

## Matti Koskenniemi advanced education of democracy by his writings after the wars

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Matti Koskenniemi (1908—2001) was an educational scientist, who in the beginning of his career from the 1930s to 1950s was interested in social life of elementary school pupils. My main purpose in this presentation is to study, why Koskenniemi was so keen to promote education of democracy after the wars.

Koskenniemi became interested in the ideas of progressive education. He knew quite well Elsa Köhler and Peter Petersen's ideas about progressive education. Good social contacts in the school community were central to both scholar for learning and wellbeing. Promoting democracy was common to the educators, who supported the ideas of progressive education. Koskenniemi's interest for pupils' social behavior became deeper when the years passed. When he started his career as a scientist of education, the democracy in Finland was frail. As late as in 1937 the right-left demarcation line was exceeded. After the wars communists were allowed to participate in politics. In Finland in these difficult post-war years, politicians were forced to flatter the views of the Soviet Union.

Was Koskenniemi an opportunist or what? Who were those persons, who guided him this matter? What was the role of John Dewey? What did he mean when he wrote about *kasvatuksesta kansanvaltaisuuteen*? During the continuation war 1941—1944 he wrote the book *Kansakoulun opetusoppi*. In this book he emphasized the traditional right-wing patriotism as an important value. After the wars he wrote two articles named *Kohti uutta koulua*, *Vapauden kautta vapauteen* (The book edited by Kalevi Kajava named *Koulunuudistuspyrkimyksiä Skandinavian maissa ja Euroopassa*) in the year 1946. In these articles Koskenniemi stressed the need to teach pupils democratic values. He referred Norwegian left-wing author Olav Storstein's book *Skolan mitt I byn*.<sup>1</sup>

The Finnish expression *kansanvaltainen koulujärjestelmä*, which he used indicates the left-wing vocabulary. The peace agreement changed political situation radically in Finland after the 2 continuation war. In this context it was vital for the professor of education to show loyalty to the new establishment.

In this presentation the main research material is the book *Kansakoulun opetusoppi* in the year 1944, the articles *Kohti uutta koulua* and *Vapauden kautta vapauteen* in the year 1946 and the article *Kasvatus kansanvaltaisuuteen* ( Koskenniemi, Matti and Saarialho Kaarlo edit. *Kansakoulun työtapa* I) in the year 1948 and the book *Sosiaalinen kasvatus koulussa* in the year 1952. My research method is history of education. I restrict the age period from the 1930s to the 1950s because my dissertation covers the years 1933—1954.

<sup>1</sup> Koskenniemi Matti. 1946. *Vapaus...*, 75.