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vuello", e FRAQOTSIAO*

EDUCATION IN THE YEAR 2000

by

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The further development of a socialist society in the GDR is inseparably linked with the improvement and further development of education. Decisive criteria of, and a decisive foundation for, the effectiveness of education in general are in this context the purposes and the content of a conception for education. For this reason it is essential to comprehensively study and analyse all processes involved in training and education, and to draw the necessary conclusions. Such studies seem to be particularly indispensable for a perspective development of the educational system of every country. Consequently, the most important task is to analyse and evaluate the development trends in science, technology, economy, culture, politics, i.e. in all spheres of social life. The specific mode of the production of material goods and the particular production relations in a given country decisively influence the character of education. On the other hand, it is important to increase the influence of education on the shaping of social life. Both aspects are in direct correlation to each other, and to make these correlations the subject of more intense in-

vestigations in the years to come is a must. An analysis of the processes of social developments with regard to the function and content of education has to allow for the differences in the individual countries and regions, which depend on historical, geographical, traditional, demographic and climatic factors.

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A successful development of education presupposes such social conditions under which the exploitation of man by man has been eliminated. When we consider the development of education in the world until the year 2000, some factors seem to have a special importance for a great many nations. We want to mention here just a few of these factors:

1. Guarantee for the provision of the necessary up-to-date and scientific general education and vocational training for all children in every country, for all people.

Of an extremely great significance is in this connection the energetic fight against illiteracy, combined with the provision of basic knowledge and basic skills.

This implies the necessity of thoroughly discussing the content of education to be imparted, and of defining this content anew in some respects. The point is to create the necessary conditions of training and education and in particular to specify what general education has to be provided.

These tasks include an education in the spirit of peace, of international understanding and cooperation, of the human rights etc. It includes, on the other hand, an education

which rejects any form of racism, racial discrimination, apartheid, colonialism and neocolonialism.

2. Elimination of unequal opportunities with regard to the access to education, and democratization of education.

What we understand by this is, inter alia, that the provision of the material and ideal conditions must be the concern not only of all those who are occupied with matters of training and education, of employees, civil servants in key positions and officials but of society as a whole. In our experience the education of people with a view to stimulating their intellectual activity and their creativeness is promoted if the majority of people in a country actively participate in this process, no matter what positions they hold and what jobs they have.

3. Connection of school with life, with productive work.

In many countries the problem of establishing a close connection between school and life is regarded to be a task of society. What matters most in this respect is to link school with productive work, to prepare the pupils for their future lives in society.

The close relations between agricultural and industrial enterprises and other economic facilities are a decisive factor in the organization of what we in the GDR call polytechnical instruction. Practical experience gained at our schools increasingly confirms the scientific prognosis of

Karl Marx that the connection of productive work, lessons and gymnastics is "... the only method to produce universally developed people" (Karl Marx: The Capital, vol. 1, in: Marx/Engels - Works, vol.23, Berlin 1969, p. 508/German).

There are obviously a number of consequences for the study and organization of the processes of training and education in terms of the school system and the productive work in countries which are interested in the practical application of this principle of education. What we should like to recommend in this connection is to study and generalize the most effective methods of education and training by means of productive work. Likewise important is the question how to plan and organize such an instruction.

4. The planning of training and education, the establishment of a link between school and production, and the development of a country's educational system in general depend largely on the development level of the people, particularly as far as their convictions and motivations are concerned. The will and the ability to tackle new problems, to do a good thing, to abandon out-dated conceptions, to critically examine such conceptions - all this has a decisive impact on the fulfilment of the great tasks facing training and education. The planning of an educational system, the content of training and education are not simply a structural problem or a formality but a definitely humanistic, a basically human affair. The supervision of education, the educa-

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tion and training of people should be entrusted only to persons with firm democratic convictions, with a high educational level and with the ability of educating themselves independently and of preparing others, above all the children in a country, for life, for productive work, and of ensuring their education in the spirit of peace and international understanding and cooperation. This is why great attention must be attached in the next years to the training and further training of school officials, of teachers. In the scope of its educational programme the International Institute of Educational Planning can do a lot in this sphere, provided the experience and knowledge of all nations are turned to good account.

In connection with the endeavours towards a high effectiveness of education it is essential not simply to see one quantitative and one qualitative aspect of the effectiveness of training and education but to regard the improvement in effectiveness in connection with the optimum expenditure of the given society under the concrete historical conditions.

It is under this very aspect that all research projects should be seen. Any other approach to the manifold problems involved in the development of training and education will lead, in our opinion, in all probability to illusory ideas of the character of a future educational system, which would result in political mistakes.

During the 30-year development of the educational system in the GDR the 10-year general polytechnical secondary school was gradually introduced as the basic type of school for all children in this country. All children in our Republic attend this type of school. School attendance is free of charge and compulsory. 10-year schooling is, as a rule, followed by a 2-year vocational training so that, basically, compulsory education covers 12 years. There is also a comprehensive adult education scheme.

In the GDR both teachers and scientists concern themselves with the problem of how to improve the practical application of the curriculum which has been in force for 10 years now, by all teachers in the GDR.

We start from the fact that in the 10-year secondary school only the foundation for the pupils' preparation for work and for their vocations is laid and that the children are prepared for life in society. These basic conditions offer a number of starting points for a further improvement in general education and vocational training and of the correlation between general education and vocational training. In this respect we are guided by the knowledge that our 10-year school can provide no special vocational qualification also in the future. In our experience the comprehensive preparation of young people, the further training of our citizens by our educational facilities and particularly by the 10-class general school are important conditions for the development of all sides of a personality, of his

intellectual and physical potentials. The better we understand in the future to plan and supervise this process, the more effective will the results of training and education be.