

The Enlightenment of the Development of Citizenship Education in Germany to the Promotion of Ideological and Political Education in China

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Abstract—Citizenship education in Germany has a long history and a profound tradition. However, German citizenship education has been in constant split and reconstruction in a long period as the ups and downs of the destiny of the German nation and its country. It is endowed with different concepts, connotations and functions, along with every change of social situation and political order. Citizenship education in Germany is deeply influenced by its traditional political culture and has distinct national characteristics. In order to discuss the history and current situation of the historical development process and realistic situation of German citizenship education has many enlightenment and reference significance for promoting the further development of ideological and political education, especially the theory and practice of patriotism education in our country.

Index Terms—Germany, citizenship education, ideological and political education, patriotism education.

I. THE HISTORY PROCESS OF DEVELOPING CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN GERMANY

The successive rulers of Germany have attached great importance to the ideological and political education of the people, it has a long history and rich content. As the history of the German state, German citizenship education has been in constant evolution for a long time. With every change of social structure and political order, the purpose and task of citizenship education also changes. Citizenship education in different periods has formed different thoughts and practice systems, adapting to and serving the different political goals and tasks of the rulers.

A. “National Education” in Feudal Monarchy Period

The characteristics presented in this period is the formation of an empire with a strong feudal legacy and a strong military dimension by the Junker aristocracy in alliance with the bourgeoisie from the political perspective, and the coexistence of a conservative, feudal, authoritarian, subject-based political culture and a progressive capitalist democratic ideology from the ideologically perspective. Due to the specificity of the unification, the Junker aristocracy was consolidated and the feudal monarchy was perpetuated, with an “elite politics” and a “subject-oriented” political culture. The cultivation of obedient subjects became a fundamental goal of citizenship education in this period, which the rulers attributed to “national education”, with the

aim of cultivating “docile subjects” as the highest political objective of maintaining feudal rule.

During the reign of King Friedrich Wilhelm I of Prussia (reigned 1713-1740), pietism became the new zeitgeist. Its main elements were to place the interests of the state at the center and to believe in the “social benefit”.

During the reign of Friedrich the Great (reigned 1712-1786), he demanded order and discipline from his subjects and unconditional obedience to his dictates in all matters. In the end, the political concept of “worship of authority” developed among the German public, and the idea of the “obliging” subject became deeply rooted.

Emperor Wilhelm II of the Second German Empire (reigned 1888-1918), in furtherance of his “world policy” of foreign expansion clearly demonstrated: “Schools were to serve the political struggle against social democracy, to defend the imperial rule in many ways, and to cultivate reverence and the love of the fatherland.” [1] Against this backdrop, Kerschensteiner developed the theory of “education for citizenship” in an attempt to develop the German character. [2] He believed that compulsory national education not only aimed at improving the overall cultural quality of the population, but also enabled them to receive knowledge along with moral and political indoctrination, reflecting the will of the ruling class, unconsciously forming the character of discipline and obedience, accepting, recognizing and then worshipping the power and authority of the monarch.

B. “Citizenship Education Based on Nationality and Ethnicity” in the Weimar Republic

In the Weimar period, the dual role of tradition and reality made the cultivation of a national concept and a sense of nationhood a priority in the education of citizenship. The Weimar government and parliament sought to arouse all the positive forces in the life of the people through citizenship education in the schools, and made a principled constitutional provision whereby a clear system of citizenship education in the schools was established. [3] This was where the institutionalization of ideological and political education in Germany began. Under the Weimar Constitution, education is compulsory for all in Germany. “Universal compulsory education is, in principle, provided by national schools of at least eight years’ duration and, in conjunction with these, by further education schools up to the age of 18. Teaching and school supplies are provided free of charge in national and further education schools. The public school sector is organically integrated. Intermediate schools and upper secondary schools are set up above the basic schools common to all children”. During compulsory education, citizenship

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education is an essential part of schooling and “all schools shall strive to provide education in morality, citizenship, personal skills and vocational skills in accordance with the spirit of German nationhood and national harmony”. In 1924, the Weimar Republic established the “Commission for Citizenship Education”, which was attached to the Ministry of the Interior. As the governmental body responsible for citizenship education, the Commission set out the principles for the organization of citizenship education courses and the curriculum in detail. It was also a pioneering step in the development of a democratic political education system in Germany after the Second World War.

In general terms, the Weimar Republic pioneered the institutionalization of citizenship education in Germany. It was based on the national interest to train “useful citizens” in order to achieve a series of goals such as consolidating the regime, easing the situation at home and abroad, actively rebuilding and developing the national economy, etc. It accumulated experience for the standardization and institutionalization of citizenship education in Germany after the Second World War.

C. The “Political Indoctrination” of State Supremacy during the Nazi Period

During this period, cultural education was completely integrated into political propaganda and ideological indoctrination, and went astray into alienation. Nazi propaganda and “education” were entirely subordinated to the needs of political reality, unconstrained by science and objective facts, and did not rely on knowledge and reason, but focused on emotional agitation, mass effect and forced indoctrination. Through political indoctrination and coercion, the Nazi rulers forced the population to widely accept and subscribe to the Nazi racial doctrine. Education during this period was considered by the Nazi authorities to be the key to the sustainability of the Nazi “cause”, in order to build up strength for wars of aggression.

D. Democratic Political Education in Post-World War II Germany

The Potsdam Proclamation of 1945 called for the complete eradication of Nazism and militarism from German education and the development of democratic education. After the victory over Nazi Germany, the eradication of Nazi militarism and the development of democratic education and “re-education” began.[4] In the GDR, the Democratization of the German School System was introduced in 1946, establishing an education system in the service of the people, and in 1949, when the GDR became the socialist German Democratic Republic, the content of its citizenship education took on a socialist flavor, including the glory of work, socialist virtues and the foundations of Marxism-Leninism. In the Federal Republic of Germany, faced with the great question of how to translate Nazi education onto democratic lines and help the German people to extricate themselves from their moral and spiritual ruin, the West German government made a wise choice: to learn from history and to make German schooling a model of education that reflected on history. They actively addressed the issue of culpability, piously repented for Germany’s crimes, called for a moral rebirth, vigorously promoted the idea of political democracy and reflected on German history and cultural traditions [5].

After the Reunification, citizenship education followed the course of the Federal Republic of Germany, focusing more on the responsibilities, rights and needs of citizens and their political development, Marxist-Leninist teachers were dismissed, the subject matter was “westernized” and all secondary schools often introduced civics in the seventh and eighth grades. Since then, formal knowledge of democracy has been a central part of citizenship education, with social studies and religion being the main subjects of citizenship education.

II. CURRENT STATUS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN GERMANY

In Germany, “patriotism” is almost synonymous with “populism” and “neo-Nazism”. In September 2015, Hamburg’s neo-Nazi group was banned by the state constitutional court for demanding a “patriotic day”, and a right-wing Facebook group page called “I am a patriot, not a Nazi”, which has 120,000 likes, illustrates the opposite. “Patriotism” is “stigmatized” in Germany. Germany today is a country founded on democracy, which in turn is based on civil society as its cornerstone. Citizenship education, in a sense, assumes the role of patriotic education.

A. The Objectives of Citizenship Education in Germany

The aims of citizenship education in Germany vary according to the historical period and according to the specific citizenship education requirements of each state.

In Germany during the feudal monarchy, a “subject-oriented” political culture was prevalent, and the training of obedient subjects and the maintenance of feudal rule were the fundamental goals of political education during this period.

In the Weimar Republic, in order to respond to the needs of national development and in the interests of the state, the rulers made the training of “useful citizens” the goal of ideological and political education during this period, under the guiding principle of cultivating good moral behavior and civic awareness among citizens.

During the fascist-ridden Third Reich of Germany, Nazi ideological and political education was aimed at implementing the ideology of Nazism, maintaining authoritarian rule and achieving the so-called political goals assigned to the German population by Hitler and the Nazis [6]. With the reunification of the two German states in October 1991, Germany has followed the capitalist system and educational system of West Germany in full. The objectives of schools in terms of moral education are set out in the Federal German General Education Act as follows: “To prepare pupils for a sense of responsibility for their own behavior in a free, democratic and welfare-oriented legal society. To equip pupils with the necessary qualities of mind and standards of behavior and to equip them with a spirit of dedication to the development of social life and to the development of science and technology.”

B. The Main Elements of Citizenship Education in Germany

After the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany, the German government made citizenship

education an important aspect of its ideological work and set up the Federal Centre for Political Education to educate on major social themes, covering many areas such as the economy, the socio-political system, international politics, history and ecology.

- Political education

“Contemporary German political cognition-participation theory holds that political participation is an important way for citizens to realize political rights in political relations, and reflects the essence of political relations” [2]. The fundamental purpose of political education with the German constitution as its core value is to promote the people’s “collective identification” with the political ideology, political power and political system of the German bourgeoisie, so that the entire political system can obtain a basis for legitimacy. On the one hand, we must continue the “De-Nazification” movement during the occupation period in the field of social and political thought, and on the other hand, we must make the German people accept and identify with the existing democratic political system in their hearts.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the Union Centre for Political Education clarified its themes for the new century in a bulletin, namely the basic problems of democratic political systems and political theory, German history, German unification, European integration, international relations, social role, the social market economy, demographic issues, the development and role of the mass media and the information society, democratic culture, political extremism, education and science, methods of political education, publishing work and cooperative exchange [7].

- Democratic education

The education of democratic and free ideology with individualism as the core is the primary task of German citizenship education after World War II. After the reunification of Germany, citizenship education followed the line of the Federal Republic of Germany. Formal knowledge of democracy (freedom of expression, free voting and separation of powers) is the core content of citizenship education, and social courses (including history, geography, social knowledge, etc.) are the main courses of German citizenship education.

“Democratic political knowledge is mainly composed of five interrelated aspects, namely state system, constitution and democratic political theory; state and citizens; the enemy of democracy - political extremism; international politics and Germany in international relations; economic system and economic Achievement.” [2] The curriculum, which again varies from state to state in terms of content, is designed to provide students with an understanding of the historical roots of the current world and its historical, social and geographical conditions in order to make understandings and judgements about the political order and political development. Pupils are given knowledge of the state in order to develop citizens who are judicious and capable of taking responsibility for the life of society.

- Religious Education

Religion has always been regarded as the foundation of morality in Germany, and it is also an important content of citizenship education. Its main content involves ethics and morality [8]. The German constitution stipulates that religious education is the core curriculum, and the church

manages religious subjects. Religious classes in German schools are conducted under the supervision of the state and based on religious teachings. Generally, religious classes in public schools are taught by different denominations according to different beliefs, and the vast majority of teachers are clergy.

- National Spiritual Education

National spiritual education with patriotism as the core is another important content of German citizenship education. The German nation is renowned for its nobility, dignity and sense of duty, and for its rigorous and thorough thinking. The tradition of patriotic education in the Prussian period has been continuously strengthened in different historical periods. National consciousness, dedication, hard work, discipline, solidarity and cooperation, and a social orientation have become the focus of German citizenship education in the new century. German education circles try to instill patriotism in students through various means, so that students can build up national self-esteem and pride, inherit national cultural traditions, and carry forward the German national spirit. Citizenship education in German schools focuses on cultivating students’ national spirit and national self-confidence, especially the teaching of German history and German geography, emphasizing the international contributions of German national heroes and famous national scientists, and focusing on the excellent performance of national culture tradition and sophistication. So many German teenagers have a strong national consciousness.

C. The Ways of Implementing Citizenship Education in Germany

The implementation of citizenship education in Germany relies on a combined effect of the school environment, the family environment and the social environment.

Kerschensteiner pointed out that civic training is to teach people to feel, think and act as citizens. “Where the power of the state rests in the hands of the people, a healthy and prosperous state will emerge only when all the people learn to feel, think, and act as citizens.” “The purpose of the public schools of the state, and the purpose of all education, is to educate useful citizens of the nation” [9]. The primary task of the school is to develop human willpower, judgment, agility and excitability in which students can systematically and step-by-step receive the knowledge needed to participate in the political process. In German family education, parents pay more attention to the development of their children’s independence and personality, and advocate a democratic and equal relationship with their children, believing that raising children means training people for the country and establishing the educational concept of training “creative” people. German families attach importance to the education of their children’s autonomy and self-reliance; there are frequent exchanges between families and society, giving children sufficient opportunities to participate in social practice; parents pay attention to the use of didactic and psychological counselling methods in the education process.

In Germany, legal education is not only taught in schools, but also published in the press, and social groups also educate their members. For example, the German Confederation of Workers and the German Confederation of Employed Employees require the regions, localities, communities,

institutions, etc. to implement the work of the moral education of those who accept work, including the development of professional skills and knowledge of the relevant laws.

D. The Features of citizenship education in Germany

Today, the German government attaches increasing importance to citizenship education as an important tool for establishing a stable social order, for training the citizens needed by modern society and the state, and for the ongoing development of democratic politics in the country.

- Focus on government guidance

Germany is a federal state with the Länder enjoying autonomy in education and with central institutions for political education in both the federal government and the Länder. The Federal Centre for Political Education carries out its educational, scientific and service responsibilities under the direct authority of the German Federal Ministry of the Interior. The Bundestag supervises the work of the Federal Political Education Center through its Management Committee. The major affairs of the Federal Political Education Center, including the determination of political education topics, financial budgets, and annual work reports of work plans, are all subject to the supervision of the Management Committee, which cannot violate the guidelines and policies established by the Management Committee, and the Management Committee has the final decision.

- Emphasis on the development of empowered and responsible citizenship

The goal of contemporary German ideological and political education is to cultivate citizens with democratic political rationality.[10] Focusing on this training requirement, its citizenship education mainly includes democratic political knowledge education and political participation skills education, with the goal of giving students the democratic spirit and German moral character and national spirit. Citizenship education in Germany also places great emphasis on reflection on democracy. German education law stipulates that German history textbooks must contain sufficient Nazi history, and textbooks without sufficient Nazi history will not be approved. The description of Nazi history in German history textbooks is also detailed and multi-angle. It not only describes the Nazis from the German perspective, but also from the perspective of the victims and the occupied countries, and use a large number of photographs reflecting Nazi atrocities, in order to enable students to develop the ability to judge right and wrong through the study of their country's modern history.

- Reinforce the influence of religion

Schools in Germany, as those in other European countries, have evolved from ecclesiastical educational institutions. When it comes to the relationship between school education and religion in Germany, it is possible to use "mother-child relationship" to describe their history and "partnership" to describe their present [1]. Moral education in German schools is based on religious education, with a strong emphasis on religious beliefs and the role of the Church. Religious education has therefore become almost synonymous with moral education. In the school context the introduction of religious courses is still one of the main ways of implementing citizenship education in German schools.

After the reunification, religious classes are still compulsory subjects in primary and secondary schools, and they are fully arranged by the church. The fundamental purpose of moral education is to take religion as the foundation and to cultivate the spirit and personality. In addition to cultivating students' religious beliefs, they also focus on cultivating human dignity, self-denial, sense of responsibility, sensitivity to truth, goodness and beauty, democratic spirit, patriotism and German spirit.

- Enhance the permeability of education

Ideological and political education in Germany tends to be carried out in an unconscious, indirect and implicit way, focusing on the use of indirect and permeable normative education. German colleges and universities no longer list religious courses and civic courses as compulsory courses, but mainly carry out education on democracy and free values through the penetration of various disciplines and majors. They also allow students to participate in social practice and social services, to be nurtured and infected in practice, enhance moral cognition, improve moral responsibility, and cultivate moral emotions [1]. In addition to specialized institutions for citizenship education such as the Federal Centre for Political Education and the Länder Centre for Political Education, the Adult Political Education Centre, political foundations and independent political education institutions, there are also various registered associations, scientific institutes, foundations, museums, exhibition halls and social groups, which create a network of educational channels with families, communities, schools and the mass media.

E. Problems of citizenship education in Germany

One of the major issues facing Germany as it continues to promote the development of citizenship education is how to deal with the "fascist legacy" of history, eradicate the Nazi legacy and prevent the rise of neo-Nazi activities. It should be said that the attitude of the German government is very different from that of the Japanese government on this issue. The attitude of the German leadership has always been to firmly and thoroughly eliminate the institutional and social roots of fascism and to combat and suppress neo-Nazi activities. The government's clear stance has given a clear direction to citizenship education in Germany. But this issue is very complex for adults who lived through the Second World War and young people who were born after the war, as they have very different feelings.

III. IMPLICATIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION IN GERMANY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION IN CHINA

The purpose of studying and discussing German citizenship education is not only to know and understand German citizenship education itself, but also to explore the general rules of ideological and political education, an educational practice common to human society. It was not until the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany that German citizenship education gradually and systematically built up a theoretical and practical system of citizenship education with bourgeois democracy as its core value, successfully transforming from a traditional authoritarian

political culture to a modern democratic political culture in German society, and promoting the final establishment of bourgeois democracy in Germany. A glance at the development of citizenship education in Germany reveals not only its national identity, but also brings us much food for thought and inspiration.

A. Citizenship Education Should be a Lifelong Concept that Continues throughout the Life of a Citizen

The theory and practice of citizenship education in the Federal Republic of Germany show that, in addition to the importance attached to citizenship education for young people by the parliament and the government, the concept of lifelong learning in political culture has permeated all areas of German society. Adult citizenship education in Germany has proved to be effective in practice. In recent decades, the German public has been recognized in the Western world as having a strong sense of democracy, a high level of enthusiasm for political participation, and a high level of political literacy [11]. This is due in no small part to the high priority and active involvement of the German government, parliament and society as a whole in adult citizenship education. In contrast, China's ideological and political education is too focused on young students, especially university students, and does not pay enough attention to or invest enough in the ideological and political work of other age and social groups or even the grassroots of society as a whole. This has led to an extreme imbalance in the allocation of educational resources and a mutual disconnect in the organization and implementation of ideological and political work in schools, and the weakening of social ideological and political work has affected the effectiveness of ideological and political education in schools to a considerable extent.

Therefore, the Party and government departments should attach importance to the ideological and political work at the grassroots level of society, and should not be under the illusion that it can be done once and for all. They should effectively establish the concept of lifelong education in ideological and political education, so that ideological and political education becomes a daily necessity for citizens throughout.

B. Citizenship Education Should be Dedicated to the Core Value System of Society

For any country, ideological and political education is an important political advantage. Judging from the development of German citizenship education, the task and goal at every different time has been to extend the core values to the general public, to make them identify with them and to put them into practice in concrete social practice. The contemporary German theory of citizenship education has always been enriched and developed within the theoretical framework of the German Constitution as a core value, and the content and themes of its citizenship education have always been based on the main spirit and content of the Constitution.

This is an important inspiration for the current construction of China's socialist core value system. Only by objectively evaluating and re-examining ideological and political education as a "unique political advantage" of the ruling class can we truly increase our consciousness and sense of responsibility in ideological and political work [12].

The guiding ideology of Marxism is the soul of the core socialist value system. Ideological and political education in China must adhere to the guiding position of Marxism and ensure the socialist direction and nature of cultural construction. Strengthening the construction of the core socialist value system is a major strategic task put forward by our Party to sum up the lessons learned from the ideological construction of China, respond to the new changes in the ideological and cultural fields, and focus on consolidating the guiding position of Marxism and the common ideological basis for the unity and struggle of the whole Party and the whole nation. This is bound to become a historical mission for socialist ideological and political education in China.

C. Citizenship Education Should Focus on and Strengthen the Ideological and Political Education Resource System for Rational Positioning

"Political education is at the heart of ideological and political education". For enabling the position of political education more rationally, the relationship between political education and ideological and moral education, for example, needs to be dealt with. At present, the establishment of China's ideological and political education management system and operational mechanism must be compatible with the construction of a harmonious socialist society and the formation of a market economy system. This is an important prerequisite for strengthening and improving the construction of an ideological and political education resource system.

The Party and the government should play a leading role in dominating society, integrate social resources for ideological and political education on the basis of giving full play to the role of grassroots party organization and grassroots power, and use various means such as laws, policies and economics to integrate, mobilize and bring into play social resources and expand channels for ideological and political work. At the same time they should support and encourage the participation of social organization and social forces such as urban and rural grassroots autonomous organizations, people's groups, social organizations, trade organizations and intermediary organizations in grassroots ideological and political work, for enhancing the socialization of grassroots ideological and political work. Ultimately, a leadership system and operational mechanism for ideological and political work that is led and managed by the Party and the government, with broad social cooperation and universal public participation, and which is compatible with the socialist market economy system, will be formed.

D. Improving the Ideological and Political Education Curriculum System, Promoting Teaching Reform and Focusing on the Cultivation of Students' Ability to Participate in Political Identity

At present, the construction of the ideological and political education curriculum system in China's schools and teaching reform are in the important period. The German curriculum construction and teaching practice of citizenship education in schools provides many useful experience for the reform of ideological and political education courses in China. The objectives of political education in China must also emphasize the highlighting of the cultivation of citizens' political identity and the ability to participate [13].

Firstly, making full use of school resources to provide

political education for citizens. Through special courses and the infiltration of various subjects, students' political identity is enhanced; various civic practices are carried out to develop students' political participation skills. At the same time, the design of the ideological and political education curriculum should also focus on the dialectical unity of "knowledge", "emotion" and "action", the integration of explicit, implicit and activity courses, as well as the combination of dominance and subjectivity. [14]

Secondly, vigorously strengthening the construction of a team of teachers for ideological and political education courses in schools. Teachers have been required to own higher scientific and perfect syllabus and curriculum design under the requirements of the comprehensive quality. In order to strengthen the teaching force of ideological and political education courses in schools, especially in primary and secondary schools, the key link is to establish and improve the system of training qualification, job evaluation, further training, business assessment and personnel management.

Thirdly, establishing a sound social support system, focus on the role of the family and strengthen the power of the mass media. More attention should be paid to pooling efforts and integrating resources. [15] Experts in various fields can be organized to compile timely educational materials on theoretical hotspots, major events, social trends and so on. These materials will then be made available in a timely manner using various forms for the education community and schools at all levels. Family education should be built in a free, harmonious and fair environment. Parents who show concern for political life will also drive their children to begin to care about it. The mass media, as the main channel and vehicle for the circulation and dissemination of information in society, facilitates citizens' clearer understanding of the political system, its organizational structure, and enhances their sense of identification with policies, laws, etc., so that they are willing to participate consciously in political life.

Fourth, optimizing the methods of political education and improve the effectiveness of political education. Using the political education in different kinds of activities with magnificent meanings, people can be influenced by the education in-consciously with the knowledgeable, enjoyable, permeable and acceptable methods. The main objective of political education is to form a "recipient-centered" model of individual self-education, to enhance students' ability to make the political judgement in political life, to play a subjective role and to develop a sense of political subjectivity. In order to strengthen the comprehensiveness and co-ordination of political education methods, we must focus on the integrated use of various methods and their mutual co-ordination, forming a coordinating mechanism of action and linking them together to form a synergy of political education.

IV. CONCLUSION

There are two main ideas during the process of implementing citizenship education in Germany: For one thing, it is about moving away from militarism and Nazism. For another thing, it is to establish norms towards democracy and peace. Germany is a country centered on traditional

culture but lacks democratic traditions, however, it can establish a democratic system and create a political civilization in just a few decades. Therefore, the study of its citizenship education system is particularly beneficial for our country. Firstly, the understanding of the functions and laws of ideological and political education will be deepened. Secondly, the useful ideas and experiences of developed countries could be learned, and then we may combine them with our own national reality to fully absorb the useful ideas and wisdom. With the principles of science, class and history to learn from other countries is an inevitable requirement of the ideological and political education work of the Party Central Committee under the new situation. It is believed that China will continue to absorb the outstanding achievements of human civilization and the beneficial experience of other countries in the world, so as to find a development path of ideological and political education suitable for its own national conditions, and continue to achieve fruitful results.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

This paper was independently completed by the author Yu Junyi, and the final version has been approved.

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