

**Biographical data of Karl Trinks**

- 29/08/1891 Karl Trinks born in Wolkenstein/Ore Mountains
- 1906-1912 Teacher seminar
- 1914-1918 Military service
- 1922-1933 Teacher at the "Dresdner Versuchsschule"
- 1924-1928 Chairman of the Dresden Teachers' Association
- 1933 Arrested for incitement to hatred
- 1939-1944 Home tutor for the Mayenburg family
- 1944-1945 Penal company
- 1945 Advisor for teacher training in Dresden
- 1946 Professor of "Theoretical pedagogy and history of pedagogy"
- 1951-1955 Director of the Institute of Theoretical and Historical Pedagogy
- 1951-1956 Dean of the Faculty of Pedagogy
- 1957 Retirement
- 01/06/1981 Died in Dresden

Karl Trinks' writings include significant works on historical and current issues in education. In 1927, the Saxon School Journal published a review of the book "Die Produktionsschule" (*The Production School*) by Paul Oestreich, and in 1932 "Die Berufsidee des Lehrers in den geistigen Wirren der Zeit" (*The Professional Idea of the Teacher in the Spiritual Turmoil of the Times*). His best-known book is "Die Sozialgestalt des Volksschullehrers" (*The Social Character of the Elementary School Teacher*), which was published in 1933 as a commemorative volume for the centenary of the Dresden Teachers' Association.

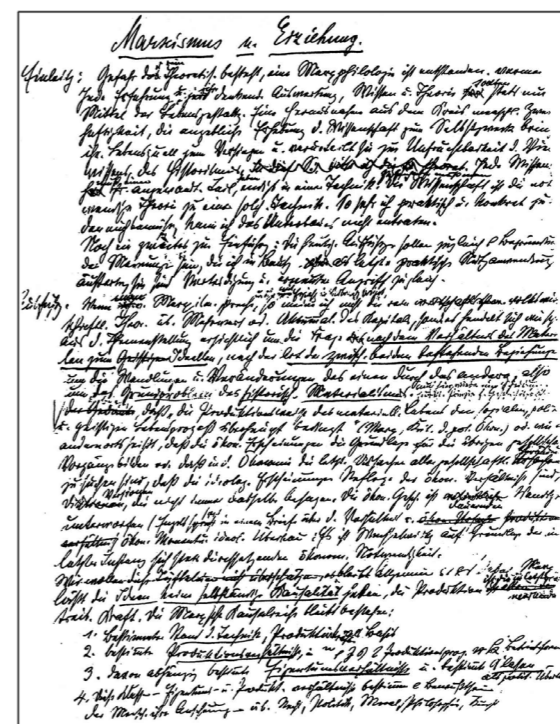


The destroyed Weberplatz building after February 13, 1945

Karl Trinks on the new beginning after 1945: "Never before has an effort corresponded so little to success ... The longed-for feeling of liberation has not materialized, because not only the material basis of our association, but also the spiritual fundament is wavering. Hardship, rootlessness, hunger, poverty ... dominate our minds so much. Nervous strain and restlessness are immense ... The conceptual basis of our teacher profession has been shaken. ... Being a teacher implies a pedagogical optimism, a belief in progress, in a historical development out of the power of constraints ... Belief in progress contradictory ... A retraining of the mind, its questionability ... The formation of a new type of individual, a democratic, pacifist ... But today, deadly crisis. Nonetheless."

Historical Pedagogy (excerpt of the 1949 lecture): "The history of pedagogy has always been somewhat backward, not having followed the transformations of historical science. Nevertheless, the whole problem of history in general is given to us with it; for the pedagogue always deals with something living and maturing ... The search for role models points us to the past. Study of the natural changes in the generations. What was possible could become necessary and possible. Awe and even irreverence can be taught through historical research and observation. The pedagogical sphere in historical space is a generational problem (polarity: fathers and sons), law of the change of ages. The pedagogue is highly subject to age differences. Youth is radical in some form, age is conservative."

His study of the history of pedagogy had led Trinks to the realization early on: We have to learn from history. Therefore, we must have a good knowledge of the history of pedagogy in order to be able to learn from it. This holds true in particular for an adequate assessment of reform pedagogy. While in the official literature of the GDR, reform pedagogy was presented as an expression of pragmatism, as a form of bourgeois ideology, Trinks always emphasized the intellectual and methodological richness of reform pedagogy.



Manuscript by Karl Trinks

Facsimile of the review for a *diplom* thesis with the topic "The historical change in meaning of the concept of education and its demarcation from the concept of upbringing" (1955): "... a good and diligent work ... which only has the shortcoming that it only evaluates reform pedagogy negatively." (grade II, signature Trinks). In his speech at the 5<sup>th</sup> Pedagogical Congress in Berlin in 1956, Trinks also categorically defended his position on reform pedagogy: He acknowledges Kerschensteiner as the inventor of the vocational school, and describes Richard Seyfert, Lichtwark, and Scheibner as meritorious pedagogues in history. Trinks' presentation at the congress led to the SED's accusation of revisionism against him. Moreover, he was accused of disorienting the students with certain statements in his lectures and thus not being up to his responsibility as a university lecturer. As a result, TH Dresden requested his removal as chairman of the "Advisory Board for Vocational Education" at the Ministry. He is the example of a committed pedagogue who repeatedly got into conflict with the state and party leadership through his academic spirit of dissent and his political civil courage. Politically, he was a lateral thinker and, at the same time, he was a pedagogical pioneer.