la fracture Nord-Sud, à la nouvelle rhétorique de l'image et des slogans... ? Je viens de vous débiter ainsi une liste banale mais non-exhaustive de mots qui caractérisent le monde actuel, le monde auquel l'école est censée préparer. Dirigeant naguère encore une université, j'ai souvent pu mesurer combien l'ouverture à ce monde était lacunaire chez les étudiants que j'accueillais. Cette inadéquation, ce fossé entre l'école et la vie n'est pas nouveau et il a toujours été critiqué. Il atteint cependant des proportions inquiétantes qui mettent en cause la légitimité même de l'école.

Je vous livre à ce propos deux témoignages, l'un anecdotique, l'autre plus fondamental. Récemment encore, la France a lancé une grande réforme du lycée (les réformes sont toujours grandes). Le journal *Le Monde* du 22 octobre 2009 (2) tente un bilan des réformes de ces vingt dernières années. C'est à chaque fois l'échec. Une phrase résume tout l'article : Personne n'ose faire le ménage dans les savoirs. Plus important est l'ouvrage collectif que viennent de publier des universitaires français, dont le plus connu est Marcel Gauchet, sous le titre *Conditions de l'Éducation* (3). C'est un ouvrage à la fois passionnant et à mes yeux indispensable pour qui réfléchit aux questions que nous préoccupent ici. Ce n'est pas le énième ouvrage qui dit ce qu'il faut faire. Il pose une question en amont. Pourquoi l'enseignement peine-t-il à s'adapter aux temps nouveaux ? Bonne question, car ne pas voir les obstacles, ne pas se préparer à les surmonter ou à les dépasser, c'est vouer les réformes à l'échec, c'est aller dans le mur.

Voici comment les auteurs définissent leur sujet dans leur Avant-propos :

« Ce livre propose un diagnostic : ce sont les conditions de possibilité mêmes de l'entreprise éducative qui se voient aujourd'hui remises en question par l'évolution de nos sociétés. Toute une série de données qui semblaient aller de soi et qui servaient de socle à l'institution scolaire ont été ébranlées, voire sont en passe de disparaître. Il ne s'agit pas de déplorer l'évanouissement d'un passé vers lequel aucun retour n'est imaginable ni souhaitable. Il s'agit de mettre en lumière l'impact d'une série de transformations majeures et de faire ressortir le défi qu'elles représentent.

Ce n'est qu'à ce niveau qu'on peut véritablement comprendre les difficultés auxquelles l'éducation est en butte et prendre la mesure de la tâche de refondation qui est devant nous. L'analyse se développe sur quatre fronts : les relations de l'école avec la famille, le sens des savoirs qu'elle dispense, l'autorité dont elle a besoin, sa place dans la société.

» (p.7) Comme on le voit, parmi les sujets traités figure l'inadéquation des savoirs scolaires à la société contemporaine, à ses attentes, à sa réceptivité, à ses besoins.

Voici quelques citations à ce sujet :

« Le sens des savoirs. S'il y avait au moins un appui qui semblait inébranlable, c'était la valeur intrinsèque des savoirs dispensés par l'école et l'évidence de la nécessité de les acquérir, le seul problème étant d'en faciliter l'accès. Or force est de constater que cette évidence s'est défaite. (p. 8)

Le constat est devenu banal : dans un certain nombre de disciplines, ou la totalité, aux différents niveaux de système d'enseignement, très tôt, parfois, les connaissances proposées rebutent les élèves parce qu'elles ne font pas sens à leurs yeux. Ils ne voient pas les raisons de s'y intéresser, ils ne perçoivent pas les finalités de ce qu'on prétend leur apprendre, ni la cohérence des différents enseignements qu'ils reçoivent. D'où le sentiment d'arbitraire répandu chez les élèves.

D'où l'ennui reproché à l'école, à tous les degrés, par les enfants et les parents. D'où le rejet des savoirs et de l'institution scolaire attesté par de multiples phénomènes de démobilité, d'absentéisme, voire de « phobie scolaire ». Le constat est assez largement partagé pour avoir suscité de multiples initiatives et propositions destinées à répondre à cette interpellation. Pédagogues et responsables se sont employés à chercher les moyens de remobiliser les élèves en rendant les savoirs plus attractifs par une présentation plus sensée...

Il faudra un jour dresser le bilan détaillé de ces tentatives d'adaptation des programmes et des méthodes. Force est de constater qu'elles se sont montrées remarquablement contre-productives, dans l'ensemble. Elles n'ont guère abouti qu'à élargir le fossé qu'elles voulaient combler, faute d'une juste appréciation de la question posée...

Ce constat est suivi d'un appel à l'implication du monde extérieur à l'école, donc au monde politique :

La vérité est que nous ne sommes pas devant un problème technique qui pourrait être réglé par des moyens scolaires. La pédagogie se heurte en ce point à un phénomène qui la dépasse de beaucoup. Un phénomène civilisationnel et anthropologique fondamental, qui ne peut être valablement abordé qu'en le sortant du cadre des institutions éducatives. (pp. 65-66). J'espère vous avoir donné le désir de lire cet ouvrage collectif et de vérifier dans quelle mesure il est pertinent pour le système éducatif en vigueur dans vos pays.

Il l'est en tout cas pour bien des pays d'Europe occidentale. Si l'on suit les auteurs, rendre du sens aux contenus de l'enseignement est donc une tâche primordiale. Les partis politiques qui ont le désir et la prétention d'apporter des solutions aux problèmes éducatifs se doivent d'y contribuer. Après tout, ce sont d'habitude les Etats qui condamnent la jeunesse aux travaux forcés scolaires. Si ce droit leur est généralement reconnu, il comporte surtout des devoirs, dont celui de veiller à la pertinence de ces travaux forcés.

Si l'on veut avancer, trois démarches au moins sont nécessaires. 1. Une réflexion approfondie sur les savoirs prioritaires. 2. Une analyse lucide de la réceptivité des sociétés actuelles. 3. Le recours à quelques tactiques élémentaires qui ont fait leurs preuves et qui sont trop négligées. Je ne m'étendrai que sur ce dernier point en rappelant trois recettes utiles même si elles ne sont pas la panacée.

1. Mesurer l'inertie intellectuelle et syndicale de la machine scolaire. Je n'insiste pas : il est politiquement incorrect et dangereux d'évoquer les grands pachydermes préhistoriques.

2. Se méfier d'expressions comme « une grande réforme » ou « une réforme urgente » ou encore « le lycée du 21e siècle ». Ces gesticulations oratoires donnent le sentiment qu'on va aboutir tout de suite et que ça va passer sans résistance. Elles ne peuvent conduire qu'à la désillusion et au découragement. Je me souviens de l'annonce triomphale faite il y a quelques années dans mon pays que tous les enfants seraient trilingues en l'an 2000.

Certes, il faut voir grand, ne pas traîner et penser à l'avenir, mais aussi utiliser des stratégies et des tactiques qui ne conduisent pas d'office à l'échec. En l'occurrence, la guérilla est probablement plus efficace que les grandes offensives. Il faut, je crois, procéder par réformes (au pluriel) et non croire à la possibilité d'une révolution. Il faut créer des espaces de liberté, des exemples qui peu à peu modifieront le système. Bref, il faut convaincre par l'exemple.

3. Il faut savoir de quoi l'on parle et se méfier des idées sommaires. Sur ce point, permettez-moi une dernière anecdote, qui me ramène à mes chères études. Le parlement belge francophone s'est disputé naguère pendant un an sur le maintien de l'enseignement du latin au début du lycée. A cette époque venaient d'être publiés en France deux ouvrages remarquables sur la question : la thèse de Françoise WAQUET (4), favorable à la disparition du latin des lycées, et le rapport de JUDET et WISMANN, rendu à la demande de deux ministres français, Jacques Lang

et Luc Ferry, qui argumentaient en faveur du latin. (5) Ce qui est intéressant dans cette affaire, c'est, vérification faite, qu'aucun parlementaire ne les avait lus, pas plus que la ministre responsable. Cependant, tous participèrent allègrement aux votes. Je terminerai sur cette anecdote grinçante.

Elle illustre mes deux préoccupations, que je crois très libérales. La première, que j'ai évoquée très brièvement en commençant, concerne les limites du rôle de l'Etat en matière d'éducation, la seconde est de lui rappeler, quand il s'en mêle, son devoir d'adaptation aux besoins de la société qu'il prétend diriger.



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TECHNOLOGY AND DEMOCRACY: THE GENIE IS OUT OF THE BOTTLE

Marietje Schaake, MEP for D66/ALDE

Technology has changed the world and is changing democracy and politics. The digital revolution's impact on our democracies has only just begun. The democratic uprising in Iran, that went around the globe through clips filmed on cell phones and posted on YouTube made us eyewitness to both the brutality of the Iranian regime against its own people, as well as the bravery of countless ordinary Iranians to stand for democracy and human rights. It gave an insight into a self-isolated country, out of which reliable news and citizen reports previously would not reach the world so loudly and clearly. While many politicians in Europe do not understand the significance of new media and how it can change societies and democracies, repressive regimes are well aware of the potential to share ideas, expose injustice and to gather people. These regimes consider this openness a threat to closed and forced governance without the people's legitimacy, and therefore repress it.

Many events and topics are impacted significantly by the way we can use information technology. Summarized as 'new media', these developments change the lives we live as citizens, politicians, consumers, readers, artists, entrepreneurs or youngsters, touching almost all people. The powerful way in which ideas can spread and people can connect over ideas creates both opportunities and threats. In any case, to believe we can reverse the presence of internet, mobile phones, social networks and spying software is an illusion: the genie is out of the bottle. As liberals we have to be fully aware of the new playing field that technology is

creating. This new playing field has political implications when it comes to freedom of expression, democratisation and accountability. It is a natural fit for liberal politicians to take the lead in implementing democratisation through new media and technology.

Opportunities

Allowing for greater access to ideas, art and information, new media developments increase the potential of democratic participation and transparency. The United States government has acknowledged the significance of new media and is implementing it in several fields such as in public diplomacy, as well as in the openness to citizens the government displays.

Earlier the election campaign of Barack Obama showed how new media could help him spread his message to previously disconnected citizens. The campaign also created platforms for hundreds of thousands of people to organize their own local events for his campaign. This cooperation between citizens, governments and politicians is now dubbed: 'we.gov', governing together. The White House has appointed a Chief Information Officer who recently pledged to release hundreds of thousands of so called 'raw data feeds' online. This undigested public information can then be used by citizens to build applications and to create new services. A comparison of campaign financing and voting behaviour of Members of the House of Representatives and Senators for example exposed how voting behaviour may be impacted by those who fund campaigns.

A woman in New York City calculated the amount of money a housing block spends on the youngsters living on that block to be imprisoned. Her initiative sparked a debate about whether these millions of dollars spent on education could have led to less crime among the young inner city generations. The opportunities for democratization taking place in democratic societies are enhanced by governments that don't fear citizens and their ideas. But there are also threats, especially when governments are not open and democratic.

Threats

Governments who fear ideas and liberty have engaged in profiling and censorship, limiting privacy and freedom. Social networks such as Facebook can be used to build networks behind pro-democracy forces, but they can also be used by oppressors to map connections between people, to trace them and to arrest them. Currently people are imprisoned in Azerbaijan, China, Egypt, Birma and other countries because of the blogs they write, the tweets they send and the Facebook friends they have. Without awareness people simply using social networks can endanger themselves and their friends.

Oppressive regimes also use filter software to trace political dissidents and to limit free speech by banning certain websites or limiting access to internet to certain people. Ironically, the software sold to these regimes has also been built in Western democracies. Proposals to prevent this from happening in the future are under way.

Europe

European leaders have not yet fully tuned into the meaning and significance of the changes new media will bring to our societies, and to their work as politicians. The increased transparency that new media enables, exposes a lack of democratic participation, and allows for protest voices to be bundled despite geographical distances. Online protests thus expose the gaps in democracy, transparency and accountability, gaps of which there are too many in the current European institutions and decision making. Increasingly, people mobilize voices from the bottom up, fostering a sense of shared responsibility, and the legitimacy of politicians. These developments should be welcomed by politicians and used to communicate more openly with the public, to get them involved.

to realise the goals of democracy, freedom of speech and liberal values such as the protection of human rights. These developments should also be used

Developing world

Besides democratisation, participation and human rights, new media can speed up a number of processes in developing countries. To name a few: access to information across borders can allow information on sexual and reproductive health in regions where taboos may exist. In Kenya a text message system connecting supply and demand for farmers allows them to bring crops to the markets where there will be a demand. In areas where walking distances to markets can be several hours, connecting supply and demand through mobile phones leads to more efficiency

and economic development.

Conclusion

The world over new media and technology are impacting peoples lives, professions and societies. Whether a true marketplace of ideas will lead to more broadly supported democracies remains to be seen. While keeping a critical eye for the threats, the opportunities lead to hope and excitement.

A new kind of leadership is needed to foster free speech, human rights and democratisation through new media and technology. Liberals have a long track record in fighting for these principles. We should take the lead in understanding and fostering democratisation through new media and technology.



BIOGRAPHY

Marietje Schaake (Born 28 October 1978, Leiden) is a Dutch member of the European Parliament for LI Full Member D66. Before joining the European Parliament in July 2009 at the age of 30, Marietje Schaake was a freelance consultant for the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Dutch Film Festival New York.

She was member of the Board of Directors of Humanity in Action, as well as President of the Senior Fellow Network of Humanity in Action.

In 2007, she was awarded the Barney Karbank Memorial Award for outstanding leadership in the field of human rights.

Marietje Schaake published several articles and a book about the relation between the Muslim world and the West.

She has been involved in a McKinsey and Co project about education and the corporate world in The Netherlands.



DECENTRALIZATION, FINANCE AND EDUCATION - THE RUSSIAN PERSPECTIVE

Dr. Sergei Mitrokhin, Leader of LI Full member YABLOKO, Russia

It is certain that only well-educated people can be truly free, and only such people can ensure prosperity, peace and security. That is why we give high importance to education issues whenever YABLOKO has a chance to influence Russia's state policies. Thus, When YABLOKO had a faction in the State Duma, the Russian parliament; our representative Alexander Shishlov headed the parliamentary Education Committee. When YABLOKO had a faction in the Moscow City Duma, the Moscow regional parliament, my colleague Eugeni Bunimovich headed the same committee there.

We managed to make a number of serious steps towards the modernization of the education system in Russia. Maybe the most noticeable was Russia's joining the Bologna process - the formation of pan-European higher education. In the Moscow City Duma we managed to significantly increase the financing of education.

Despite considerable differences between countries, conditioned by the specifics of the governments and socio-economic development, the essence of decentralization in the education sector is the same: it is always a transfer of power and responsibilities, most importantly financial responsibilities, from the centre to the regional and local bodies. In our view the common goals here are the following:

1. ensuring transparency of the education system which should take into account the interests of all the participants in the education process

2. Individualization of the "educational paths" in accordance with individual needs of the pupils

3. Provision of academic mobility

4. Preservation of integrity of a single national educational area which is especially important for federal and multi-national states

5. Increasing the quality and competitiveness of national education systems.

Let us take a quick look at the present Russian education system, which is quite young compared to the Soviet system. The Russian Federation law "On Education", recognized as one of the most liberal in the world, was adopted in 1992. Theoretically it offered great liberties to Russian teachers: they could have a free hand in the choice of programmes, textbooks, etc.

However, the law did not include solutions for financing the program. As time went by, the system of financing education developed the following redistribution of power and responsibilities between the federal, the regional and the municipal level:

- the federal state preserved its powers in the legal regulations, establishing of federal educational standards, control over their implementation, and financing of universities

- the regional level held the powers for allotting subventions to the municipal entities for paying wages to the workers of the

sector, provision of the education process and establishing corresponding expenditure standards on the regional level;

- The municipal level held the powers for material and technical support for pre-school educational institutions and schools (in other words, actual spending, solution of all the administrative and logistical problems for schools).

Thus, we can speak about the following trend: during decentralization the state loses its monopoly in the education sector. At the same time the importance of the reliability of information provided to the participants of the educational process grows. Professional communities and consumers should gradually become the key subjects of the regulation.

This model looks quite smooth in theory, but in reality it had to face a major problem - under financing.

Even in the best years of Russia's economy, when oil prices were very high, state financing of the education sector was insufficient. This led to the development of dramatic differences in provision of certain standards (the basic minimum standard) in financing per one person in Russia's different regions. In Moscow such minimum standard of financing allows for USD 2,000 per person annually, in other regions this can be as low as USD 300. This shows that in such a situation people of the same social background studying in the best educational institutions

of their regions would still get a different quality of education. This leaves us with great differentiation in the quality of education per region and depending on household income.

Also differentiation of Russian regions between poor and rich also manifested itself in the under financing of the education sector: poor regions covered only about 30-35% of the basic minimum standard. Rich regions (such as Moscow) covered about 70-75% of the basic minimum standard, albeit none of them managed to cover 100%.

Consequently, educational institutions had to find ways and means to cover under financing (varying from 30 to 70%). Their solution lay in the introduction of the so-called "paid educational services" even in the state educational institutions without tuition fees. This marked the development of a "wild market" of services in the education sector; Russian educational institutions were simply put in such a situation when they had to beg for money from students or their parents; giving way to corruption.

As an example: there is a single state standard regarding school curriculum. However, if a child needs to study some subjects deeper or requires more hours for a particular subject, his parents have to pay for this. Not all families can afford paying for such education, not to mention the needs of those families with special needs children.

We consider under financing in the field of education to be a factor of social inequality. It leads to a gap in the starting conditions for the rich and the poor and, consequently, a reduction of freedom, as people with a poor background can not make use of their abilities and talents, and, consequently, can not realize their freedoms and liberties to the full extent.

In Moscow YABLOKO managed to introduce, via the Moscow parliament, over 20 educational standards addressing different categories of pupils (for example, talented mathematicians, musicians, special-needs children, etc). We proceeded from the fact that it is in the interests of the country to become educated.

However, the Ministry of Education has been insisting on a single educational standard. Most crucially: what does this ideology of "paid educational services" mean for us? Should we regard education as a national priority or view it as a department store where the richest customer gets the most? Somehow we developed the latter

approach when a talented student can not get access to proper education as he simply cannot afford it. The social lift function was virtually eliminated. The new Russian elite has been continuously reproducing itself conserving the status quo, not allowing fresh minds to come from the outside.

The YABLOKO party assumes that the state, acting via federal and regional governments should not leave the education sector, vice versa it should provide equal access to education to all citizens. And this does not contradict the liberal idea, as well-educated free citizens make a better labour force.

President Medvedev in his recent address to the Russian parliament mostly spoke about modernization of the education and the science sector in Russia, quite correctly stressing that the country cannot progress without modernizing these sectors. However, he said nothing about liberalization of these sectors, which in our view turns his intentions into mere words. In contrary we in YABLOKO regard liberalization of education and increasing participation of the civil society in the governing of the education sector as one of the most important steps in modernization of education in Russia. YABLOKO introduced to the State Duma, a draft law on school Governing Councils, encouraging participation of parents and other representatives of local communities in the school governance. It is sad to say but the

Russian government and its party United Russia were not interested in this and our draft law was rejected. However, we are certain that active public participation in the education system is an indispensable condition for efficient decentralization of the education sector.

This year the Single State Exam was introduced all over Russia instead of individual entrance exams in the universities. One of its goals was to eliminate corruption. School Students had to gather a certain number of points to be able to apply to a university. However, this did not produce the desired effect simply channeling corruption to other areas. There suddenly emerged regions producing a great number of students with very high points of the Single State Exam. After some investigation it turned out that the results were simply overstated, very much like election results in voting for the progovernmental United Russia party. Moreover, it turned out that these were the same regions - producing unrealistically high scores in the Single State Exam and surprisingly high percentage of "votes" for the governmental party. Which drives us to a conclusion: there can be no transparency in the education sector in a non-transparent and un-democratic country. For us in YABLOKO this is yet further proof of that assessing any transformations, including decentralization of the education sector, should be based on the key modern liberal values.



The party dates back to early 1990s. The immediate predecessor of the Yabloko party was the electoral cartel Yavlinsky-Boldyrev-Lukin, formed for the legislative elections of 1993. "Yabloko" is an acronym of the names of its founders: Я (Ya) for Grigory Yavlinsky; Б (B) for Yuri Boldyrev, and Л (L) for Vladimir Lukin, the name meaning "apple" in Russian. The party stands for the greater freedom and civil liberties in Russia, for greater integration with the West and membership in the European Union.

The party opposed president Yeltsin's and his prime ministers' policies, earning the reputation of a determined opposition movement that nevertheless was devoted to democratic reforms (in contrast, most of the opposition was communist and/or nationalist at that time)[1]. Similarly, it has continued to oppose Vladimir Putin for what they see as his increasing authoritarianism and has called for the removal of his elected government "by constitutional means." Originally established as a public organization in 1993, it transformed into a political party in 2001. On elections in 2007 the party was left without seats in the Parliament



VENEZUELA: LA NUEVA LEY DE EDUCACIÓN SOCIALISTA

Rocio Guijarro, directora ejecutiva de Cdice Libertad, Venezuela

En Venezuela la Asamblea Nacional, controlada por amplia mayoría por el presidente Hugo Chávez, aprobó recientemente una nueva Ley Orgánica de Educación (LOE). La arrogancia y el fanatismo oficialista impidieron que la discusión de esa ley, se convirtiera en un debate abierto sobre los problemas pedagógicos y los desafíos que la nación debe encarar para colocar el sistema de enseñanza en palanca del desarrollo integral del país. El Gobierno utilizó su maquinaria para imponer un modelo sectario y atrasado de la enseñanza. La comunidad educativa, integrada por los padres y representantes, los estudiantes, los trabajadores y los funcionarios con responsabilidades en el sector educativo, tendría que ser la responsable de darle al proceso pedagógico ese carácter integral que debe tener.

El Estado, en conjunto con los factores de la sociedad ligados a la escuela, tiene la obligación de propiciar una educación que forme para la vida productiva y la convivencia civilizada. En la Venezuela chavista ha resurgido el fantasma maoísta, ese que los chinos se propusieron desterrar hace treinta años, después de que Deng Xiao Ping derrotó a la Banda de los Cuatro. La Ley Orgánica de Educación (LOE) representa una oda a esa escuela “participativa”, “comunitaria” y empobrecida pedagógicamente que, en medio de sus delirios totalitarios, proyectaron Mao y su versión tropical, el Che Guevara. En los 50 artículos que integran la LOE no se abordan ninguno de los grandes desafíos que confronta Venezuela para lograr una educación de excelencia,

que además de incluir las grandes mayorías, nos permita contar con una masa crítica de profesores, maestros y estudiantes, capaces de asumir en condiciones óptimas los retos del crecimiento económico y el bienestar social. En ese texto no aparecen indicadas las exigencias que debe encarar la educación para resolver problemas, innovar, inventar y desplegar todas las capacidades creativas encerradas en la niñez, la juventud y los docentes venezolanos. La LOE es un texto que parece redactado por los miembros del Partido Bolchevique en la época en que Stalin ya controlaba totalmente esa maquinaria. En ese texto la educación pasa a ser una sección del Partido y un componente para mantener la “revolución permanente”.

Forma parte del dispositivo global que preserva el predominio de la casta gobernante. Además, es una ley centralista que se subordina a las directrices del primer plan socialista de la nación, el plan 2007-2013, aprobado por la Asamblea Nacional a comienzos de 2008, luego de que el pueblo había derrotado el 2 de diciembre de 2007 la reforma constitucional socialista presentada por Hugo Chávez en agosto de este mismo año. La obsesión de Hugo Chávez, orientada a su eternización en el poder y no a la liberación de los ciudadanos, terminará por degradar aún más la educación, ya suficientemente envilecida por este gobierno. La LOE en vez de resolver los graves problemas de la educación, lo que hace es agravarlos.





MEMBERS AND LEADERS

Liberal International

Member Parties

Partit Liberal D'Andorra (PLA) - Andorra
 Partido Liberal Democratico (PLD) - Angola
 Liberales Forum (LF) - Austria
 Mouvement Réformateur (MR) - Belgium
 Vlaamse Liberalen en Democraten (VLD) - Belgium
 National Movement for Upsurge and Stability (NMSS) - Bulgaria
 Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) - Bulgaria
 Alliance pour la Démocratie et la Fédération/Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (ADF/RDA) - Burkina Faso
 Liberal Party of Canada (LPC) - Canada
 Alliance Nationale des Démocrates pour la Reconstruction (ANADER) - Congo
 Partido Movimiento Libertario (ML) - Costa Rica
 Rassemblement des Républicains (RDR) - Cote d'Ivoire
 Hrvatska Socijalno Liberalna Stranka (HSLS) - Croatia
 Partido Liberal de Cuba (PLC) - Cuba
 Partido Solidaridad Democrática (PSD) - Cuba
 Unión Liberal Cubana (ULC) - Cuba
 Det Radikale Venstre - Denmark
 Venstre - Denmark
 Unión Democrática Nacional (UDENA) - Ecuatorial Guinea
 Democratic Front Party (DFP) - Egypt
 Reform Party - Estonia
 Suomen Keskusta - Finland
 Swedish People's Party (SFP) - Finland
 Freie Demokratische Partei (FDP) - Germany
 Liberal Party of Gibraltar (LP) - Gibraltar
 Partido Liberal de Honduras (PLH) - Honduras
 Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz) - Hungary
 Radicali Italiani - Italy
 Israeli Liberal Group - Israel
 Progressive Party (PP) - Iceland
 Liberal Party of Kosovo - Kosovo
 Alliance Latvia's Way - Latvia
 Liberal and Centre Union (L&CU) - Lithuania
 Demokratesch Partei (DP) - Luxembourg
 Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) - Macedonia
 Movement for the Progress of Madagascar (MFM) - Madagascar
 Union Constitutionnelle (UC) - Morocco
 Mouvement Populaire (MP) - Morocco
 Democraten 66 (D66) - Netherlands
 People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) - Netherlands
 Venstre - Norway
 Partido Justicia Nacional (PJN) - Peru
 Liberal Party of the Philippines (LP) - Philippines
 National Liberal Party (PNL) - Romania
 Yabloko - Russia
 Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS) - Senegal
 Liberals of Serbia (LS) - Serbia

Liberal Democracy of Slovenia (LDS) - Slovenia
 Democratic Alliance (DA) - South Africa
 Freedom and Democracy (Li i D) - Spain
 Unió Mallorquina (UM) - Spain
 Liberal Party of Sri Lanka (LP) - Sri Lanka
 Folkpartiet Liberalerna (FL) - Sweden
 Centre Party of Sweden - Sweden Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) - Taiwan
 Parti Social Libéral (PSL) - Tunisia
 Civic United Front (CUF) - Tanzania
 The Democrat Party - Thailand
 Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
 Alliance Party of Northern Ireland - UK
 Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe of the Council of Europe (ALDE)
 Liberal Democrats (LibDems) - UK
 Deutsche Gruppe der LI (DGLI)
 British Group of Liberal International (LIBG) - UK
 International Federation of Liberal Youth (IFLYY)
 International Network of Liberal Women (INLW)
 Netherlands Group of LI (LIGN) - Netherlands

Observers

Reconstruction for Growth (Recrear) - Argentina
 LDP- Bosnia and Herzegovina
 Brazilian Group of Liberal International - Brazil
 National League for Democracy, Liberated Areas (NLD-LA) - Burma
 Alliance Democratique Pour le Renouveau (ADR) - Burundi
 Alliance Pour le Renouveau du Congo (ARC) - DR Congo
 Union Pour La Reconstruction Du Congo (UREC) - DR Congo
 Croatian People's Party (HNS) - Croatia
 Sam Rainsy Party - Cambodia
 El Ghad - Egypt
 Republican Party of Georgia - Georgia
 Movimiento Reformador (MR) - Guatemala
 Union des Forces Républicaines (UFR) - Guinea
 Progressive Democrats (PD) - Ireland
 Liberal Vannin Party - Isle of Man
 Federation of Italian Liberals (FdL) - Italy
 Italian Liberal Group - Italy
 SLS - Kosovo
 New Union Social Liberals (NuSL) - Lithuania
 Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia Party - Malaysia
 Citizens Party for the Renewal of Mali
 New Alliance - Mexico
 Alianta Moldova Noastra - Moldova
 Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) - Serbia
 Civil Will Party - Mongolia
 Singapore Democratic Party (SDP) - Singapore
 ZARES - Slovenia

Cooperating organisations

Africa Liberal Network (ALN)
 Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats
 European Liberal Democratic Reform Party
 Network of Arab Liberals (NAL)
 Friedrich Naumann Stiftung (FNSt)
 Dr. Y. Foerder Foundation
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