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In your view, what were the biggest problems with education in the GDR?

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“The biggest problem of all was the excessive amount of political-ideological content in everything that was taught to us, and, starting in the mid-1980s, the ever-increasing militarization of schools and classes. This included, for instance, the introduction of a subject called *Wehrkundeunterricht* (Defense Studies). This ideological infiltration didn’t just concern social sciences, but all subjects. In mathematics, for example, we had to calculate the distance that a grenade would have to travel in order to hit the enemy U.S. army. Critical and open discussions were not possible at schools or universities. There was only one correct world view — the Marxist-Leninist one, which was taught as being unquestionable. Anything that didn’t align with its beliefs was discredited as subversive nonsense. Open pro and con discussions were unthinkable. In addition, all children and adolescents were obligated to become members of socialist youth organizations (*Pioniere, Freie Deutsche Jugend*). Anyone who was not a member of one of these groups had very little chance of being accepted to an extended secondary school or university.”

