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U.S. SPECIALIST REPORT

ASSIGNMENT - BAVARIAN ADULT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

by

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This report covers the period from September 1st to the end of November, i.e. the 90 days during which I was a Visiting Specialist with the Bayerische Landesverband fuer freie Volksbildung and headquarters at the American Consulate General in Munich. As I understand it, I happen to be the first under a new scheme, and since this has been of a certain importance, I wish to put some emphasis on this fact right at the beginning.

Under this scheme, the Landesverband did the inviting and the American government examined their proposal and consented. As a consequence I came to Bavaria to fulfil certain expectations of the people in Bavaria. These main expectations were laid down in the memo of March 17, 1952 as project number g-21. Six points were made, and in the actual fulfilment of the task, 1 - 4 were exhaustively covered. Number 5 was whittled down to one appearance in the Amerika Haus in Regensburg, for lack of time and opportunity. With regard to 6: During my participation at the close of my stay, in a meeting of the board of the Adult Education Association, I became convinced that the officers of the association intend to make ample use of a number of the new insights gained during our most pleasant and cordial collaboration.

In entering now upon the program in some more detail, the expectations formerly articulated in the memo may be evaluated

here in their more general significance. These expectations sprang from the fact that I had done much experimenting in adult education in Germany and in Europe between 1912 and 1933. Among the features of these experiments there were some which are identical with those of a mature American adult education. I shared them already with my friend Morse Cartwright in the 20ies, who then was the American delegate for the World Association of Adult Education with headquarters in London, England, where I was the vice chairman. And I again found myself in a complete agreement with my colleague Van Sant, who, while I was in Bavaria, visited Baden/Wuerttemberg. These features inhered among others the "open door", the starting out with the discussion, the deliberate avoidance of all similarities to an old fashioned school system. On the other hand there were other features in my own tradition and in the expectations raised by it in the minds of the Bavarians which differed from standard American procedure. For Europeans a discussion which remains mere discussion proves frustrating; at the end of the discussion the need for coherent teaching arises. Therefore, I have insisted that the older German principle of just lectures and the American principle of just discussion are equally unsatisfactory. It is my ideal to start as vehement and turbulent a discussion as possible and then end up in a comprehensive representation in which more or less all the questions,

dissensions and whims of the discussion give way to a vision of the order for which any potent mind will always be yearning. The second feature is a corollary of this first just mentioned. Truth is not pragmatic but is always a fresh re-discovery of a trust and treasure mine of our traditions. History, law, government, speech, economics and all the proceedings within human society are not purely secular flashes of insight at the hour of discussion. Adults strive to become elders in their society. Participants of a discussion wish to become fathers and mothers who can speak with authority to their children. This means that the "pupil" in adult education has not to be treated as the last recipient of the information. Instead, he has to be treated as someone who has to teach and to speak with authority himself one day. In adult education, the listener is a potential teacher. On the other hand, he teaches best in adult education, who not only still is a student of a subject matter, but also lays open to the listeners, part of his mental process of arriving at the truth. The potential student in the teacher; the potential teacher in the student, these two features seem to be the two principles which deviate from the American program. American adult education is restless and does not believe in those very slow and longwinded processes of understanding which stretch out over years. In its impatience with immediate results American adult education to me is hectic and

unsound. Even at home there is no continuity in our forums, symposiums and panels.

Being a heretic in the States and having insisted there on methods of long range influence, I resent even more the application of the mere discussion methods to present-day Germany. The reason for this is very simple. Germany had to give up its foremost purposes. It now is a people without any hope or expectation of a longrange future. ^{as a great power;} Therefore, each year of recovery in Germany has seen another craze. Travelling in foreign lands was the craze in 1952. To raise the sights of the average German to times of 10, 15 or 30 years is the first educational task of any spiritual leadership. The various departments of knowledge have to be rethought in the light of this exigency. History, f.i., has to join together the first and the 2nd world war and fuse them into one single event. Otherwise the various factions of the German people will focus attention on various decades. They never will come to grips with reality, never come to terms of understanding with other nations and never reconcile themselves with the other groups in Germany herself as long as the socialists dream of the Weimarer Republik, the soldiers of the old Reich, the youth of their well being under Hitler. With regard to the law, a similar short-livedness does much harm to the German-American relations. The opportunistic policy of zigzagging certainly has not aroused either admiration or

satisfaction in German minds. Their sense of justice has not been rebuilt on solid foundations. They remain indifferent to the big fundamental laws passed in a hurry and far too numerous to impress them as anything but paper and more paper. The economic confusion of values is even more obvious. In the East there is Communism, in the West there is a contradictory policy in every field. The Americans have licensed one labor union only and thereby have killed all the spiritual vitality engendered by the clash of convictions inside the former order of unionisation. Atheistic, liberal and christian unions struggled before Hitler for a solution of the problem of property of the major production. The American licensed "Einheitsgewerkschaft" is artificial. On the one hand the allies have taken away enemy property even in neutral countries like Switzerland and the Russians have taken away whole factories without indemnity. German factories in the West have been dismantled by the British economic rival. How can a German then know to what extent the capitalistic system, i.e. the private ownership of the means of production is already ignored by the allies. In his own heart he finds little comfort. Hitler's expropriation of the Jews, and in the Eastern countries his theft of treasures of art etc.etc., has destroyed the basis of private property radically. The America-made reform of the currency in Western Germany cruelly has wiped out the liquid accounts from one day

to another and has privileged all the hoarders of commodities.

History, law, economics, theology, have been atom-bombed, so to speak, and modern art in all its departments (literature, music, painting) reflects this Hiroshima situation. Who can imagine that a purely secular adult education at this point can spread new confidence and patience ?

A positive reestablishment of lasting truth in history, law, human relations, economics is my frankly avowed aim. I can neither be neutral nor objective in this teaching but I am a student who has learned his lesson in the humanities through and out of the catastrophes of the last 40 years. Having accused the academic profession of its negligence, that is of its false pride in going on with its naturalistic dogmas of evolution, of automatic progress, of the native goodness of men, of mechanical adjustment, I have become known in Germany as the emancipator of adult education from the 19th century superstitions that dominate the universities in the Western World. It is in this capacity that I was invited and I could not remain silent without betraying their trust.

The campaign of the last 3 months consisted of seven separate main enterprises and many smaller meetings and conversations with ministers of State, high officials, doctors, teachers,

business men, workers and engineers. The smaller meetings and the visits to individuals in Germany aim at one purpose. Adult Education in Bavaria has not attracted as large a variety of people as it needs for its task. I, therefore, went out of my way to meet former students of mine or to make new friends whom I could interest for the first time in adult education. Three months naturally, are too short a period for comprehensive tapping of new human reserves. I was helped by the fact that many of my former friends and students in Eastern Germany have been transferred into Bavaria. And I found some excellent men. One of them who had never heard of adult education before by now has started his own Volkshochschule.

What was tried with regard to the participants, the tapping of new reserves, was done also with regard to the speakers at the conferences. They came at my personal request, often without any former contacts in adult education. This means that I had to provide the orchestration as well as my own contribution. Here is a tentative list of the speakers who accepted my invitation: architect: Hans Schwippert, President of Deutscher Werk-

engineer: Direktor Mohr, Siemens Werke, Traunreut
bund

therapeut: Dr. Heyer

adult educator: Eduard Weitsch

therapeut: Emanuela Jaeger

American and German adult educator: W. Seyferth

Swiss politician, Zuerich: Paul Gmuer

poet and playwright: Leo Weismantel

housewife: Elisabeth Flitner (known for her work among
the unemployed)

Christoph von dem Bussche, work service

Especially helpful has been the collaboration of Dr. Franz Schuerholz, Wangen. As an industrialist, as the longtime head of the Department of Industrial pedagogics of the National Association of Manufacturers, as the head of a Catholic Workers School and especially as a passionate member of the wellknown "Hohenroddter Bund" he was able to do more than his share at the three different conferences at which he made his contribution.

One more feature might be stressed as its significance seems to be overlooked in American techniques: As all life, the life of the mind is diversified. The usual informal "guttural" or "nasal" prose is only one style of human utterance. If taken as the only possible style, it must put people to sleep. I have written many books on the necessity that any important truth never is assimilated by one style but has to be followed through various manners of speech. Stormy, balmy, discursive, poetic, argumentative, dogmatic, playful, solemn speech are all equally necessary before a mental experience is made. Hence, the rhythm of a conference must lead through this variety of styles. Rhythm probably is the most correct term for the life which I have tried to instill in the conferences. The participants never were allowed to rest assured. When rhythm is the dominant feature of conferences they assume a wholeness of their own, and the single hours or half days have no meaning outside this context of a whole. When such rhythm is realized, many more

discordant notes and many darker passions may be aroused than in those polite and polished conferences which are mere sums of the bricks of each minute or hour. Rhythm alone makes the mental process into more than an abstract reflection on reality; the mental process itself then is felt as the highest reality itself.

Except for Regensburg, every conference established rhythm. The reader may have noted that the term 'rhythm' is used and not the term "group dynamics". "Group dynamics" is the great fashion in adult education today. As I have been the first to publish a book on industrial group dynamics as early as 1922, a book about to be reprinted because of its fundamental approach, I cannot be suspected of blindness or prejudice against group dynamics. However, as hypnotism moves one story lower than loyalty, and psychoanalysis lies one or even two stories lower than creative sympathy, so group dynamics as compared to 'rhythm' is a purely technical affair. Group dynamics in most cases is purely analytical. It leads people to observe their own reactions in a group. Group dynamics thus is purely academic. It retains a wilful and conventional character in which "nothing can happen". "Rhythm" is more risky and more real. Where the life of the group mind is rhythmical, it borders at the necessary and the indispensable. And necessity is the highest criterion of reality.

The seven main conferences were held in Traunreut, Nuernberg, Niederpoecking, Regensburg, Burg Rothenfels, Forchheim and Augsburg. The trick of these undertakings, if it may be called trick at all, was the combination of sensation and continuity. Since we came to the various centers only once, and the group each time differed, the sensational character of the unique, of a kind of a lightning stroke was quite well retained. On the other hand we took great care that quite a number of members attended 2, 3 or even more of the 7 conferences. At no time after the first was I deprived of the support of at least half a dozen participants who already had been won over to the whole campaign. This established the character of a steady and serious effort even in the minds of the newcomers. Of course, it became impossible to repeat; since the oldtimers were present the teaching each time had to be spontaneous for these groups with quite new material and content, an organic unfolding of just one more branch of the whole tree of the new learning. The themes of the 7 conferences may roughly be summarized as follows:

Traunreut: The building of a new community. The heroic character

of the founding period. Holiday and weekday in such a community. We were able to attend the anniversary of the founding of a completely new town inhabited by expellees from the East and to build our conferences around our experiences during this holiday and the consecutive week in this community.

Nuernberg: The structural changes of the post-war society in the areas of permanent settlement as opposed to Traunreut.

Niederpoecking: Dividedness of modern men and divisiveness of modern society.

Burg Rothenfels: The humanelements represented by prominent doers from various fields, (architect, poet, educator, Swiss, American, psychotherapeut) were analyzed in their four main aspects as elements of inner and outer space, as the heritage of the past and as the seed of the future. The same facts thus were stated in four different ways.

Forchheim: Family and religion in the workers' life and in the workers movement.

Regensburg: The four types of facts and the four types of treating time. How to have time; how to forget time; how to measure time; how to win time.

Augsburg: Law and art. Lawlessness and tastelessness in the German workers' experience and environment.

The results of this unified campaign in all its diverse battles will not be known before one or two years. And anything I express today cannot be a considerate or objective judgment but nothing more than a fair guess.

The Bayerische Landesverband has been able to fuse its membership into a conscious group to an extent they had not been able to achieve before and has done so at a critical

moment of its own development. Our splendid officers at the Consulate, Mr. Grosselfinger and his German aid, Fraeulein von Arnim, have encouraged the Landesverband with a good deal of patience and farsighted wisdom to dig in at the critical points of Bavarian society, in the smaller towns and the rural areas, the frontier stripes towards Czechoslovakia and towards the Russian Zone of Germany. The Verband has still to convince the powers that be, of the unquestinable truth that Adult Education is the only third force between the classes and the denominations which divide Bavaria distressingly. It already has done splendid work in the neglected areas of the Bavarian forest. Its very able general secretary, Mr. Baudrexel, is for his own personality commanding sincere respect and he cannot fail to impart this respect of the Bavarians to the whole organization. My own contribution, I hope, has intensified this existing process, it has made many of the 250 or more participants of my conferences more proud of their own work and of their role in the future society. What I have not been able to do sufficiently is to break down the suspicions of denominational political cliques against the Landesverband. If, however, the campaign has added stature to the Verband, it can be hoped that its enemies will have to recognize its greater impetus and power, and will hesitate to crush it as they undoubtedly intended to do some years ago. This would have meant an

irreparable blow to the very best democratical forces in Bavaria, to the one group which is ready to learn its lesson from the last three and four decades of history and to participate in the common course of Western man.

The Landesverband is going to publish a periodical and will draw heavily for its first issues on the content matter gained in those seven conferences. Even its title "Partners" is taken from one of the discussions. A number of collaborators of this new magazine have been trained in the last months. Another result of the conferences sprang from the fact that I received generous and valuable support from personal friends all over Germany, the States and Switzerland. These people came partly without any material at my request and spoke to the groups of their own experiences. The tendency to splendid isolation mars many German associations. They like to close up like a clam. These speakers of other regions and other ways of life certainly impressed the groups of educators and in many cases human relations have been established. It is too early to say whether my catholic approach and the example set by these friends can have a lasting effect. The joy over and the recognition of a fine fellow from another field or another group is not well cultivated in Europe. Adult education will prosper if it succeeds in cultivating this trait, and it will fail if we abandon it in its honest struggle against the national vice of professional pride and unending suspicion and

envy against all others. Only outsiders from a country like America can shift the balance. Therefore, I would like to say in closing that regardless of my own success or failure the American intervention in German adult education is one of the main assets of all the American plans in Europe. It is, so to speak, the entering wedge which may help to clean out frustration, hectic impatience, constant fault finding with others, self-pity, and the incapacity of meeting constantly new people. This, however, the meeting of new people, is the secret for the solution of any problem in modern society. The stagnation in human relations on the one hand, and the dynamic character of German technical and economic development on the other still constitutes a terrible contradiction and a dangerous lag. As I went along I had time enough to observe again and again this dilemma and to realize that without the perpetual infiltration of Americans and other foreigners the German movement would be stopped at a moment where the dead center is just about to be overcome.

In behalf of the Bavarian Landesverband I attended the UNESCO week on adult education in Hamburg and, although the work in which I participated there is going to be published separately in a lengthy volume, I have appended to this report a summary which I was asked to deliver at a press conference. My slogan "From Universe Towards Home" was accepted by the meeting as expressing the new situation in which adult education finds itself after the 2nd World War.

To sum up:

A group of 250 people have been aroused to a new resolution. They are convinced that the new democratic and intensifying way in adult education is possible. Nearly every member of the conferences has testified to the experience that new energies and a new confidence have been unleashed. Even at this early date, a remarkable number of new steps have been taken by individuals in their own area. They also have testified that this new impetus in adult education is necessary. For, without it, the lamentable cultural lag in the schools, the bureaucracy, the churches, the courts, cannot be shortened. Only adult education can reach the parents of the children in school. The jurors in the courts, the public of the bureaus, the laity of the churches, and arouse them to active participation.

Because these people combine a feeling of new power and of necessity, they are rearing to go. This, in any case, seems a rare occasion. Here are 250 people generous in their devotion, open to sharp self-criticism, starved for new information and new methods, and wonderfully ready for a new approach. Where is such a similar group today in Germany?

However, the restoration, partly from inertia, partly produced by allied measures, has put back many obsolete ways of life which had miserably failed in or before 1933. These restored powers throttle the new life in open defiance of the

obvious popular feelings and wants. Hence, a mere pittance is allowed to adult education from fear that it would develop the civic spirit by direct participation of the individual citizen. As I see it, the opportunity is greater than ever before, and the dangers of financial ruin by the factionalism of religious and social strife also loom larger than ever before.

In selecting the points of action which are of strategic importance, (youth, schools, recreation, Amerika Haeuser, etc.) I do hope that it may be realized that adult education is the indispensable feeder or the presupposition of all these other valuable activities. If successfully growing, adult education will impart new life to all of them. The opposite, however, cannot be said because the other activities are less catholic or less central to the task: the task is that the German mind has to catch up and a very sick national soul has to overcome the errors of a whole generation, in the shortest time possible.

As their most urgent need the adult educators consider a center for intensive three or six month courses. Here, the

future helpers and assistants of the local and regional community work must be trained. Such centers do exist in all other part of Germany. The Bavarians are convinced that at least one such center should immediately be established. How the proved hostility of the Bavarian Ministry of Education against the obvious can be overcome, I do not know. Publicity may be one way, and I have a hunch that here, one point may exist, at which the highest American authorities openly should express their views and their displeasure.

American policy in this matter may not reap the reward of its patient generosity without reconsidering its own treatment of public opinion. Then, Bavaria may get its Central Home of Adult Education.