

German Educational Reconstruction No. 1

Experimental Schools in Germany

by

MINNA SPECHT and ALFONS ROSENBERG

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PRIVATE BOARDING SCHOOLS

by MINNA SPECHT

I. INTRODUCTION

TOWARDS the end of the last century a fresh breeze suddenly began blowing through the German schools. It blew open the windows and enticed the young people into the open, into new and freer paths.

In those days the question did not revolve around a new Youth Charter which might have drawn general interest to necessary reforms within publicly run schools. At that time Germany was in a state of growing prosperity and stiffening tradition. There was civil freedom which, through the press and organisations, together with administrative authorities, enabled the schools to adapt themselves to the demands made by modern society. However, tradition remained stronger than progress. Particularly in secondary schools the spirit of Neo-Humanism, introduced by Wilhelm v. Humboldt, was still alive. The preparation for academical studies remained the alpha and omega of instruction. Added to this there was the spirit of authority which imbued all the schools.

The fresh wind blew from outside: from the organisation of the primary school teachers [*Deutscher Lehrerverein*] who, under Georg Kerschensteiner, substituted *self-activity* of the pupils for instruction; from the Youth Movement which in the "Wandervogel" gave to youth the use of its own leisure; and from the energy of a few courageous teachers who founded boarding schools in the countryside, away from the urban secondary schools.

The attempt to recall these independent efforts at progress is not based on the historical interest they present. No, the memory of these deeds of the primary school teachers, of youth itself and of the founders of the boarding schools in the country has remained alive till to-day in the hearts of all liberal-minded teachers and children. To-day these schools have been taken over and misused for the purposes of the totalitarian State, but to-morrow, under a free sky, they may be reawakened to new life if we take to heart the experiences of these dynamic movements and learn from their successes and their failures.

This study is devoted to the *private boarding schools* [*Landschulheime*] as they have become known in professional teacher circles under the names of Lietz, Wynecken, Geheeb and their successors. The great and lasting thing in this movement was the will to a *reform of life* within the framework of the secondary school. These educators did not mean to improve methods of instruction, to introduce new subjects, to reform the conditions for admittance and leaving, in a word, to loosen the strict framework of the academic school. In general they took the whole teaching apparatus with them into the new schools, but they placed learning in the environment of the free and full life of a community of teachers and pupils. This community was characterised by Luserke, later the principal of the "Schule am Meer", as possessing the following constructive forces:

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Nature, in which youth lives; *Rhythm* which rules over the school's daily life; a certain amount of *Protestantism* not in a denominational sense but as non-acceptance of valueless forms of society, and the possession of their own concrete *attitude to life* compatible with youth.

What Luserke says here of Wickersdorf can be said of all. The handful of schools which, up to 1933, gave youth the opportunity to live its own life have been in some cases opposed to each other. But their basic character which drew youth under its exciting spell shows the same features: a free and yet controlled growth. This basic character they owe to Lietz, the pioneer of the movement. Wynecken, Geheeb, Lohmann and the others who did the same have learnt this best trait from Lietz. It is therefore natural to stress his work particularly and to mention the other schools only inasmuch as they tried to supplement him or to correct his mistakes.

II. DIE LANDERZIEHUNGSHEIME

Who was Hermann Lietz and how could he achieve this work? He received his lasting and decisive impressions at two places: on his parents' farm in the island of Rügen, where their love of truth and their straightforwardness, along with the freedom they allowed their children, were the first model according to which he formed his later attitude to life. The second experience he received at Abbotsholme, Dr. Reddie's English reform boarding school, where, during his one year of residence, Lietz saw the practical ways by which he might link up his youthful experience with his education plans.

His own school life in the secondary school of a small town, the life of his companions then, and later at the university, inflicted wounds on him which "never healed" (*Lebenserinnerungen*, p. 26). Then followed restless years of seeking, only partially calmed through absorption in academic studies. He could not become a pastor, nor a secondary school teacher in the system as it was then. He meant to show by example what he wished to change, irrespective of the system. He often ignored dependence on environment. He, like his successors, has had to pay for this.

After his return from England he wrote *Emløstobba* (the inversion of the English name) as a monument of his gratitude to Reddie's school; at the same time he attacked in this monograph the shortcomings of the ruling German school system. That was in 1897. A year later he opened his first *Deutsches Landerziehungsheim* (DLEH.). He thought more of propaganda through action than by meetings and prospectuses. Although without means he took over a small private school at Ilsenburg in the Harz Mountains, and with a few pupils who had been entrusted to him by progressive men and women he moved into the nearby "Powder Mill" which at first he could only rent and which he transformed into his first establishment. The description, as he gives it in his memoirs, shows the spontaneous joy with which he could now at last, at the age of thirty, approach his life's work. He went to Berlin, bought "two pianos, one harmonium, oatmeal, buckwheat groats, and some furniture". Then came the first pupils and a life started, which during the first years brought him the full realisation of all his dreams: hard creative work as a builder, carpenter, gardener, teacher, in constant collaboration with the boys.

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When the day was over, which had begun with a long-distance run and a shower under the waterfall, he read to them in the evenings, in the "Chapel", from books which were near to his world of ideas. They could go and talk with "Hermann" long into the night, to ask for his advice in their troubles. Even during the holidays he was there for them and they for him. On bicycles they went out into the world, far beyond Germany's frontiers. And all this was based on the simple, natural life of healthy, self-reliant people. Nature, Rhythm, Protestantism, Form of Life! Teachers and pupils gathered around him. After three years he founded Haubinda in the tiny principality of Sachsen-Meiningen, where the liberal Duke granted him all the freedom he wanted. After another three years he founded Bieberstein, the "most beautiful school in Germany", high on a wooded peak, in the former summer residence of the ducal abbots of Fulda. Up to 1933 seven DLEH'S were in existence.

During Lietz' lifetime the three schools together never numbered more than 300 pupils, small schools compared with English boarding schools. He aimed at an intimate communal life, and for German conditions his schools were large. He retained the three schools separate from each other, because he wanted to give youth a change of surroundings and considered the separation of age groups educationally sound. The schools in the Harz Mountains received pupils between the ages of 6 and 10, in its houses surrounded by water and villages; Haubinda, to which a farm was affiliated, had one principal building near to the small family houses, and took the 11 to 14 year olds; while the large castle of Bieberstein was reserved for the older ones, up to 18. Lietz himself travelled from one school to another, accompanied by a few boys who helped to repair the rickety car!

Lietz taught history, religion and German in periods of three weeks, whenever possible in the open air. Homework consisted of free exercises and compositions which were intended to be collected in a "home-made text book". He eagerly participated in all games and sports, and himself supervised the daily gardening instruction. He did not think much of the educational value of languages. He supported experimental instruction in physics and chemistry as far as possible. The various Governments showed him growing favour. This recognition contributed to the widening of the scope of examination requirements and the adding of independent studies in several subjects, as a test of maturity.

But to return to the essential: the personal influence of this educationist. Soon collaborators and pupils split up into friends and opponents, although the number of the latter remained a minority. In most instances they left the schools. Where lay the cause of this opposition, which in some cases became an irreconcilable enmity? It would be too easy to make conflicting characters the cause of this estrangement, according to the simple formula: selflessness, straightforwardness, efficiency on the one side—ambition, intellectualism, lack of sincerity on the other. The conflict began when different opinions opposed each other in the matter of aims and methods and when Lietz' rigid and often onesided judgment did not admit of any kind of compromise. He believed he was liberal and erred just here. He overlooked the power of the tradition which had formed him. At first he was in favour of not acknowledging class, racial and national differences. He always regretted that he had to rely on

well-to-do parents and he used his first profits to found the country orphanage of Veckenstedt. He welcomed foreigners. But the children of different worlds, who could not easily accept his own attitude to life, did not always find in him the mentor who could look at their world without prejudice, with an open mind. Painful experiences with a few could become for him unjustified generalisations. In questions of minor importance, such as co-education, he might have followed his nature without any great disadvantage. He was no educator for girls. The exacting work in workshop and fields, the dare-devilness in games and travelling, was not a matter for girls. When they could "join in" he did not like that either. So he filled his homes more and more with boys only, and sometimes attacked "Anglo-American feminism"—rather a rash judgment. He defended his reactionary attitude with the explanation that he had already attempted sufficient innovations and anything further could be left to the future. Much more serious was the development of his attitude to the question of Germans and Jews. At first he accepted Jewish children because "antisemitic inclinations were foreign to his home traditions". But when children of rich town families turned up who did not take to the hard physical work, and even more when Jewish collaborators and pupils arrived with a sharper intelligence and took an interest in other problems than those dealt with by Lietz in his history lessons, and when they stuck to their point, he drew back. The barrier he erected in such moments was felt with sadness and disappointment and few were willing or able to pull it down. Whoever experienced this, even only as a spectator, saw the danger of an educator who was beloved for his inspiring qualities but who evaded the discussion of conflicting opinions. This estrangement was sharpened by the moral suspicion of Lietz which was revealed in his disapproval. Even if this was partly justified, why did his loving patience fail here when he could show it in hundreds of other cases?

Before answering this question let us trace the development which became more and more obvious with the approaching crisis of the first world war. Lietz gradually dissociated himself from the principles of tolerance taught by Lessing. His crude generalisations from single experiences became more marked. Although he did not actually belong to those who said "my country, right or wrong", he adopted the almost equally dangerous attitude of believing his own people to possess virtues which all other nations lacked. It went so far that he promised in his prospectuses to safeguard the German national character of his schools and laid down the rule that he would accept Jews and foreigners only "in exceptional cases and in small numbers". The world war found the 46-year-old man an enthusiastic defender of the fatherland—he became a soldier in a ski-battalion. During the collapse of 1918 he was a blind adherent of the "stab in the back" legend and a passionate defender of the reactionary forces which had led Germany into disaster. He was certainly already a very sick man who could no longer fight for truth. But his ideas on national honour—not tested in more peaceful times—became so coloured by nationalistic propaganda during the war that teachers protested against the twisted political bulletins which he presented to his pupils. In 1919 he died a German who "lived in the tradition of past heroic times", a man who could never again be happy in this life. His successors were, and remained, people who were afflicted by

the same confusion of judgment. The future of his schools was: Hitler. And, according to their present headmaster, Andreesen, "all the homes showed a definite improvement" with Hitler's advent to power.

This places before us the question: what can the work of a man like Lietz mean for the world of teachers and what conclusion can we draw from it? Personal integrity linked with social and political ignorance, a "treudeutscher" nationalist, is that the picture we gain of the leader of this reform movement? Although this judgment is not false it does not exhaust all the facts. It is easy to turn away from Lietz, and call him the "first national socialist" among German teachers. But what happens to the other conviction: that during his first years we see in him an educator of a very rare quality? How can both be possible?

Let us return once more to his creative years. For a long time Germany had not seen a man who took education and the formation of character in all seriousness as his task. The environment which he created was not only meant to give light and life to youth, it was also to produce energy, comradeship, sincerity, and loyalty to community life. With a sure hand he created the environment in which youth could understand these demands. And he gave more: his example. This example was impressive not because it derived from a pedagogical principle but because he led the life which was in conformity with his nature. The thing that set this man apart from thousands of well-meaning, sincere friends of youth was the strength, the passion of his moral nature which stimulated the boys and compelled them to examine themselves. It is significant of the struggle into which this educator threw the boys, a struggle which often became the basis of a profound friendship between teacher and pupils, that a pupil, thinking his brother had been treated unfairly by Lietz, actually attacked him physically—in a school where corporal punishment was banned. Lietz revealed himself to youth in his decided "yes" or "no". With a healthy sense of humour he admitted his own faults. He proved his independence from fear and privilege, his willing devotion to boys in need. His distinction was not due to these individual qualities but because he was a man who did not only *absorb* lightly and easily impressions from his surroundings, from his relationships with others, but who by the strength of his good nature could also *shape* them equally easily and lightly. He did not need a resolution, or a theory. He reacted spontaneously, himself free and happy and radiating warmth and goodness. In this sure instinct he built his homes and worked in them during the first years as their living centre.

But why did he not remain the same? The turning point occurred when Lietz left the spontaneity of his nature and stamped certain decisions which had prompted his actions as a model for others. This happened partly under the influence of his authority and of a tradition which crystallised even here, under his long leadership, partly because he misjudged the character of moral self-determination. He overlooked the fact that in each specific case we must weigh the pro and con, taking the circumstances into consideration. We cannot establish a code of behaviour binding for others on the strength of casual experiences and values relative to them. If we have grown up in the country we may set store by agricultural work; and if we are interested in popular education we may read the Dane, Grundtvig, but we cannot make virtues out of these

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things and classify people according to whether they respond to them or not.

This is exactly what this passionate and energetic man did. He did it because he had experienced the liberating influence of his own moral energy, but even more as a kind of defence, as soon as he met people whose judgments and actions were alien to him. Instead of basing himself on their experiences and examining them by the measures they used, he rejected their decisions and suspected their interests and motives.

Once he had started making values absolute, drawing around him all those who accepted him, repelling all who refused to follow, he was prepared to become a nationalist. For in nationalism there happens on a large scale what had happened here on a small one: the pretence to a moral monopoly, binding all citizens, the whole nation, and denying to other nations the same capacity for judging rightly.

The moral seems to be obvious. Without a deep insight into the character of morality and education we get into the quicksands of moral codes and classify people in accordance to whether they subscribe to them or not. If Lietz had had some Socrates at his side who, by constant questions, and on the strength of concrete events, had shown him the conditioning of his experiences and the oneness of his values, Lietz like many other educators might have been spared from confusing morality with adhering to definite rules. But this is only one side. The other is the opening of our eyes to the original qualities in the nature of the educator. A philosopher once said that the value of a person is indicated by the nature of his regard for Lietz. This need not mean complete acquiescence. But it does imply a recognition of the deep innate force which developed from childhood the idea of goodness in this man. He got entangled in its limits. Such a force can and must be purified through enlightenment. But no theory, no intelligence and no talent can replace it.

Let us now review briefly the other country boarding schools which sprang up in quick succession. It is almost possible to deduce a priori not only their common traits but also what differentiated them from Lietz. As almost all of them derived from the DLEH and were directed by progressive men, they kept the fundamental structure: the harmonious life of youth and its teachers, with homes in the German hills, on large lakes or on an island in the northern seas. But this time they included their predecessor in their "protestantism". They turned away from the subjective influence of Lietz, as well as from his oneness of values.

III. WICKERSDORF

Thus originated first of all the "Free school-community" of Wickersdorf, permeated by an "objective mind", under the leadership of Gustav Wynecken. Wynecken sided with that autonomous creation of German youth, the Free Youth Movement. On his school estate he opened a youth hostel for the Wandervogel. He helped forward everything that enabled young people to make good use of their leisure time. He supported the idea of "youth culture" which did not regard youthful life, including school, merely as a preparation for adult life but as an epoch in its own right. Thus, for the first time, at Wickersdorf, the co-operation of adolescents in questions concerning school and community became a reality.

Youth's response is well expressed by a former pupil who, remembering his school days, wrote: "The institution of a school community and a school committee, and the recognition of youth as a body worthy of consideration although different, made me feel proud, happy and elated". People who inclined towards the Left looked on Wickersdorf with more hope than on the DLEH. During the first days of the Republic Wynecken was called to Berlin as adviser to the Ministry of Education. Officials of the U.S.S.R. in Germany sent their children to Wickersdorf. A group of children was sent there by a People's Republic in Mongolia and their education was paid for by the State.

One feels the contrasts with Lietz' methods. The above-mentioned pupil writes as regards the waning of the teacher's individual influence: "It is difficult to express how deeply conscious I became of the 'objective mind'. Whoever identified himself with the school read the papers and books of the 'Father of the School' as a matter of course", a remark by which the author does not dissociate himself too clearly from the inspiring influence of the Wickersdorf headmaster.

The theory of the authority of a higher Court of Appeal, taken over from Hegel, did not impress the pupils very much. As with all young people, it was the environment and the personality of the teacher which were the bond, not the teaching. What remained, however, was a very marked intellectual atmosphere which opened wide to the pupils a field of literary and philosophical matters hitherto unknown to them. The intellectual freedom at Wickersdorf not only attracted many independent personalities as teachers—as was also the case with Lietz—it also enabled them to remain and to exercise a far-reaching influence on the life of the school. Under Halm's direction, for instance, a vigorous musical life flourished which induced the German schools to introduce musical performances by the pupils into their curriculum, and not only choir-singing. An example of this development is Hindemith's opera for young people: "We are building a city". Luserke introduced another counter-balance to Wynecken's intellectual influence. He was "the Dreamer, and Enthusiast who wrote, not philosophical treatises, but fairy tales and all sorts of fabled myths". He became the creator of the youth theatre which helped youth to new and bolder means of expression.

The difference between Lietz and Wynecken is obvious. Lietz, being a man of moral intuition, distrusted intelligence. Wynecken, theoretically well trained, rejected what he called the "primitive tracks" of the head of the DLEH's. There was no fruitful, enriching interchange between the schools, as the departure of Wynecken from Haubinda had led to insuperable personal disagreements. We cannot take sides in this controversy.

Wickersdorf did not escape the political crisis of the 'twenties, though in another direction than the DLEH. The reactionaries fulminated against this "centre of communist propaganda", although the school abstained from all party politics. The crisis was accentuated by the conflicts of the responsible teachers inside the school. Geheeb was the first to leave, Luserke and Lohmann followed later. All three founded schools of their own. Even Wynecken had to leave for a time. Yet the school did not capitulate when the Fascists raised an outcry. However, it had no support from any of the parties then in power; it succumbed to the blows of the Nazis. They have reorganised it on their own lines.

IV. THE ODENWALD SCHOOL

The third typical representative of the country boarding schools is Paul Geheeb, who now lives as a refugee in Switzerland, still hoping that his old dream of the "School of Humanity" will come true. Our times do not seem to be propitious for such ideas. They found an asylum in his school in the Odenwald during the days of the Weimar Republic. Geheeb was bound to Lietz not only by their common ideal of the home-school but for a long time by personal friendship. It was not simply the boisterous character of the founder of the movement that often ran counter to the ideas of his less robust colleagues but ever sharper differences of opinion arose over the meaning of education. Lietz' solidly rooted scale of values led to an equally firm application of principles: youth should dedicate itself to the "service of the German people". This sort of direction was foreign to Geheeb. He wrote, "Be what you are, the self that you can only become through the development of your own individuality". Certainly the former did not wish to educate mere tools of a State bureaucracy, or the latter to educate people who could not take their rightful place in society. But conflicts that arose between the interests of the individual and the demands of society made Lietz, himself absolutely consumed by devotion to the community, suspect that egoism and anarchy were behind "the principle of self-determination" that drove Geheeb to oppose "the arbitrary influencing of a child by a general idea of the teacher". He was enthusiastic about the "infinite variety of unique individuals".

In public opinion the Odenwald School was recognised as the school of tolerance, a beneficial novelty in German education. The conflict we have noted between the principle of care for the child and that of duty to society showed that these educators actually differed less in their methods of youthful life than in their conception of how the child should be trained to take his proper place in society.

Geheeb introduced co-education, according to him a successful experiment, a healthy equalising influence for boys and girls. The school committee settled the affairs of the school "without a headmaster". The constraint of a time-table with its 45-minute periods was abolished in favour of a system of courses, in which two subjects only were studied, for periods of four weeks, then were replaced by two others. The choice was left to a great extent to the pupils. In this Geheeb gave the State schools an interesting stimulus. Sebald Schwarz was the first to introduce the "core and course system" in his "Oberrealschule am Dom", in Lübeck.

The Odenwald School was a happy island in the sea of depression that swamped post-war Germany. Because of its special privileges, which allowed a large staff of teachers and assistants to be at the children's disposal, it could not adapt itself to satisfy the needs of public educational reform. One fine achievement of the school, however, which should not be forgotten, was its work for conciliation between peoples and races. Under Hitler, it was this achievement that dug its grave.

These three private schools were the foundation types. All the more recent ones leant more or less towards one or other type, adding some worthwhile qualities to the character of the new German boarding school.

V. SCHONDORF AM AMMERSEE

Schondorf, partly built up by Kerschensteiner's daughter, developed the idea of self-government to its fullest extent and made it the keystone of education. Reisinger, who took over the school after Lohmann, said that in his experience "only boys notice everything that happens among boys" and that early responsibility in a position where understanding is practised is "the best school for strengthening social-ethical consciousness". According to a statistical report of the Third Reich, the school still exists under the same leadership, a rather depressing thought!

VI. SALEM

Broad-minded Prince Max von Baden, on retiring from the political arena, founded Salem to counteract the growing moral anarchy. Kurt Hahn, its headmaster, dedicated his educational talents to this ideal and borrowed from the best masters he could find: Plato, Arnold of Rugby, and Lietz. He emphasised proudly "that nothing was original in Salem". He justified the high standard he set his students by saying "success in the sphere of one's weakness is often as great a source of satisfaction as a triumph in the sphere of one's talents".

Besides a limited quota of lessons and sport Hahn provided for his pupils a wide selection of stimulating occupations, so that they could follow their own tastes and discover the *grande passion* which was to be their "guardian angel" throughout their development. This "un-original" school had the very original merit that it openly opposed Hitler's moral nihilism *before* this came to full power. When the leader of the Nazis sent to the murderers of Potempa, who had trampled a communist to death before his own mother's eyes, a telegram expressing approval Hahn sent his old pupils a round-robin by which he requested them to break either with Salem or the N.S.D.A.P. He was imprisoned after the Reichstag fire, and Salem carried on the fight without him until, a year and a half later, it had to give in to Nazi pressure. Hahn is now headmaster of Gordonstoun, a school he has built up in Scotland.

VII. THE SCHOOL BY THE SEA

Luserke, for a long time Wynecken's colleague, took a different turning. Of the many roads that lead to Hitler, he followed the romantic one. In 1923, when the Reichswehr marched into Saxony and Thuringia, he called on his pupils to defend Wickersdorf in the event of its occupation. When the new reactionary Government of Thuringia abolished the workers' official holiday he made a fiery speech on the first of May about the workers' fighting day. Yet one can feel that these actions were caused less by political convictions than, as he put it, by the "idea of a grand and adventurous life". After his quarrel with Wynecken he founded the School by the Sea on the island of Juist, and he wrote in support of Rosenberg's Nordic myth. As there was a dearth of Nazi poets, this action was, in 1936, crowned with a prize by the city of Berlin.

VIII. GANDERSHEIM

Bondy, who came from the Youth Movement, made a genuinely serious attempt, in his school at Gandersheim at the foothills of the Harz. He realised that nothing could go smoothly in the Germany of those days, either outwardly or, in many cases, inwardly. What use, he asked himself, was it educating children for community life when all the old ties, such as the family, the churches, and the nation, were toppling? Where could the German idealism of the nineteenth century, with its ideal of justice and freedom, possibly be used? He regarded the situation as hopeless. Instead, however, of challenging the social institutions for not corresponding to those ideas, he repudiated the ideals themselves as inadequate. He hoped to set free deeply buried forces through the consciousness of religious power. Freed from dogmatism and rationalism, youth should feel itself embedded in a broader entity; it would thus, he hoped, discover new values. He knew that "the bridges are still narrow that lead over there". Pupils who were interested in such problems did not acquire from this master a firm conception of life. They left the school as seekers. One can rightly say that this is too little to sail with in the storms of our times. One may go further and assert that, by his sarcasms, he cast a doubt upon ideals already established in the mind of the young. Yet one thing is certain, the pupils who were under his influence were incapable of embracing any "power ideology", or to serve it as opportunists. Bondy is now in the U.S.A., where he runs his own school since Gandersheim was destroyed by the Nazis.

Other schools of the same type were the country school on the Solling, Letzlingen and the mountain school of Hochwaldhausen. Letzlingen, which was diametrically opposed to Lietz and in despair over the mistakes of all the others, proclaimed that it consciously avoided educational influence and saw salvation "in the disinterested pursuit of free occupations". It thought that life did not give cause "for any sort of enthusiasm" and that one had somehow to put up with that situation. It developed an educational programme which in contrast to Hahn's was not without originality, but which led in the end to compromise with Hitler.

IX. THE WALKEMUEHLE

The Walkemuehle differs from those already mentioned in that, unlike most private pioneer schools, it was not restricted by depending on the fees of paying parents. With the help of an international circle of friends, an endowment was created that enabled the school to unite children and adolescents, irrespective of race, nation or class, into a school community. Everyone worked together at the daily duties which a community such as this requires, and this gave a proper balance of physical and spiritual activities. It also kept up the connection with working-class surroundings, from which most of the pupils came. When Leonard Nelson, who helped to found the school, was asked for the characteristic mark of the Walkemuehle, he wrote this brief remark: "One does not have to lie in this school". The school aimed at preserving the child's courage of his own convictions, to strengthen it during the years of his growth. Then to send

him forth as an adult, well armed, determined to see that his fellow-men should also have the right to grow up honestly and live decently. It would be permissible to ask for more if that little had been accomplished.

It was not little, however, in our state of society. When the school had been confiscated, shortly after Hitler came to power, a young workman wrote of his three years at the Walkemuehle, that he had learned there "the courage of unfulfilment". This was not the expression of an inferiority complex but of the consciousness that he had come to a right relation with the love of truth. The school tried from the outset to close the gap that separated most of the boarding schools from the life outside them: it held fast to its connections with like-minded political and social groups. The grown-up pupils came mostly from circles active in trade unions and political parties which were sympathetically inclined towards the Walkemuehle. They returned to their previous activities better equipped for the struggle for the establishment of social justice. The position with regard to the children was similar. Their parents did not wish them to strive to climb a little higher up the social ladder because of their better education. They wished them to return to the social background from which they came, free and unprejudiced, ready to help where help was needed.

The school's international character was only partial. After the last war there was no international co-operation which could have supported such a school community. When a few parents sent their children from other countries or young people came from abroad, it was due to their being kindred spirits, with minds above national boundaries. Later on the school opened its door to those who could not develop in countries with reactionary or Fascist governments, where freedom and equality had ceased to exist. Through this assistance the school found itself prepared to go into exile when Germany fell to the Nazis. First in Denmark, later in Great Britain, it found the freedom which children had found so far in the Walkemuehle.

X. SOCIAL FUNCTION OF PRIVATE EXPERIMENTAL BOARDING SCHOOLS

After reviewing the different types of boarding schools of those days we are confronted with the problem of the character of the *social* function these schools fulfilled or did not fulfil, and of what can be learnt from them for the future. All these boarding schools were pioneer schools. There are two kinds of pioneer work: first, that which is carried out through the initiative of the ruling powers themselves, within an existing order of society, because they recognise the danger of rigidity and narrowness. Second, that which emancipates itself from the ruling powers and opposes them, and whose fate depends on their toleration. The education in boarding schools in Germany, at the beginning of the century, belonged to the latter category. The schools served children of progressive parents, they gave an opportunity to teachers who were eager for reforms, and some of them at least hoped to be able to stimulate the official school system. This succeeded in so far as many of the town schools, during the time of the Republic, established country homes which offered weeks of country life, with freedom in work, to their pupils. Many suggestions were made through the method and the artistic activities in the pioneer schools. Berlin opened the school farm of Scharfenberg maintained by municipal

grants. But everywhere could be felt a dependence on the political and social order which was really alien to those schools. A number of Governments did not grant them licences. In 1919 Lietz told the Prussian Education Ministry that, so far, he had never had the honour of welcoming one of its representatives to any of his schools. The majority of the schools were compelled to look for their maintenance to those circles who could afford such an expensive education for their children. Compared with English conditions these schools were cheap. Bieberstein cost £80 per annum. In spite of this there was not only the class difference to be felt in spite of a few scholarships. Some children of spoilt families never quite realised why they were expected to pass their days in this "primitive country environment". The elite of the pupils, if it can be called that, was therefore only happy when the reputation of a school made sympathetic parents entrust their children to it. Otherwise it often happened that the causes for sending the children to "the country" were unhappy family relations, failure to pass exams in the *Gymnasien*, or indifferent health. The pupils who had liked the schools and taken seriously the ideas on comradeship, sincerity and disregard of prejudices, often found themselves lost once they had left school. These schools were not English "Public Schools" where the one big advantage—that is, the unity between home, school and future profession—has grown up slowly under a long tradition. The first generation coming from the German pioneer schools went into the world war, the second into the crisis of the Weimar period, the third fell under the spell of the totalitarian State which ordered the *Gleichschaltung* or the closing down of the school.

And lastly the schools were dependent upon public opinion as it made known its educational demands, from the universities right down to the families, with various judgments and prejudices.

Such a situation creates pioneers, martyrs and opportunists. All three types can be found among the leaders of the schools. The fact that the number of the unsuccessful schools grew was due to the failure of finding any support from any established powerful group, as had been the case, before 1914, with the cadet schools and *Ritterakademien*, and later with Catholic boarding schools.

Without doubt the *teachers* belonged to the best representatives of their profession. The staff of such schools was not highly paid. No pension was attached. The State-owned schools did not like taking on these gentlemen who, after their apprenticeship in those "strange institutions", expected to be able to reform the public secondary schools! Those who nevertheless went to the home schools did so because they hoped to engage in a freer and wider educational activity and were prepared to share their life with youth. So these schools remained islands in a social structure which remained substantially the same before and after the world war.

What we hope for the future, if we want to revive the achievements of these schools without exposing them to the dangers which threatened them during their early period, is that the pioneer schools may be fitted into a social structure in which politics and education recognise the same basis: the freedom and equality of men. In other words, we must attempt to make pioneer schools belong to the first category, schools which serve the progressive advance of society itself. This does not mean that we should admit only *State* experimental schools. For we know all the dangers

arising not only from bureaucracy but also from the struggle for existence of the State itself. Nationalism lights up only one side of this danger as it has appeared especially clearly during the war. On the other hand, it must not be overlooked that public funds can open up fields of activity for pioneer work in a way quite impossible for private initiative. A planned selection of teachers and pupils, the ability to dispose of public funds, the transfer of achievements to the generality of the publicly owned schools, in all this the State is superior to private schools.

Nevertheless individual educators should be left free to build up independent schools, independent from the State and public money, although authorised by the State. The reason for such freedom is not only that a Government can hardly be expected to grant money for experiments which it does not consider to have any future. The deeper educational reason is that the building up of something out of one's own force—particularly in education—offers such a wealth of possibilities of creative development as no external suggestion, no external support can present. After a period of trial the State can still enquire whether the time has come to widen the scope with the help of grants, or to remove other difficulties.

That such reform schools, whether State owned or private, should include a type of boarding school is obvious. It should even be attempted to afford as many children as possible the opportunity to pass a few years—two or three—in such a youth community. Germany will have many families where the free development of youth will be hampered for many reasons. This youth needs such homes for the sake of its own growth: it must learn to experience community life which is not based on authority and subjection, but on consent, and it should be able to have this experience in surroundings characterised by those beautiful educational powers: nature, rhythm, protestantism and youthful ways of life.

These homes must be simple, according to the life of the post-war period. They must have open doors, emphasising the spirit of the motto over the entrance to the Walkemuehle: "You are a guest as I am". Their teachers—apart from a thorough social and political education—should, for this special task of an educational community, have the opportunity during the period of their training to visit boarding schools in their own and other countries, and later on to interrupt their life in a boarding school temporarily by teaching in day schools. Such homes can only grow slowly into what is expected of them by a recovering nation. But they are the very thing to support such a process of recovery. Freed from the inhibitions of the past which hampered the first boarding schools, they may, if they be granted a more and more tranquil process of growth, emerge from the stage of mere pioneer work and become a part of the general public education of the people.

DAY SCHOOLS

by ALFONS ROSENBERG

XI. SCHARFENBERG SCHOOL

One of the most striking outward characteristics of the experimental schools was that it was always one *individual* who founded a new school, drafted a programme, put his own views into practice and had to live according to his own personality. Public opinion, the Government, the political parties, the school authorities, either took no notice at all or, if they did, they seldom adopted a sympathetic attitude, but were mostly hostile. That is a fact and it is important to know it.

Yet—and perhaps this is more astonishing, and unique in the history of education—youth itself (that part which belonged to the early Youth Movement) had awakened, was longing for new forms of life and school, and followed the pioneers of these new schools with enthusiasm, loyalty and respect. Whenever public opinion or the Government interfered with these reformers, then youth closed their ranks in their determination to support these men and to fight for them.

True, this only stresses the fact that the public was either apathetic or definitely in opposition. Yet the devotion of their youthful followers must have given the pioneers infinite energy and unshakable courage.

It is necessary to repeat, particularly outside Germany, that when the tide of school experiments reached its climax there was a certain section of youth ready to collaborate and, if necessary, to make sacrifices. The section that had discovered itself in the *Jugendbewegung* knew, as it were, what it was worth and those young people wanted a school as a place for their particular work and life, which they took very seriously. Only because of these conditions is it possible to understand the foundation and the character of the *School-Farm Scharfenberg*.

In this case, masters and pupils co-operated in order to build up their own school, on an island in one of the many lakes near Berlin. This communal working remained its unique characteristic, from its start in 1922 to its Nazification in 1933.

In the case of Scharfenberg, we cannot speak of the idea of one single master for which and round which the school was built up. Every member was simultaneously building and shaping it. It is true *Wilhelm Blum's*, the headmaster's contribution, was the decisive one. He emigrated with a score or so of boys from his *Gymnasium* in the centre of Berlin to this desert island which was put at his disposal by the Berlin County Council. One tenant lived on it. The Berlin school authorities allowed this school experiment and masters and boys set to work. The house was made habitable, leaving the surrounding grounds to be prepared for use and cultivation. Weeks of hard work and a Spartan life, which were to be two more characteristics of the experiment, followed. Manual work had to a great extent taken the place of games—deliberately.

This school should not be one for people with plenty of money, plus a few outsiders from elementary schools. The aim was to be self-supporting

to the highest possible degree—by means of the surrounding land the object was attained. The boarding fee, for those who could afford it, ranged from 10d. to 1/6d. a day.

They retained that simple life even when the authorities and their friends had made it possible for them to improve their conditions. Likewise, "school democracy" was the obvious outcome of their communal beginnings. It is true, however, that taking part in lesson periods was never left to the pupils' free choice. In every other matter Scharfenberg was ruled by the suggestions of *all* the members of the school community. They met in the *Abend Aussprache* (evening discussion) which decided all questions by a three-quarter majority. An eye-witness's account gives us the best idea of the subjects and of the methods of discussion.

"At the hall door you read a notice, signed by the 'committee'; 'Tonight after supper there will be an *Abend Aussprache*'. Straightaway they want to discuss precautionary measures involved by the boys bathing in the lake. The games secretary suggests a re-division of groups with a different sequence of exercises in the 30-minute P.T. break before lunch. The masters have proposed a re-organisation of the *Studientag* (a day allotted to the seniors for private study); the boy in charge of the meals proposes to give the right of vote to two kitchen helps, who have been with us for a long time and have willingly done their full share of the work. . . . The main point on the agenda, however, is the question: 'What have the pupils to criticise in the masters, and what have the masters to criticise in the pupils? . . .' Outside the agenda the majority approved the distribution of bread and dripping on Wednesdays during communal work and refused to organise special lessons on one afternoon, as had been requested by the Zentral Institut für Erziehung und Unterricht (a Dept. of the Prussian Ministry of Public Instruction). . . . At the end, as at the beginning, a trio by Mozart was played; at intervals fruit was passed around the tables at which we sat quite informally, as if at a meal. Those *Abend Aussprachen* did not develop as parliamentary sittings but arose out of our table conversations."

As explanation: the "committee" consists of one master and three boys. It has to prepare the *Abend Aussprache*, to see that its decisions are enforced and to set an example to others by its own behaviour—the two kitchen helps are, with the exception of the matron, the only paid house staff. All other work is done by masters and boys—and there is work enough!—much farming, including dairy farming with their own cows, a horse, a chicken-run, keeping the buildings in repair, a ferry service, an island fire service. But not only from a "school-selfish" standpoint. They also help the surrounding farmers, take their advice and, if necessary, work with the neighbouring fire services.

Work—communal life—democracy—freedom. This is the framework around which the teaching, which after all is the centre of school life, is built. It was rather striking that in the pre-1914 *Schullandheime* (modern country boarding schools) little attention was paid to the actual method of teaching. A class room at Wickersdorf looked, if possible, duller still than one in an ordinary town school. The periods in the modern country boarding schools very often lay like bleak patches in the garden of a free youthful life. At Scharfenberg, however, the vigour of their common life, the sun which tanned the body and the breeze which blew over the

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lake and the island, permeated the class room. No more "forms", but courses in different sections. No more "spoon-feeding" and rigid timetable, but integrated study days or subject weeks. You should hear an old Scharfenberg boy tell of the *Kulturunterricht* (the combined teaching of literature, history and arts of a particular epoch) which was given by the headmaster. There, literature, philosophy, art and music combined to conjure up the lively image of an epoch. Often the product of weeks of communal work.

Just as this is being written a letter arrives from an old Scharfenberg boy, who is now serving with the British Army in the Middle East. He asks why, until 1939, when he emigrated, so few of his Scharfenberg friends had become good Nazis. Could the answer not be found in the motto of the school farm: "There is but one virtue—to forget oneself, and but one vice—to think of oneself".

XII. THE KARL MARX SCHOOL

Scharfenberg, with its 85 boys, was generally regarded as a remarkable experiment. But was it more? After all, every boy and every girl is entitled to good schooling with a youthful outlook. There were teachers, particularly in Hamburg and Berlin, who frowned upon the setting up of experimental schools in the remote countryside, far away from the masses of children.

The left-wing parties, after the November revolution of 1918, had, according to their tradition, a strong interest in the shaping of an education that should allow the pupil the greatest possible freedom, make possible genuine mental development and fill the young people with so strong a sense of social responsibility that they should not only become willing supporters but also active reformers of the Weimar Republic. Here we see the dangerous paradox already approaching: school is the *expression* of social conditions and organisations. How can it at the same time prepare the pioneers of an altered and better form of society? May not the German experimental school have been wrecked to some extent by this vicious circle?

After the November revolution, however, nobody was aware of it. From the Youth Movement, from the democratic and socialist parties, came a crowd of enthusiastic teachers anxious to start their great work. The Berlin borough of Neukölln had a social-democrat and communist majority in its council. They enabled Fritz Karsen to try his solution of the problem in a school in the East End of Berlin, afterwards called "Karl Marx Schule". Here we do not walk any more along a peaceful lakeshore, in the shade of age-old trees. Straight, cobbled and forbidding run the hard streets of Neukölln. Red and prison-like towers the former "Kaiser Friedrich Realgymnasium". It is to be transformed into the educational centre, that is to say, the life-centre of the surrounding proletarian youth. Once again this is the atmosphere of the *Jugendbewegung*—masters and pupils work together in friendship and mutual aid. The class room becomes a workshop, the master a foreman. The class community and the school community decide on the syllabus and create the school atmosphere. Their representatives take part in the staff meetings. Any able worker's child must have access to the school. That is to say, access

to higher education, to the university. Yet these children have another background than the rest of the secondary school pupils, therefore they must have a different start and a different syllabus. Its nucleus is formed by subjects which can be taught in the mother tongue and which deal to a great extent with their own country (i.e. German, geography, scripture, if wanted, and history, especially the latter). It is especially through historical knowledge that these boys and girls (the school is co-educational) may be enlightened about their own social conditions, the wheels of politics, the possibilities of change. Thus subject and life came into the most direct creative contact. Here, for once, no chronological march through world history. These children provide through their personal experience the raw material of their first historical knowledge. The father is an industrial worker. What was the grandfather? Did he too live in a town? What were his conditions of work, what are they to-day? Unemployed? Since when? Why? On the dole? and so on. . . . The industrial revolution, the growth of the towns, the ever-increasing State interference in industrial activities, in private life, and many more historical problems can thus, in genuine collaboration, be brought before the eyes of the child—and of the master—in a most realistic way. A complete history syllabus has been built up from this point of view: In a six-year course it lifts the child from his immediate environment to the heights of imperialism and world politics. Of great assistance are the *Studienfahrten* (excursions conducted for the specialised study of a particular subject). Every year—in the middle of the summer term—the school proper is closed and every form goes with its master to a rural district, or to a town in the mother country, or abroad, where the particular subject which is under review can best be examined. London is generally chosen for the study of a metropolitan city with its political dependences and implications.

Before the journey the pupil had chosen a small, particular section that he intends to study most intensely on the spot. Upon this his *Jahresarbeit* (annual essay) is largely based. The latter is the second characteristic of the method. The *minutes* which are taken during every period are the third characteristic. They are particularly important. At the beginning of the school year, or whenever necessary, form and master agree on the problem to be studied; for example, the German drama of the middle classes. (In history a parallel subject is taken.) Individual pupils choose certain writers or groups of plays for a special subject. The pupil gives a talk on his work, the form criticise or ask him questions and take notes. In regular rotas each member of the form takes the minutes. At the beginning of every period they are read out, if necessary changed and then entered. Thus the problem of revision is partly solved in a pleasant way, and the child is trained in listening, understanding and reproducing correctly. A well-kept minute book shows the form to what extent they have reached their goal and it may be of great help to the work of other forms.

At the end of each session every pupil writes a report on his own work, his masters, and the school in general. This, too, by being read in class, ensures a fair criticism and a just appreciation of his work. Not only the work of the individual but also the work of the form and the school as a whole can be presented as a realistic account of twelve months' work in an annual exhibition. Essays, drawings, files, diagrams, statistics, etc., give an irrefutable testimony to the work done in each form. Thus

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their work provides an opportunity for appreciation and encourages weaker forms, or if not satisfactory it may be fairly criticised.

In 1923, in connection with the Karl Marx Schule, *Arbeiter Abiturienten Kurse* (Workers' School-leaving Certificate Courses) were started. There, in a three-year course, working-class men and women received a special training which led to a university entrance examination.

The Karl Marx Schule (a day school, incidentally), with its affiliated elementary school, became by degrees the biggest school in Berlin. It is hard, however, to make a genuine community in work and in social life out of about 1,000 boys and girls. Thus lack of *esprit de corps* certainly was a disadvantage. Yet the individual learned how to work independently, acquired an open mind and a critical judgment for what was happening around him. Scarcely one true Nazi could be found among its pupils or old boys. The dismissal of the headmaster, in 1933, was proclaimed by the German wireless as a political victory. Karsen has found refuge in the United States.

XIII. THE BERTHOLD OTTO SCHOOL

Thus Berlin's best known practical contribution to experimental education was destroyed. It is strange, however, to notice that Berlin never held a place in the German School Movement which was in any way commensurate with the otherwise great importance of that city of 4,000,000 inhabitants. Probably life with children, the complete maturing of new ideas, needs more quietness and contemplation, and also a background of tradition and organic growth which upstart Berlin certainly did not afford. There was more quietness and "soil" for growth in its suburbs. There stood the cradle of the German *Jugendbewegung*. Thither must we turn to see the oldest experimental school of the "Greater Berlin", the Berthold Otto School. It takes us back to the "naughty 'nineties". Not long before 1900 Otto began teaching his own children according to his own ideas in Lichterfelde, in the shadow of Prussia's leading (and strictest) Military Academy. *Vom Kinde aus* (emanating from the child)—this was the proud-humble slogan which, later on, from 1919 onwards, the Hamburg Community Schools threw like a flaming torch into the teachers' midst. This motto contains in a nutshell the definition not only of what Otto meant but of what he actually did. He was convinced "that every human being carries in himself his own tendency of development, that he will strive towards the goal, set by his own dispositions, and that consequently the only thing that matters is to create for him a natural environment". Active sympathisers enabled Otto to buy a house, and handed over their own children to his care. Quiet avenues lead to the cottage-like buildings; it doesn't look like a school—and it doesn't smell like one! Why should it? Education, after all, is everything which we experience and which therefore compels us to some sort of reaction: a singing-bird as much as a famous general, a dog as much as Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, a schoolmaster as much as a game of rugby. You yourself have to make the best out of all that. You child, and you grown-up. Is it not true that often the most important things for our lives have been told us in informal conversation? Family conversation, a sort of family life, Otto always visualised this as his type of school.

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So any visitor will remember most vividly the *Gesamtunterricht* (all-round instruction). In a big circle all the boys and girls, the masters and guests are seated. Anything which interests the child serves as a topic of conversation. The child has limitless opportunities of asking either written questions or spontaneous verbal questions. Everyone who is able, answers. Furthermore, school affairs are being frankly discussed. If time remains, anyone present will speak on interesting experiences of his own life. Otto was convinced that, by this method, he would know the innermost feelings of his pupils, their particular interests, where they stood in their development, and in what direction they tended. More important still, could he not see through the children into the changing mind of the nation? Were not the voices of these youngsters testifying to the great interests and trends of his country and of his time? Otto was bold enough to see on the horizon the dawn of a truly national school and the possibility of a reshaping of his nation. Here, where these children could live as one large family, they were free from all enforced regulations. At the beginning of term the children would say what they would like to learn and courses were arranged in consequence. A period lasted for thirty-five minutes—a child cannot pay attention any longer—it was followed by twenty-five minutes' break. Discipline? This too was the business of those concerned. They had a tribunal of pupils. The heaviest punishment consisted in a longer or shorter exclusion from school. The longer the time, the heavier the penalty.

Otto has paid special attention to the language or the dialect of the children at their different stages of development. Only he who knows the child's language thoroughly is able to have genuine mental intercourse with his pupil. Thus many children who had been harmed by being mere cogs in the mechanism of a large school found here the chance for an adequately happy development. For this school followed its self-imposed law: "Here no child is considered to be stupid, only those grown-ups who do not know what to do with it".

XIV. THE HAMBURG COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Berlin's importance for the progress of German education was overshadowed by the two other German-speaking cities with more than a million inhabitants—Vienna and Hamburg.

Under the impulse of the revolutionary movements of 1919 new developments grew out of a soil fertilised by an old civilisation and tradition. As nearly always, here also we meet with a paradox: the most progressive things, if strong, genuine and important, need as a background the most ancient ones. It is the old class who usually produce the revolutionaries and revolutionary theorists, and not the new and rising one. Hamburg, throughout the centuries, had retained the democratic sense of independence of the wealthy middle classes. The nineteenth-century proletarian movement could graft itself more organically into this atmosphere than into that of Northern Prussia. The second biggest port on the continent, Hamburg had its attention directed towards the whole globe, and particularly towards its neighbour, Great Britain. Placing children in conditions of freedom, open-mindedness, joy without national bigotry

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seemed in Hamburg to be only the natural outcome of existing conditions. In this broad-minded attitude William Lottig, a teacher, addressed the parents. "Don't overlook that earnest people in all nations are bent on the rejuvenation of education, in our way. This far-seeing circle looks with great attention at our schools." In the report on the Heidelberg conference of New Education Fellowship in 1925 we read: "Did not Marietta Johnston's description of her work with children in America, and her refusal to acknowledge any traditional existing adult standards, sound as if she were speaking of the boldest experiments in our Hamburg schools? Obviously, it is the question of a most important part-movement within a big approaching wave of liberation of the human soul. What is being struggled for so laboriously in great politics is ethically not different from that for which we want to pave the way with a new type of education. It is with this historical background that you parents must realise what we do, and what we do not do, with your children." In these Hamburg teachers, coming, for the greater part, from the Socialist Youth Movement, a great love had arisen. Love for the child, love for life with and for youth, love for the working-class and its future, and love for a Germany, democratic, socialistic and peaceful, who should become a good sister to all the other nations. "Germany must come of age. We help to educate her children towards independence and self-responsibility, towards self-government."

You go to such a school under your own responsibility and you must take the risk. The Hamburg school authorities granted them an almost unrestricted freedom. It is your own choice if you are a teacher, a pupil, or a parent at that school. Indeed, the parents also form an integral part of school life. They organise social amenities for the poorest of the children, help in the needlework rooms, help towards getting a school country-home, take part in the staff meetings or other school discussions if called upon to do so. These by no means prosperous dockers or factory workers contribute towards the expenses incurred by workshops, teaching materials and decorations. They form a school choir, a discussion group on education in order to understand better the new school and their own children. They help in the teaching of certain subjects, in which they are more proficient than the master. The school has been transformed into a house of youth, whoever enters it has to conform to its laws. The author remembers being present at a lesson when some incident of a story by Dostoevski was being read. The children were listening breathlessly. Suddenly the door opened and the inspector entered. In a flash he appreciated the situation and on tip-toe he crept to a vacant seat in a corner of the class room. The method used is easily explained. The form community elects its leader and with him formulates a plan of work. For the more mechanical subjects, such as writing or arithmetic, they fix special practice periods. Any work the member of the community does is subjected to the criticism of all. In front of the class are hung up twenty to thirty drawings: under the teacher's chairmanship a discussion starts on their merit, with the object of discerning which is the best. The latent qualities of art, taste and decoration are brought out. And all this in the most real contact with the children's humdrum home existence.

The community schools are in communication with one another all over the country. Hamburg exchanges letters with Frankfurt, Thuringia,

Saxony or Berlin. They visit each other on an exchange basis, so that once somebody mockingly called them "the travelling school".

Travelling, seeing interesting people from other countries or at least from other provinces, isn't this the ordinary way of broadening one's outlook, increasing one's knowledge? It isn't the lesson any longer that matters but the whole environment. Teaching has become life and life branches out into science, art and work. Yet, however happy a school may be, at one moment or another it will be reminded of the stubborn fact that it cannot last in splendid isolation. The political changes in Germany threw their shadow over this sparkling life. As far back as 1924 Wilhelm Lamszus wrote: "For a long time, in any attempt towards further development, we had felt that we were no longer a cell of the 'becoming', but an alien body in a stagnant organism." In Hamburg, too, political developments made an end of an experiment which had deeply influenced schools in Berlin and in all the progressive districts in the Reich.

XV. CONCLUSION

Whenever the renewal of education catches the interest of the masses, whenever it tends to bring about something completely new in method and final aim, it is the indication of a far-reaching crisis which shakes the national body. The organisation, syllabus and object of a school normally has to be the adequate expression of prevalent economic, social and political conditions. Woe to a society, to a government that are not strong enough to serve any longer as a solid foundation. Then individuals, organisations, political parties rise in order to seek solutions, both from their particular philosophy and their particular situation. The German Youth Movement, starting about 1900, and the simultaneous beginning of what in the course of time became a series of remarkable school experiments—both are the first symptoms of the breaking-down of a society, with all its values. The Weimar Republic was faced with the formidable task of endowing the nation with new values, with a belief worth living for. Yet alas! it was not self-confident, not creative enough, and so it failed. The following extract from a well-known educationist, written in 1930, shows how bafflingly flimsy were the moral and spiritual foundations upon which German education had to rest: German Youth "*has a new feeling of the meaning of life, a tendency towards new syntheses in the realm of the human mind. . . . This new feeling does not listen to Plato and Thomas Aquinas, to Luther and Schleiermacher, to Marx and Nietzsche, nor to German Idealism, nor even to Kant and Goethe. This Weltgefühl is not smiling serenely, as a prosperous America tried to persuade us for some years: it is tragic, yet of an incredible courage. . . . It knows that the highest reward for such a way of life, that which might perhaps be called happiness, consists in the reaching of new levels, seen from which a hundred problems are solved but a thousand new ones come in sight*" (Hermann Harless).

In such an atmosphere the New School could not be integrated in the national body. It remained—rootless—hanging in the air and was bound to wither. The German schoolmaster should have learned his lesson: education on a national scale can never develop soundly except in permanent contact with the existing society. Furthermore, he who wants

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to educate children who will be able later on to organise and improve State and economy has to train them accordingly. A happy, youthful life, the experience of friendship with other children, the free unfolding of the child's personality—these are good and fine things, yet they cannot be the only and final ideals. For instance, the man who had been so trained that he could work out the Beveridge Plan is the more useful contributor to a better life. Will the school in post-war Germany be able to produce people who have a firm grasp of reality, whose best pupils know how to master and improve political conditions, free from selfishness, with the "common weal" in view? That is the crucial question.

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