

First-hand information

Vocational training for today and tomorrow

Report
on the life
of apprentices
in the GDR

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in the GDR*

PANORAMA DDR

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At first glance there seems to be hardly any difference between young people in a socialist country and their counterparts in any given capitalist country. They mostly have long hair, wear jeans and like loud music. We see in them the self-awareness of youth, coupled with the uncertainty of adolescence. They are hungry for knowledge and capable of enthusiasm, set themselves goals and have their dreams.

But these external similarities withstand only the most superficial examination. If one takes a closer look, if one talks with them, one soon realizes that there are essential differences. While in the capitalist countries one hears almost daily reports of the lack of vacancies for apprentices and unsatisfactory educational standards and unemployment among youth, the young people in the GDR know that their future is assured. They are needed in their society. More than that. As the successors of the working class, which exercises power in the state, they are called upon to take part in deciding the fate of their country. The extent to which they respond to this summons depends on them, on their readiness to learn, on their knowledge and abilities. Socialist society helps them to meet this task.

This is naturally not easy—either for the society or the young people. Much had to be done before vocational training in the German Democratic Republic attained the state it is in today. How did we manage it? What can an apprentice expect today? What does he himself do for his vocation? How does he live? What prospects does he have? These are questions which we shall be trying to answer in the following pages.

I. Vocational training and society

An old proverb has it that an apprentice is not his own master. Is that still really the case? Can one apply this formulation—which in the past was used to make the apprentice realize that he was to be humble and obedient—without modification to a socialist country?

The apprentice as learner

In one point yes, for the apprentice is a learner. In order to be able to live up to the demands of his future job, he must amass as much knowledge as possible and acquire certain skills. For this reason he—after completing ten years of general polytechnical education—sets about acquiring new theoretical and specialized knowledge. He gains a practical knowledge of technical processes, regulating manual operations, and also certain knacks and tricks of the trade that have to be mastered. And, last but not least, he develops the civic attitude which benefits a member of the working class.

All this requires receptiveness and a willingness to give of one's best. It requires a readiness to take pains, for in two or three years he ought to be capable of doing the job of a skilled worker. In this respect an apprentice really is not his own master. But there are few young people for whom this is not self-evident. After all, they are learning and working for their own future.

In a socialist country vocational training—like all education—serves the all-round harmonious development of the human personality. It is intended to help everyone to develop their gifts and capacities for the benefit of society as well as for their own. Socialist relations of production, which rest

on the communal and planned use of all means of production, guarantee this. The factories belong to the entire people, exploitation has been abolished, and hence there are no rulers and ruled irreconcilably opposed to each another. On the contrary. Socialism can only be the work of all, and it requires the skilled cooperation of everyone—both at work and in deciding questions of vital interest to our people.

The apprentice as worker

Anyone who pursues such aims in setting up a system of vocational training clearly has no intention of turning out people who want to play it safe and just do as they are told. And in this sense the proverb about an apprentice not being his own master no longer applies. Socialist conditions are gradually turning workers into self-aware, creative people who take part in carrying out the community's tasks—both in the management and planning process in their plant and in determining the kind of life that is led in their village or town, and indeed in the country as a whole. A skilled worker is distinguished by class-consciousness, expertise, creativity, the desire to improve himself, and cultural interests.

Even during the period of their apprenticeship girls and boys acquire such traits. This is a development on which the most enduring influence is exerted in the production process. The work collectives in which apprentices are employed will not only instruct the latter in their practical activities. They draw the young workers into all their activities. Together with their older colleagues the apprentices discuss the plan, try to think out ways of improving working and living conditions, and not infrequently spend their leisure time together.

In this way mature personalities are gradually formed, who feel themselves responsible for the development of their socialist homeland. They understand that the working class is in charge of the country and consciously prepare themselves to assume their share of and to shoulder this responsibility when the time comes. It is precisely this attitude that underlies the words of 17-year-old Marina Schmidt, apprentice in the Niederschmalkalden worsted yarn spinning

mill: "I know that my work accounts for only a tiny part of the enormous amount that we produce every day. But the fulfilment of the plan can depend on just such a tiny part."

Investments for the future

Great importance is attached to vocational training in the GDR. Between 1971 and 1975 920,000 school-leavers were trained to become skilled workers. By 1980 another million young people will have attained this goal. Ninety-nine per cent of all school-leavers who do not take up any other form of further education, embark on vocational training courses. This means that every boy and girl, upon leaving the ten-year polytechnical school, gets an apprenticeship. In September 1977 this amounted to 232,000 young people, almost 10,000 more than in the previous year. This rising tendency will continue in future, although on account of the higher birth rate increasing numbers of young people are expected to be entering employment age.

The training of future skilled workers to a high standard is most closely bound up with social requirements and scientific and technological progress. In May 1976 the Ninth Congress of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, the leading social force of our republic, laid down the goal of continuing to work towards advanced socialist society and thereby create the basic conditions for the gradual transition to communism.

In order for this to be achieved, productivity and the quality of work must be constantly raised and output in all fields increased. In our country the main road to achieving these goals is intensification of production. By this we understand attaining higher results with the existing scientific and economic capacity. This does not, however, mean increasing the physical effort required at the place of work, but above all finding, with the aid of scientific and technological advances, solutions which correspond to this aim. This means that the ideas and commitment of all workers and of whole work collectives are needed. This in turn presupposes a better standard of training, for only a high level of knowledge and skill enable a worker nowadays to be creative in his work, to organize the work process rationally, or to make sug-

gestions concerning the improvement of machines and equipment. At the same time this requires an appropriate political and ideological attitude on his part.

"Tomorrow's skilled workers should be equipped with solid professional knowledge and be capable of creatively exercising their trade and acting on their own. Their personal convictions and mode of behaviour are imbued with a view of the world founded on Marxism-Leninism, as is their striving after high communist ideals. They feel, think and act as people loyal to their socialist homeland, as proletarian internationalists and firm friends of the Soviet Union." This passage is to be found in the Joint Resolution of the Politbureau of the SED Central Committee, the Council of Ministers of the GDR, the National Executive of the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions (FDGB) and the Central Council of the Free German Youth (FDJ), which was passed on 7 December 1976 and in which the tasks of the forthcoming period are exactly laid down. It makes clear that everything will continue to be done for the new generation of skilled workers to receive a solid training. The schoolchildren and apprentices of today will be the skilled workers of the year 2000. Thus the large sums that are spent on their education are investments for the future.

How it began

By 1980 84 per cent of all employed persons in the GDR will have completed a course of formal training; of these 66 per cent will have qualified as skilled workers and 18 per cent will have graduated from college or technical school. Twenty-five years ago a bare 26 per cent of all employees were skilled workers. These figures testify to the radical development which has taken place in the field of vocational training in the thirty years of the GDR's existence.

The starting point for this was the democratic transformation which was set in motion in the eastern part of Germany after the defeat of fascism by the Soviet Army and the other armies of the anti-Hitler coalition. Part of this fundamental transformation was the antifascist-democratic educational reform which for the first time on German soil broke the system whereby education was a privilege of the

ruling class and at the same time invested the educational process with a new, progressive content. This affected vocational training too.

When in the autumn of 1945 on the territory of what is now the GDR the vocational schools opened their doors, they had been fully incorporated in the democratic educational reform that was under way and declared a constituent part of the unified antifascist-democratic educational system. With the law on the democratization of German schools adopted in 1946 essential demands of the revolutionary German working-class movement and progressive educationalists were implemented: uniformity and equality of educational opportunities, nationalization of education, secularity of educational institutions and attendance at them free of charge, and a scientific approach to instruction. The central concern was to bring up young people in the spirit of peace, democracy and international friendship.

Material and staff shortages at the time were very great, and in addition there was a lot of resistance to be overcome before the new system could be implemented. But the thousands of skilled workers and supervisors from the nationalized enterprises which had been set up in the interim, who had offered their services as teachers and instructors at vocational schools, together with other democratically minded individuals set about repairing the apparently endless material damage and disabusing people of Nazi ideology. Classrooms and workshops arose out of destroyed schools and factories. All young people of an age to take up vocational training were mustered and given apprenticeships, and hence the prospect of a career. With the Decree on the Training of Industrial Workers at Vocational Schools of 1947 the legal foundations were laid for every young person upon completion of his apprenticeship to receive a job.

The first youth act, which was proclaimed a few months after the foundation of the GDR, contained new principles relating to vocational training. These involved chiefly the immediate influence of the working class on the education of their successors, the synthesis of vocational training and production, and also the synthesis of theoretical and practical vocational training. These requirements were further provided for in the mid-sixties in the education act and in

the principles for the further development of vocational training as a constituent part of a unified socialist system of education. They were brought up to date in the new youth act of 1974 and given precise form for the present stage in the 1976 Decree on the Development of Vocational Training.

Meantime new job profiles and curricula were drawn up. If in 1947 the period of apprenticeship lasted on average three and a quarter years, today it has been reduced to about two years, despite higher requirements and at the same time better results.

The road has not been an easy one—nor are we without problems and difficulties today. But the goal and the direction are clear. Thus no one can be in any doubt that the new, higher requirements being made of the vocational training system will also be met in their turn.

II. Before becoming an apprentice

Asked if she wanted to learn a technical trade, a twelve-year old schoolgirl answered: "Technical subjects are very interesting, but I have more of a bent for biology. I rather fancy being a doctor in a remote part of Asia or Africa, or being a pharmacist or a research worker at some big institute, or perhaps looking after mentally retarded children. But I also like literature, cinema, the theatre. One never knows, perhaps I might even become an actress. I wouldn't mind being a judge either. I wouldn't dismiss a technical career out of hand, but it wouldn't be my first choice. The inside of a radio arouses my curiosity, but there are other things that interest me more."

One can often hear such a catalogue from ten- or twelve-year-olds. Later their ideas assume a more realistic shape and are more thought out, but the expectations of job satisfaction remain high.

Equal education chances for all

In fact that girl could have acquired any of the professions on her long list. In a socialist state the level of a citizen's education depends only on himself. There is no more privilege in education. Every child attends first a ten-year general polytechnical school. Thereafter their paths diverge, but none is a blind alley.

Most school leavers learn a vocation which at the same time opens the door to technical college, from which they can go on to an institution of higher education. Others proceed from the ten-year school to two years of supplementary schooling after which they too are qualified to embark on a course of higher education. And should anyone's studies fail

to proceed smoothly, so that he has to leave the ten-year school prematurely, his fate is by no means sealed. He too is offered by society a wide range of opportunities for making up for lost time in vocational training institutions or adult education classes. He too can attain the level of education of which he is capable.

This means, therefore, equal education for everyone, but no mechanical egalitarianism. Everyone has the opportunity to take advantage of the conditions provided and follow his calling. There is nothing preventing him from developing his personal interests, inclinations and gifts. An important precondition of this is the fact that education is free and that generous grants or other allowances are given in order to enable everyone—irrespective of the length of his parents' purse—to follow this path.

In the field of vocational training the GDR finds itself in conformity with the international recommendations and conventions of UNESCO and the International Labour Organization pertaining to vocational training, career guidance and the development of adult education.

Roads to a career

In 1977 82.3 per cent of all young people who took up an apprenticeship, had completed ten years of general poly-technical schooling.

The principal way to acquiring a trade is the apprenticeship. For those who have completed the ten-year school this lasts as a rule two years, and at present there are 225 vocations to choose from. Upon completion of the apprenticeship a skilled worker's certificate is given. Some proceed directly to technical college, others after an interval. There, in three years at the most, they can become engineers in their chosen speciality or prepare themselves for a number of other vocations, all of which require advanced theoretical knowledge.

Another road to a career is combining vocational training with one's school leaving certificate (Abitur). Particularly gifted pupils, upon completing the tenth grade, can take up a three-year vocational training course which they complete simultaneously with their Abitur.

They are then in the position of being both qualified skilled

workers and eligible for higher education, which is very advantageous if one intends to take a degree in a technical subject. In the GDR 10,000 young people take advantage of this opportunity every year.

A certain number of pupils fail to reach the tenth grade for reasons that may be widely differing and not susceptible of influence. Usually these young people have successfully completed the eighth grade. With this they can choose from 66 vocations reserved for them. These include the jobs of fitter, turner, grinder, electrician, gardner, forester, building painter, garage mechanic and post-office worker. The apprenticeship period is normally three years, in exceptional cases also two and a half years.

There are a few who leave school even before the eighth grade. Others may be unable—mainly because of psychological disturbances—to attend the ten-year school and therefore go to a special school. They too have a choice of possibilities open to them. They can acquire partial skills in one- to two-year courses and become, for example, domestic helps, dry cleaners, gardeners, seamstresses, conservation workers, confectionery workers, store-clerks, rubber workers, assistant cooks, paper processors or printing workers. The concern to ensure everyone the chance of a career—even when the individual circumstances are unfavourable—is a clear indication of the fact that socialism guarantees material security for all.

In this way the proportion of semi- and unskilled workers in the GDR has declined steadily. From 70 per cent in 1955, it fell to about 22 per cent in 1977 and is expected to be only 16 per cent in 1980.

Handicapped and still a skilled worker?

Young people who have been physically handicapped since birth or because of an accident are the subject of special care on the part of our state. This goes for vocational training as well. In the sixth grade all schoolchildren are subject to medical screening, at which stage the question of vocational fitness already plays an important role. Thereafter physically handicapped children are immediately registered with the competent public bodies, so that they can receive the kind

of care they need and be prepared for a suitable career. In special schools, most of these children manage to acquire ten-year polytechnical school standards. Numerous career possibilities are opened to them. They can choose from 40 careers. Training takes place either in special vocational training centres for the physically handicapped or for those with defective sight or hearing, or in rehabilitation centres for vocational training.

On the work of the rehabilitation centre in Dresden its Director, Senior Teacher Helmut Grühne, has this to say: "The majority of the young people here have finished the tenth grade. For them there are four careers to choose from: construction draughtsman, engineering draughtsman, electrician and skilled metal worker. In addition there are several possibilities for those who have finished the eighth grade. Other centres offer further vocational training courses. Moreover there are a limited number of external courses. If for example someone from Dresden wants to become a tailor or an industrial clerk, why should he have to attend a course far from his home town? That's where the close cooperation between Dresden enterprises and schools comes in."

Young people whose infirmity prevents them from completing the eighth grade are catered for in special classes. This training also follows the GDR's normal curricula. It does, however, have a few special features: the courses in all specializations last half a year longer than usual; the apprentices receive regular special medical care; and the size of classes is relatively small, usually about 12 to 15 pupils. This enables the teachers—who are all fully qualified—to devote more attention to each individual child.

The young people usually board in suitably equipped hostels which belong to the rehabilitation centres. Besides the vocational training itself much is done to encourage the creative use of leisure. The apprentices pay 30 marks a month for board and lodging; instruction is, of course, free.





Vocational training in Berlin's nationally-owned housing construction enterprise. During their two- to three-year apprenticeship the future skilled construction workers attend the enterprise's vocational school two days a week. On the remaining days the theoretical knowledge acquired is applied in practice and supplemented on the building site. The final months of the apprenticeship period are spent under real production conditions in the apprentice's future work team. Experienced teachers, instructors and skilled workers provide the boys and girls with help and guidance.





Agrotechnician/machine operator—a new trade in the socialist agriculture of the GDR. Apprentices from different cooperative farms learn in Wachau how a combine harvester is got ready for the harvest. After three years of successful training these boys and girls will receive their school leaving certificate and skilled worker's diploma.

Girls doing a "man's job"?

All the opportunities and possibilities described so far apply equally to boys and girls. And although the sixth-grade schoolgirl quoted earlier by way of example betrayed a certain reserve with regard to a technical career, things look different in practice. Between 1971 and 1975 450,000 girls earned a skilled worker's certificate, one-third of them in technical specializations.

What does the apprentice construction worker Carla Paeye of the Berlin civil engineering works, VEB Kombinat Tiefbau, have to say about this? "I was looking for a job that I could really get to grips with. I feel the building site is just the right place for me. And to be on the spot where new homes are being built, that is a great incentive!" Of course, it is not always easy for a girl to master all the requirements of technical specializations. Seventeen-year-old Michael Stab of the same works is familiar with this problem: "The fixing of reinforcement cages, for example, is hard for girls, and some don't manage to achieve the required level of performance, even though they try very hard. We talked about this in our Free German Youth branch. We boys help the girls who again are more nimble at other jobs. So the performance of the whole collective balances out."

There can be no doubt that it is a particularly courageous decision for a girl to become a skilled construction worker. And yet there are not a few girls who make this decision. Thereafter they usually study at a university or technical school to become a construction engineer. From among technical careers other girls prefer to choose such specializations as operator of data-processing and office machines, electronic technician, electric fitter, mechanic or machinist.

That here too they are absolutely capable of holding their own is proved by the fact that 87 per cent of all women of working age in the GDR are employed, three quarters of them in industry. Sixty per cent of all employed women possess a skilled worker's certificate, have completed technical school or have a college degree. Every third woman takes part in the innovators' movement, while every fourth manager in the economy is a woman. But there are other proportions as well: only every tenth supervisory worker is a

woman. The fact that women receive the same pay for the same work is a matter of course which need only be mentioned in passing.

Can anyone become what he wants to be?

In principle, yes. In practice, however, it often happens that a schoolboy or girl wants to take up a career only because it appears attractive at a given moment, because it is, as it were, "fashionable". Or it may happen that there are far more applications for a given training course than there will be jobs later. Finally, many a young person—without any idea of what his future job would involve—sets his heart on a vocation that does not correspond to his aptitudes.

Of course one possibility might be that society attempted to satisfy all these desires, which would then put it in a position of being unable to guarantee the trainees any opportunity of employing their skills after receiving their qualification. But such a policy would be short-sighted. For this reason the socialist state takes another path, one that corresponds both to the interests of society **and** of each individual.

Another point of departure in organizing the system of vocational training is planning, which is an essential feature of the socialist economy as a whole. The planned and proportional development of all sectors of the national economy requires among other things an exact calculation of the demand for skilled workers of various specializations, and for technologists and engineers of the most varied kinds. Within the framework of the binding five-year plans the individual enterprise are able to calculate what personnel with what specialized knowledge they will need to recruit in order to meet their targets. This calculation is based on a thorough analysis of the development and prospects of the enterprise. The figures thus arrived at are cleared with the local state authorities and are then entered into the annual plan. In this way every school leaver is assured of an apprenticeship and every apprentice is later assured of a job. What has not yet been ensured is that everyone receives the apprenticeship that is best suited to his talents.

Finding an optimal solution to this problem is the re-

sponsibility of the GDR's career guidance centres. They have been set the task of bringing the requirements of the national economy on the one hand, and the gifts and inclinations of the individual on the other, into alignment. The career guidance centres provide information about the various careers available and their importance to the community and draw attention to existing needs within the framework of the nation's economic development. Thus whoever decides on a career bearing all these things in mind will find the vocation best suited to him, can become what he wants to be and have an assured future in life.

A few figures are enough to prove that this is no mere theory: 80 per cent of school leavers in the GDR receive the apprenticeship of their choice at the first application. In 1977 nine out of ten schoolchildren in the tenth grade in Berlin knew one year before beginning their apprenticeships **what** they were going to train for and **where**. The waiting period before taking up a job is constantly shrinking—an indication of the great extent to which individual choice of career and the community's requirements have been reconciled. In 1977 the number of apprenticeship contracts that had to be dissolved during the apprenticeship period came to less than one per cent of the total.

Polytechnical education

Strictly speaking, career guidance in the GDR begins on the first day of school. In handicraft classes, which are taken from the first to the sixth grade, the children learn to handle simple tools, work with various materials and produce useful objects. In their leisure time, too, whether in the day centre or in hobby groups, they are made familiar with various activities.

From the seventh grade onwards, children go once a week to a factory for what is known as polytechnical instruction. This consists of a theoretical part, comprising the two subjects "Introduction to socialist production" and "Technical drawing", and of practical participation in the production process of the factory, under the heading of "Production work". Here the boys and girls spend three to four hours being shown production processes and operations by ex-

perienced workers and then trying them themselves. In this way they acquire—besides basic technical and economic knowledge—general working skills.

Especially when the pupil in polytechnical instruction is given small tasks to do independently, the educative effect is very great and promotes an attitude which is of importance for the future vocational training. There are many examples of this. Thus girls of the ninth and tenth grades at the Cottbus textile works are able to sew children's clothing. In the Lausitzer glass factory at Weisswasser pupils are able to operate a machine that makes tumblers. And at the Berlin transformer works fourteen-year-olds build small electronic assemblies. They learn to work steadily and painstakingly, to be orderly and disciplined, and they realize the value of working together. It is not so much their performance that is important, but the development of skills and character traits.

Last but not least, polytechnical instruction helps in the preparation for a career, as it gives pupils an opportunity to become acquainted with individual specializations. Thus they know what a given job requires, and this facilitates their own later choice of a career. As polytechnical instruction is usually held in enterprises which are also in charge of vocational training, pupils are directed in a concrete and purposeful way towards special careers. But this does not exhaust the career guidance process—not by a long chalk.

Career guidance— enlightenment or recruitment?

Career guidance begins in the sixth grade with information about the economic development of the region and about important branches of industry and enterprises and the specializations chiefly represented in them. At the same time the boys and girls are made familiar with the job profiles. This is followed one year later by what is known as vocational orientation. It takes as its starting point those specializations which are most urgently needed in the national economy, depicts their requirements and advantages, and establishes in the course of individual interviews to what extent each school leaver would be a suitable candidate for them.

This comprehensive work is directed by career guidance centres which exist in every district of the GDR. In 1977 there were 214 of them. Here under state direction experienced vocational instructors, teachers and representatives of enterprises work together. They organize the comprehensive information of the pupils and their parents and work in close cooperation with the training enterprises of the town or village. They also organize visits to factories and excursions. Thus the Mirow cooperative farm organized an exhibition of machines in the yard of the local secondary school, at which the cooperative farmers introduced tractors, combine harvesters and other agricultural machinery. In the village of Mustin fifteen- and sixteen-year olds are allowed during their summer holidays to ride on tractors and combines, which is not only instructive but fun. Similar examples could be taken from industry.

But not only enterprises and schools—as the most directly interested parties—concern themselves with career guidance. Many other public bodies lend their support. As an example, the socialist youth organization FDJ organizes interviews with young skilled workers. The Young Innovators' Exhibitions, a large-scale movement of young technical enthusiasts and inventors, help to awaken the interest of pupils in important specializations in good time. The mass media present given careers in special supplements and broadcasts. Suffice it to mention the special editions of enterprise gazettes, a large proportion of which are sent to schools, and such career guidance programmes on radio and television as the series "Careers in Pictures".

All this shows clearly the great efforts made by socialist society in the GDR to help young people on their way to a career.

Application and contract of apprenticeship

When the decision on the choice of a career has been taken, the school leaver submits a written application at the beginning of the final school year. This consists of filling in a printed application form and enclosing a letter of application in which he gives the reasons for his request together with

the requisite personal particulars, and sends it to the enterprise in which he wants to serve his apprenticeship. After all the applications are in, selection commissions, on which the trade union and the youth organization are represented, decide in the course of joint deliberations on the application and inform the applicant within the space of 21 days of the result.

A rejection must be justified in writing. In such case the pupil's personal particulars are returned to him, and he can apply elsewhere. If the decision is positive, the contract of apprenticeship is concluded within five weeks.

The regulations governing the conclusion of a contract of apprenticeship are a component part of the GDR's Labour Code. This contract contains the rights and duties both of the enterprise and of the apprentice. It mentions the exact designation of the specialization in which training is being provided, the level of proficiency to be attained, the beginning and length of the period of apprenticeship, and the place at which theoretical and practical instruction is to be provided. It specifies the length of holiday to which the apprentice is entitled, as well as the amount of his remuneration.

Alterations in the contract of apprenticeship, including its dissolution, are in principle only possible with the consent of all the parties. These also include the apprentice's parents, if he is under eighteen years of age. Moreover such alterations require the agreement of the competent government body for vocational training and career guidance. This goes to show that the enterprise cannot make any unilateral decisions.

Should it prove necessary in an individual case to wind up a contract of apprenticeship, this can only happen on the grounds of the apprentice's state of health or his total unfitness for the career he is being trained for. Notice must be given a prescribed period of time in advance. In such a case the enterprise is obliged to take all necessary measures to furnish the young person concerned with a new apprenticeship or a new job. Moreover a prolongation of the contract of apprenticeship for a period of up to two years is possible if the apprentice has been temporarily unable to attend courses on grounds of ill health or other socially justified reasons. Thus no one is abandoned to his own resources.

Society sees to it that everyone receives training in accordance with his abilities and desires and that he is able to complete it successfully.

The first day as an apprentice

Suddenly the great day dawns: still somewhat unsure of himself, the new apprentice finds himself in the enterprise that for the next few years is going to be to some extent his second home. But today he is not in overalls yet. The apprenticeship begins with a small ceremony. There is music, a recital, and the manager makes a speech. Then apprentices who have already spent a year here, tell about their training. Other events follow to make a modestly festive programme.

The apprentice senses that he is expected and that much is expected of him too. He knows that he will receive every support during his years as an apprentice. But he also knows that it depends first and foremost on himself whether he attains his goal or not. Then in two or three years he will be a skilled worker, like thousands of others.

III. What it means to be an apprentice

We now know how one becomes an apprentice. But what happens during the period of apprenticeship? How is the system of training organized? What is learned? What specializations are there? Who trains the young skilled workers? What is the relationship between theory and practice during the training? Do apprentices have a say in things? Are they interested in politics? What is a vocational competition? What is it like to live in an apprentice hostel? What is the cost of training? How do apprentices spend their leisure time? Does every apprentice get a job upon completing his training? Who is responsible? Let us begin by answering the last question.

Vocational training—a social concern

The Programme of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany contains the following passage: "The Socialist Unity Party of Germany is concerned to ensure that all government agencies and public organizations, enterprises and cooperatives fully meet their responsibilities for vocational training and advice for a new generation of highly skilled young workers."

The Labour Code of the GDR formulates these responsibilities in precise terms in that it stipulates close cooperation between the training enterprises and the competent local government agency, the trade unions, the FDJ and other public organizations, and parents as well. This clearly shows that vocational training is a concern of society as a whole. Many official and honorary groups are involved, for example the advisory boards for vocational training, examination commissions, supervisory boards,

teams of textbook authors and special vocational commissions.

The last-named commissions are 316 in number, i. e. one for every specialization for which training courses exist. The members of these commissions serve in an honorary capacity and include experts from the relevant branches of the economy, such as instructors, skilled workers, engineers, representatives of scientific, technological and economic faculties, teachers and representatives of public organizations. In 1978 a total of 10,000 citizens served on vocational commissions. It is their task to draw up job analyses, job profiles and training programmes. They suggest how places of instruction are to be fitted out and equipped, provide the requisite teaching aids, and make recommendations for the publication of new job-related literature.

The training programmes and other documents drawn up by the vocational commissions, together with expert opinions and comments provided especially by the trade unions, are submitted to the minister or departmental head responsible for the given specialization. The state secretary for vocational training then announces the curricula as official documents having the force of law. In this way they apply uniformly to all training establishments in the GDR.

This way of decision-making from below, from the discussion of outstanding problems at the place where the most informed opinions are to be heard up to the taking of decisions in government departments, is an essential feature of our society.

In the GDR vocational training is the responsibility of the State Secretariat for Vocational Training, an organ of the Council of Ministers, which acts in close cooperation with other central and regional government agencies as well as with the trade unions and the youth organization. The State Secretariat is supported by a scientific research institution—the Central Institute for Vocational Training in the GDR.

Where does the money come from?

The training of apprentices involves immense costs. It is not the apprentice that bears them, but society as a whole. This is a general principle of education in this country. By 1950

the state was already spending 65 marks on the education of each citizen. Today this sum has risen to 524 marks annually.

The training of an apprentice—including the costs of the vocational school, the teaching workshop and its equipment, the wages of the teachers and supervisors, board, lodging, use of public transport and other items—costs 20,000 marks. These costs are paid out of the state budget. The sums involved are earned by all citizens, for all are directly or indirectly responsible for the training of the next generation of qualified skilled workers.

The place of theory and general education in the curriculum

The theoretical and practical aspects of vocational training are inseparably bound up with each other. There is no contradiction between the two, although it is a well known fact that with the rapid development of science in recent times the impact of theory on vocational training has increased considerably. Today theoretical subjects account on average for one-third of teaching time, the remaining two thirds being taken up by practical instruction. However the situation can vary in individual cases. As an example, a future tailor has three times as much practical as theoretical instruction. On the other hand the amount of time allotted to theory in the case of an apprentice in the field of data processing is 50 per cent.

For many young people this is not easy to accept. They have already spent ten years in the classroom and have perhaps been longing for the moment when they would be able to show what they could do in practice. And again the acquisition of theoretical knowledge is demanded of them.

"We too have some apprentices," says Andreas Thomas, an apprentice at the machine and equipment assembly section of the Leuna Works, "who don't have a proper understanding of the importance of theory. We have talked things over with them in the FDJ branch, because in our opinion being a skilled worker is not just a matter of achieving good results in production, it is also a matter of possessing theoretical knowledge."

For a skilled worker who wants to master new techniques, who would like even to try out something new himself and develop it, needs a solid theoretical grounding. Mathematics and other scientific subjects, which are taught in relation to his specialization, help him to acquire a thorough intellectual grasp of the work process and enable him to perceive reserves in the work cycle. The aim of theoretical instruction is to impart knowledge which can readily be applied.

Building on the solid stock of general knowledge acquired at the ten-year school, the apprentices pursue their general education further at the vocational schools in a wide range of compulsory and optional subjects. Civics and sports instruction, for instance, are taught as independent subjects. German language is of course obligatory, while foreign languages are compulsory for certain occupations only. A basic knowledge of Marxism-Leninism as well as of the interrelations between the construction, modes of operation and aims of socialist society, helps to raise the apprentice's level of consciousness and sense of civic responsibility.

Basic and special training

Curricula have had new subjects added to them which were previously of no importance. Nowadays highly mechanised and automated production processes are increasingly taking place in plants equipped with power units and control and regulating devices operating on largely similar principles. A result of this is that to some extent uniform requirements are made on skilled workers. In order to meet this development, apprentices of all specializations receive elementary training in several subjects, such as electronics, process measuring and control engineering, and data processing. The knowledge acquired may not have to be applied by everyone in the job he gets upon completion of his apprenticeship, as in many factories machinery is still in the process of being modernized. But it does ensure that everyone is able, as a skilled worker, to operate and master the new machinery at any work place.

Besides all this, apprentices are made familiar with cost accounting and socialist law. This gives them a general insight into basic economic processes and the actual work-

ings of an enterprise and familiarizes them with legal regulations which affect their professional work.

In close harmony with general education which is compulsory for all apprentices in all specializations, job-related basic knowledge is also imparted. This is meant as a rule for groups of similar specialization, although it may be differentiated for highly specific specializations. Such job-related subjects include materials science, technical drawing, testing techniques, and production technology. Production processes are becoming increasingly complex. Similar scientific, technical, technological and economic laws governing the work cycle require a comprehensive professional knowledge so that in the long term one is able to take over a wide variety of functions. A solid grounding in the above-mentioned subjects enables the skilled worker to adjust swiftly to necessary structural changes of an economic and technical nature.

The future skilled worker also needs a special vocational training. It covers the last part of the apprenticeship and enables the young skilled worker to practise a trade in at least one sphere of work. Its content is concentrated on the specific demands of this sphere of work. This part of the training process takes place in the great majority of cases under the immediate conditions of production. The apprentice learns and works in a collective of experienced workers, and here he acquires the necessary abilities and skills, in order later to attain the full level of performance required of a skilled worker—a process, therefore, in which learning and working are united.

What are basic occupations?

The number and content of specializations in which training is provided are not fixed. They are subject to permanent change, arising out of the dynamic development of science and technology, the intensification of production and economic integration between the socialist countries. These processes are of a multiple nature and operate to some extent in different directions. They require scientific analysis and administrative measures on the part of the state.

The advance of the division of labour, of integration, of

science and technology, and the changing activities in production and administration, in education and culture, in trade and handicrafts, in the health and social services, and not least the development of socialist democracy has brought about and continues to bring about constant changes in apprenticeable jobs. It was found necessary to extend the scope of individual specializations in general. As a result the number of specializations in which training was provided declined radically over the past two decades. From 972 in 1957 the number fell to 455 in 1968 and to 316 in 1977.

At the same time a new phenomenon—the basic occupation emerged. This term is used to describe a broadly defined occupation involving activities which are performed by very many people, often working in various branches of the economy, and within which there are certain specializations.

In 1968 the first five basic occupations were introduced. Today their number is 28. They include for example the occupations of skilled electronics workers, skilled plant operator, skilled worker for chemical production or cutting machine operator, or in agriculture such occupations as farm mechanic or mechanic for irrigation and drainage equipment. Each of these basic occupations admits of a certain number of specializations, of which at least one is taught during the period of apprenticeship, while others can be learned on the job, without any lengthy retraining being necessary. Let us take a closer look at this phenomenon on the basis of an example.

What does a skilled construction worker learn?

One of the basic occupations is that of skilled construction worker. By virtue of the GDR's housing programme, which envisages the building of 850,000 dwellings between 1976 and 1980 and the solution of the housing question as a social problem by 1990, this is at present one of the occupations most in demand. In 1977 35,000 boys and girls began to learn this multi-faceted trade, in which there are six specializations to choose from: precast concrete construction, reinforce-

ment prefabrication, formwork, civil engineering work, plastering and bricklaying.

Side by side with the general basic training every apprentice construction worker acquires basic knowledge of materials science, construction machinery, technology, theory of construction, foundation engineering and technical drawing, as well as the planning and management of construction processes. All future skilled construction workers acquire knowledge and skills in bricklaying/assembly, plastering/finishing operations, concrete and reinforced concrete making, precast construction work, machine operation and other operations specific to the trade.

Every skilled worker trained in this way can assemble wall and ceiling sections, staircases and complete three-dimensional elements, for example bathrooms and kitchens. He is able to turn out structures of reinforced concrete and masonry and to plaster walls. He has a knowledge of the chemical and physical properties of materials and of the use and maintenance of construction machines. In every field of his training he has passed a corresponding examination. He is therefore—independently of his specialization—capable of assuming a wide range of jobs. As a rule he naturally works in the field with which he is most familiar, especially as the choice of specialization takes place in accordance with industrial needs. But it is not a once-and-for-all decision. Neither altered conditions nor the personal desire for something new create insoluble problems.

The vocational school

The theoretical training of apprentices takes place in vocational schools. Instruction is given twice a week in two sessions of seven compulsory hours each. A class may consist of from 15 to 30 apprentices, the average being 23. At present there are about 1,000 vocational schools in the GDR.

More than 700 of them are **enterprise schools**, state training establishments attached to nationally-owned enterprises. They combine under a single direction both the vocational school for the provision of theoretical instruction and the necessary premises and facilities for the acquisition of practical skills. In many cases a hostel is attached to them. The

enterprise school is headed by a director who is responsible to the works manager for training and education. Enterprise schools also train apprentices for other enterprises which have no training facilities of their own.

The nearly 300 **local vocational schools** are schools run by the local authorities and teach handicraft, commercial, agricultural or general occupations. They provide only theoretical instruction and are attended by apprentices from enterprises which have no vocational schools of their own, as well as by apprentices from craft cooperatives or self-employed craftsmen.

Apprentices in trades where the number of apprentices is very small, such as goldsmithery, musical instrument making or chimney sweeping are brought together for theoretical instruction in what are known as **central vocational schools**, which may serve several counties or the entire republic. The material to be taught is imparted continuously in courses lasting several weeks, during which time the apprentices live in hostels.

The content of instruction in all vocational schools is the same and is laid down in binding curricula. Theoretical instruction is the responsibility of 15,000 vocational school teachers, 98 per cent of whom are qualified teachers. Of the latter figure 64 per cent have teaching degrees in the fields of engineering, agriculture or economics. Most are graduates of such well-known institutions as Berlin's Humboldt University and the Technical University of Dresden. Their number is steadily rising. At present there are 500 students at institutions of higher learning who want to become vocational school teachers. Besides a school-leaving certificate, a skilled worker's certificate is a desirable prerequisite for such a course.

The thorough training which vocational school teachers undergo guarantees a high level of theoretical instruction. Modern teaching methods are applied, which concentrate on developing the student's ability to learn independently. Emphasis is laid on experimentation and the discussion of typical situations and problems. Part of the course involves the use of programmed teaching materials. Modern technical aids, such as overhead projectors, film projectors and tape-recorders are available in all vocational schools. A start is being made with closed-circuit television.

But favourable opportunities do not by themselves ensure interesting and effective instruction. Not everywhere and not always is training sufficiently bound up with practice, and the resistance of apprentices tends to be aroused when the teaching material is boring and imparted in a manner divorced from reality. Increasingly, however, a critical attitude to one's own study habits is coming to be the rule among apprentices.

The training workshop

The major part of the teaching time is reserved for practical instruction, which takes place chiefly in training workshops, laboratories, building sites, retail points and other similar establishments, and later in the work collective itself.

The training workshop of the Berlin-Marzahn machine tool factory is situated in the middle of a large factory hall. It contains 65 modern machines for the apprentices to learn on. Wilhelm Hilger, who has been training young skilled workers for 20 years now, describes the set-up as follows: "Because with us training is linked to production and at the same time has a theoretical basis, the apprentices have a good chance of going on later to prove themselves in practice. The time an apprentice spends in the production collective goes a long way towards ensuring that as a skilled worker he attains the full level of performance right from the start."

Apprentices are increasingly being trained on semi-automatic machines in the workshops and scale models of highly sophisticated automatic machines are designed to familiarize them with the latest techniques. But the most essential point is that apprentices are trained by qualified skilled workers with many years of experience. About 30,000 such instructors are engaged in the provision of practical training for apprentices.

They are not only good workers but at the same time understanding teachers. One of them is Hans-Georg Käding, instructor in Berlin's NARVA electric bulb factory. He is proud of the progress made by his apprentices. "I have never regretted my decision to qualify as an instructor, in order to be able today to turn young people into skilled workers who



In the school garden and in industrial arts classes from grades 1 to 6 and in the course of polytechnical instruction from the seventh year of school onwards the children learn a wide variety of practical activities (left). In the GDR's over 200 career guidance centres—the one shown here is in Potsdam—experienced practitioners of various trades and professions stand ready to answer questions and provide information to help young people in the search for the right career (right).



Andrea wants to be a beautician. She is one of 140 apprentices who advanced to the finals of the nationwide apprentices competition in Gera in 1977 (left).

This annual event—the result of an FDJ initiative—is aimed at achieving high results in theoretical and practical training. The apprentices from the Mansfeldkombinat Eisleben give their endorsement (below).





The General Secretary of the SED Central Committee, Erich Honecker, among delegates to the 10th Congress of the FDJ in Berlin, at which in June 1976 3,000 delegates discussed the problems of youth (above).

One of the youngest deputies to the People's Chamber is 19-year-old Eveline Thoese, an apprentice in the Lübbenau-Vetschau power station. In the youth committee of the GDR's highest representative body she devotes particular attention to the concerns of her age group (right).





Taking a stroll by the restored Stargarder Tor in Neubrandenburg. Here too—as everywhere in the GDR—young couples with families receive a wide range of benefits in addition to family allowances, and are given preference as far as possible in the allocation of homes (above).

From the first day of their apprenticeship special attention is devoted to the social concerns, health and safety of the apprentices. In the apprentice hostel of the Boxberg power station 700 boys and girls have found a second home (top right).

The preventive medical care provided by the nationally-owned man-made fibre works in Guben includes regular hearing tests in the factory's own health centre. Physically handicapped young people are being trained in about forty trades. Kar has signed on as a dressmaking apprentice with the nationally-owned enterprise Vest in Leipzig (centre right). The employees of the Brandenburg gear works relax in the friendly atmosphere of their new canteen room (bottom right).

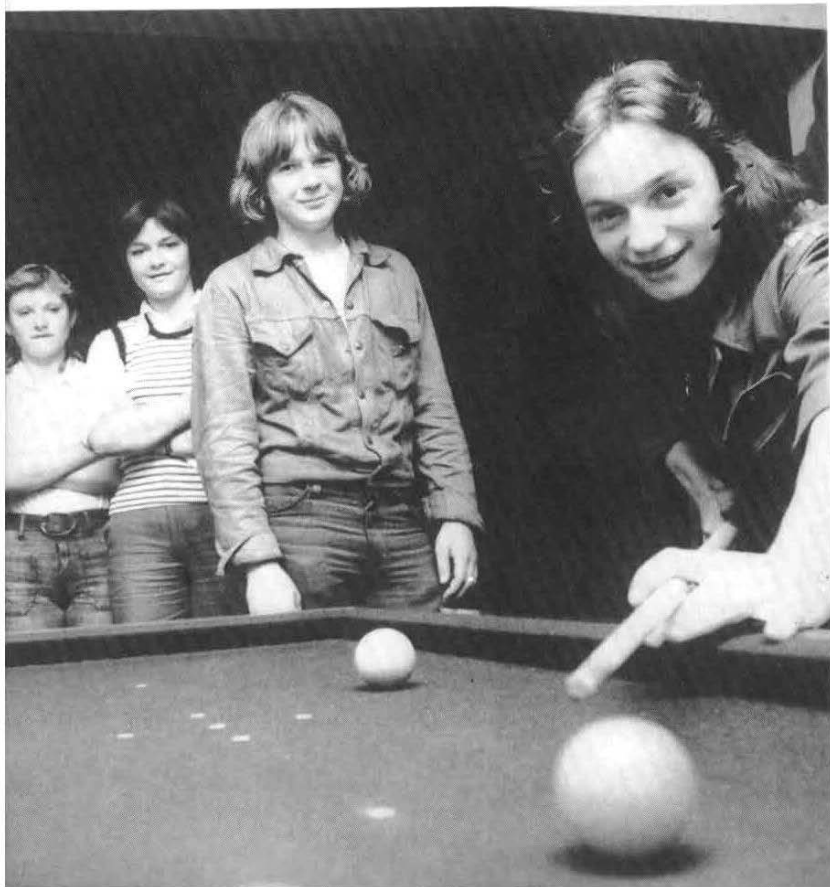




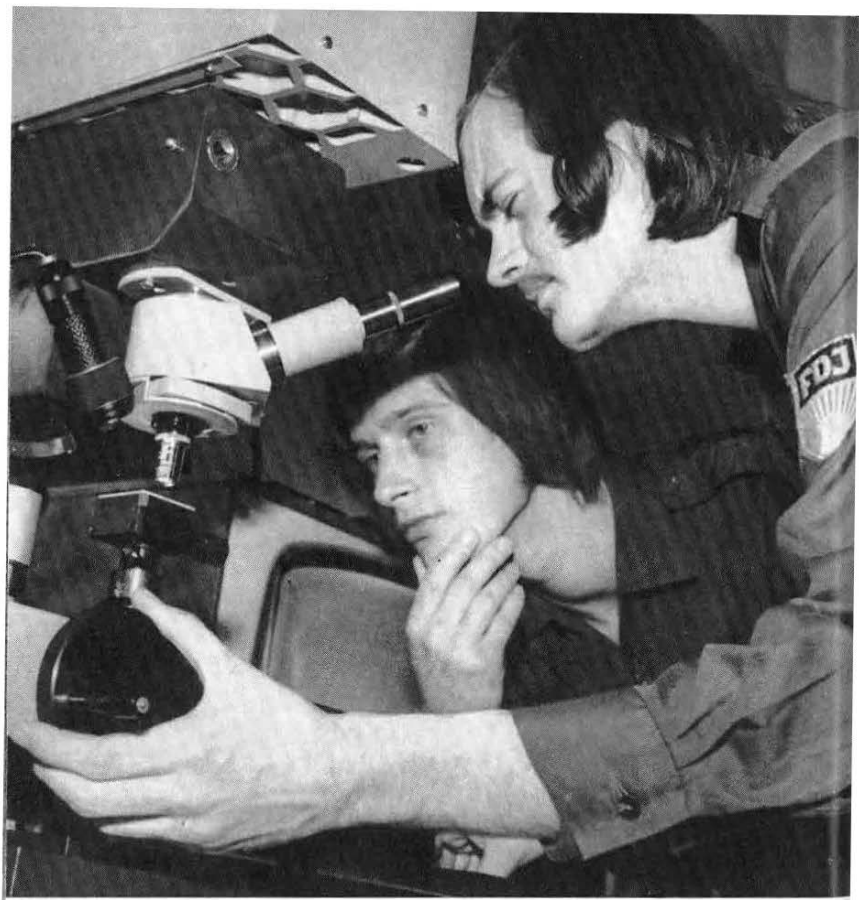
Away from work, there is always something going on. Ship electronics apprentices from Rostock enjoy a real winter holiday in the Erzgebirge (left).

Young people from the Berlin district of Treptow with the help of the Borough Council built a club where they can also play billiards (below).

Apprentices, young workers, schoolchildren and students are members of the FDJ singing group Jahrgang 49. On the occasion of the Tenth Workshop they performed in the club of the Leuna-Werke in Merseburg.







Started by the FDJ in 1957, the Young Innovators' Fair is the name given to the annual exhibition of the work and achievements, particularly scientific and technological innovations of young people—many of them apprentices. Those who benefit are the nationally-owned enterprises, which by the saving of materials and labour time are able to work more efficiently.

turn out quality work that one can build on. Even if I do occasionally have trouble with the hotheads, the successes make it all worth while!"

The time spent in the work collective

When the apprentice has mastered the most important skills and has a rough idea of the production process, he is attached—usually in his final year—to a work collective. What does he do there? Is he an errand boy, a supernumerary or a "maid of all work"?

Everyone is familiar with the reminiscences of the older generation: in these days the apprentice had to get the coffee for breakfast, sweep out the room and keep the others' workplaces neat and tidy. Here and there even today there are still jobs which arouse discontent among apprentices. Regine Engel had an experience of this kind in the Klosterfelde wood processing works: "A week of dowsing, a week of wiping the dust off the boards. Casual labour, we said to our instructors." She knows that jobs like these have to be done too, and that it is not possible to start off by operating sophisticated machines. But she asks: "Must an apprentice really do all the chores? At any rate, I would like to have a go at something more challenging occasionally..."

The Labour Code of the GDR has a clear answer to this question. Paragraph 144 excludes apprentices from all work operations which run counter to the goals of training and education. And this rule is naturally followed in most establishments. The work collectives regard apprentices on an equal footing as young workers who need the advice and assistance of their elders.

Skilled worker-instructors, who are over 100,000 in number, are indispensable in assisting the education and training of the apprentices in the work collectives. They are socially active, professionally experienced production workers of high character, who are jointly selected from the shop floor by the management, the trade union branch and the youth organization and called upon to fulfil the unpaid function of skilled worker-instructor. They do not become teachers by profession, but remain skilled workers who pass on to the apprentices the wealth of their experience gained

in production work and life. Their responsible work receives moral and also material recognition. Thus they are entitled to add the designation "skilled worker-instructor" to the official description of their trade, for example "electrician skilled worker-instructor".

Apprentices are often trained in what are known as youth brigades, that is collectives with a particularly large membership of young people. They realize exactly just what an apprentice still has to learn and act accordingly. There are currently over 32,000 such brigades in our republic. One of them, the brigade of master faceworker Otto Kiehne, of the copper mine of the nationally-owned Mansfeld Complex, apprentices are literally queuing up to join. Every future miner has a member of the brigade as his mentor, whose example he strives to emulate, receiving every aid in doing so. Once Otto Kiehne had a young man who had left school with a bare pass but who passed his skilled worker's certificate examination with top marks and ahead of time. "To be accepted by the men—that is something the young lads find worth striving for", he says. "How they develop depends on the example set by the brigade."

An apprentice's performance during training is judged against a skilled worker's norm. To begin with he is expected to achieve ten to 15 per cent of this performance level, but by the end of the apprenticeship period he ought to be able to achieve 100 per cent. This is a challenge many apprentices aim to meet. Monika Lentz, who wants to become a specialist in animal husbandry and farm machinery operator and is learning this trade in the Rechlin cooperative farm, made the effort to milk by mechanical means 45 cows in one shift—the skilled worker's norm. And she succeeded. "I'm very proud of that, because it shows that I've made good use of my apprenticeship. The fact that we were assigned to all the various kinds of jobs to be done here made things easier. If there's a skilled worker missing, we take his place. This means frequent change and gives us a chance to test our skills in different fields."

The time spent in the work collective is an important part of the apprenticeship as a whole. Here it is not only a question of developing manual skills, but above all of the right attitude to work. To hold one's own as a skilled worker requires, besides professional knowledge, a love of one's

work, conscious discipline, the right political point of view, and the confrontation and rejection of phenomena and modes of behaviour alien to socialism. And where can the apprentice learn these things better than in the work collective?

The apprentice as a participant in socialist emulation

It is a fundamental feature of production in nationally-owned enterprises that every worker strives to fulfil or overfulfil the plan with a high standard of quality. The attainment of this goal is served by socialist emulation, a mass movement concerned both with plan fulfilment and a high quality of products. The aim is to use the existing machinery and equipment effectively, reduce costs, and save material and labour. At the same time emulation contributes to the development of the personality, for it includes the workers having a say in production and the struggle to achieve high, self-set goals.

From the first day of their apprenticeship onwards the future skilled workers are drawn into the emulation campaign. For almost 30 years there has been in the GDR an emulation campaign for apprentices. Its aims are the attainment of a skilled worker's level of performance, high quality and effectiveness of training and the adoption of a creative approach to all tasks. It is organized in close cooperation between the trade unions, the youth organization and the works management. The tasks are differentiated according to specialization and year of apprenticeship.

Whoever achieves the emulation targets, puts in an outstanding performance or even proves to be an innovator, receives a distinction. He may finish his apprenticeship ahead of time or be released from certain examinations. With such apprentices promotion contracts are concluded. The commendation takes place publicly. Distinctions in the form of cash bonuses, prizes or free trips may also be awarded. The best apprentices receive medals.

The professional emulation campaign sets many apprentices thinking about how they could improve their work and their working conditions. Trainee sales personnel in

Berlin introduced "Apprentice Day". On this day, for example, all functions in a store department are taken over by apprentices—from department manager to cashier. In doing this the young people assume a great responsibility, for on their work alone depends the satisfaction of the customers.

Youth projects are another proof of the desire of apprentices to work creatively. There are currently some 75,000 youth projects in the GDR, in which almost a million young people are engaged. These are projects of importance to the nation's economy which have been entrusted to young people, and hence also to apprentice collectives.

As an example apprentices at Berlin's nationally-owned radio and communications equipment works were charged with preparing a new type of telephone exchange to be put into service. The collective set about the task with enthusiasm, finishing it according to schedule and with a high standard of quality. Five youths took part, of whom three were able to complete their apprenticeship ahead of time. Naturally, the whole thing did not go off without any problems. Many a time the apprentices felt discouraged and wanted to give up. Sometimes things went wrong. But Jörg Zeh, their skilled worker-instructor, was always there to restore their spirits, helping where he could. Thus the goal was achieved—and in achieving it more than specialized knowledge was acquired. They learned to respect one another, and their readiness to render mutual assistance and work as a team has grown.

Young innovators

In general there are many apprentices interested in being set challenging tasks. They are not satisfied with being allowed to perform simple operations and just stand back and admire modern technology. For this reason the innovators' movement in the GDR meets with a great response precisely among young people. Innovators are workers who are constantly on the lookout for ways of improving the products, techniques and machinery of their branch of production.

In the case of young people, the specific form assumed by this mass movement is the "Young Innovators' Exhibitions".

In every school, every enterprise and every district annual exhibitions are held at which the young innovators and rationalizers display the results of their work. The most valuable exhibits are sent to the nation-wide annual display held in Leipzig. The exhibitions highlight a broad movement of creative work among youth. In 1977 more than 2.3 million boys and girls took part; in Leipzig alone over 20,000 young people exhibited 1,700 structures, models or new, improved products. Every second apprentice takes part in this movement.

Besides economic benefits, the main aim of the young innovators' exhibitions is their educative effect. Andreas Günter, apprentice in the Berlin electric bulb works, relates the following: "Last year our FDJ group was set the task of producing a numerically controlled machine tool. At first there were mutterings that we had no time for such side issues, and things like that. But in the course of friendly conversations we were able to awaken interest in the idea. Furthermore, by agreement with our electronics instructor, who gave us marvellous support, this job was recognized as our annual examination project, which was an incentive for many."

Do apprentices have a say in things?

Many of the examples already quoted show to what a great extent apprentices themselves are involved in the training process, not as the object of this process, but as equal partners engaged in active cooperation. The responsible tasks which are entrusted to them develop their efficiency during work and study and encourage their striving for creative activity. Well-founded knowledge and self-confidence, reinforced by the consciousness of achievement, enable the young people to have an informed say in the proceedings.

Frank Roth, an apprentice in the Berlin-Marzahn machine tool factory, tells of the discussion of plan targets that his brigade intends to set itself: "I was impressed by the openness and down-to-earth way in which every problem was discussed. It was a very good idea to draw us apprentices into the discussion. It helped us to find our bearings in the life of the brigade, and we got a broad overview of our sphere

of work. Besides, we also found out what kind of tasks would face us as skilled workers."

In the GDR there are legal stipulations concerning the right of apprentices to have a say in matters that concern them. Moreover the public organizations, the FDJ and the trade unions, keep an eye on this matter. This is proved by the example of Petra Klawe, apprentice in the Eberswalde brewery. The seventeen-year-old girl was elected as the union's youth shop steward. "The most important thing", she informed us, "is to guard the interests of the young people. Previously there were only one or two apprentices here. Now there are over thirty of us, and we want our interests to be represented by the union. That's why I was elected to the enterprise's trade union committee."

Petra takes her job seriously. She sees to it that the youth promotion plan that exists in every enterprise, is implemented in the brewery. She concerns herself with the working and living conditions of the apprentices. And she also helps raise the level of performance. She regards the question of whether the apprentice has a say in things or not as being beside the point, since: "The youth shop steward is the spokesman of the union as against the management. He has the right and the duty to raise all outstanding problems."

The Confederation of Free German Trade Unions and the Free German Youth are the organizations through which the apprentice generally exercises his right to participate in decision-making. An important manifestation of this is the annual mandate for apprentices discharged by the FDJ and the trade unions jointly at the beginning of every year, which summons the future skilled workers to strive for a high level of political knowledge and to acquire comprehensive professional knowledge and skills. It also gives suggestions concerning life in the hostel and a creative use of leisure.

The youth organization also organizes training camps for officials concerned with vocational training in order to prepare them effectively for their duties. The FDJ branch in the enterprise ought to be a second home to every apprentice, a collective in which personalities can mature in a friendly and open, but also critical, atmosphere. It is not unusual for the growing girls and boys to take their problems to the branch, seeking advice and comradely help from the others.

Friendship and solidarity

Sixteen- to nineteen-year-olds are increasingly coming to understand that they cannot confine their interests to themselves and their own collective. They also take just as much of an interest in the social changes that are taking place in the world. Apprentices in the GDR realize, for example, how important it is that the socialist community of nations should be constantly strengthened. They are friends of the Soviet Union and make their own contribution to creating ever closer, all-embracing relations with the world's first socialist country and all other socialist countries. The ways in which they maintain such relations are many: mutual visits, meetings to swap ideas and experience, joint cultural events and holidays spent together.

For apprentices in the GDR anti-imperialist solidarity is a matter of course. This means solidarity with those peoples which have liberated themselves from colonial servitude and decided upon a path of development with socialist orientation as well as peoples which are still fighting for their national and social independence. And they give concrete proof of their stance with cash donations, by doing extra shifts the remuneration for which goes to the solidarity account, by holding solidarity bazaars at which they sell practical objects they have made themselves, or they organize friendship gatherings with young people from the countries in question.

Many apprentices, however, learn the meaning of solidarity at first hand. Their neighbour in the training workshop may turn out to be from Vietnam, Cuba or the Mongolian People's Republic. These apprentices do not only receive the same high level of training as GDR apprentices, but also many kinds of additional support. Hai Ha Le from Hanoi, who is learning the trade of machine fitter in the Magdeburg heavy machinery works, says: "I should like to mention our class teacher as an example. He helps us to overcome language difficulties faster during instruction by the use of visual methods. A glossary of technical terms drawn up in the factory also goes a long way towards making it easier for us to understand our new trade." The young people from abroad often get together with their GDR friends after work. They meet for joint cultural and sporting events and thus get to know one another and one another's countries.

Social security during the apprenticeship period

An apprentice need have no worries about his social concerns. It goes without saying that he has the same rights as every other worker. All cultural and social facilities are at his disposal, including holiday homes, club houses, sports facilities, library and factory clinic.

Medical treatment, as is everywhere the case in the GDR, is free of charge. This also goes for all prescribed drugs. The GDR youth law stipulates (Paragraph 40): "The agencies of government ensure continuous health supervision and medical care for youth." In this spirit the GDR's Central Institute of Vocational Training has already drawn up physical fitness criteria for 52 occupations, and similar criteria for the remaining apprenticeable jobs are in preparation. These criteria are applied by the doctor at the medical checkups all school leavers take in the ninth grade. As of September 1978, schoolchildren, parents and training establishments will receive medical reports on health requirements for the various occupations, which should facilitate further the choice of career. In the field of skilled worker training alone, all 500,000 or so apprentices and young workers under 18 receive checkups once a year.

An apprentice has the longest basic leave of any employee in the GDR: 24 weekdays. If he works during the period of his vocational training in a shift system—which is permitted only after his eighteenth birthday—the leave period can be extended to 33 days.

Young people under 18 and apprentices enjoy special protection from dismissal. Skilled workers up to the end of the first year after the completion of their apprenticeship can only be dismissed by the employing enterprise when the competent district or borough council has previously given its consent in writing. In such cases the period of notice must be at least a month. Moreover, the enterprise cannot give notice unless the employee has previously been offered an amended contract for a suitable alternative job and has refused to accept it.

And of course an apprentice can also claim all the social benefits which have been introduced, especially since the Eighth Congress of the SED (1971) when the new social

welfare programme was approved. This concerns young people who marry during their apprenticeship period and are eligible for an interest-free starting-out loan of 5,000 marks to be paid back within eight years. Should children be born during this period, the repayment will be partially or totally waived. Young women who give birth to a child receive a state grant of 1,000 marks as well as an additional allowance of 175 marks to their apprentice pay. Over and above this, schools and enterprises assist them in every way possible to enable them to complete their training within the same span of time.

In order to give women and girls genuinely equal chances in their working lives and equal freedom of decision, a law on birth control was passed on 15 April 1972 in consultation with the FDJ. Under this Act even a girl who is undergoing vocational training no longer has to interrupt or give up her apprenticeship because of an unwanted pregnancy. From the age of 16 onwards every woman can have contraceptives prescribed by a doctor or family planning clinics. Furthermore she is entitled to have a pregnancy terminated free of charge in an obstetric hospital within 12 weeks of its inception. Such cases are treated like illness under labour and insurance law.

The financial side: how it all adds up

An apprentice's actual allowance starts at 100 marks and rises to 150 marks a month. One's first reaction is that 150 marks doesn't seem like much. Can an apprentice manage on that? Of course it is not enough to enable him to live in luxury. But he can manage, for his current expenses are very low, and nothing is deducted from his pay. For his training he pays not a penny. Tools and materials are placed free of charge at his disposal.

In the apprentice hostel—the home of one apprentice in four—full board and lodgings cost 1.10 mark daily. If he doesn't live in a hostel, he can eat in the works' canteen for 50 pfennigs daily. A rail ticket to his parental home costs only a quarter of the regular fare, and is usually borne by the training enterprise. For cultural events, too, apprentices and schoolchildren pay substantially reduced prices. During ill-

ness the apprentice's allowance continues to be paid to the full amount. The same goes for treatment at health resorts.

Moreover every apprentice has the opportunity to add something to his income. If he achieves good results in the work he does during his practical training, he may receive an efficiency bonus. And if he does well in socialist competition, besides moral recognition, he may expect cash prizes.

The apprentice hostel

There are currently 1,100 apprentice hostels in the GDR in which 120,000 girls and boys live. In 1977 alone 8,426 new hostel places were created, and this tendency is continuing. As a rule hostels are occupied by apprentices who have taken up training some distance from their family home. They are looked after by about 5,000 wardens, all of whom have completed three-year college courses to prepare them for this job.

The hostels are furnished in an up-to-date and functional manner. They have many common rooms in which it is possible to watch television, play indoor sports, read or indulge in such forms of entertainment as disco sessions. It is no coincidence that the FDJ does a particularly good job in the apprentice hostels, as there everyone wants to show what he can do and thus help to ensure that leisure is spent in an interesting way.

What can one do in one's spare time?

How apprentices spend their leisure depends largely on themselves. This is a field in which personal initiative is especially encouraged. This does not mean, however, that they are left to their own resources. The choice of activities in which one may join in after classes and practical work are over is a wide one.

Let us take the school attached to the retail and catering enterprise in Eberswalde. On the very first day of their apprenticeship the future shop assistants, waiters and cooks are asked about their leisure interests. They can go in for a

number of cultural activities—in the singing club, the cabaret or the photography society. They can practise sports—gymnastics, handball, swimming. They can take part in discussion groups on politics, literature or art. Finally, they can try their hand at creative pursuits such as handicraft, painting or playing musical instruments. Materials and equipment are provided by the school, including cameras, musical instruments, oil paints and sports gear. Almost every second Eberswalde apprentice is a reader of the school library.

Even if the choice of spare time pursuits has not yet attained the level of the Eberswalde school everywhere, it does show the direction in which things are developing. Many vocational schools and apprentice hostels have already come a long way along this road and are even overtaking Eberswalde in the range of facilities they offer. Sometimes more is offered than is made use of. A number of apprentices appear to be satisfied with the restaurant and the discothèque in their spare time. There is no objection to this as long as leisure activities are not confined to this alone. The efforts of the vocational school teachers and the wardens are, however, directed towards ensuring the all-round education of their charges. And this includes the encouragement of a wide variety of spare-time interests and activities.

For young people it is particularly important to engage in sport. One of the ways of encouraging them to do so is the annual nationwide competition for the titles of "Most Athletic Apprentice" and "Most Athletic Girl". The boys have to demonstrate their muscular power by doing chin-ups, knee bends, push ups and a standing hop, step and jump, while the girls have to do exercise with the skipping rope, the medicine ball, on the wall bars, and also a standing hop, step and jump. The performances are calculated as points in a table, and in this way the winners of every school, district, county, and of the whole republic are selected. The best are awarded distinctions by the GDR's top-performance athletes.

The pursuit of sport is also a component part of the apprentices' pre-military training. A worker in the GDR sees it as his duty to protect what he has created. For this reason the acquisition of military-political and military-technical knowledge as well as appropriate military skills also forms

part of an apprentice's training. The boys attend a camp run by the Society for Sport and Technology. Here, in addition to the numerous events held during the period of their apprenticeship, they take part in pre-military training, which is a form of preparation for national service. The girls are made familiar with the requirements and measures of civil defence.

Of course, in his leisure time the apprentice is not short of opportunities for enjoyment. Dancing facilities are constantly being extended, and new youth clubs and discothèques are coming into existence. Many apprentices also organize joint holiday expeditions. As an example, Magdeburg's apprentices pitch their tents every summer on the banks of the Templiner See in Potsdam county. This kind of holiday is never boring. Beach sports and parties, steamer cruises, night hikes, visits to places of interest and dances make for a change. Anyone who wants to can draw up his own individual programme to suit himself. As in every other respect of his apprenticeship, the apprentice is a participator. He is not kept in leading strings, but counselled. The way he does things is up to him. What he makes of the many opportunities offered is his affair. And most of them manage to find something that is both enjoyable and beneficial.

The skilled worker's certificate examination

The skilled worker's certificate examination is not a procedure which takes up the last few weeks of the training period and in the course of which the apprentice has to appear before a number of examining boards. Rather the level of knowledge gained in the individual subjects is determined as soon as the respective training course is completed. Thus examinations are spread over the whole apprenticeship period and from the very first lesson onwards each and every mark counts. At the end of their apprenticeship everyone has to submit a written project. 97.5 per cent of all apprentices pass this examination. Those who don't make it at the first attempt have the opportunity to repeat. For this purpose the contract of apprenticeship may be extended for up to six months.

About 90 per cent of the young skilled workers manage to fulfil the skilled worker's norm from the first day after their apprenticeship. This testifies to a high standard of training

and shows that these young people in a relatively short space of time have grown into qualified workers, representatives of the class that wields power in our republic. They fulfil their plans in terms of both quantity and quality, stick to the desirable materials and energy consumption figures, act on their own responsibility in the solution of tasks, and are able and willing to work shifts. At the same time they have acquired moral qualities and Marxist-Leninist knowledge which enable them to steer a correct course in life and to judge everything from a class viewpoint. At work they are constantly on the lookout for better solutions and new ideas, and take part in the innovators' movement.

No worries about not getting a job

Every skilled worker in the GDR has job security. The Labour Code prescribes that six months after the expiry of the contract of apprenticeship the former apprentice should be assigned to a job for which he has been trained, and offered a contract. In his first year as a skilled worker he is protected against dismissal.

Even more security is enjoyed by the physically handicapped skilled worker. In his case the future job is laid down at the moment of concluding the contract of apprenticeship. Well before the apprenticeship is over, the instructors visit the work establishment to make sure that all the necessary conditions have been met for the disabled apprentice to start work.

In the exceptional eventuality of the enterprise having no job available corresponding to the trade acquired, the young skilled worker can then be offered another kind of job on a temporary basis, in which case he will still receive the pay he would have got for a job in his own specialization. Finally, the enterprise is also obliged to provide the very few apprentices who do not pass the skilled worker's examination with acceptable jobs corresponding to their abilities in one or another work establishment.

In a socialist country the right to work is anchored in the constitution and has been translated into reality. Every worker receives a job which corresponds to his abilities and guarantees him economic security and a constantly rising standard of living.

IV. The further training of skilled workers

The building of a new society demands rising educational levels on the part of workers. After the 1917 Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia Lenin called upon everyone to improve their level of education and acquire more knowledge. Only in this way can the complicated tasks set by socialist construction be mastered. His words "Learn, learn, and once again learn" became one of the most frequently quoted slogans and today, in the face of the demands made by economics and science, education and culture, they are more topical than ever.

Why further training?

It is a fundamental law of social development that any advance in the productive forces is always accompanied by an increase in the division of labour. There are two ways of dealing with this situation. The first is to turn out highly qualified specialists who have perfect mastery of a very narrow field. The second is to give all workers constant wide access to further training which will afford them both specialized knowledge and an overall view and, not least, a cultural education. There can be no doubt that the second way represents a clear gain for the individual, for it is not only the growing demands of the work process and the scientific and technological revolution which require and evoke the desire to learn.

Socialism and education are inseparably linked with each other in a very special way. Under socialism, where the workers are not only producers but also owners of the means of production and join in building society, there is also sufficient motivation for permanent learning.

All knowledge the individual acquires can be applied in a way which benefits both himself and society. And everyone sees that his work turns to account, not in the far future but now and here, in the everyday life of his family, in that of his neighbours, and his friends. To learn means to guarantee that the system of government, the economy, indeed every aspect of life, will be optimally geared to the interests of the working individual.

Looking to future requirements

To hold power in the state and to exercise it in the interests of progress, implies certain obligations. As society advances along the road of mature socialism, the responsibility of the working class and its Marxist-Leninist party for social processes grows. Expertise, experience and inventiveness on the part of workers, scientists and technicians, their ideas and initiatives, are increasingly gaining in importance.

Recent years have shown how fast science is advancing, at what tempo knowledge is multiplying. The consequences of this are manifold. One is that conditions must be created that enable everyone to keep up to date with the store of generally accessible knowledge. This goes for skilled workers too, as it is after all in the sphere of production that material values are created.

Socialist education is based on the assumption that it is impossible to impart to a person in his early years all the knowledge and skills he will require throughout his life. New discoveries are constantly arising in one's own field that have to be assimilated if work is to be improved or even performed at the same level. For this reason vocational training is not confined to the training of apprentices but covers the whole working life. The further training of skilled workers is a task which is on a par with the vocational training of apprentices. In this case too it is a question of constantly raising the level of general education, with emphasis on modern mathematical and scientific education. What is important is acquiring the ability to combine the achievements of science and technology ever more effectively with the advantage of socialism. Finally, it is a question of acquiring a sound knowledge of

Marxism-Leninism, of developing and strengthening socialist consciousness, of understanding underlying social patterns, and of being able to take initiatives.

The urge for knowledge has become a matter of course in the GDR. Here there is no tragic talk of being "too old" or it being "too late" to supplement one's education. Socialism guarantees everyone this right, even if he is over forty, and does everything to develop the potentialities of every individual as fully as possible, in accordance with his own inner bent and intellectual capacity.

For years one in every four employees in the GDR has been taking advantage of one of the many forms of further training available. In industry about 120,000 skilled workers and 36,000 supervisory workers improved their qualifications in 1977 alone. Nor are craftsmen an exception. Between 1975 and 1977 1,800 cooperative and private craftsmen got their master's certificate. All these people have come to realize that the knowledge of today is not enough to tackle the tasks of the future.

Further training on the job

The further training of the workers is entirely the responsibility of the employing firms. This is laid down in Chapter 7 of the GDR's Labour Code. At the same time this Code contains a multitude of detailed regulations specifying the nature of this responsibility and the rights and duties of every employee as regards further training. The enterprise is required, for example, to create the necessary conditions, and this is everywhere complied with.

Large enterprises and industrial complexes have their own training centres, known here as academies, of which there is a total of 790 in the GDR. Their total staff numbers 65,000 and is composed of teachers, economists and technicians from the enterprises themselves, and scientists from research institutes, colleges and universities. The enterprise academies provide training that takes into account practical requirements and is favourably timed. In many cases it is even customary to impart the material to be taught at the place of work itself. There are also enterprise academies at district and town level, which are attended by employees of



In socialist emulation everyone pulls together. Instructor Gerhard Martin and the two apprentices Ralf and Stefan of VEB Starkstromanlagenbau Halle, which produces high voltage equipment, help to fulfil the plan by achieving good results in their work (above).

FDJ teams from all parts of the GDR are taking part in the construction of the GDR's section of the new Soviet Druzhba natural gas pipeline from Orenburg to the western frontier of the USSR (right).





The further intermeshing of the economies of the fraternal socialist countries makes it possible for apprentices to do their training among friends abroad. Jerzy and Andreas from Poland are being trained in Dresden as electrical fitters (left).

A good time was had by all at the Fourth Festival of Friendship between the youth of the USSR and GDR in Volgograd in 1977, where numerous cordial encounters between young people from the two countries took place (below).

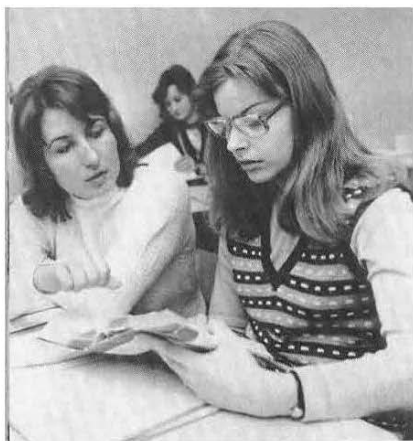




By training young Vietnamese, the GDR is helping with the work of reconstruction in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Before these boys and girls return to their homeland, they will have received their certificates as skilled mechanics (left).

Kankan/Bordo in the Republic of Guinea is the work place of an FDJ Friendship Brigade from the GDR, which is extending solidarity and assistance to the young nation by helping with the training of qualified African personnel (below).





Even skilled workers continue to add to their qualifications. These young women are qualifying as supervisors at the school attached to the semi-conductor works in Frankfurt/Oder (left). In the countryside it is mainly the winter months that are used for further training. These farm machinery operators in Velgast are familiarizing themselves with new repair techniques (below).



the health service, the catering and service trades, local administration and crafts.

The enterprises have not only to create the material conditions for further training—they are also charged with the entire organization thereof. On the basis of long-term plans they ascertain in which trades and specializations further training will be required. They are obliged to discuss the matter with the workers well in advance and to win the latter over to the idea of improving their qualifications. It must be ensured that upon the completion of further training a corresponding job is waiting.

The trade union too has an important voice in the matter. The enterprise's trade union committee proposes candidates for further training, sits in on interviews with them, and conscientiously checks up on the implementation of the measures agreed upon. The legal basis of further training is constituted by what is known as a qualification contract, which is concluded between the employee and his employing firm and is equally binding on both parties. The enterprise can only terminate such a contract with the agreement of the trade union.

The enterprise is legally bound to support the skilled worker undergoing further training. It can, for example, come to an individual agreement with the worker concerned regarding his working hours, allow him to take time off occasionally, appoint experienced senior workers as mentors, and organize exchanges of experience and other suitable measures. The enterprise also bears the total costs of further training. The worker has to pay only for his own personal working aids, textbooks and eventual transport costs to the institution where he is receiving further training. In most cases, however, the enterprise provides an extra allowance to cover the cost of books and travel. All expenses are covered by the enterprise, if the further training has become necessary on account of rationalization schemes or structural changes carried out in the enterprise.

Further educational opportunities

Besides the further training courses organized by the enterprises themselves, there exists a wide variety of other opportunities for continuing one's education. Evening classes, correspondence courses, the URANIA society which organizes public lectures, the Chamber of Technology, special classes for women and the television academy offer something for everybody. But taking advantage of these opportunities is not exclusively the employee's private affair. He can also be delegated to attend certain courses by the enterprise for which he works. In such cases the latter often pays a substantial proportion of the costs. Furthermore everyone has the opportunity of submitting proposals for further training on his own account. In most cases the enterprise will give its consent. Of the multitude of forms of further education let us mention only a few:

Evening class institutes: These are state educational institutions generally concerned with the provision of general education enabling adults to take, after school-age, the tenth grade or advanced level examination (Abitur). Instruction in foreign languages is very widespread in the evening class institutes. They also have much to offer on the liberal arts side, but they also run, with regional variations, certain courses in technical and administrative fields.

Enterprise sections of the Chamber of Technology organize events the number of which in 1977 was way in excess of a million. The Chamber of Technology is an organization comprising scientists, technologists, economists and also outstanding workers. They cater mainly for the kind of skilled worker who is engaged in elaborating innovatory suggestions or tackling complicated problems of production or engineering.

URANIA is the name of a society for the dissemination of scientific knowledge, which provides information about new developments in society, nature and technology chiefly through the medium of popular lectures addressed to the layman. In this way it contributes to the general level of education and opens people's eyes to new problems. In 1977 URANIA organized 321,000 events which were attended by ten million visitors.

Schools of Socialist Labour. The GDR's mass organiza-

tions are also constantly engaged in the organization of events connected with further training. Of particular importance to workers are the Schools of Socialist Labour run by the FDGB. They are concerned above all with the further political and economic education of the workers, as well as with enabling them to take an active part in trade union work. These schools cooperate closely with the enterprise academies.

Radio and television. The range and quality of educational programmes on radio and television have increased markedly in recent years. Television series on the scientific organization of work, electronic data processing, education and culture have attracted a large audience. And tens of thousands of cooperative farmers of both sexes take part yearly in the television "Cooperation Academy", a series of programmes broadcast twice weekly on problems of modern organization and production in agriculture.

Working and studying—can one do both?

Thus the number of opportunities for further education in the GDR is very great. But they are not always sufficiently taken advantage of. There are still workers who declare themselves satisfied with the state of knowledge they have achieved, who do not look beyond today. The most frequently heard argument is that one cannot work and study at the same time.

Evening classes after a full day's work can often be a burden and give rise to personal problems. Constant study cannot be turned into a universal human need overnight. However there is no denying that the number of adults in the GDR who are continuing their education in various fields has been steadily rising. This shows that the comprehensive system of preferential treatment granted to those who want to study is bearing fruit.

Thus there are more and more people who are able to cope with the problems involved. In order to get a more precise picture, let us take Berlin's NARVA electric light bulb factory as an example. In 1977 alone 547 of its employees completed a course of some kind; of this number 191 were older workers doing their skilled worker's certificate. In this the en-

terprise supported them in every way. Apart from the fact that a place in a skilled worker's course costs 250 marks, of which the employee pays not a penny, a large part of the training takes place during working hours, during which time he continues to receive the full amount of his average pay. And finally he is helped by his work-mates, who place their knowledge and experience at his disposal. Particular support goes—and not only in this enterprise—to women.

Working women seize the opportunity

In 1977 87 per cent of all women of working age in the GDR were gainfully employed. Almost every second job is held by a woman. This shows the fundamentally altered place of the female sex in our republic. This also throws into relief the results of vocational training and further education. There is no getting over the fact that there was a problem in providing a vocational education to numerous women who before, during and immediately after the Second World War were either unwilling or unable to learn a trade or profession.

This process has not yet been completed even today. But now as before socialist society is doing a great deal to guarantee that women have the same chances as men of learning a vocation. Legal stipulations concerning the training of women as skilled workers ensure that the necessary time devoted thereto is as short as possible, that there is no loss of income, and that a high success rate is guaranteed. Women who for ten years or more have done the job of a skilled worker, receive their skilled worker's certificate after only a brief period of training. For women who want to take college degrees in engineering or economics, special classes have been set up at the appropriate institutes, where they study two days a week at full pay. After three years of study they receive their diploma.

As a result of these and many other measures the proportion of skilled women workers among the total of female employees rose from 26.2 per cent in 1970 to 45 per cent in 1976. In socialist agriculture 70 per cent of all women possess some formal qualification. This general raising of the level of education also helps explain the fact that an in-

creasing number of women are assuming middle and top management functions.

Some four-fifth of all women owe their level of education to the sweeping measures taken by the GDR for the advancement of women. 91 of 100 women graduated from technical schools after 1946, 80 per cent of all woman supervisors and 78 per cent of all skilled workers obtained their qualification in the course of the last 30 years. This positive development will be continued in the years to come.

First-hand information

**Erich Honecker,
General Secretary of the Central Committee
of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany
at the Party's 9th Congress in May 1976**

The Party's care and attention belong always to the reserve force of the working class. Building upon the results of the ten-year comprehensive school, it has been possible since the 8th Congress to train over 920,000 young people—boys and girls—as skilled workers who have stood their test in the sphere of production as well as in social life. A total of 370,000 working people acquired a skilled worker's certificate. One in four working persons attended courses of further education. This contributed considerably to encouraging the creative ability of the working class and raising the level of their efficiency.

The new Five-Year Plan provides for the training of one million skilled workers, male and female, including 50,000 who have reached university entrance standard. This is a challenging and satisfying task facing teachers, instructors and the educational staff of apprentice hostels.

Applying the experience gathered since the 8th Congress, curricula will now be more strongly adapted to the requirements of intensification in production and particularly to scientific and technological progress. In technical fundamentals instruction, apprentices are being made acquainted with the technological equipment needed to rationalize and automate production. It will be imperative to fulfil the teaching programmes in this field with high quality, as it is a question here of determining the standards of the skilled worker of tomorrow. He will need technical and political skills and knowledge, love of and loyalty to his trade. He should be proud of being a member of the working class.

From the Constitution of the GDR

Article 25

(1) Every citizen of the GDR has an equal right to education. Educational facilities are open to all. The integrated socialist educational system guarantees every citizen a continuous socialist education, training and higher training.

(4) In the German Democratic Republic general ten-year secondary schooling is compulsory; this is provided by the ten-year general polytechnical secondary school. In certain cases the schooling may be completed within the framework of vocational training or the further education of the working people. All young people have the right and the duty to learn a vocation.

Article 26

(1) The state ensures the possibility of transference to the next higher stage of education up to the highest educational institutions, the universities and colleges; this is done in accordance with the performance principle, social requirements, and taking into consideration the social structure of the population.

(2) There are no tuition fees. Training allowances and free study materials are granted according to social aspects.

From the GDR's Labour Code

§ 129

(1) The system of vocational training is under the direction of the socialist State and takes place directly in enterprises and vocational training institutions. This training is to take place along planned lines as a systematic educational process. It is carried out with a view to ensuring the unity of job-related theoretical and practical training and builds on the educational results of the general polytechnical secondary school.

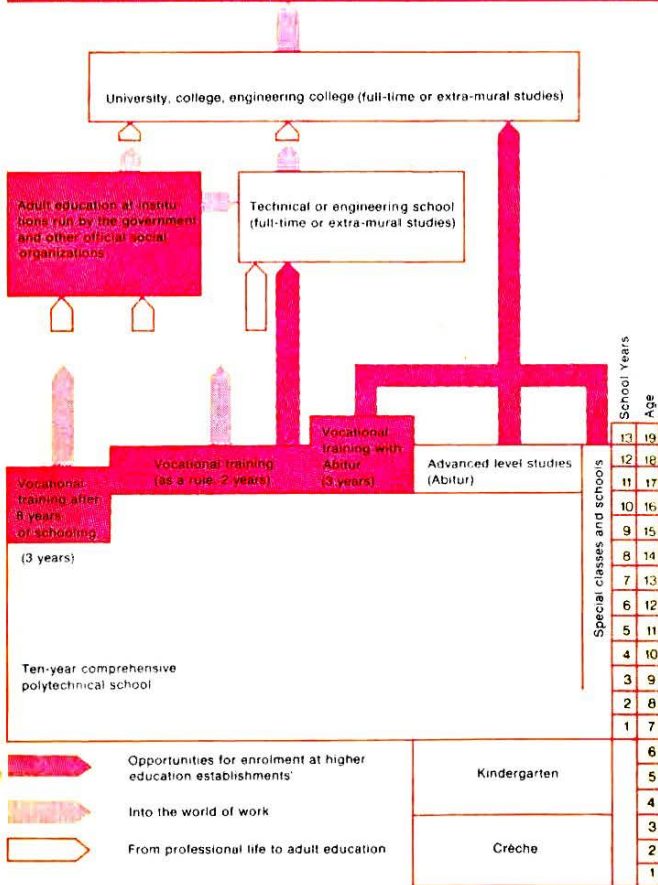
§ 130

(1) The enterprise is responsible for the management and planning of vocational training. In discharging its obligations in the field of vocational training, career guidance and recruitment of young skilled workers, the enterprise is expected to work closely with the local district or borough council, the relevant trade union bodies, the Free German Youth and other mass organizations as well as with the parents of the

Erratum

In the diagram on page 57 showing vocational training as a component part of the integrated socialist education system in the GDR please read instead of "Vocational training after 8 years of schooling": "The organization of ten-year comprehensive polytechnical schooling was completed in 1976. The need for vocational training for premature school leavers is only a limited one."

Vocational training is part of the GDR's integrated socialist education system



trainees. It is responsible for the fulfilment of the central curriculums. The enterprise has to create the necessary pre-conditions, above all the material, personnel and financial conditions, to enable apprentices to learn a given trade.

§ 132

(1) The apprentice has the right to acquire comprehensive vocational knowledge and skills, and to improve his general standard of education.

(2) The apprentice is entitled to take part in the management and planning of the training and education process and in the fulfilment of the enterprise's plans, and also to participate actively in the socialist emulation campaign and in the Young Innovators' movement.

§ 138

(1) If an apprentice for reasons of health or other socially justified reasons is temporarily unable to attend training and education courses and if the successful completion of his course is thereby endangered, the enterprise must offer to extend the contract of apprenticeship. The contract of apprenticeship may be extended for a period of up to two years.

§ 140

(1) At least six months before the expiry of the contract of apprenticeship the enterprise is obliged to offer the apprentice a job in the enterprise corresponding to the vocation in which he has been trained.

(2) If an apprentice in an exceptional case cannot be offered a job in the enterprise corresponding to the vocation for which he has been trained, the enterprise must, in consultation with the council of the district or borough in which the apprentice is resident, enable him to take up a job corresponding to his training in another enterprise. Until this happens the young skilled worker must be employed in the enterprise and paid as a skilled worker in the trade in which he has been trained.

§ 145

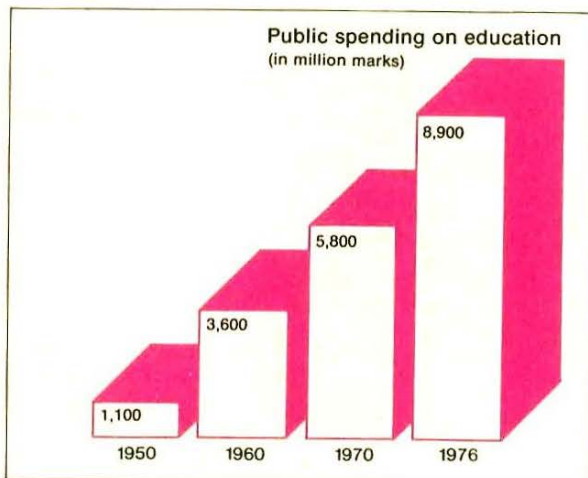
(1) The basic and further training of workers in employment serves the extension of basic knowledge and acquisition of higher knowledge and skills required to fulfil mutually contracted or other envisaged work. It is carried out in harmony with the task and development of the enterprise. Training and further training enable employees to raise the efficiency of their work and to take a creative part, and show greater expertise in running the enterprise. This contributes to the development of socialist personalities.

§ 148

(1) In basic and further training women are to receive special encouragement and support. Above all women employed in production are to be systematically raised to the level of skilled workers. More women should be enabled to take up managerial positions. Suitable measures should be laid down in plans for the promotion of women.

§ 150

(2) The enterprise is obliged to support employees taking part in basic and further training schemes by such measures as allowing them to arrange their working hours in the best suitable way, granting them leave of absence, mentor ar-



rangements, exchanges of experience, refunding of personal expenses, and other suitable measures laid down in the works collective agreement and the training contract. Good showings by employees in basic and further training courses are to receive moral and, as far as the enterprise's possibilities allow, material recognition.

From the Youth Law of the GDR

§ 21

(2) Directors and executive boards as well as heads of vocational training establishments shall see to it that school leavers are formally received at the training centres. They shall help ensure that groups of workers establish close relations with apprentices, exert an influence on their training and ideological education and enhance their love of their job and their ties with their employing firm. The training of apprentices shall be organized in such a way that they attain the standard of a skilled worker upon termination of their apprenticeship. Young skilled workers shall be taken into the future work team in a worthy manner.

(5) The results achieved by apprentices in work and study shall be acknowledged financially and morally in accordance with the performance principle. The lower apprentice pay shall be increased step by step.

(6) All apprentices shall be entitled to an annual holiday of 24 work days.

(8) Outstanding results achieved by apprentices shall be rewarded with official distinctions. The committees of the Free German Youth and of the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions shall have the right to submit proposals to this effect.

Facts and figures

Number of apprenticeable jobs

	1957/58	1966/67	1968/69	1970/71	1977/78
Total	972	655	455	356	316
Basic occupations	—	—	5	23	28

Young innovator's exhibitions in enterprises, schools and cooperatives (in thousands)

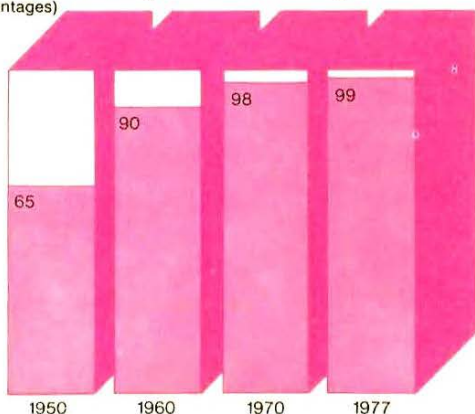
	1970	1975	1977
Number	9.8	23.2	33.0
Exhibits	160.0	524.9	611.9
Participants	616.0	2,086.0	2,323.0

In 1977 50 per cent of all apprentices took part in this movement.

Breakdown of the work force by qualification (in per cent)

	University and college graduates	Skilled workers and supervisors	Semi- and unskilled
1955	4.4	25.6	70.0
1964	7.4	45.6	47.0
1970	12.5	48.5	39.0
1975	13.6	62.2	24.2
1980 (projected)	18.0	66.0	16.0

School-leavers starting vocational training (in percentages)



Vocational training curriculum for skilled construction workers

	2-year course	3-year course including Abitur
Theoretical instruction	882 hours	2,394¹ hours
General subjects	180 hours	1,746 ¹ hours
civics	72 hours	99 hours
sport	108 hours	198 hours
mathematics	— hours	324 hours
physics	— hours	198 hours
chemistry	— hours	162 hours
geography	— hours	63 hours
German language and literature	— hours	198 hours
Russian	— hours	198 hours
second foreign language	— hours	198 ¹ hours
history	— hours	108 hours
Job-related theoretical instruction	702 hours	648 hours
cost accounting	72 hours	72 hours
socialist law	36 hours	36 hours
basic electronics	36 hours	36 hours
basic process measuring and control equipment	90 hours	90 hours
basic data processing	18 hours	18 hours
materials science	90 hours	54 hours
knowledge of construction machines	54 hours	54 hours
building construction equipment	180 hours	152 hours
production techniques	72 hours	72 hours
technical drawing	54 hours	54 hours
Job-related practical instruction	2,710 hours	2,572 hours
Basic vocational training	1,146 hours	1,146 hours
Course on mechanical equipment	44 hours	44 hours
Course on masonry	438 hours	438 hours
course on concrete and reinforced concrete	403 hours	403 hours
course on plastering and fitting operations	261 hours	261 hours

Specialization (practical instruction in the given specializations)

1,564² hours 1,426 hours

¹ For apprentices with no previous knowledge of a second foreign language an additional 261 hours are provided

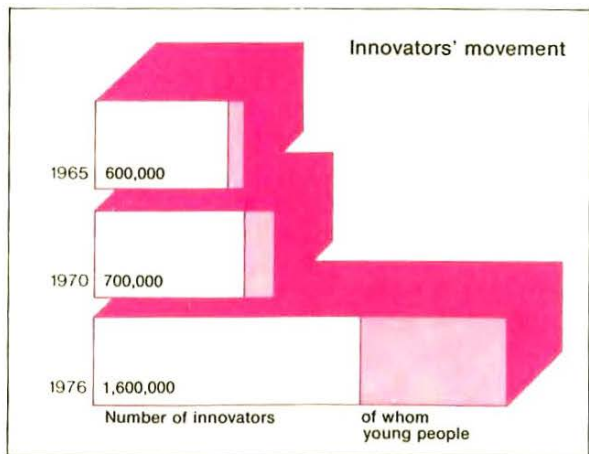
² Of which 264 hours are reserved for becoming acquainted with the future job

Further in-service training (In millions of employees)

1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
0.9	1.1	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.4

● In the GDR there are 316 apprenticeable jobs. These are drawn up in an official list called the "Systematik der Ausbildungsberufe". 225 of these jobs with 560 specializations require the completion of the tenth grade; 66 jobs with 45 specializations are reserved for those who have only completed the eight grade, while 25 with 30 specializations can only be learned by adults.

● By now more than 80 per cent of school leavers in the GDR receive the apprenticeship of their choice at the first appli-



cation, while only 0.9 per cent of apprenticeship contracts were dissolved in 1976 during the period of apprenticeship.

- The number of career guidance centres rose from 77 in 1974 to 214 in 1977. The tasks and activities of such career guidance centres are regulated by the government.

- About 50,000 teachers, instructors and supervisors play a major role in the training and education process. There are 15,200 teachers engaged in theoretical and 30,000 in practical training at 1,000 vocational schools attached to enterprises or run by local authorities, and about 3,200 other training establishments; 5,000 persons are employed on the staffs of apprentice hostels. In addition there are over 100,000 skilled workers who act as instructors or mentors.

- At present the GDR's vocational schools have at their disposal 9,250 classrooms, which number will have been increased by almost 2,000 by the year 1980. The size of the average class in theoretical instruction is at present 23 apprentices.

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