

The U. S. Cultural Plan in Germany

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The United States cultural program in Germany is subjected to penetrating analysis in this article. The authors assess the program to date, pose significant questions and offer constructive suggestions.

IN MAKING an assessment of the U. S. cultural program in Germany, one must remember that the occupation of the country is in its seventh year and that U. S. policy toward Germany during this time has undergone at least three major changes. We might speak of the first period (1945-49) which was under the U. S. Department of the Army as the "telling" period. The United States was convinced that Germany must have a democratic "way of life" and that basic cultural, economic and political changes would be inaugurated to assure democratic attitudes in a future peaceful world. Our policy was initiated in this direction and one very often heard opinions expressed that the occupation would continue from twenty-five to fifty years before basic democratic changes and attitudes could be deeply rooted in German society. A great many highly-trained professional persons were recruited to develop and carry out the cultural program.

The second period from 1949-52 under High Commissioner John J. McCloy and the State Department might be called the "working with" period although legal authority still rested with the occupying power. This period saw the end of the Berlin air lift and the beginning of the struggle in Korea. Our policy toward Germany adjusted

itself in the light of world events. One heard much less talk about a twenty-five to fifty year occupation needed for the democratization of Germany and much more talk about encouraging Western Germany to become a member of the western democratic world, playing her part in the fight against Communism. United States professional staff was reduced accordingly and many regular State Department "generalists" replaced the trained technical personnel.

The third period is now developing and might be called "Sovereign Germany—under the Contractual Agreements." The United States started the reorganization of American offices in Germany in the fall of 1951 to conform to the structure visualized under the Agreements. The words most frequently heard were, "A typical State Department program for any sovereign country—staffed with regular State Department foreign service officers." Most of the experienced professional personnel in specific fields disappeared and were replaced by regular State Department officers. The activities of the United States will be limited to those

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approved by the German Government or stipulated in the Agreements. Presumably, as soon as the Contractual Agreements are signed by the nations concerned, the occupation of Germany will cease.

An evaluation of an operation such as that in Germany is always most difficult and certainly much dust has to settle before we will really know what the impact of this great invasion has been. However, we should continually try to study, discuss and assess our activity. We should attempt to inform and interest American citizens in the basic issues involved in developing a cultural program abroad.

Our occupation of Germany, Italy and Japan presented new problems to the United States. Almost overnight our country had become the key figure in international leadership. We know that a large part of the program developed was of a "feeling our way" nature. We know also that a great deal of money and effort, as well as thousands of sincere, honest people have been involved in our program abroad. However, because we are playing a new role in international relations, because so much depends on our skilled leadership, it is now time that we know what we are doing abroad, why we are doing it and how it is being done. We should be thinking about the following questions:

What kind of cultural program should we have abroad?

What is the purpose of this program?

What type of personnel should staff such an operation?

How should such a program be administered?

How should United States governmental, private and state institu-

tions, and lay groups cooperate in the program?

What Have We Accomplished?

In assessing the cultural program in Germany the authors would like to present the following comments which express their sincere feelings. They hope these will not be taken as the only opinions but will, rather, encourage investigation, study, discussion and recommendations about our total cultural program abroad.

- Hundreds of Americans have made friends of thousands of Germans. This is a real asset and one often undervalued. It seems that even untrained Americans have succeeded well in this field.

- A vast effort based on the use of many methods and a variety of resources has been made to carry the "American Story" to the German people. Certainly nowhere else, except possibly in the Japanese effort, has such a program been undertaken. The effectiveness of the program is difficult to evaluate, but credit should be given for the vastness and sincerity of the effort.

- No consistent theory of cultural development was recognized or applied. No criteria for cultural work were agreed upon. Part of the work in all three periods was based on authoritarianism, part on a "hands-off" policy, and part on the careful support of certain selected, important, democratic trends. No concerted plan for leadership education existed. Pre-service teacher education, the key to the improvement of formal education, was not treated as an approach. In-service teacher education and pre-service teacher education were treated in dif-

ferent programs. Preparation of adult education teachers was not even handled by the education branch. The universities were not involved in training leaders for the community program. While much fine work was done in compartmentalized efforts, the very compartmentalization indicated a lack of theory and encouraged the personalized approach.

- The cultural program was a splinter program. It consisted of:

- a. The Mutual Security Administration cultural program

- b. The cultural program of other offices such as Labor Affairs, Political Affairs, Food and Agriculture, General Counsel

- c. The work of the Resident Officers

- d. The activities of the Special Projects Fund Staff and committee

- e. The work of the Exchanges Staff

- f. The work of the Education and Cultural Relations Division in the Office of Public Affairs.

This type of bureaucratic organization, which was complicated even further by several sections under each of the programs listed above, made unified planning and cooperation most difficult. It was often discovered that officers, divisions, and even branches and sections were working at cross purposes.

- There seemed to be neither a philosophy nor adequate standards for the choice of personnel. A great many individuals participating in the cultural program in Germany could not have secured a position with a cultural institution in the United States because of their training and background. Many of the Amerika Haueser (U. S. Information Centers) were being directed

by individuals who had had experience neither in libraries, schools, nor community centers in the United States. This becomes of greater concern when we realize that many of the centers were the size of a public library in an American city of 50,000 to 75,000 people. Also, in some instances the Amerika Haus was the only U. S. cultural outpost in the area. However, in spite of lack of experience and training, a great many of these individuals are sincerely trying to do a good job. The philosophy of the U. S. Department of State seems to be that a Foreign Service Officer should be able to perform any of the duties characteristic of a foreign mission.

- The status of and continuity of the top cultural affairs officer have always been undesirable. No person has ever held the office long enough to be fully effective. No such officer has ever had adequate support. The officer was supposed to carry out mandates whether he agreed in a professional sense or not.

- Information activities had become axillary while the cultural program, the fundament or base for the total program, had become ancillary. Here is an issue which is ruining the worldwide program as well as the German program.

- The impact that has been made on formal education is covered in detail in a very precise research report¹ called *Postwar Changes in German Education* which was published by the office of the U. S. High Commissioner in Ger-

¹ A more recent interpretation emanating from the Department of State is Vaughn DeLong's article in the *Field Reporter*, U. S. Department of State, Publication 4744 (November-December 1952, Vol. I, No. 3) 1944. pp. xii and 190.

many and is obtainable through the U. S. Department of State. In broad outline one can say that the most significant changes are (a) an increase in English teaching, (b) more free tuition, (c) more free textbooks, (d) more teaching of social studies, (e) one community school experiment, (f) the establishment of eighteen centers for in-service education and limited use of the U. S. Information Centers (Amerika Hauser) for the same purposes, and (g) the intensive education of a number of teachers and administrators through the exchange of persons program.

If we should look more closely at the schools, we might make these additional observations:

a. *Elementary Schools*: (1) We have succeeded in getting a few teachers to experiment with newer methods in the classroom. (2) Many more "educational workshops" for teachers are being conducted. (3) Many more children are being given the feeling that they should have an opportunity for study in the secondary schools. (4) Many new classrooms have been constructed. (5) A few experiments in home-school relationships have been instituted and some parent-teacher groups started.

b. *Secondary Schools*: No structural changes have been made and thus the secondary school remains essentially undemocratic in role. Social stratification still remains, and little real potential is apparent for the training of democratic citizens. No real experimental work was attempted in vocational education so the education of the lower socio-economic strata of the teenage population who suffer from a bad

apprentice system is unchanged except as more free tuition may favor an already favored few. The increase in Mittel Schulen (intermediate school) enrollment is significant but the school is a class school for the children of the common people.

c. *Universities*: (1) A considerable attempt has been made to broaden student extra-curricular activities. (2) An extensive building program partially financed by the United States has been undertaken.

However, no appreciable dent has been made on the philosophy of university education. The universities remain "ivory towers" with little or no participation in community living. They have only an insignificant potential for promoting the freer life.

d. *Adult Education*: In spite of the fact that adult education in Germany is the only educational area which is based in the community and controlled by the community, it received only token assistance and recognition from U. S. authorities. There has been encouragement to strengthen and broaden local control and support. There is an emphasis on basing the curriculum on local needs. Many educational workshops for teachers have been held and many teachers have participated in the exchange program.

The educational program has suffered because our leadership did not grasp the importance of education as the foundation of democratic living. Our educational officers were never part of the policy-forming group. There has been considerable feeling expressed by Germans that in this cultural area we had the most to give—and actually gave very little. German

youth have been particularly disappointed in our showing.

- Several pilot projects such as Haus Schwalbach, a school for community leadership, Haus Ahlenberg in the British zone, the Multi-National Center at Nuerenberg, have been started with American financial help and leadership. These centers if carefully nurtured will develop into "beach-heads" for democratic German cultural development.

Suggestions for Improvement

The United States is losing a cultural battle not only in Germany but throughout the world. Other peoples often respect us for our size and wealth, they appreciate our "know-how," they appreciate our genius in production and invention, but they neither understand nor appreciate our culture as a whole. Its scope and promise are difficult to interpret.

It is in this area that we have so much to share. The rest of the world wants to understand our attitudes on family life, our theory of democratic discipline, our community spirit, our voluntary participation in civic affairs, and all other aspects of our culture that have made us a fortunate, free people. It is imperative to future world peace that other countries understand and appreciate our way of life.

Every schoolteacher and every parent has a stake in the situation. Today we are in the beginning phases of a third world war. All male children must do military service or be excused for cause. Some will end their lives in that service. For others it will be temporary. But will the draft be temporary or permanent? Will the "little war" expand into an explosive holo-

caust followed by chaos, pestilence and world communism? Worst of all is the fact that we seem to be educating our children to war as a way of life. Such militarization of our culture is the only thing worse than war.

Every American citizen and especially those of us engaged in cultural professions and activities should give careful attention to the following suggestions:

- We should seek to encourage the gradual development and installation of a program of international cultural relations which will be democratic, sincere, overt, co-planned with the cultural agencies, in accordance with the principles of cultural anthropology, and completely independent of information, propaganda and psychological warfare programs. This naturally implies certain precise policies and a certain kind of organization appropriate to the kind of program to be developed.

- We should seek to bring about a new personnel policy based upon the utilization of the great state and private facilities of higher education to prepare for foreign service, the staffing of cultural programs with professional people rather than with generalists, the easy interchange of personnel between the cultural institutions and associations of the United States on the one hand and the U. S. State Department on the other (we do not think that persons who spend all their lives in foreign countries can properly staff a cultural program), and a dignified, professional form of personnel administration.

- We should seek to encourage the various unofficial cultural agencies, institutions and associations in the United States each to develop an appropriate program of cultural relations

with foreign peoples and foreign counterpart institutions. This program should be completely free of governmental pressure and direction and should deal with such projects as exchange of persons, cooperative investigations, international meetings, exchange of artistic programs, in the form of drama, recordings, films, etc., exchange of literature and the general exchange of information.

Unless citizens of the United States become concerned about the problem, the present over-emphasis on political, military and economic programs, the present inefficient administration, and the extreme tension which characterizes world affairs will almost certainly conspire to bring about a third world war more disastrous than anything we can imagine.

The Challenges for ASCD

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development can be a potent force in world affairs. The world needs the things dear to the hearts of ASCD'ers. These are techniques for developing democratic leadership, techniques of arriving at compromises and consensuses, and techniques for improving teaching, whether through educating the professional or improving the curriculum.

How can the ASCD Committee on International Understanding cooperate with Haus Schwalbach, with Haus Ahlenberg, with the Scheim-Jugendheim community school, and with professional teacher organizations in Germany? The Point Four (Technical Cooperation people) report that shortage of professional personnel is the main problem. ASCD can provide



WE have our problems with the 3 R's also. You know—rare atmosphere control, radiant astronomy and rocket communication.

many people if it has an adequate plan. ASCD needs its own complete and balanced program of intercultural relations.

The second challenge has to do with a world-wide program of cultural relations for our official foreign missions. Such a program cannot be left to propagandists, bureaucrats and political adventurers. Nor should the cultural program be treated as an adjunct of our defense - economic - political program. The cultural institutions of America must intervene at once. Is the ASCD ready to join with universities, educational associations, service clubs and foreign policy associations in proposing a philosophy and a program to develop the cultural aspect of foreign relations? We are spending billions for material defense but the problem of peaceful relations is essentially psychological and educational in nature. We must not remain idle. Nineteen-fifty-four may be too late.

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