

The Aims of Teacher Education in a Socialist Society

by *W. Rocks* (Potsdam)

The development of teacher training in the GDR reflects the continuity of our educational policy in the past quarter of a century of socialist construction. It is based on principles which have crystallised out of the experience of the long struggle for a democratic system of teacher training waged by bourgeois humanists and the revolutionary working class, and also on the knowledge and experience of the other socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union.

When we removed the active Nazis from the schools, after the liberation from fascism in 1945, and replaced them by tens of thousands of emergency-trained "new teachers", the works of Pestalozzi, Diesterweg, Wander and other classical bourgeois educationists were their most important textbooks. These gave them the ideal of a teacher whose thinking is rooted in the people, who takes an active share in developing society, who has a basic scientific training and works constantly to improve his knowledge and whose character is marked by an unselfish devotion to the children entrusted to him.

The democratic ideas of the past have been preserved and further developed in socialist educational ideas. The inalienable principles underlying teacher training in the GDR are that it should be integrated (*einheitlich*), public and secular, that it should have a scientific approach, that its ideas should be democratic and that it should be linked up with practical life.

The aims and tasks of teacher training in

the GDR today are governed by the objective demands of further developing our socialist society. We are now in the process of shaping the developed social system of Socialism which is marked by all-round development of socialist democracy, a high standard and rapid rate of growth of production and far-reaching improvements in working and living conditions. Educational problems are inextricably linked up with all the tasks of the periods of completing socialism.

The recent documents on further shaping our education system in general and teacher training in particular have been worked out in view of the demands which a socialist citizen will have to meet in the year 2000. The aim of our education system, formulated in the Law on the Integrated Socialist Education System passed in 1965, arises out of this basic standpoint:

"The aim of the integrated socialist education system is to achieve a high standard of education for all, to educate all-round harmoniously developed socialist personalities who consciously shape social life, change nature and lead a full, happy life worthy of the human race."

This is not an abstract ideal for us ; we see it in its concrete historical framework. This means today educating socialist citizens who possess a high standard of knowledge in the foundations of the sciences, arts and technology. It means that all school children should receive a ten-year secondary education. The new teaching plans for our com-

pulsory general ten-year secondary schools are so planned, that the educational work in all subjects and at all levels follows three related guiding lines: 1) the provision of knowledge, 2) the development of skills and 3) education to conviction. These aims have a determining role also for teacher training, and in achieving them teacher training is of high importance. The quality of teacher training today already determines the extent to which the schools will be able to cope with the increased demands on educational work in coming decades. The step ahead of events which the education system should achieve in order to be in a position to solve the social problems of the year 2000 must first be introduced by measures in the field of teacher training.

To get a step ahead in this way means in particular the following:

1. Student teachers must be provided with a comprehensive basic knowledge of the social sciences and philosophy which will enable them to recognise the laws underlying our social developments, understand their function in society and, through their work, to make an active contribution to consolidating socialism.

2. Student teachers need to have a high standard of specialised knowledge in the subjects they are to teach and to be thoroughly conversant with educational theory (pedagogics, psychology etc.).

3. Student teachers must learn how to study independently and do creative scientific work, so as to be able to conduct and analyse the educational process in a scientific way and to continue to improve their own knowledge after they graduate.

4. Student teachers must be closely in contact with educational practice (teaching and extra-curricular work) during training so that they can do good work as soon as they start their teaching careers and take an active part in getting new things introduced into their schools.

5. Student teachers should have the traits of character which will enable them to continue to improve their qualifications as teachers and to cope with the great respon-

sibility resting upon them for the future of the children in their care.

6. Last but not least, the personality of student teachers must be so developed that they are in a position, as highly trained and cultured people, to act as models for their pupils through their entire personalities, their optimism and their sense of responsibility.

The result of all this is that there can be no alternative between a child centred, a subject centred and a society centred teacher in our teacher training or in our ideas of the role of the teacher. In accordance with the demands social life makes on education, all these aspects are integrated in the aims of our socialist teacher training.

All further developments and improvements in teacher training aim to a large extent at ensuring a harmonious entity and a fruitful inter-relationship between the students' general educational training, training in special subjects (two for teachers in the secondary, three for teachers in the primary stage), training in social sciences and philosophy and his development as citizen. Any changes made in training in pedagogics and psychology are also not motivated by any change in ideas about the development of children's abilities; here it is much more a question of further development of our schools and of the social conditions under which children grow up making it possible to improve the way in which we develop their abilities and individual talents. And this places high demands on the educational qualities of teachers and thus on the training of future teachers.

The above applies to all teacher training institutions, regardless of whether they train students for teaching in the three-year lower school (primary stage), in the middle and senior classes of the general school or in the vocational schools. Of course, there are modifications in aims, but these remain within the framework of the integrated concept for the entire field of teacher training.

Permit me to point out the most essential tendencies of development in connection with the aims of training at our teacher

training institutes. It is not a matter here of generally new aims but of a sharper accentuation of ideas which have already received attention in the past. These are closely inter-related.

1. We regard improvements in the theoretical foundations of training as a main link in the chain of further improvements in the quality of teacher training as a whole. There are two main ways of doing this :

- a) through providing a profounder basic training in the social sciences and philosophy, which should help students to integrate the knowledge gained in special subjects into the broader framework and to give it ideological content, and also to consolidate the methodological foundations for their own scientific work;
- b) through paying closer attention to foundations, fundamental laws and problems in the two special subjects studied by students and in the science of education.

2. The new study programmes introduced in 1969—70 are centred round the most up-to-date scientific knowledge. They attempt to take into account the tendency both to differentiation and also to integration in the development of science (scientific knowledge).

The tendency to differentiation is reflected, for example, in the fact that a number of newer particle disciplines have been included, especially in the programme of training in special subjects. Future junior school teachers will no longer be trained to teach all subjects in beginners' classes but will receive a compulsory training only in German and Mathematics. In addition to this they must decide on an additional subject (crafts, physical education, music, art, school gardening).

The new training programmes take the tendency towards integration much more into account than the earlier programmes. The training in the two (main and subsidiary) teaching subjects and in the science of education now begins with a complex basic course on which the specialised

courses in the various particle disciplines are built up. A compulsory-optional course either in cybernetics and data processing or in logic and theory of science was introduced for all student teachers.

At the beginning of training in the theory of education comes the basic course in education and psychology in the first year of study, worked out and conducted by educationists, psychologists and methodologists. A further integrative course, also worked out by educationists, psychologists and methodologists, comes at the end of the training in educational science, in the second term of the fourth year, after students have had several months of practical teaching in school. These courses at the beginning and end of training are intended to ensure that students obtain a better understanding of the development of the child's personality as a whole and of the all-round tasks in educational policy. In other words, they serve to ensure a higher level of child centration and also a higher level of society centration in teacher training.

The entire course of study in four-year specialised teacher training was so planned that the first two years form a basic study phase, while the specialised study in the third and fourth years gives students the opportunity to specialise within the framework of selected compulsory and compulsory-optional courses.

3. The teacher training centres have the task of organising the training process as scientific-productive study through-out.

In the process of acquiring theoretical knowledge, students learn to master the methods of independent scientific work and have an opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills in practice. It is not here simply a matter of giving them scope for practice; the idea is for them to help actively, under expert guidance, to apply new knowledge in practice.

In working out the new study programmes for specialised teacher training, the principle of linking teaching with research received special attention. An introduction into the most important scientific methods

of investigation is given during the basic integrative course in the first year. This is done mainly with the help of students' contests, for which lecturers select suitable subjects in the first and second year. In the third and fourth year students take a direct part in research projects in their special subjects and in educational science. All students are drawn into research work in each department and subjects for diploma themes develop out of this.

The transformation of training into scientific-productive work calls for a new quality in the relationship between theory and practice. The central field of practical work in teacher training is the practice of socialist education, for the entire training—in their special subjects too—must aim at equipping students to solve concrete problems as teachers. The new training programmes ensure that students have permanent contacts with schools and also do practical teaching work. They not only complete a number of connected periods of practical work but also, over a period of two years, work regularly with a specific group of children in the extra-curricular field.

In addition to this practical school work, self-education of students in the socialist youth organisation is also an important field, the potentialities of which we exploit. Students in our teacher training institutes

are active in the organisation of their own training. There is close cooperation between teachers and students especially in preparing and evaluating lectures and classes. Students are represented in all directing bodies in their institutes. This active cooperation also teaches them how to develop independent activity and initiative amongst school children and young people.

Permit me to sum up: the aims and tendencies of development in teacher training in the GDR emerge from the objective demands in further development of our socialist society, from the dynamics of development in our schools and from the trends in scientific developments. The aim of teacher training is determined by the aim to educate all children to become all-round harmoniously developed socialist personalities who can make full use of the possibilities of co-determination in socialist democracy and can master the tasks of the scientific-technical revolution.

Of course, the aims of teacher training outlined here and further development of them accord with the concrete needs in the development of our own country. But in the basic features and in the way in which these aims were determined, they are certainly typical of the approach to teacher training in socialist society in general.

Les Buts de la Formation des Enseignants dans une Société Socialiste

par *W. Rocksch* (Potsdam)

Après la guerre, la reconstruction de la formation des enseignants en République Démocratique Allemande a été fondée sur les idéaux démocratiques du passé, exprimés, par exemple, dans les travaux de Pestalozzi, de Diesterweg et de Wander, ainsi que sur les idées pédagogiques à partir de la connaissance et de l'expérience des éducateurs dans d'autres pays socialistes. Les principes de base de cette ré-organisation sont les suivants : l'éducation doit être intégrée, publique, laïque, scientifique et démocratique, et liée à la vie pratique dans une société socialiste, caractérisée par un développement dans tous les domaines, une évolution rapide et de haut niveau et d'importantes améliorations des conditions de vie et de travail.

L'enseignement futur dépend de la qualité présente de la formation des enseignants ; cette dernière est organisée en fonction des buts du système d'éducation pour atteindre de hauts niveaux, former des personnalités socialistes complètes, changer la nature des choses et contribuer à rendre la vie des gens heureuse et complète. L'enseignement dans les écoles où les études durent dix ans est guidé par le besoin d'apporter une connaissance, de développer des aptitudes et d'inculquer des convictions. De façon à résoudre les problèmes de l'année 2000, la formation des enseignants doit atteindre à un stade supérieur en donnant à tous les futurs enseignants :

1) une connaissance extensive des sciences sociales et de la philosophie

2) un haut niveau de connaissances spécialisées et pédagogiques

3) un apprentissage au travail autonome

4) un contact étroit avec la pratique pédagogique

5) formation du caractère pour les préparer à leurs futures responsabilités

6) développement de la personnalité.

Ces objectifs impliquent l'intégration d'un intérêt aux enfants, aux matières qu'ils apprennent et à la société. Le développement dans la formation des enseignants, à tous les niveaux, vise à améliorer la relation entre la formation pédagogique générale des étudiants, leur formation dans des matières spécifiques, les sciences sociales, la philosophie et leur développement civique. Une formation de base plus approfondie est maintenant nécessaire dans les sciences sociales et la philosophie, dans la théorie pédagogique et dans deux matières à enseigner. Les nouveaux programmes d'études portent une attention particulière aux tendances à la fois vers la différenciation et l'intégration dans les sciences. Une plus grande spécialisation a été introduite dans la formation des enseignants du primaire et en même temps plus d'éléments communs ont été introduits dans la formation des professeurs de matières spécialisées. Des cours de pédagogie et de psychologie sont donnés au début et à la fin du cycle de quatre années d'études et la phase d'étude fondamentale des deux premières années est complétée par un travail plus spécialisé au cours de la troisième et de la quatrième année.

Les instituts de formation des enseignants organisent le déroulement de la formation comme une étude scientifique, demandant aux étudiants d'appliquer, sous la direction d'experts, de nouvelles connaissances et aptitudes, d'apprendre les méthodes de recherche et de prendre part aux investigations. La nouvelle relation nécessaire entre la théorie et la pratique demande un travail d'enseignement pratique dans les écoles, et du travail péri-scolaire et dans les organisations de jeunesse socialiste. Une étroite

coopération entre les formateurs d'enseignants et leurs étudiants prépare les étudiants pour l'activité et l'initiative indépendante parmi les enfants d'âge scolaire et les adolescents.

Par ces différents aspects la formation des enseignants en République Démocratique Allemande est, tout en reflétant les besoins spécifiques du pays, typique de la formation des enseignants dans les sociétés socialistes en général.