

## CHAPTER III

## EDUCATION IN WEST GERMANY

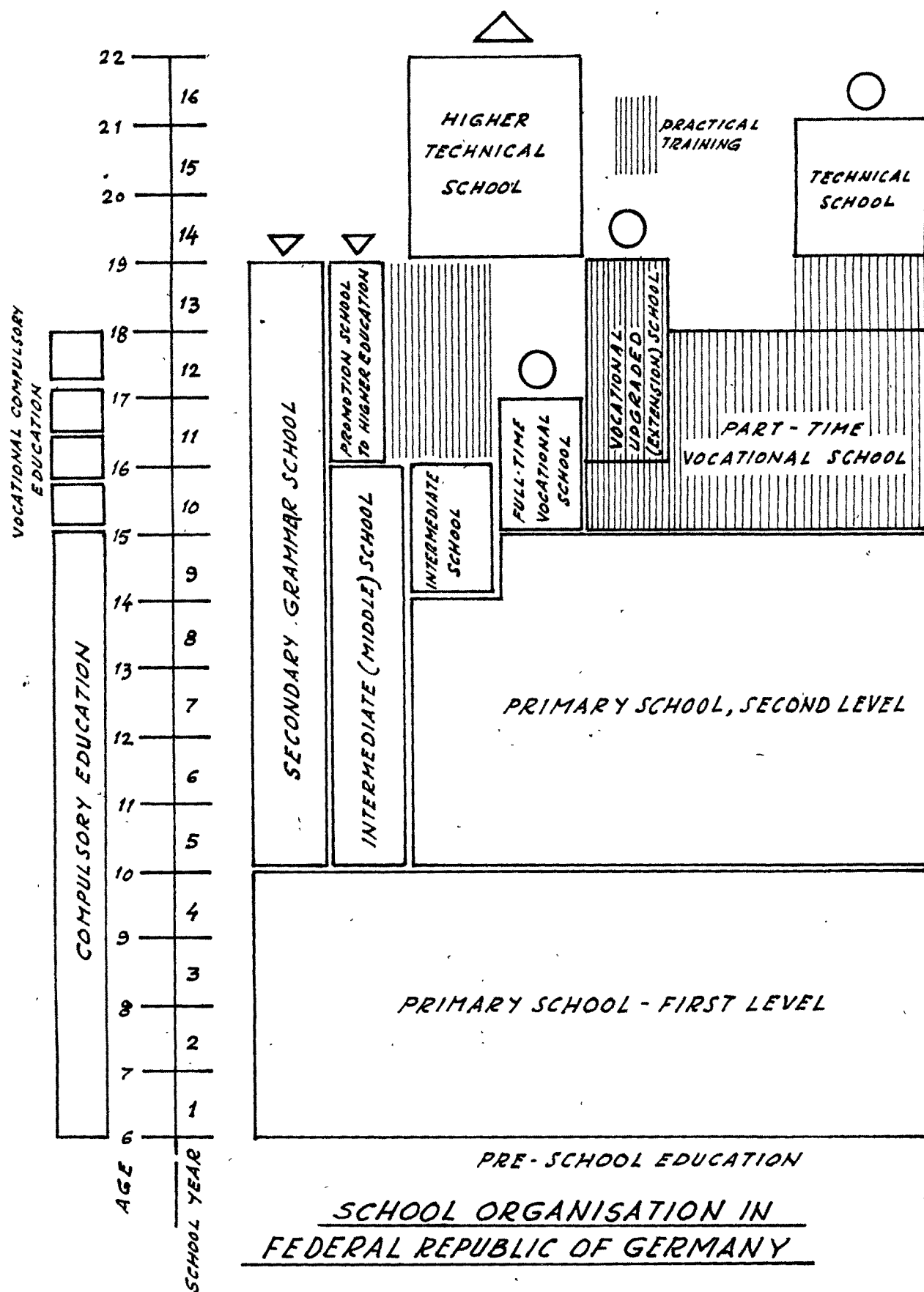
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Some Special Features of German Educational System

In Germany, attendance at school is compulsory for all pupils, both boys and girls, from the age of 6 to 18. Of this period of compulsory education 8 years (and in some States 9 years) are spent in a full-time school of general education. If the pupil leaves the full-time school at the age of 14 or 15, he has to spend three more years in a part-time vocational school (Berufsschule).

In the Federal Republic of Germany, each of the eleven States (Länder) has autonomy in education. There is no Central Ministry of Education as we have in India. Each State is the legislative and administrative authority for all matters concerning education including higher education, adult education, and cultural affairs in its own area. Nevertheless, the school systems throughout Germany are uniform in their principles, organisation and curricula. In order to maintain certain uniformity of standards and co-ordination, there is the 'Permanent Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs' (Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland) consisting of the Educational Ministers of all the 11 States.

Practically all schools in Germany are public and free. However, there are some private schools also. But their number is not more than 10 percent of the total number of schools, and they all are subject to inspection by the education department. Most schools, with the exception of universities, are not co-educational.



There are no tuition fees for the school education. Even the learning materials, especially the textbooks, are also provided free for all pupils in most of the States; in few States they are free only for those who are in need of financial help. In this nation, educational facilities have penetrated into the heart of the country and we find schools, both for boys and girls, in rural areas also.

Here, every profession, however humble, has been made into a science and technique. This has raised the status of all the professions to <sup>their</sup> proper place in the scheme of community life.<sup>1</sup>

Surprisingly enough, Germany has no organised pre-primary education - which sounds like irony in the native country of Froebel, who developed the idea of the kindergarten and which has become such an important institution across the Atlantic.<sup>2</sup>

#### Educational Structure and Ladder in West Germany

By tradition, the German school system comprises <sup>of</sup> three branches, the elementary schools (Volksschulen), the intermediate or middle schools (Mittelschulen), and the secondary schools (Gymnasien). Although the need for the nursery schools has been accepted, they do not form the part of the general recognised educational system in Germany. In almost all small towns and in all cities we find the kindergarten and children between the age of 3 to 6 attend them. Generally these nursery schools are

<sup>1</sup>Hirlekar Yamunabai. 'Education in Germany', The Popular Book Depot, Bombay-7, 1955, p.28.

<sup>2</sup>Rudolf Haas, 'German Education Today-Facts and Problems' in 'Meet Germany', Atlantik-Brücke, Hamburg, 64, 1969, p.82.

maintained by communities, churches, industrial organisations, labour organisations and also by private bodies. Attendance is of course, not compulsory nor the pre-primary education free. The parents have to pay some fees.

#### Primary Schools (Volksschulen)

Primary education became free and compulsory in the whole of Germany during the second half of the 18th century. At present it is free and compulsory all over the country. From the age of 6 to 14 (or 15 in some States). Here all children having completed their sixth year must attend grades 1 to 4 at the elementary school (Volksschule) which are known as basic schooling (Grundschule). ( In the three city - States of Berlin, Bremen and Hamburg these grades are 1 to 6). After completion of the Grundschule a pupil can choose to attend either the second level of the Volksschule (Oberstufe der Volksschule or Hauptschule), or transfer to the Realschule, formerly called Mittelschule, or to the High School called Gymnasium (Secondary general school leading to higher education). The decision on subsequent schooling depends on the choice of the parents and the talents of the children. It may be noted that a great majority of the pupils ( about 81 per cent) proceed straight to the upper primary i.e. they remain in the Volksschule and leave after 8th or 9th school year at the age of 14 or 15. (After completing the primary schooling, the pupils either go to apprenticeship and join part-time vocational schools (Berufsschulen).

or join the full-time vocational schools (Berufsfachschulen), but every boy or girl must attend a school, part-time or full-time or a continuation school till the age of 18).

In the Grundschule they learn religion, German, regional and local history, geography, arithmetic, physical exercise and music and drawing (in the last two years) and the girls also learn needlework in addition.

In the second level of the Volksschule ( the upper four grade) the following subjects are added, Social Studies, German and World history, nature study, a craft and a foreign language.

#### Intermediate or Middle Schools (Mittelschulen or Realschulen)

After attending the 'basic school' (Grundschule), those children who pass on to a Mittelschule have a course of six years of studies complete in itself at the end of which they appear at the examination. This course paves the way to occupy in life intermediate positions of semi-academic type in a clerical or administrative job and for careers in industry or other departments. Here the pupils learn religion, German, Social Studies, History, Geography, two Modern Languages (usually English and French), Mathematics, Nature Study, Drawing, Craft, Gardening, Music, Physical Training, Short-Hand etc. The girls learn needle-work and domestic science in place of craft. After passing the examination, the pupils can also go to a Fachschule or a Ingenieurschule or other technical

schools after two or three years of vocational practice. There is also a provision to attend the upper grades of the gymnasium or a Kolleg if the student intends to sit for the Abitur. It is worthy to note that only about 5 per cent of the children go to Mittelschule.

#### The Gymnasium ( Secondary High School )

About 14 per cent of the pupils go to Gymnasium which offers a nine year course leading to Abitur or Reifeprüfung ( maturity examination). Thus the Gymnasium leads upto the 13th school year. It exists in three main types : (1) The Gymnasium - the classical type, where Latin, Greek and one modern foreign language are compulsory; (ii) Real gymnasium - the modern language type, where two or three languages, including Latin , are compulsory; and (iii) Oberrealschule stressing mathematics and science, where two foreign languages are compulsory. The Gymnasium ends with Abitur which gives access to all forms of higher education. It is possible to leave the Gymnasium at the end of 6 years and follow the same course as the children leaving Mittelschule at the age of 16. After Abitur they can proceed to the university, or to some Technische Hochschule (Technical College) or to Agricultural or Music College or to any other higher institute of learning. It is said that about 40 } percent of the German Youth finally go in for the Abitur examination.

It is sometimes criticised that the upper four (or five) classes of free-compulsory elementary schools are for the masses, the middle schools are for the middle class and the Gymnasiums are for the higher class people. Thus German educational system is based on 'Class System'. But this is not correct now. Today even for a poor but intelligent pupil, it is possible to attend any of the schools he chooses.

The following table shows the number of schools, pupils and the teachers in 1958, 1965, 1967 and 1968 in

the Federal Republic of Germany :

TABLE 7

Types of Schools		No. of Schools	No. of Pupils
1. Primary Schools * (Volksschulen)	1958	30,337	4,618,000
	1965	30,756	5,607,400
	1967	29,511	5,982,065
	1968	28,498	6,140,741
2. Intermediate Schools (Realschulen)	1958	880	312,000
	1965	1,377	539,900
	1967	1,863	694,494
	1968	1,965	759,615
3. Grammar Schools (Gymnasien)	1958	1,610	765,000
	1965	1,763	957,900
	1967	2,059	1,194,280
	1968	2,151	1,274,548

\* Inclusive of Special Schools.

The Table indicates that :

1. The number of primary schools have decreased slightly but the number of pupils studying in primary schools have increased gradually. This means that each school (and in that case perhaps each class) has a greater number of pupils than before.
2. The number of Intermediate schools and pupils studying there have gradually increased considerably. During the last 10 years it has practically doubled.
3. The number of Grammar Schools and the pupils therein has also increased greatly. It has also almost doubled during the last 10 years.
4. In 1958, about 81 percent of the pupils were in Volksschule, 5.6 per cent in Realschule and 13.5 per cent in Gymnasien. While in 1968, the percentage in Volksschule was reduced to 75, and the percentage in Realschule rose to 9.3, and in Gymnasien to 15.7. This shows the tendency of pupils towards getting admitted more and more to Realschule and Gymnasium which shows the rising aspirations of the parents also.

#### University and Higher Education

In the Federal Republic of Germany, radical changes are at present taking place in the organisation of higher education. This particularly applies to the universities. Yet higher education in Germany is characterised by a dynamic mixture of tradition and experiment, with the element of tradition being still stronger than the element of experiment.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Haas Rudolf, ' German Education Today - Facts and Problems' in Meet Germany, Atlantik-Brücke, Hamburg 64, 1969, p. 83.



The oldest German University, Heidelberg, dates back to the 14th century. It was founded in 1386. The next one, Tübingen, was established in 1477, and the others followed. The early German universities were famous for<sup>ly</sup> their scholarship and research and had a good deal of influence on other European universities. Over and above the universities, other Hochschulen, such as the Higher Institutes of Technology, Academics of Mining, Institutes of Business and Finance, Academics of Fine Arts and Music, Pädagogische Hochschulen and other institutes provide higher education in Germany.

At present the Federal Republic of Germany has 26 universities. 9 Colleges of Science and Technology (Technische Hochschulen), 11 Academics of Art, 15 Colleges of Music, 5 Protestant Theological Colleges, 10 Catholic Colleges (Philosophy and Theology), and 5 colleges devoted to special branches of economy, agriculture, veterinary medicine etc. Some of the 55 colleges and academics are independent and others are either associated with the universities or form part of them. The number of students studying in the German universities and colleges in 1967-68 (Winter Semester) was about 350,000 of whom 20 per cent were women and about 22,000 were foreigners. The leading centres of education in the Federal Republic are :

1. Universities of Kiel, Hamburg, Göttingen, Cologne, Münster, Bonn, ~~Mor~~burg, Giessen, Frankfurt/M., <sup>Mainz</sup>Mayence, Saarbrücken, Freiburg, Tübingen, Heidelberg, Munich, Erlangen, Würzburg and the Free University of Berlin;
2. <sup>Aachen</sup> — The Technical High Schools of Hanover, Brunswick, Aix-la-chapelle, Darmstadt, Stuttgart, Karlsruhe, Munich, and the Technical University of Berlin;
3. The Higher Institutions of University standing in Clausthal (Academy of Mining), Hanover (School of Economics), Nurnberg (School of Economic and Social Sciences), Düsseldorf (School of Medicine) and <sup>Stutt</sup>Stuttgart-Hohenheim (Agricultural College).

These 32 seats of higher education are members of the West German Rectors' Conference. The functions of the universities are teaching, research and preparation for a trade or profession. All these functions are related to one another. The German universities are well-known for their academic and cultural freedom. The German universities have succeeded in producing students who are intelligent, mature and responsible, and who can face the future with confidence and courage.

The German universities grant diplomas in the fields like physics, chemistry, mathematics, psychology, economics etc. They confer only one degree i.e. the doctor's degree. Only recently, the Free University of West Berlin has introduced the Master of Arts, a non-specialized degree corresponding to

that given by American and English universities.<sup>1</sup> The diploma certifies knowledge and proficiency perhaps somewhat more profound and extensive than does the Master's Degree granted by our Indian universities.

Apart from a certain amount of supervision with regard to fiscal matters, the State institutes of higher learning enjoy almost complete autonomy with regard to their teaching and research. Public financial support does not imply interference by the State or the State Legislative Assembly. The students are regarded as mature and responsible individuals and enjoy freedom of learning (akademische Freiheit) which places all responsibilities for their studies and activities on the students themselves.

The Students' Organisations manage student dormitories, dining halls, medical service and health insurance. They also handle applications for financial aid, loans, stipends, free meals etc. They also chalk out guidance and cultural programme. They come out with number of publications and literature of their own.

#### Vocational Education

After completing compulsory general education in a Volksschule, he or she will have to undergo some more formal

<sup>1</sup>Hylla Erich J. and Kegel Friedrich O. 'Education in Germany'. Hochschule Für Internationale Pädagogische Forschung, Frankfurt/M. 1958, p.46.

schooling in a part-time vocational school (Berufsschule). In this country, attendance upto the end of the 18th year of age (or termination of apprenticeship) is compulsory for all those not enrolled in a full-time school. The part-time vocational school developed from the continuation school (Fortbildungsschule) and Germany was the first country to make attendance at a vocational school obligatory for all young workers and apprentices in her Constitution of 1919. The pupils have eight to twelve periods of instruction per week and they are required to attend this part-time vocational school either on one or two days every week. These schools add to the general education of the adolescents and reinforce practical training gained in industry, trade, commerce, agriculture, home economics, mining etc. by instruction related to the future job. They are usually quite satisfactory and try to meet the demands of the various vocations of the community.

There are also Full-time Vocational Schools (Berufsfachschulen) which usually last for two years. This school mainly prepares pupils for vocations in the field of commerce or domestic science. The number of girls in these schools is much bigger than the number of boys because these schools provide training for stenographers, typists, secretaries as well as the training for domestic science. They are mostly maintained

by the communities, vocational organisations and by private persons.

The Upgraded Vocational Schools (Berufsaufbauschulen) have developed during the last decade only. The attendance is purely voluntary. They qualify young working people by providing them additional general instruction and technical education.

The advanced full-time vocational schools (Fachschulen) only admit those young people who have enough practical experience in a vocation. Sometimes the applicants have passed the apprenticeship examination. These schools offer courses for the examination for 'master of a trade.'

One of the latest development in the German educational field is the introduction of what is called the 'Second Channel of education.' Here the suitable qualified pupils are offered facilities in the form of evening or special schools which partly or wholly make it possible for them to undertake a more advanced education upto final graduation at a University along with their professional activities. Thus irrespective of economic situation and social status of the parents, today there is a possibility for every young man and woman in Germany to receive scholastic education and professional training according to his or her best capacities.

### Importance of Polytechnic Education in East Germany (GDR)

It is interesting to note that in the East Germany (German Democratic Republic) also the major slogans applied to educational activities are 'Patriotic Education' and 'Polytechnic Education'. The first slogan is mainly concerned with the development of socialistic ideology. A positive viewpoint towards the political ideology of the Government is systematically developed among the youth. The second slogan of 'Polytechnic Education' is the basic concept of the relationship between education and life in modern technological society. Since 1953, Polytechnic Education has been proclaimed as the key to basic educational reform in the German Democratic Republic.

To achieve these two objectives of 'Patriotic Education' and 'Polytechnic Education' the East German Government has developed a comprehensive school system from the kindergarten to higher education. A broad programme of adult education, youth organisations, parents' councils and clubs for children also help substantially to strengthen the educational programme with a view to fulfil the desired goals. Polytechnic education in the Marxist concept is not only vocational training but also the total education of man in a technological society. Hence the system of technical schools plays a major role in the total educational programme of East Germany. Similar to

vocational educational system in Federal Republic of Germany, here also there is a well-planned apprenticeship training along with part-time vocational schools and also full-time vocational schools and technical colleges to provide high degree of specialisation. A great emphasis both on the technical and the political education is laid because 'the students enrolled in the technical schools must master the economic laws of socialism, for they together with the workers and the scientists, will make socialism a reality.'<sup>1</sup>

Administration and Control of Education in Federal Republic of Germany

The Federal Republic of Germany is divided into eleven States (Länder). In the field of education, each State is autonomous with its own Minister of Education, who is responsible for administration, supervision and educational policy of the State. Each State is the legislative and administrative authority for all matters concerning education including higher education, adult education, and cultural affairs in its own area. The Ministry of Education is called 'Kultus Ministerium' (Cultural Ministry) which shows that education cannot be divorced from culture.

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<sup>1</sup>Bohenman Paul S. 'Education in the Soviet Zone of Germany,' U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington, 1959, p.17.

There are three levels of administration :

- (i) The State Ministry of Education,
- (ii) The Government - District level (Regierungsbezirk);  
and
- (iii) The country level, rural or urban.

Generally, the Ministry of Education has the following  
Departments :

1. Elementary Schools (Volksschulen) and Intermediate  
Schools (Realschulen);
2. Grammar Schools (Gymnasien);
3. Vocational Schools (Berufsschulen);
4. Education of Girls;
5. Universities and Higher Education;
6. Teachers' Training Programme;
7. Adult Education;
8. Youth Affairs.

The Ministry of Education takes care of the general  
school policy, curriculum planning, examinations, and  
certifications. All appointments of the teachers are made by  
the Education Ministry. There is also a tendency to decentralize  
some of the powers and delegate some of the functions to other  
authorities. Under the Education Minister is the Ministerial -  
Director. Next to him are 'Ministerialrat' who are the heads  
of the different sections. In the district they are called



Regierungs-Direktors. Then there are Oberregierungs<sup>✓</sup>rat who are in charge of administration, supervision and teachers' training. Next come Regierungs<sup>✓</sup>rat who are in charge of curriculum, employment of teachers, supervision and examinations. These positions are similar to our Class I officers. The Class II officers consist of Regierungsamtman who are in charge of administration, payment and scholarship. The Regierungsoberinspektor deals with pensions to widows, orphans and insurance.<sup>1</sup> Under him is the Regierungs<sup>✓</sup>Inspektor and finally comes the Secretary who does the clerical work.

To co-ordinate their work and to observe some uniformity in educational policy, the Ministers of Education of all the eleven States have formed the 'Permanent Conference of Ministers of Education' which is located in Bonn. One of the permanent committees of the Conference is the School Committee. It examines all matters of primary and secondary education, all matters pertaining to vocational and technical schools, colleges of engineering and teacher training requiring a joint solution and submits its proposals to the plenary session of the Conference. By the resolutions of this Conference, which can only be passed unanimously, each Minister binds himself to put these resolutions into practice or to support them in the

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<sup>1</sup>Hirlekar Yamunabai, 'Education in Germany', The Popular Book Depot, Bombay 7, 1955, p.82.

in the cabinet and assembly of his State.<sup>1</sup>

At the local level, there are county (Landkreis) or city units (stadtkreis), which supervise schools under their jurisdiction. A State supervisor (Schulrat), appointed by the Minister of Education, sees that the school district operates efficiently and smoothly, and that the State educational policy is well implemented. Naturally, the local units function in close co-operation with the Local Governmental authorities i.e. the heads of the County Governments or the City Mayors. It is the responsibility of the county or city school administrators and supervisors to see that the school regulations are properly observed and wherever needed, the guidance and advice provided. They also take interest in the in-service training of young teachers and other teacher training programmes.

#### Finances for Education

In Federal Republic of Germany, the public school financing is a joint responsibility of the State and the Local Communities. Mainly the schools are financed partly by the State Government and partly by the Municipalities. As a general rule, each State is responsible for institutions of higher learning and for vocational and teacher-training schools; the local units are responsible for elementary,

<sup>1</sup>, A Guide to School Systems in Federal Republic of Germany' published by the Council for Cultural Co-operation, Strasbourg, 1965, p.7.

intermediate and secondary schools. When public schools offer vocational and technical subjects, they often receive combined support from the State and local units. In general, the teachers' salaries and old-age pensions are paid by the State; the physical plants of the schools are built and maintained by the local authorities from their budgets based on general taxations. In the State of Baden-Wurttemberg, for example, the local community contributes 30 percent of personnel costs of elementary schools and pays for all material costs including the construction and maintenance of buildings, libraries, instructional facilities etc. For intermediate and high schools, generally the buildings and equipments are provided by the local authorities while the salary of the teachers is shared almost equally by the State and Local authorities. Universities are financed entirely by the States, but the State has no control over the academic matters of the University.

### Conclusions

After the Second World War, there was a lot of discussion in West Germany about the educational reforms, and today a number of reforms have taken deep roots in pedagogic life of Germany. At one time, the teacher dominated the class and the pupils accepted what was offered to them. Today the pupils are trained to acquire learning through their own efforts, and

through their own thinking. The co-operation of the pupils is invited in almost all phases of school activities. Again, all efforts are made at school to bring the pupils closer to actual facts of present day life, to social, economic and political interrelations. At all stages more and more emphasis is laid to concrete facts of life in place of abstract theoretical knowledge. One fact is very clearly noted that an overwhelming majority of the German school youth think along democratic lines and are internationally minded. The European Community idea in particular has found a wide support at schools.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Matthewes Ernst, 'The German School System' in Meet Germany. Atlantik-Brücke, Hamburg-Wellingsbuttel, 1960, p.91.