

**THREE LECTURES  
ON VOCATIONAL  
TRAINING; PP. 1-51**

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**GEORG KERSCHENSTEINER**

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## THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF CONTINUATION SCHOOLS

The wealth of a country depends not only on the natural riches of its soil, but also on the men who turn these riches to account. It has always been the aim of industrial states, or of states that desired to become industrial, to produce human material more and more fitted for their task. It was principally this object that induced absolute monarchs in Europe to establish primary schools. These schools were to contribute toward making industries, or, as they were then called, manufactures, a more productive source of state revenue.

But the farther we penetrate into the question of educating the masses to industrial capacity, the more we recognize that the problem before us is not special but general, that it is in fact nothing less than the problem of educating the whole man. Educational works in the United States are full of this discovery. In a description of the Lynn works Alexander Magnus says:

There are three main problems that enter into production: the machine problem, the material problem, the men problem. The latter is the most difficult problem, but also the most important one, in competitive activity.

In an article in the *American Federation of Labor* on industrial education I find the sentence:

There is a growing feeling that is gaining rapidly in strength, that in industrial education the human element must be recognized, and cannot be so disregarded as to make the future workers mere automatic machines.

This is perfectly true. The one-sided education of workmen to dexterity is only an apparent solution of the problem.

Of course industry requires an army of men trained to perform their special tasks as well as it is possible to perform them. But dexterity only attains its full value when it is based on insight. And one more thing is necessary. We require not only dexterity and insight but also the education of the moral character. Perhaps this development of character is the most important part even in industrial education, for firmness and principle will lead a man to acquire dexterity and insight, but dexterity and insight are not always placed in the service of character.

I do not assert that it always makes itself immediately felt, when any branch of industry neglects to train its workmen to insight and character. Many industries may profit for a longer or shorter period by their one-sided purely selfish training. But if all the industries of a state were to confine themselves to the development of dexterity, or even of dexterity and intelligence, the disadvantages of this method would soon make themselves apparent. For neither men, nor the states which they form, nor the industries which they carry on, can live an isolated life. They are all bound together by more or less common interests, linked together by a thousand chains. The individual is not only a workman in one branch or another, he is also a citizen of the state. And as a citizen his welfare and interests are inseparably connected with the welfare and interests of all other citizens. Every form of education, whatever its special aims may be, must seek to further the peaceful disentanglement of these interwoven interests—at least, that is to say, every form the realization of which requires schools supported by public money.

It might be urged—and I know that Americans favor this view—that it is not incumbent on the general community to provide more than a general education. To do this is both its right and its duty. But it has no duty and no right to use public money for purposes of specialized forms of education. This assertion cannot be justified. I have the conviction even that education for a calling offers us the very best foundation for the general education of a man. We are far too much

inclined to assume, both in the old world and in the new, that it is possible to educate a man without reference to some special calling. This assumption is erroneous. The only part of it that is true is that one calling requires more preparatory education than another, and that in our higher schools a common preparatory education can be given simultaneously for several learned and technical professions, exactly as the primary schools prepare their pupils for every kind of calling. We are also still far too much inclined to assume that early education for a calling must necessarily be a narrow and one-sided education. Yet it lies in our power to make an education for a calling as many-sided as any education can be. Well-nigh every calling, if treated with sufficient thoroughness, naturally involves an enlargement of the field of conception and activity. Science enters today into the simplest work and incites all possessed of the necessary gifts to develop their knowledge, their dexterity, and their initiative. Indeed experience has shown that the path of early education for a calling may lead to very much better results than the path of early general education with no definite calling as its goal. We might say, the useful man must be the predecessor of the ideal man. Everyone must be able to do some good and thorough work, though it be of the simplest kind, of one sort or another. Not till then will he be able not only to satisfy his fellow-men and be of use to his country, but also to make his own life of value to himself. And in the same measure as our lives gain value for ourselves do we attain power to reach a higher stage of culture.

If then the early education for a calling need by no means be one-sided or devoid of general value, if rather it is for most men, and especially for workers in industries, trades, and traffic, well-nigh the only way to reach a higher stage of culture, it cannot be regarded as a private matter; it becomes a matter of the community, a matter of the state. The reason for this does not lie in the advantages procured for any single branch of industry, but in the fact that this is the only road to civic education. Everyone who lives in a state and enjoys its pro-

tection must contribute through his work, directly or indirectly, to further the object of the state as a community for purposes of justice and civilization. Not till then is he a useful member of the state. And there can be no doubt that it is the duty of all schools supported by public means to educate useful members of the state.

Now if every individual is to contribute by means of his work to the general welfare of the community, our first business must be to provide him with the best opportunities of developing his skill and capacity for work. But the development of skill in his calling must not be placed only in the service of industry, or limited by industry. Its first object is the development of a man's own joy in work and thereby of his joy in life. For true joy in work can only grow out of real capacity for it. Thus the skill in work and the consequent joy in work that are cultivated in our trade schools prove themselves educational factors of the very highest importance. Through them we are able to appeal to the hearts of the boys and girls of our working classes. We can educate no one who is not happy in his work; and this is the point where we can intimately combine general and technical education. And there is no other way of doing this. It is possible to make use of skill in work and joy in work in an absolutely egoistic sense, and it is in this egoistic sense, unfortunately, that most technical schools approach their task. They only concern themselves with the individual, whom they endeavor to make as skilful as possible, while they pay no attention to the class as a whole. This is also the weak side of factory schools, which might otherwise be such admirable educational institutions for training intelligent and skilful workmen and artisans. It cannot be the interest of the manufacturer to give all his apprentices an equally good special and general education. He only concerns himself with the best among them, and not those with the best character but with the best intelligence and manual skill. Public schools have a very different object. They can and they must accustom the pupil betimes to use his joy in work and his skill in work in the service of his fellow-



pupils and of his fellow-men, as well as in his own. It is in their power to repress the general tendency of human nature to employ our gifts only for our own advantage. And it is their duty to repress this tendency, for if everyone were to use his gifts only for his own advantage there would be an end to all progress both for the industrial development of the nation and for the state as a whole.

\* Pupils who have learned in schools of this kind to place their joy in work and their skill in work at the service of their comrades will then be able to learn the lesson that every school ought to teach, of uniting readiness of service, consideration for others, and loyalty, with insight into the aims of the state community. Naturally the limits of this insight will depend on the intelligence and age of the pupils. But even when the teacher is compelled to be content with little, the public school will always have means to accustom its pupils to the habitual exercise of civic virtues.

Our present schools have not yet fully grasped the meaning of this threefold task: first, education to skill in work and joy in work; secondly, education to readiness of service, consideration for others, and loyalty to schoolfellows and to the school; and, thirdly, education to insight into the aims of the state community. Well-organized schools fulfil the first task, the development of personal capacity. It still remains to enlarge them to schools for social service, and our most important task is to provide such schools for the mass of the population, based on training for a trade.

But the schools for the vast majority of our fellow-citizens, the real schools of the people, do not even suffice to fulfil the first task, for they leave off precisely at the point at which education by means of and for a special calling begins. This is the same in the United States as in Germany. Not only the struggle for life but also the struggle for education commences for millions of our country-men at the age of fourteen. The doors of the primary school have closed for them, the doors of a higher school open only to the favored few. The competition for daily bread drives the half-grown boys and girls into

the market. They take what they find. True, the question of the children's future has peered out of the background in the mind of parents and relatives, but there has been no time to answer it. Their eyes are fixed on the necessities of the moment. Posts are valued at the salary they offer, however unfavorable the conditions may be for intellectual or moral development. Some few have the force of character to struggle through untoward circumstances. Their intelligence, their will-power, perhaps also their home training, gives them strength to overcome the forces that drag men down. Some few have the good fortune to get into a factory or shop that has a natural interest in well-trained workmen. Some few find employers who do not regard the young hand as a cheap workman but as a human being who must be educated. But the innumerable mass of weaker and less fortunate youths, of whom thousands and thousands are also valuable human material, and the innumerable mass of real capacity, that find no warm-hearted employer and no employment demanding intellect, drift like shipwrecked men on the stormy ocean. Some reach the haven, after a loss of many years; the majority lead a life never brightened by the sun of joy in work. No one has ever taught them to seek the true blessing of work. No one has ever taken the trouble to point them to anything farther ahead than the daily task by which they must earn their bread their whole lives long. People tell us industry requires thousands of hands fit to perform the same manipulation with the same unerring skill hour by hour, month by month, year by year. I fully believe that industry does require them. Division of labor is the vital element of industry. But industry is not the aim of human society. The aim of society is the increase of justice and culture. And if industry permanently continues to recklessly disregard this aim it becomes a danger, not only for the state, but also, in the end, for itself as well. A democratic or even a constitutional state that is ruled exclusively by the lust of gain, by money and the machine slaves that money buys, is doomed to inevitable ruin, as soon as the natural riches of the soil become exhausted and the population becomes too dense.

Even the industrial state cannot dispense with strong moral forces. These forces grow, but not in a people of machine slaves and money princes. Moral forces, like skill in work, grow on no other soil than that of joy in work.

Now it cannot be one of the first objects of industry to further the development of a country's moral forces. Its first object is the profitable use of economic forces. The struggle for existence compels it to strain these forces to the uttermost, to press the greatest manual and intellectual capacity into its service, and therefore to train its workmen to the highest degree of dexterity. The capital invested in it clamors with reckless insistence for its interest. No one has better represented the psychology of gain-seeking capital than the great English painter George Frederick Watts in his picture "Mammon," that hangs in the Tate Gallery in London. It is true that capital brings untold blessings to men. But it rarely unveils this second face until it has ceased to be capital hungering for increase or until it has discovered, as it must sooner or later discover, that the third factor, moral capacity, cannot be neglected with impunity. And even after this discovery it long seeks to defend its position by ever stronger accentuation of the need of pure skill, sometimes even until it is too late for its own undertakings and for the state that has left it free play.

There is no escape from this natural fate of industry but state intervention, not too long postponed, to supplement the one-sided education afforded by industry, trade, and traffic. It is in fact an entirely new duty that has arisen for the community since the economic revolutions of the last century. It arose not only in the interests of industry but in the most vital interests of the community itself. It is the imperative duty of the state to create school organizations which deal with the trade-training of boys and girls, which enter into the question with the utmost thoroughness, enlarging and deepening it, and thereby awakening in boys and girls many-sided capacity for work and a living joy in work.

It will not be the object of this new school to replace the training now given in the practical work of factory and handi-