

**PRESENT TRENDS AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS IN
EASTERN EUROPEAN EDUCATION: THE CASE OF HUNGARY**

by

Tamas Kozma
Head of Department
Policy and Research Planning
Hungarian Institute of Educational Research
Hungary

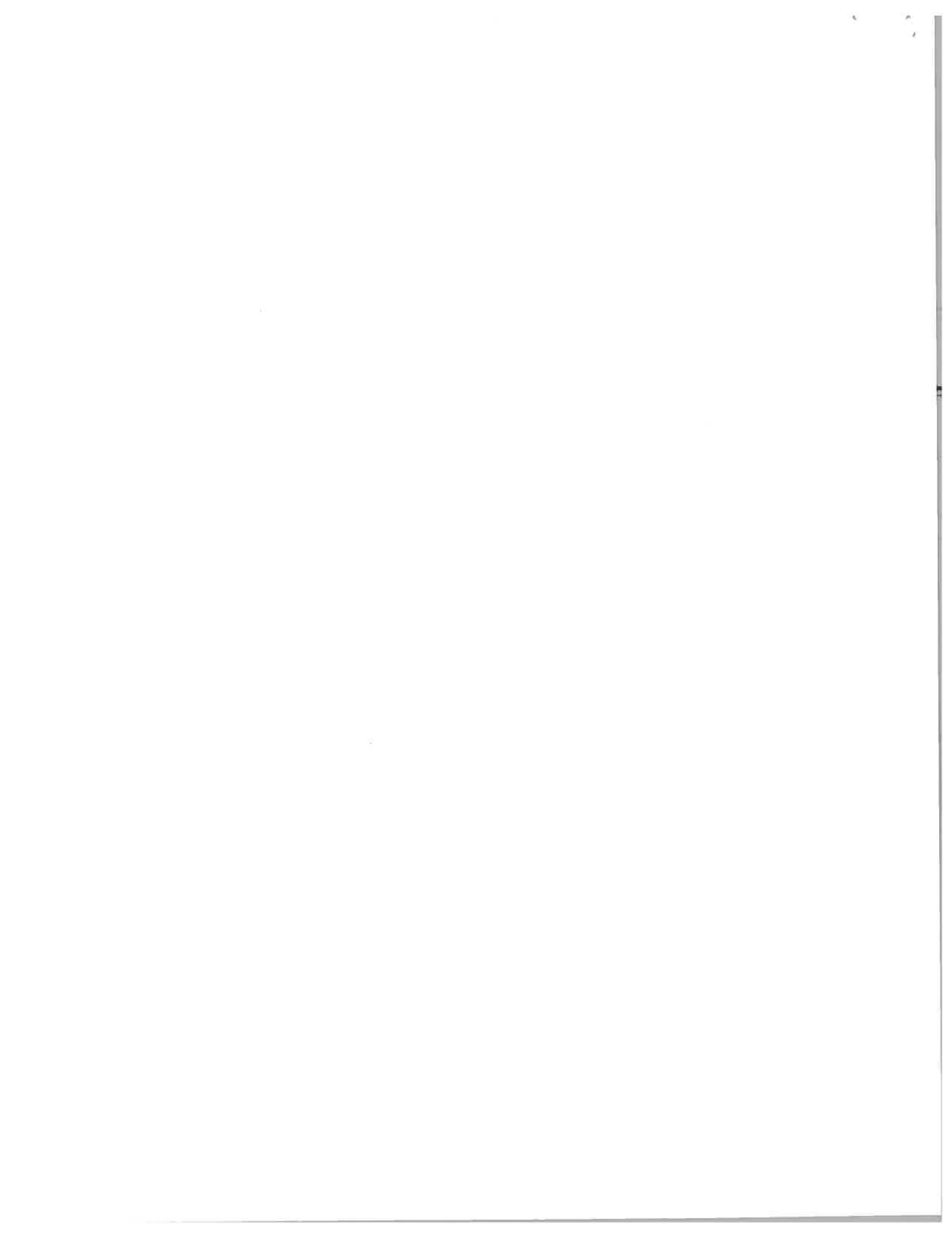
Discussion Paper

on

Radu I.C. Bogdan's
THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND TRAINING IN ROMANIA

The Thirteenth International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences
Washington, D.C. September 2-5, 1984

© 1984, Paragon House Publishers



In this paper, I should like to give an illustration of the Hungarian system of education till the turn of the century in relation with the socio-economic changes. First I will outline the changes which already took place, or are expected to occur in the educational system of Hungarian society. Later, I will describe the policy alternatives of the changing of the educational system in Hungary. Finally, I will outline the future of that system till the year 2000. /Table 1 shows the basic data of the system./

1. ORGANIZATION IN THE MAKING:

A HISTORICAL VIEW

The crucial development in the last third of our century is that secondary education /second circle/ became universal by 1980ⁱⁿ Hungary. The same development took place in the industrially developed countries between about 1930 and 1960.

The mass-development of secondary education took place under different organizational conditions. One of the characteristic ways of development is seen in countries, where the institutionalized selective system of secondary education has been preserved. The other characteristic development is manifest in countries where school reforms began in the fifties of our century aimed at the uniformization of these parallel phases. The European socialist countries show the third characteristic

course of development, since the secondary education for the 10-14 year olds was made uniformly obligatory almost a decade sooner. After World War II in these countries so-called general schools were developed in the course of the democratic educational reforms from the primary schools and the lower forms of the classical grammar school.

In the late forties, the democratic school reforms of the European socialist countries also endeavoured to develop a comprehensive secondary school. As a first step, the majority of vocational schools were reorganized into technical secondary schools in several socialist countries /these were called "technical secondary schools" in Hungary/. According to these plans, first and second year students would have had more or less the same curricula in these schools. However, owing to a forced and one-sided industrialization, the various levels of vocational training, and the schools preparing for third-level education were organized in differing types of schools in the early fifties.

The reform of the educational system-which began everywhere in the European socialist countries during the seventies-has aimed at finding for a more appropriate proportion between vocational training and general education, than the existing one. In countries, where the secondary schools as institutions did not have long traditions-for instance in

of the parents, and the aspiration of their children for higher education, we can forecast the expected development of the demand till the turn of the century /Table 3/.

Our prognosis indicates that by 1990 about 58 per cent of the 14-17 age group, whose number will be smaller then, will want to go to grammar-school and technical secondary-schools, while the proportion of those who will choose skilled worker training courses will remain 34 per cent. The proportion of the first group may further increase by the year 2000 to 60 per cent, while the proportion of the second group decreases to 31 per cent.

3. THE POSSIBLE FUTURES OF THE SYSTEM

The circumstance that secondary education will become general will require new organizational framework for the schools. In the following, I shall give an outline of the future image of the organization of the schools which we should approach from now on.

/a/ Primary education. The early phase of schooling needs to be reorganized in the future to complement the prolonged phase of maturation. The continuous transition from kindergarten to school approximately between the age of 5 and 8 can be solved organizationally. Naturally, one of the preconditions for this consist in general kindergarten education for all children which, according to demographic data, may be attained between 1980 and

Yugoslavia and Romania-attempts are being made to make two further classes of the secondary school general by transforming them organizationally separate. In Poland and Bulgaria the intention is to couple these classes organizationally with the elementary schools, but the realization of these plans is not as advanced as the Yugoslav or Romanian programmes, and their outcome is not clarified yet either. On the other hand, Czechoslovakian education authorities are inclined to preserve the technical secondary schools as well as the general grammar schools on the longer run, and to develop cooperation between them. The next step in Czechoslovakia is seen as the gradual elimination of the institutional separation of the vocational training and the technical secondary schools, with an emphasis on the conceptual unity of the 12 year learning cycle.

From the middle of the sixties, secondary education has become widespread also in Hungary but mainly through the spread of technical schools, apprentice schools giving no entitlement to enrol in third-level courses.

2. THE DYNAMICS OF SCHOOLING

How would then schooling levels develop in Hungary around the year 2000? Table 2 shows the trends that can be forecasted for persons over six years of age.

Considering the relation of the educational standard

1986. A further precondition is the planning of new schools, developing more functional areas instead of the traditional buildings, more or less on the pattern of the modern kindergarten buildings.

/b/ Schooling for early teenagers. Two aims can be outlined concerning the development of the existing general school. One of them is to raise the standard of teaching in such a way that the proportion of school-failures is decreased. The other aim is to reconstruct the institutions to increase the number of teachers in order to enable the full-day operation of the general school instead of the present half-day practice. The full development of the general schools may be attained approximately around the year 2000 with the improvement of the buildings, equipment, and not least with rising the standard and number of teachers of elementary schools. But this process is not merely an educational matter, it is also a mirror and an indicator of the standard of Hungarian socio-economic development.

/c/ Secondary education. In the course of making secondary schooling general in Hungary too, the next step is to fit the training of skilled workers more organically into the whole system of secondary education. This means that vocational schools must be in the long run developed towards technical secondary schools; the transfer among the various types of secondary schools must be made free; instead of separation general education and vocational training will have to be linked organizationally to a greater extent than at present.

The integration would develop a new cooperation among the existing types of schools in such a way ^{that} the various secondary schools of the same district closely harmonize their activities. Several problems will arise, and it is advisable to face them in good time. The problems will include the establishment of a new system of administration, recording and information which is to serve these integrated secondary schools, complex vocational training bases, educational regions. Increased size, within which the number of bureaucratic phenomena will increase is also a problem. Therefore, new methods of the pedagogic management of learning have to be developed. It is also obvious that not many students will profit yet from the mass-like secondary education during the next 15-20 years. The question is how could and should they be motivated.

/d/ Higher education: the third level. The democratic school reform provided the basis for extending secondary-school education to masses of the youth. However, this was realized in the seventies without any changes in the organization of third-level education. According to estimates, compared to 49 per cent in 1970, the proportion of those who intend to continue their studies in third-level education will increase to over 60 per cent during the coming decades. This increased demand for third-level education is accounted for by the higher school qualification of the parents living around the year 2000. In 1970 only 14 thousand of the 45 thousand applicants could enrol in universities and other institutions of higher

education. The capacity of third-level educational centres is not expected to grow above 16 thousand. Therefore, it is easy to foresee that the tension between demand and supply will increase /see Table 4/.

At present, the centres of third-level education are even less prepared for providing education to the mass of aspiring young people than our secondary schools. But the number of vacancies to university graduates /about 147 thousand till the year 2000/ prevents a massive increase in university enrolments in the present form. Considering the continuously increasing demand on the one hand, and the existing capacities on the other, the solution seems to lie in developing and improving the most varied ways of education above secondary-school levels.

Besides the traditional "royal course provided by the university", we have the various ways of vocational training. On the one hand, certain vocational courses will be open only to secondary-school graduates, on the other, the extension courses of the enterprises should be organized on a national level. Apart from extension courses, we are referring also to other organized courses, such as the national organizations of trade training and further education, particularly in the dynamically developing branches of industry. It would seem natural to organize them under the guidance of universities. In practice this could mean that the education activities of secondary-school leavers would be registered and perhaps qualified by various universities in different regions. And this brings up the problem of several districts which have no university. The

development of a new, organizing type of "university" would be very much needed in these regions.

4. STABILITY OR CHANGE: POLICY ALTERNATIVES

International records show that secondary education became general uneven in most countries. The process is not subject to some "natural law", we have a wide scope of action. Therefore, both theoretically and practically, we can accelerate or slow down the process.

Policy A: Trend acceleration. The proportion of secondary-school students has been increasing each year so far. The practical result of accelerating this development means that we modify the current proportions of secondary education in favour of the grammar and vocational secondary schools, by developing the skilled worker training centres into vocational secondary schools. The increased burden it would place on the current educational infrastructure could be an argument against accelerating the development towards making secondary education general. The consequences of this may reduce the efficiency of education. It would also bring forward the problem of extending third-level education. The acceleration of development would modify the Hungarian labour situation, i.e. a part of the age groups concerned would start their active careers later.

Policy B: Slowdown. A slowdown in the growth rate of making

secondary education universal, is a realistic alternative. In order to achieve this, we could keep the proportion of students receiving skilled worker training, and increase the capacity of vocational secondary schools versus the grammar schools. But I cannot conceal my aversion to a slowdown. It can become a source of socio-political tensions. The proportion of people who get but a narrow technical education would increase out of proportion. We already can read this from forecasts of labour demand. Commanding only some narrow technical education, young people will undoubtedly face employment and adjustment problems. This alternative has distorting influences on the social structure /development of schools for the elite as well as narrowing down the channels of social mobility/.

Policy C: Postponement of the wave. If we plan to interfere with the process of the secondary education becoming general, we cannot disregard the fluctuations in the size of the 14-17 age group. Should we want to postpone making secondary education general till after 1990, then we will have to maintain the existing system of training skilled workers for 10-15 years. This will cause considerable tensions.

Relevant prognoses indicate that there will be some 2.5 million jobs in Hungary in 2000. However, some 680 thousand of these will consist of jobs, which will need simple instructions only even in twenty years time. But there will be some 1.9 million persons bidding for the 1.4 million jobs, where

skills will be necessary, consequently there will be nearly half a million people who will not be able to utilize their original training in the job. These data indicate that even at present more people get a special school training than would be justified by the demand. It follows therefore that training in one trade only should not be increased, but on the contrary, it should be reduced.

Based on this brief consideration of the policy alternatives, policy C of changing the system is recommended. In plain terms, this means that secondary education in Hungary will be made general only during the nineties. That is the time, when the populous age group, which was born between 1974 and 1977, and now forms a demographic wave will leave the institutes of secondary education. However, the early phase of the reform of secondary education may already take place in the second half of the eighties. And the further development of third-level education will become timely in the second half of the nineties. Thus the complete renewal of the Hungarian system of education is expected to be completed some years after the year 2000.

LITERATURE

ANDERSON L, WINDHAM D. M. /eds./:

Education and Development

Lexington /USA/: Lexington Books, 1982.

BÓNA E. et. al. /eds./:

Future Research in Hungary

Budapest; Akadémiai Kiadó, 1983.

DI MARIO A. J.:

"The Soviet Union and population: theory, problems, and
population policy"

Comparative Political Studies, Vol. 13. No.1. pp. 97-136.

HASKINS R., GALLAGHER J.J. /eds./:

Models for Analysis of Social Policy

Norwood /USA/: Ablex, 1981.

Hungarian Central Statistical Office:

Statistical Books of Hungary

Budapest: Statistical Publishing House, 1975, 1980, 1983.

HUSÉN T., KOGAN M.:

Educational Research and Educational Policy.

Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1983.

INKEI P., KOZMA T.:

"Regionale Ungleichkeiten und alternative Konzeptionen für
die Reform des ungarischen Bildungswesens."

In: Weishaupt H. /Hrsg./: Sozialraumanalyse und regionale
Bildungsplanung.

Baden-Baden /FRG/: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1983.

pp. 295-318.

KIENITZ W.:

"Fortschritte des Bildungswesens in der Etappe des entwickelten Sozialismus."
Vergleichende Pädagogik, Vol. 1984. No.1. pp. 140-163.

KIRK M.:

Demographic and Social Change in Europe 1975-2000.
Council of Europe, Liverpool University Press, 1981.

KORN K. et. al.:

Education, Employment and Development in the German Democratic Republic.
Paris: Unesco International Institute for Educational Planning, 1984.

KOZMA T. ed./:

The School at the Millenium /in Hungarian/
Budapest, Tankönyvkiadó, 1979.

KOZMA T.:

The Modernization of Education: Chances and Burdens /in Hungarian/
Budapest; Kossuth Publisher, 1983.

NIESSEN M., PESCHAR J.:

Comparative Research on Education: Overview, strategy and applications in Estern and Western Europe
Oxford, Budapest: Pergamon Press, Akadémiai Kiadó, 1982.

TOMIAK J.J. /ed./:

Soviet Education in the 1980's.
London, New York: Croom Helm, St. Martin's Press, 1983.

TABLE 2
 Expected changes in the schooling levels of the population
 over 6 years of age, 1970-2000 /in per cent/

Year	Population over 7 years of age	Completed		Secondary school	University and academy graduate
		1-7 grades of elementary school	8th grade		
1970	100.0	54.2	33.3	9.4	3.1
1975	100.0	47.5	36.9	11.6	4.0
1980	100.0	41.3	40.3	13.6	4.8
1985	100.0	37.2	42.1	15.2	5.5
1990	100.0	33.3	43.3	17.2	6.2
1995	100.0	28.4	45.1	19.7	6.8
2000	100.0	25.3	45.1	22.3	7.3

TABLE 1

Basic data of the educational system: Hungary, 1984

	Kindergarten	Elementary schools	Special schools for the handicapped	Vocational schools	Grammar schools and technical secondary schools	Universities and academies
Number institutions	4,690	3,633	167	268	531	57
Capacities	386 ^a	37 100 ^b	2 335 ^b	-	6 514 ^b	-
Enrolment /in thousands/	457	1 128	37	153	342 ^d	103 ^d
Number of teachers	27 548	73 469	4 984	10 579 ^c	15 168	13 597
a Full places /in thousands/						
b Number of class rooms						
c Full-time theoretic and practical instructors						
d Total of full-and part-time students						

TABLE 3

Expected fluctuations in the demand for education, 1970-2000 / in per cent /

Year	Number of elementary school leavers	Wants to go to				Does not want to study further
		grammar school	technical secondary school	vocational training school	special trade school	
1970	142,400	18.7	26.4	41.7	3.2	10.0
1975	121,900	20.5	27.8	39.7	3.1	8.8
1980	113,700	23.9	30.0	36.1	3.1	6.9
1985	130,200	26.2	30.9	33.9	3.0	6.1
1990	163,800	26.8	31.1	33.3	2.8	6.0
1995	143,500	27.5	31.2	32.8	2.9	5.8
2000	126,000	29.5	31.2	31.0	2.7	5.6

TABLE 4

Fluctuations in the demand for third-level education, 1970-2000 /facts and forecasts/

Year	Secondary- -school graduates /in thousands/	Wants to go university or academy /per cent/	Wants to be trained as a skilled worker /per cent/	Does not want to study further /per cent/
1970	44.6	49	7	44
1975	46.3	56	5	39
1980	45.4	56	5	39
1985	44.9	58	5	37
1990	49.4	60	5	35
1995	62.9	57	5	38
2000	52.5	61	5	34