

International Educational Programme of the International Federation of Trade Unions

The International Federation of Trade Unions emphatically proclaims that the emancipation of the workers, the object for which it strives, should be intellectual as well as material. It considers that its efforts should cover both these spheres, and it is desirous of proclaiming general principles which will make it possible to emancipate the minds of the workers gradually by means of a profound change in the methods and curricula of teaching and education. The I.F.T.U. considers that it is impossible to separate vocational from general education and for this reason claims the right to deal also with the problem of general education.

The International Federation of Trade Unions is not ignorant that the conditions necessary for the achievement of the programme which it is compiling vary from one country to another, being contingent upon the political and social regime instituted in each. It is impossible therefore to lay down a programme for immediate use which shall be the same for all the national centres. It is however possible to lay down a general programme which the working class would approve and which could be used by each country as a basis for its immediate programme.

Aims and methods of education

1. The object of education is to develop the whole personality of the child with a view to its harmonious incorporation into the community, to enable it to develop physically, intellectually and morally and to secure its active and conscious co-operation in the advancement of civilisation.
2. The essential means to be used to provide the education demanded by the working class should be the development of the critical spirit on the one hand and the social sense on the other. These means are valuable in all stages of education, from Kindergarten to University. They are opposed to all dogmatism.
3. In the present order of society, divided as this is into antagonistic social classes, development of the social mind or social feeling can only take place if it combines a sense of the reality of these class divisions with the conception of a future classless society as the ideal towards which human effort must strive. These are the fundamental ideas which should dominate both curricula and methods, but these ideas should not be made the subject of systematic teaching except in the higher grade classes (pupils of at least 15 or 16 years of age).

Organisation of teaching

4. Education should be compulsory up to the age of 18, inclusive of vocational training and continuation school. In view of the extensive equipment of civilisation and culture which every adolescent has henceforth to acquire, any lower limit would be insufficient.
5. Education should be entirely free in all stages, including the college stage. There should also be free provision of all school equipment, and the cost of living should be covered, if necessary. So long as this is not possible, school fees must be graduated on the basis of social considerations, and public funds must be provided for educational grants, etc., in order to prevent children from having their training and general education hampered for financial reasons.
6. Education is social. It should be organised by the State and administered conjointly by the representatives of the parents, those

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interested in education, and the representatives of technical educationalists, that is to say, the teachers; in vocational and trade schools trade union representatives should also co-operate. The school system should be absolutely unsectarian, it should not be under the control of any religious denomination.

7. There should be no sex privilege, either among teachers or taught.

8. The classification of education into various periods is based on the mental and physical development of the child. Four periods are to be distinguished: I. Earlier Childhood; II. Pre-puberty Period; III. Period of Puberty and Development; IV. Adult Period. To these periods correspond respectively:

Nursery or Infant Schools;
Elementary School;
The Lower-Grade Middle School;
The Higher-Grade School (Vocational education and preparation for university).

9. During the first two periods and part of the third, the teaching should be the same for all pupils. In the second part of the third period there should be diversity, in order to enable the children to show their various tastes and aptitudes. All paid work should be prohibited for children during the first three periods, up to 16 years of age, in accordance with the programme for the protection of youth.

10. The fourth period should be utilised both for culture and for systematic preparation for a calling (industrial, commercial, agricultural, artistic or domestic): also, and especially, for preparation for college.

11. The health and physical welfare of the child both in and out of school should have the constant attention of the teachers and the school authorities: there should be open-air schools, children's play centres, ample air and floor space, comfortable well-equipped premises and special schools for physically or mentally defective children.

12. All the children should be placed under similar conditions of development, both in school and out, any variation in the teaching given to different children being due only to their different aptitudes and tastes. There should be an end to all social distinctions between the various kinds of schools. The school will then become a genuine « unity school », both in spirit and structure.

Methods

In order to promote the development of the social sense along the lines specified above, the International Federation of Trade Unions lays down the following methods, which are based on the research and recommendations of the International Trade Secretariat of Teachers.

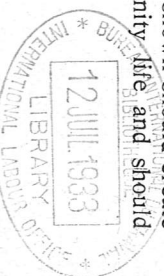
1. Teaching should proceed from the concrete to the abstract. It should gradually widen the child's horizon, which is at first limited to what immediately surrounds him, but should then be enlarged by education and travel and deepened in the sphere in which his education is specialised.

2. The teaching should make clear the fundamental features of economic life and its world inter-dependence.

3. A point to be specially developed is labour solidarity. Particular emphasis should also be laid on everything which facilitates the comprehension of this fundamental idea, such as travel, and knowledge of foreign languages (especially of some auxiliary international language). Chauvinism and militarism should be combated with the utmost energy.

4. The essential basis of the teaching method should be the idea of « creative work », whether manifested in some means of expression, such as reading, writing, arithmetic, singing, drawing, dancing, etc., or in creative technical ability.

5. The school should be organised as a community of work. By an application of the principles of self-government, the relations of the children among themselves and to the teacher should make the school a democracy. Stimulated by the teacher's example, the solidarity, friendship, joy and sense of responsibility shown should create in each class an atmosphere of healthy community life and should make it a model for future society.



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6. In the continuation school (4th period) the principle of creative work should be widened by the active co-operation of all the students, without exception, in the actual life of industry (or commerce, etc.), chiefly through the statutory establishment of the half-time system.

7. In all stages there should be a drastic reform of the examination system, examinations being used only to provide rational guidance for the different forms of intelligence. Over-pressure for the sake of examinations would thus disappear.

8. Institutes for educational research should be organised in order to utilise as effectively as possible the experience of the whole teaching body and the resources of scientific method.

The teaching staff should have facilities for acquiring the highest culture. This high level of culture will stimulate them to make research into new methods of teaching.