

and 20th-century problems by overemphasizing the importance of past events, of old languages and of outdated knowledge and thinking. What is the sense of orientating our youth obstinately towards a remote past when it is too obvious that as citizens they will be unable to cope with the difficulties of today and tomorrow. Dominant features of our present time are economic, technological and scientific supremacy, political and social instability, strong demographic pressure and a deeply disturbed relation between civilization and man's environment. Is the main function of education not precisely to prepare our children, by teaching appropriate subjects, to understand and to be competent to deal with the problems they will meet as adults<sup>42</sup>?

Why not consecrate part of all the time spent on learning Latin and Greek to the study of another modern foreign language and perhaps even to more of natural sciences, amongst which biology would now be able to contribute very valuably to a genuine humanistic education? Why not, instead of starting the teaching of history with ancient Egypt or Greece, begin with present times and take from the past what is strictly necessary for understanding our own political and economic structures? Would it not be preferable, instead of reading and learning in chronological order a long list of literary and philosophical authors from the Renaissance onwards, to study among the modern writers those dealing competently with the main problems of today, even if their education were not strictly literary? Moreover, instead of sticking to on outdated number and hierarchy of subjects, should we not have the courage to fix new centres of gravity and even to replace old and obsolete subjects by new ones, such as economics, sociology, etc.? Above all, however, should we not seek to realize much more interdisciplinary work, since our existence is not a mosaic of single topics but rather the result of complex interactions between the numerous aspects of our life? But this would mean bridging gaps between single subjects and above all between the literary and scientific 'cultures', the last gap being one of the main obstacles to a fully comprehensive education.

It is true that, if we were following these suggestions, we would then educate people who would not be cultivated in a traditional sense, who would for instance not know

what 'in medias res' or 'ipso facto' meant, who would ignore who murdered Julius Caesar, who were the genitors of Hercules and who wrote the story of Gargantua. But these people might instead be able to exchange information and ideas with a wider circle of foreign persons than most of our youngsters with a leaving certificate can, to understand more than the average citizen of today about politics and economy, to contribute more efficiently than most learned persons of these days to the solution of demographic and environmental problems and, as journalists, to diffuse more realistic information about these problems, and with another emphasis, than is done currently. Such people and their education might eventually lay the foundations for a new and more realistic notion of culture and humanism.

Our hitherto existing educational structures and methods rest upon, and always lead again to, sophisticated and unrealistic concepts of culture and humanism, in which many outdated and unimportant features of our history and intellectual life are overemphasized, whilst scientific, technological and socio-economic knowledge and work are despised. That such concepts are a weak, misleading and dangerous basis for an up-to-date education should need no further comment.

And still, hard fighting, if not worldwide catastrophes, will be required until the educational reforms, about which so much is said and written today, will yield more than mere reshuffling of existing programmes. The space attributed in Western Germany to the teaching of the natural sciences and the new Swiss 'Maturitäts-Anerkennungsverordnung' (1968) prove how far our competent authorities still are from a comprehensive view of human life. Such a view is, however, a prerequisite for ending a sterile competition between literary and scientific humanisms and for finding the solution of, amongst others, our demographic and environmental problems, on which all the aspects of our life, from ecological to moral, converge. If we lose this educational battle, then the chances for winning the environmental one will remain very small indeed.

<sup>42</sup> P. A. TSCHUMI, *Gymnasium Helveticum* 23, 373 (1968/69).

## CORRIGENDUM

P. A. FINOT, R. VIANI, J. BRICOUT and J. MAURON:

*Detection and Identification of Pyridosine, a Second Lysine Derivative Obtained Upon Acid Hydrolysis of Heated Milk*, *Experientia* 25, p. 134 (1969). The correct name of com-

pound V should be L-2-amino-6-[3-hydroxy-4-oxo-6-methyl-1-pyridinyl]-hexanoic acid or  $\epsilon$ -[3-hydroxy-4-oxo-6-methyl-1-pyridinyl]-L-norleucine instead of  $\epsilon$ -[1,4-dihydro-6-methyl-3-hydroxy-4-oxo-1-pyridyl]-L-lysine. Pyridosine is to be maintained as trivial name.

## CONGRESSUS

### Romania Regional Congress of Physiological Sciences

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