

# CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION: CURRICULUM CHANGE AND THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL IN A SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

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*ABSTRACT* Citizenship education is an important component of the contemporary school curriculum, particularly in the subject of social studies. This article argues that citizenship education is not new in New Zealand. It underpinned the introduction of social studies in the common core curriculum in the 1940s: and even before that international views on citizenship education influenced some New Zealand schools. Case studies show that citizenship education has been linked to democratic values and while the role of school has been to transmit culture it has also had the potential to act as an agent of social reform.

## INTRODUCTION

A study of the new syllabus, *Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum 1997*, suggests that there is general agreement that the essential elements of a sound citizenship education require children to develop knowledge and understandings about human society, and that through skills and using social studies processes they will develop the ability to explore values and make social decisions. Knowledge, skills, inquiry learning, values exploration and social decision-making have thus been identified as complementary and inseparable aspects of social studies. The assumption seems to be that together they should help students to develop a broad understanding of society which 'will enable students to participate in a changing society as informed, confident, and responsible citizens' (Ministry of Education, 1997, p.8).

This main aim places importance upon the child's "participation" in a "changing" society. It suggests that through the taught curriculum the school has the ability to shape and regenerate society. The inclusion of social studies in the New Zealand curriculum demonstrates that the school is no longer perceived as being concerned only with the transmission of a cultural and social heritage, nor with merely equipping youth with the knowledge, and skills which could enable them to take their place in society. Therefore it cannot be taken for granted that school will necessarily contribute solely to the stability and preservation of an existing society. If children are being encouraged to understand the complexity of society, to critically think about the society in which they live and to make informed decisions, then the assumption is that teachers and children will be expected to re-examine the social relations of the larger society.

The belief that educational tasks may be linked to a fundamental reconstruction of the social order is not a revolutionary idea (Tanner & Tanner, 1980). However, the concept of the state as an agency of reform and the idea of the school as a place for educating all of the children of all of the people highlights the need for the relationship between the individual and the school to be examined.

An understanding about how notions of citizenship, with an emphasis upon the need to change society, developed and became linked to formal schooling, can be gained through an historical and social constructionist account of the introduction of social studies into the common core of subjects in 1945. Furthermore, historical study, it can be argued, has a valuable role to play in challenging, informing and sometimes aiding the generation of theory.

### **SOCIAL STUDIES: THE AMERICAN INFLUENCE**

Brady and Barth (1995) have argued that the social studies movement has affinities with certain political movements opposed to the status quo. They perceive the social studies movement as emanating from a need to deal with ever increasing social changes. In the course of its development as a curriculum subject, social studies has always been affected by political currents which underpin the movements for citizenship education. It is, therefore, according to Brady and Barth, important to note that the notions embedded in the philosophy and aims of social studies education have been determined by political relationships and that the aims of, and purposes for, the inclusion of social studies emerged and developed in the context of change. It is from within this context that the continued focus upon human behaviour, values, and interrelationships is explained (Brady & Barth, 1995).

In the United States of America notions of citizenship emerged at a time when there was a need to ensure that the population was informed and active about civic and political issues. This necessity developed in the latter part of the nineteenth century when the United States was undergoing rapid social change. The transition from a rural to an industrial and increasingly urban society became linked with the pressure of large scale immigration and enormous social problems. As large numbers of new immigrants arrived from many nations they needed to know their citizenship rights and responsibilities in their new land. Schools and voluntary agencies played an important role in informing new immigrants, and in socialising and assimilating the huge diversity of national and ethnic minorities into the country.

During the upheaval, questions were posed about the structure of American democracy. The organised poor and less economically fortunate demanded that the political, social and economic context of American society be examined. In a search for the purposes and the aims of social studies in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the relevance of citizenship education, Brady & Barth (1995) have drawn particular attention to the role played by the populist movement in the 1890s in the United States.

In the 1880s and 1890s the Populists, who were concerned with eliminating the corruption and selfishness of bankers and industrialists, questioned the vision of democracy which had been developed by the corporations and the banking

institutions. The Populists were prepared to endorse open criticism of existing society because they desired fairer and more equitable participation in society. They believed that there was a need for a democratic mass movement based upon political participation (Goodwyn, 1978, cited in Brady & Barth, 1995). The Populists focused upon the practical demands and consequences of 'freedom', 'democracy', 'citizenship', and the 'equitable sharing of social burdens.' They believed that it was through education that co-operation and alternative ideas could be promoted.

Brady and Barth (1995) claim that the populist tradition 'was the womb within which social studies gestated' (Brady & Barth, 1995, p.209). They also point out that social studies was introduced into the American public education system in the progressive era and developed as a subject at a time when there was public concern about making government more democratic. Brady and Barth perceive progressivism as a civic reform movement which contrasts with populism. They argue that the populists' leadership consisted of active common citizens, who were often of low social origin whereas by comparison, the progressive leaders were middle class professionals, primarily writers and academics, who were well schooled.

## **DEMOCRATIC IDEALS AND PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES**

The writings of prominent American educators this century continued to advocate democracy as a social process for achieving high goals in education and as a way of preparing people to make intelligent decisions about social change. John Dewey (1859 -1952 ) was undoubtedly the most influential of the progressive thinkers. In *Democracy and Education* (1916) Dewey perceived the school as a democracy in microcosm, and argued that these educational institutions could be organised to promote the growth of social intelligence through cooperative problem solving activities. For Dewey, individuals learned to understand themselves through becoming members of a community in which there was a shared concern for the common good.

Dewey, however, recognised that if the social function of education was acknowledged, then there was a need to define the 'ideal' society. He believed that the main aims for education could fit, appropriately, as much in a dictatorship as in a democracy. Moreover, the 'social aim' of education could easily become perverted into narrow nationalism. Thus education, Dewey argued, needed to have distinctly social purposes as well as a focus upon the individual.

John Dewey's perception of democracy and education carried with it notions of social progress and growth rather than a view that democracy was simply a form of government. Dewey attacked the status quo by challenging the alliance between culture, class and unequal access to school. He argued that if fuller participation in society was desired then there was a fundamental need to produce societal change. The value of knowledge, he believed, lay in its potential to improve peoples' lives. Dewey's ideas were concerned primarily with advancing and upholding social justice. In *School and Society* (1899) he argued that, historically, liberal education had been restricted to the education of the elite, but in

a democracy liberal education was the name for the sort of education that every member of the community should experience.

Tanner and Tanner (1990) argue that Francis W. Parker (1837- 1902) was the first theorist to conceptualise the curriculum in terms of democratic goals. In *Talks on Pedagogics* (1894) Parker expounded his thesis for common schooling. Parker believed that the public school was a tremendous force for the building of democracy and that the common school was the key to human progress. He claimed that the most important factor in learning was the social factor, and that children from all social classes and backgrounds learned from each other.

The relationship between school and society and the duty of people to make a better society was stated in Lester Frank Ward's *Dynamic Sociology* (1883). Ward proposed a 'planned society' and championed the cause of educational opportunity as the key to human progress. In Ward's opinion, the systematic education of the young was needed if students were to be provided with an understanding of their relation to society. Ward argued that a particular kind of education was required because at the heart of a 'dynamic' democracy lay the need for citizens who had an ability to make intelligent decisions. Such notions implied that citizens required training. Ward thus highlighted the connection between enlightened citizenry, social change, and schooling. He claimed that in order to produce good citizens, schools themselves would have to become laboratories for citizenship. Moreover, it is important to note that Ward did not contemplate that pupils should learn to think independently as citizens in a situation which required unthinking obedience (Tanner & Tanner, 1990, p.109).

Progressive educationists shared and expounded a common belief that education had a role to play in sustaining democratic values. They believed that a radical reform of schooling was called for if this purpose was to be achieved. The influence of their thinking upon leading New Zealand educators in the 1930s and 1940s should not be underestimated.

## **CITIZENSHIP IN ACTION: AMERICAN EXPERIMENTAL SCHOOLS**

Curriculum makers in the United States of America in the 1920s attempted to reorganise subject matter in accordance with the recent findings on child development. The radical idea of integrating the curriculum for meaningful learning developed alongside an emphasis upon individual development which had resulted from the scientific movement. The historian James Harvey Robinson, according to Brady and Barth (1995) was among the founders of social studies. Robinson, in *Humanising of Knowledge* (1924), had called for the development of new integrations of subject matter, and provided the 'theoretical underpinning' for the movement toward the re-ordering of knowledge so that it was not broken up into meaningless fragments (Tanner & Tanner, 1990, p.309).

In the United States of America experimental child-centred schools were set up. Their major goal was to develop the individual (Tanner & Tanner, 1990). Winnetka in Illinois and Lincoln School in Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, were regarded by progressive educationists at the time as the most influential and best progressive experimental primary and high schools (Tanner & Tanner, 1990, pp. 310-320). One of the purposes in establishing the Winnetka and Lincoln schools had been to develop models for curriculum integration.

At Winnetka children worked independently to 'master' units of work, but at Lincoln the curriculum was organised and planned around units of work. At Lincoln, Harold Rugg's vision of curriculum reconstruction was demonstrated. In theory, the idea of an integrated unit study originated with children's interests or felt needs, although in practice, the units were often teacher-initiated or chosen by the teacher and class in collaboration. Tanner and Tanner (1990) have drawn particular attention to Harold Rugg's contribution because they believe that Rugg was the first curriculum developer to integrate the social sciences into the social studies. They consider that the breadth of Rugg's conception of social studies provided the foundation for curriculum reorganisation, and that the 'impact of Rugg's social studies was national' (Tanner & Tanner, 1990, p.168).

At Lincoln School, social studies was the 'central vehicle' for integration. In effect, social studies, English, the physical and biological sciences, and mathematics were reconstructed under a broad umbrella of social studies. The elementary curriculum was organised around a 'unit' of work, although ultimately core courses were also developed in the high school (Tanner & Tanner, 1990, p.313). Again, it is important to note that Rugg's integrated programme was developed through the implementation of core courses aimed at the development of the individual to his or her full capacity. It can be argued that an integrated programme was undertaken in response to the belief that the school was a participant in the progressive improvement towards democracy.

Such an assumption links democracy and education, and provides the purpose for the integration of subjects under the umbrella of social studies. It can therefore be argued, I believe, that social studies developed in response to the assumption that education plays a part in the process of social reconstruction because through the integration of the social studies subjects, social, political, and economic problems were able to be focused upon.

Like other American social educationists in the 1920s, Harold Rugg considered that examining problems, doing projects and gaining first hand experiences were the best ways to generate interest and concern, and prepare youth for adulthood. His contention was that youth should discover personal satisfaction and attain harmony with societal needs through education and schooling and that this could best be achieved through the project method and the integrated curriculum.

History textbook approaches were considered inappropriate for the worthwhile teaching of citizenship. Instead, there was a need for a study of 'live' issues. Furthermore, practice was required if citizens were to develop the ability to grapple effectively with the larger problems of society.

## **CITIZENSHIP IN ACTION: NEW ZEALAND INNOVATIONS**

Two New Zealand case studies illustrate how new ideas about the purposes of education and schooling which originated in the United States, were taken and introduced into practice. Indeed, the New Zealand experiments went further and prepared children for adulthood through introducing them to community participation and notions of self government

One innovator who was greatly influenced by the new progressive trends in education in the United States was James E. Strachan. At Rangiora High School in

South Canterbury, Strachan built a reputation for innovation through instigating a programme which was regarded by fellow high school teachers and principals as original and experimental. Strachan's ideas about the curriculum offered at Rangiora represented a departure from the more conventional and traditional subject discipline approach which was common to the New Zealand post-primary schools at the time. His interest in school organisational and curricular reform had led to him to develop an integrated course of studies which he referred to as an 'organic' curriculum. Based around agricultural studies, Strachan's approach was a practical solution aimed at meeting the perceived and real vocational demands of a rural community. In the foreword to Strachan's *The School looks at Life* (1943) Frank Milner made the point that Strachan's thinking and work was linked to a 'personal sociology', and concluded that 'social studies generally was devised to give pupils the background of social knowledge and the independence of mind which alone equip for useful vital citizenship' (Milner, 1938; 1943).

At his own high school at Rangiora in Canterbury, Strachan had encouraged the development and teaching of social skills and democratic citizenship. He wanted the function of the school to involve 'the building up of a new and more humane civilisation' (Strachan, 1943, p.98). He argued that the 'welfare of the child throughout his life should be the first consideration in our schools' (Strachan, 1943, p.13). He firmly believed that traditional subjects which had dominated the school curriculum through the external University Matriculation examination were far too narrow and too academic to be effective, because they were not suited to most pupils. He sought, instead, to provide alternative subjects which were more practical and vocational in nature.

Strachan had travelled to the United States of America in 1938 on a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. In *New Zealand Observer: A Schoolmaster looks at America* (1940) Strachan described not only his travel experiences but also offered insight into his own and others' educational thinking. While in the United States he visited progressive and experimental schools, and observed mass education and numerous school vocational training programmes based upon aspects of community life. He found that many American educators were most concerned with devising a suitable general course for students who were not intending to go on to the university colleges. In his letters he wrote:

...when a school frees itself from classical tradition and sets out to train students for the work they will do in the world, the curriculum soon reflects the complexity of life in a modern civilised community (Strachan, 1940, p.28).

Strachan identified the need for curriculum reform to be undertaken in New Zealand to meet the changing relationship which was developing between school and society. His personal records of experiences outlined in the 1940 publication show that prominent educationists in the United States thought that the school had a role to fulfil in building a new and 'better' social order. But as he journeyed across the States, Strachan found that educators appeared to be afraid of some impending catastrophe, and that a persistent fear was held that democracy could be destroyed through an inadequately educated citizenry. This widespread fear, Strachan believed, was a rather vague post-World War 1 response to the

breakdown of the economy and the effect of the economic depression. He also observed that it was generally believed that the element of fear about the breakdown of the American way of life and the threat to democracy should be countered by a new type of education for American youth. As a consequence of this belief, attempts were being made in a variety of schools and educational institutions to find an educational answer to individual frustration and the 'perceived threat of social disintegration' (Strachan, 1940, p.46).

At the progressive experimental schools he visited, Strachan observed that the task of the schools seemed to be partly to provide instruction and partly to provide social education. He wrote:

...a new and greater task has fallen to the schools... they must see to it that students get a broad and liberal education as well as intensive training in some selected field - and this as much to develop the personality of the student as to build a sound society (Strachan, 1940, p.29).

In America students devoted their time to core studies and activities because of the emphasis placed upon the child's behaviour and the relationship between school and society. He also noted that the belief in individualism was very strong. For example, it was 'a citizen's duty' to support himself and not become 'a charge upon the state. Strachan noted that if the task of the school was to link school life to a changing social order then preparation for citizenship education needed to enter the curriculum in a new way (Strachan, 1940, p.24).

Strachan considered that if teachers were to understand these philosophical changes and the new ideas embedded in them, there was a real need for well qualified teachers who would be able to handle new approaches. The problem was that teachers in New Zealand were unlikely to be innovators since their teacher training emphasised their role as implementors of tightly prescribed curriculum (Ewing, 1970).

Strachan visited Winnetka school where he found that educational objectives were focussed upon preparation for citizenship and democratic living. Most of the teachers at Winnetka believed that the chief function of the school was to educate children for citizenship in a democracy, for it was feared that democracy would not be able to function without the moral, intellectual, and civic integrity of its citizens. At Winnetka, through the inculcation of democratic ideas and the development of proper attitudes, instruction was given in the principles, institutions, and processes of democracy. Students were provided with the opportunity for the application of these ideals through problem-solving activities.

At Winnetka it was taken for granted that the democratic state should be maintained and that individual freedom consistent with the general good should be promoted. Citizenship in a democracy, it was thought, entailed equality of political rights, and the obligation of the individual to meet to the best of his or her ability the responsibilities that the citizen had to society. Notions of democracy were connected to ideas about social betterment through individuals' respective contribution. It was believed that peoples' lives would be improved socially and economically through education and endeavour. Not surprisingly, obedience to the law was stressed. It was stated that children were not born with a knowledge

of their social obligations, and therefore needed to be educated to understand and accept laws.

With special reference to Lincoln School, Strachan observed that the school had attempted to meet postwar social problems through the introduction of an integrated curriculum. Integration was perceived as a solution to preparing youth to play their part in the context of an apparently unstable, disturbing, and unpredictable future (Strachan, 1940, p.88). It was believed that the duty of the school was to provide and sustain the social interest that was required to meet the formidable unsolved problems of national life concerned with the economic downturn. Therefore, curriculum programmes at the elementary level involved the study of community life, while at the high school courses were more systematic and structured. At both experimental schools Strachan observed that the persistent motive was the need for better education 'to save democracy from being undermined' by totalitarian nations (Strachan, 1940, p.108).

Strachan believed that education had a protective function and that the well-being of the child was paramount. He concluded that fear of impending global disaster was not exclusive to educational thinking in the United States of America. But he believed that the school had an important role in safeguarding the interests of young people through offering them protection against an 'unstable and uncertain future' (Strachan, 1943, p.21). He believed that enlightenment came through schooling which was positive and constructive in nature, and that the progress of humanity lay in the establishment of genuine democracy which could not be 'built on any other foundation than that of intelligent and enlightened communities' (Strachan, 1943, pp. 22-23). This was especially significant because of Strachan's conviction that the child 'has still to live his life in the world beyond the school and the home, and that the world today is by no means a simple, safe, and sane world for a human to live in' (Strachan, 1943, p.20).

Strachan presented a case in favour of state intervention in schooling. He believed that the educationist was able to 'determine what is best for the child', for he considered that parents' and employers' interests often conflicted with the welfare of the child. He stated that the educational interest of the child should not be obscured through 'intellectual snobbery' or the 'motivation of industry and commerce' (Strachan, 1943, p.12).

Schooling, Strachan claimed, was a preparation for responsible citizenship in a changing world, and therefore adjustments to the preparatory courses in the schools were needed. Strachan noted that the promotion of individual self expression and the significance and worth of human life now called for the integration of the studies and the activities of the school. He warned, however, that curriculum reform required careful planning and organisation if separate subjects were to be related to a theme.

Strachan wanted the social environment of the school to be related to the community and the realities of the wider environment. He deemed it necessary that the same courses must be followed by all students (Strachan, 1943, p. 50). Learning, he claimed, was to be gained through problem-solving which should be related to an interest in real problems which were found in 'science, technology and sociology' (Strachan, 1943, p.51). The school itself was to be 'a working model of human society as we knew it best', and 'the types of work done in the community were to be done also in the school' (Strachan, 1943, p.66). Thus, the



school was to raise and present the actual working problems of society. A School Council of pupils was set up at Rangiora High School to work through standing committees of management. It was to act as a governing body and direct the various activities and services relating to the pupils at the school.

Strachan was aware of the difficulties inherent in seeking to apply a new schooling philosophy in the New Zealand environment. He noted that the 'grave difficulty facing a school that makes a radical departure from standard practice' was that of staffing. Teachers who were trained through orthodox methods were disconcerted when faced by problems they had never envisaged (p.71). Teachers, he found, experienced difficulty when confronted with new approaches to history, technology, community surveys, projects, vocational developments, and notions about pupils' self government.

Some New Zealand primary school teachers were choosing to adopt approaches which included community participation. Roger Openshaw's interview with George Parkyn (1991), for example, offers evidence of how notions of community and the idea of self government were taken into primary schooling during the 1930s. As a primary school teacher at Burkes Pass Primary School in South Canterbury, George Parkyn had been commended for the 'development of self government' in an inspector's report of 1934 (Openshaw, 1991, Interview with George Parkyn, p.4). The inspector's report commented specifically upon the wholehearted adoption of modern educational methods which had led to the pupils exercising their initiative and having more responsibility for their mental activity.

This report, cited in Openshaw (1991), offers evidence that in New Zealand primary schools social studies was being developed from a field involving a general approach to teaching history and geography to a separate curriculum category in the primary school. A local project that Parkyn had his pupils involved in received particular commendation in the report. The children had compiled in 1934 a history of their local area entitled 'A History of Burkes Pass: Compiled and written by the pupils of the Burkes Pass School under the supervision of G.W. Parkyn, M.A., Dip Ed.' In the course of this project the children had been encouraged to get out into the local community. Through means of a survey they had been encouraged to focus upon the kinds of occupations and the choices that people were making in their community. Parkyn pointed out that as no books had been available about the district, oral histories were recorded. As Parkyn observed, these projects that the children worked on were in a sense what might have been called social studies because the focus of the study was upon people and their activities that people were engaged in their community.

The inspector's remarks indicate that concepts such as 'co-operation' and 'self government' were taught in some New Zealand primary schools in the 1930s, and that the idea of community study had developed from the perception that children needed to have some ideas about 'government'. I believe that through exploring and developing the idea of school and community relationships, using problem solving and integrated unit studies, children at Burkes Pass school, like those at Rangiora High School, were being prepared deliberately for adulthood. They were being encouraged to be participants in the school and community indeed, and to make social decisions.

Through involving his pupils in a local study George Parkyn thought that he had done,

...quite a lot of quite innovative things all of which were related to what one would now call, I think, social studies. Though we never had the term. I don't think I met the term then. (Openshaw, 1991, interview with George Parkyn, p.4).

Parkyn thought that probably the idea of 'integrating a whole lot of teaching' had come under the heading of Social Studies. He recalled having read the *National Society for the Study of Education Year Book* in 1932, and how he had kept following the Year Books every year after that. He thought that there must have been many articles about the development of social studies and believed that the idea about integrating 'a whole lot of teaching' in the schools came under the umbrella of social studies. His recollections indicate that curriculum debates were truly international, and that New Zealand was not being excluded from them. The 'umbrella' framework seems to be similar to Harold Rugg's notion of how integrated studies were undertaken at Lincoln School.

At the end of 1936 Parkyn's inspector's reports again referred to social studies. The reports acknowledged the breadth of social studies and the variety of subject matter which could be included. In them it was stated that 'Geography and History were mainly good, while health, temperance and safety first were important social studies'. These reports confirm, I believe, that at least some teachers were thinking in terms of social studies, not as a curriculum subject but, as at Lincoln School, a sort of coverall for the ideas that teachers were trying to work through. A further inspector's report dated 18 November 1938, cited by Parkyn, listed comments and suggestions on the subjects that had to be taught. In this report social studies was treated in primary schools as a subject covering broad cultural aspects. No specific mention was made of history and geography in the report. By 1938, therefore, the term 'social studies' was being used in New Zealand primary schools.

Although such innovation may have been unusual, the inspectors' reports for George Parkyn confirm that some primary teachers were experimenting with new ideas and new methods in the 1930s. It may have taken a further ten years for social studies to be formally recognised and offered in the post-primary schools as a separate subject, but the evidence offered suggests that some primary and secondary teachers were engaging with new ideas and that social studies was certainly one of the things that they were thinking about. As George Parkyn concluded, the inspectors gave support to this evolving subject of social studies because it seemed to be the 'in thing' (Openshaw, 1991, Interview with George Parkyn, p.7).

## A NEW VISION

Overseas travel, the reading of educational philosophy, and the New Education Fellowship Conference (1937) would have sustained this development. Philosophers, psychologists and the scientific movement were instrumental in deciding what schools should teach. There was an underlying assumption that

education had a major part to play in bringing about a better and fairer society and New Zealanders in general were catching up with the 'thinking of the outside world' (Beeby, 1992, p.106).

The New Zealand case studies show that a new subject was developing. Traditional practices associated with history teaching were being challenged. Children were being required to think more critically about society and their future place in it.

A commonly expressed concern in the 1930s and 1940s was that it was necessary that a new kind of society be constructed which could sustain newly emerging political and social forces. Education was perceived by progressive educationists and some politicians as a living process and potentially an agent of change. Primary education provision had been considered the 'duty' of the state but now the secondary school was given the responsibility for educating the whole teenage population. Secondary schools were called upon to prepare youth for well informed citizenship. In the changing social order and in the cultivation of democratic values schools were called upon to re-examine their practices.

Ideas about democracy, freedom and social justice which had germinated and spread internationally now became embedded in curriculum provision. A perceived need for citizenship education resulted in curriculum change in New Zealand. The Thomas Report (1944) drew attention to social studies as a subject in its own right and so for the first time social studies was identified officially at the national policy level. It was identified, moreover, as a compulsory core subject to be taught in the post-primary schools to pupils in Forms Three to Five.

Progressive educators, both internationally and in New Zealand, thought that social ills could be healed and an ideal society rebuilt. It was believed that citizens who had the ability to solve problems could be developed through schooling. When considered from this perspective, notions about democracy at the time conveyed not only the idea that individuals were able to reconstruct their own outlook with the knowledge and capacity to act intelligently, but also that it was possible to fully reconstruct whole social systems through schooling and citizenship preparation.

The report of the Thomas Committee reflected the prevailing view at the time that young citizens needed training to operate in a reconstructed society. In the recommendations of the Thomas Committee for changes in educational policy and provision, there was an underlying assumption that democracy and democratic values were under threat internationally. The report therefore promoted a sense of the wholeness of school and society and the interrelationship of school and society.

## **DEFENDING DEMOCRACY , SCHOOLING AND THE CORE CURRICULUM**

The Thomas Report (1944) assumed that all children had some 'common needs' which would be met through a core curriculum of general education (Openshaw, Lee & Lee, 1993). Greg Lee (1991) has claimed that the common core curriculum introduced by the Thomas Committee was a political instrument. He has argued that the Thomas Report was 'an ideal vehicle' for New Zealand politicians and educationists 'to transmit their world views to a captive young audience' (Lee, 1991, p.102). Lee, moreover, has made the point that the common core was a

control device which laid down the necessary attributes for intelligent citizenship in a participatory democracy. He has pointed out that:

...the appeal of the common core curriculum has typically been greatest at times of international conflict when democratic society was under threat; when a large proportion of the youth population sought entry to high schools; and when educational officials have had a political or social agenda to fulfil which could not be satisfied through the study of non-compulsory subjects (Lee, 1991, p.102).

This emphasis upon pupils' participation as citizens in a democratic society continues to underpin official state policy and provision of state funded education in New Zealand. Notions of democracy and the emphasis upon participation as citizens has been sustained through the state policy documents through the 1990s. For example, *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework* which is the foundation policy statement for learning programmes and formal schooling asks that 'students will be helped to understand their rights, roles, responsibilities as members of a family and citizens in a democratic society' (Ministry of Education, 1993, p.14).

Such statements reflect a society's beliefs. The school is in most, if not all cases, a reflection of the type of society in which it is embedded. Barr (1996) has claimed that the terms 'citizen' and 'citizenship' made their appearance in New Zealand national curricula in 1991, but there have been other academics who have argued that one of the distinct historical traditions which has underpinned the inclusion of social studies in the New Zealand curriculum has been the transmission of ideas of citizenship (Openshaw & Archer, 1992). There have been commentators too, who have claimed that the aims of social studies have always been somewhat vague and general, and would even suggest that this has been deliberately so (Bloomfield, 1995).

However, as this investigation shows citizenship education is not new. Indeed, there is a long tradition of views about preparing children to participate in society along with school practices to bring this about. Citizenship education in a democracy places great importance upon teaching democratic values. The belief is, that through citizenship education youth should come to understand how a given society functions, and be left in no doubt that they should learn to participate in it. This historical study shows that as education provision has moved from being an elite enterprise to a mass educational endeavour, the state has played, and continues to play a major part through schooling (Goodson, 1988). Therefore, it is surprising that apart from the occasional expression of academic interest, citizenship education in New Zealand has received scant attention. Yet throughout this century citizenship education has provided at least one reason for teaching social studies.

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