

I would like to say that living in the atmosphere of the summer workshop was the most inspirational experience I have ever had in my training. The fact that the principal of my building attended the same groups as I has helped to give me the feeling that there is a oneness of purpose in attempting to meet the needs of youngsters.

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The evaluation of the effect of the ideas and of the constructive changes made on my classes as a result of my attendance at the workshop is not a simple task. The effect has been on my students and that must be seen to be understood. Most noticeable of these effects is the change in attitude of my students concerning their own personal responsibility for their own conduct and achievement.

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In my district a number of elementary teachers attended the workshop this summer, therefore making them more alert to the pupil as an individual and to his or her difficulties. This in turn makes the principal more conscious of individual needs and the value of conferences with the teacher and visiting teacher.

No, we haven't all the answers. Teachers are confused. Some gripe. Others resist. But many of us believe: "Nothing outstanding is ever accomplished without distraction and confusion. You choose either the calm of the static regime or the general upset of creative adventure. It's the rare soul who can have both at the same time."

Let's Face the Facts—and Act!

BETTY MORGAN BOWEN

We present the following "extra," which we feel a strong compulsion to publish. This article was written by Betty Morgan Bowen, American Friends Service Committee, Philadelphia, Pa., who spent some time in Germany and describes some of the existent conditions affecting children in that nation.

TWO YEARS after the end of the fighting in the town of Schaufenberg, Germany, the Schaufenberg Elementary School, where 390 children are enrolled, is still in very bad repair. The roof and the walls on the top floor are toppling, and rain pours into the building. The six classrooms still in use are musty and damp, and the floor boards are warped to four or five inches above their base. During heavy rainfalls water

drips onto the children as they sit at their desks.

Though the central heating system of Schaufenberg School has been repaired, and though coal could easily be supplied from the Schaufenberg Mines only a few hundred yards away, less than a ton of coal had been allocated to last at least six weeks into the winter of 1946.

The children attend school for two

hours a day. They are ill-fed, ill-clad, ill-shod, or even barefooted. Most of them sit apathetically at their desks, hardly responding at all to the efforts of the teacher.

There is only one outdoor lavatory for both boys and girls at the end of the Schaufenberg schoolyard. The roof of this lavatory is so badly damaged that the children are exposed to rain and cold and to falling bits of masonry. Since the school's water main has not yet been repaired, the toilets cannot be flushed after every use, but only by pails after the end of the school day.

There is no electric current in Schaufenberg School, as the wiring system has many short circuits owing to the wetness of the walls.

The soup supplied by Military Government to Schaufenberg for supplementary school feeding does not always arrive; sometimes the feeding must be discontinued for a few days. This is especially unfortunate for those children for whom this is the only substantial meal in the day. Often the soup is of such poor quality and smells so badly that children who are listless through malnutrition cannot eat it.

Schools in Germany have had to amalgamate. In one town in the British Zone, school is now being held in a small back room of a pub, with fifty children crowded together, some of them standing for the four morning hours, and fifty more in the afternoon. A typical German elementary school has five classrooms and six teachers with an enrollment of 500 children. In the village of Vonhausen in the American Zone, there is one teacher for 150 children. At first, in order to give all the children some chance of schooling, a

four-shift-per-day system was begun in many schools. Now most schools have been able to change to two shifts per day.

Creature Comforts Come First

In a country where whole villages—whole cities—are little more than rubble heaps, the fight must be not for decent teaching but for four walls and a roof. One drives through village after village—Schmidt, Bergstein, Hurtgen, Vossenack—where there is nothing left but a few walls with wrecked tanks pressed against them, where the roads are not cleared, where telephone wires still hang unused from twisted poles. There can be little interest in rebuilding schools when farmers live in cellars and sell all they have to buy black market cement to rebuild their barns for the expected harvest, not even thinking of protecting themselves and their families through the winter.

The Teacher Crisis is "Real"

With nothing like adequate staff, with teachers much overworked and yet underfed, without books or materials, the teaching profession in Germany is struggling against overwhelming difficulties. An added problem is the fact that those teachers who were known to be in the Nazi Party lost their jobs at the end of the war, and even now the teaching staff is gradually decreasing under progressing denazification. Teachers, like everyone else, live under the tension of suspicion, inevitable in a country which had twelve years of Gestapo policing. Wary of causes, refusing to commit themselves enthusiastically to anything, teachers still have no sense of freedom of speech or

healthy criticism, but instead are haunted by a feeling of being watched and cut off, of having no clear idea of what is happening outside Germany, of hearing only controlled information. Many teachers are so shaken in their beliefs, not knowing where to find a worthwhile goal in their teaching, that they no longer have the courage or convictions to influence their pupils.

The subjects taught in elementary schools are usually German, arithmetic, elementary science, hygiene, singing, and in some schools North Rhine geography. Very little world geography or history of any kind are taught because these are considered to be "political" subjects, and even in schools where these subjects are permitted, teachers are afraid to begin.

Yet it has been the teachers themselves who have repaired the buildings so that schools could open, who have built new windows and cleared the floors of debris, and who now say, "We must try to give the children a happy life, so they will not see all the difficulties and fight for existence at home and in the streets." During the warmer months teachers are often seen leading their children to the woods or fields; parades of a hundred or more jog along, three in a row, almost always singing.

Attempts have been made to fill the gap in teaching personnel by training "School Helpers" in six months' courses, and providing additional night courses and conferences while the Helpers are teaching. But the problem of lack of personnel is heightened by the fact that so many teachers in Germany are over fifty years of age. It is estimated that within ten years fifty per cent of all teachers in Frankfort will have reached

retirement age, sixty-five. More training courses must be opened, and teachers must be trained more adequately, before there can be any noticeable improvement.

German Youth Speaks

The following is taken from an appeal sent out by a group of young Germans: "Nobody in the world has confidence in us. Nobody in the world is worth our confidence. No church, no school, no class, no profession, no party, not even a state has ever represented our interests. But we had to bleed for the interests of all these others. The great sacrifice of blood in all wars has always been made by the young, never for their own benefit, always for the benefit of the others. . . .

"The school belongs to youth . . . and yet we have not the smallest right of self-determination. Everybody has his word in the school: the state wants us to itself—to bleed us again; the church wants us to itself—to forsake us again; the parties want us to themselves—to rouse us again against one another for their own ends. No one thinks of us, everybody lives on us; we serve them all, nobody helps us."

Hitler made youth Germany's idol. Young people were made to feel that the future, with all its conquests and glory, belonged to them. Then suddenly, with Germany's defeat, the young people felt their pride dashed to the ground; they felt all at once insignificant, bewildered, and robbed of their ideal. A group of youth leaders meets weekly in a German city to exchange ideas. To an outsider, they seem at first quiet, shy about expressing themselves; then one realizes that these young

people actually have no clear ideas on which to base their thoughts; they cannot say what they want for themselves and Germany; they have no knowledge of anything other than the way of living that failed them so terribly. Yet they WANT to learn, they are really hungry to know about other countries, about what Democracy is like, for instance. They are aware that they must begin to think for themselves and lead themselves now, but they have no notion of what social responsibility IS. How can they work toward a new ideal when they remember only years of parades and uniforms, battles and High Causes that deceived them?

A youth whose family had been members of the Confessing Church and always in opposition to Hitler said, "Tell me honestly, does America want to annihilate Germany or not?" He was thinking of hunger in his city, of streets still clogged with rubble, of the demolished university and silent factories. Youth in Germany needs not so much to shoulder its guilt as to find some hope and faith in the rest of the world.

It Can Be Done If—

Before the teachers of Germany stands the opportunity of showing German youth the way to a new future, of giving youth new interests and new ideals. But this will be possible only if teachers themselves see their plight not as a singular German plight but as a part of the general world situation, only if teachers are offered a chance to break

through the barriers surrounding Germany, to read the best of English, French, American and Russian writing, to learn the viewpoints of teachers of these countries.

But more important, a good educational system will be possible in Germany only if the struggle for food ceases to be the prime motive in every German's life.

We watched a group of young boys playing "Fussbal" in an empty lot in a former factory district of Aachen, the first major German city to be captured by the American Army in World War II. It was the kind of play one would find in any city lot, with the rougher, larger boys running and kicking in the middle, the smaller ones hanging around the outside. The difference came when we looked more closely, at the spindly legs and arms and wrinkled yellow faces of some of the boys on the sidelines pathetically going through the motions of those in the middle. More than one hundred children were arrested in one afternoon on the Dutch Border, begging and bartering for food. Almost every German with anything to sell or barter dabbles in the black market. Those who cannot afford to do so are growing weaker and more apathetic, are in fact slowly dying. Only when children must no longer drift about searching dustbins, only when teachers must no longer stand for hours in bread lines will education take its rightful place in German life.

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