The German University

— Its Role in World Peace

By DR. ALONZO G. GRACE

The most important asset in any nation is its youth. At the same time youth can become the greatest liability. The great majority of youth in Germany, cooperatively working with youth in other nations, can become one of the greatest forces for peace, if there is the statesmanship, vision, courage and willingness to provide the proper program.

There have been few constructive proposals to remedy the plight of youth in Germany. If such proposals have been made, there has been little action. A great responsibility rests with the educators of Germany to see to it that youth is provided with a sound educational program, job opportunities and a mission in life.

It is especially important that this new generation not take the path of the disillusioned, frustrated, jobless youth emerging from World War I. Youth in this country, or in any other country, must not become the possession of the state, the rights of parents must be observed and voluntary, non-governmental organizations be given support.

There is a tremendous unpublicized effort in the development of self-help work education programs already in progress in this country. There are numerous jobs involving the reconstruction of dormitories or the erection of new housing facilities in universities and in other educational institutions. There are student facilities, schools, laboratories, libraries to be reconstructed which would provide work for youth and which would allow a young person at the same time to continue his education either after working hours or as an integral part of the educational program.

This is an idea which should be of particular interest to universities where many students are living on a sub-marginal basis. Another phase of such a program involves an exchange of what might be termed work-students among the various countries, in order that youth of various nations may work and learn together and observe the life and customs which prevail in other nations. The plan also should involve the opportunity for youth to borrow the necessary funds from some agency in order to remain in school. This loan should be repaid from funds which he would earn while securing his education.

This is not a new program for the whole idea originated in Germany in 1919 and was most successful until 1932 under the able leadership of Dr. Reinhold Schairer. It is being revived and expanded. Such a program already exists in Sweden. The initial steps have been taken to reestablish the program in the United States and other countries are deeply interested. But this whole idea must not be delayed; it must be recognized. This is the crucial moment in Germany.

Self-help develops self-responsibility, a character trait of major importance in the decisions which youth will be called upon to make. The first urgent need is the provision of the opportunity for youth in Germany to secure equal access to education and to be able to work in conjunction with this education. This should not be made an opportunity for the economically distressed, but every youth in every nation should understand the dignity of work and that the component parts of true education are intellectual-manual-moral.

Only one phase of the youth education program has been emphasized. The whole area of youth education and welfare is of major importance to Germany and the world at this particular time.

Nations frequently are guilty of displaying their cultural contribution more in a competitive spirit than in an effort to unite mankind through cultural cooperation. The brotherhood of man will not be accomplished through selfishness. Cultures are superior only insofar as there are superior people within a nation and only when there is an environment of freedom that enables men to create.

The disastrous situation of modern culture is due, not only to a lack of knowledge, and we know much more than our ancestors, but to our failure to cultivate the emotional qualities of man. There should be a compulsory part of general education embracing all of those activities which may lead to a more deepened and harmonious life. This means poetry, experienced — not explained; fine arts, including music, performed — not just appreciated. It means drama, handicraft, sports of the collective as well as the competitive type. This will have as much effect and perhaps more unity than restricting individuals to some intellectual activity.

At Erlangen recently certain principles of cultural cooperation were discussed. I indicated at that time that I believe each nation to have its own cultural pattern, that there must be respect for the individuality of each nation but that there can be unity without uniformity. The formation of a cultural union through which we could share with each other the great contribution of each nation

(Continued on next page)
would be a long step toward durable peace.

A tremendous improvement in educational opportunity and in programs and institutions is evident during the past 15 years in many countries. There should be an annual conference on comparative education in order that educators be able to discuss educational developments that are occurring elsewhere.

It must be realized that educational systems and cultural patterns will differ from country to country; that what may be good in the United States or the Netherlands may not be good in Denmark or Canada; that each country has its own cultural pattern; that possibly what we need is less emphasis on the differences that prevail among nations and more emphasis on similarities.

Perhaps it is possible that there may be established an institute on international education for if a body of scholars can study aims, programs and methods of education in other countries, it will contribute to the improvement of education throughout the world.

Such an institute also should develop a widespread program of exchange of persons. This is an important aspect of self-help programs. It is time now that the exchange of persons not be simply a one-way movement.

There should be, in addition to the student exchange, certain other types of exchange; for example, 25 young German university faculty members might go to 25 American universities to teach German, and 25 scholars in the field of English and American civilization might come to Germany to hold lectures and seminars in this area. I am fearful that the exchange of the future may be more in the technical fields to assure greater production than in the intellectual, spiritual and cultural fields to assure greater understanding among men.

I am personally of the opinion that one or two months in another country is a waste of time, effort and money. There can be little mutual understanding developed unless a person has ample time to observe and learn about the ways of life in other countries. A year is almost a minimum. Greater opportunities should be afforded youth leadership or potential leadership in this area.

The university of the future, if it is to exercise the maximum leadership responsibility, cannot remain isolated from the community, the nation or the world. It cannot be an ivory tower occupied by those who are content to devote their effort solely to the transmission of knowledge or culture. A university has a tremendous leadership responsibility. The European university, in general, and the German university, in particular, is a totally different institution from that which has been developed in the United States or in Canada. Far too many youth aspire to professions many of which are badly overcrowded.

It should not be beneath the dignity of a university to take the leadership in developing extension centers or people's colleges as has been done in Denmark. Perhaps they should not award diplomas or require examinations, but they could be institutions in which those who aspire for more learning would have this opportunity. Such a program would:

1. Bring into professional status training in many practical areas in which people are employed.
2. Provide for centers for instruction in the humanities.
3. Assume leadership in the development of a program of widespread reading and discussions of the great books so well known in Germany.
4. Develop a close relationship with the labor movement.
5. Provide for the further education and training of people who are in the practical areas of life.

The university always should remain the institution which will admit only the very finest talent in the country. Admission, however, should be opened to a greater extent to those who come from the so-called working classes—from the farms, mines and factories. Irrespective of the financial status of the parents, race, nationality, or religious preferences youth should be permitted to pursue education.

We would be short-sighted in the education program of any country if we did not recognize as one of the important elements in a nation's life and economy the development of trained, educated manpower. There are those who would hold the working class to a minimum of education. This is a most serious blunder for the danger lies not in too much education but in too much of the wrong kind of education.

Any system that omits the liberal training of those who work with their hands, and that means the majority of any population, is merely paving the way for more difficult problems. It must be pointed out that most of the world's demagogues were not university graduates, and that their immediate associates were not those who were from the professions or were the products of a liberal education.

There is an urgent need for the development of more effective human relations throughout our respective nations and especially between management and labor. Instead of developing docile bench workers, the world needs intelligent, rational citizens.

The vocational school in any country is one of the most important parts of the educational system. There must be more dignity for manual work; there must be a realization that the man who operates a machine is as essential as the man who stands before the bar of justice, or who attends us during periods of illness. The man at the bench should be capable of reading and understanding the great books, for example, for these are not the private possession of any particular class. The vocational school can become one of the finest self-help programs in any community. This is especially true in agriculture, in trades and industries and in homemaking and it can have a substantial bearing on production.

About 100 years ago Henry Barnard of Connecticut and Horace Mann of Massachusetts were leading advocates of educational reform in the United States. They were concerned with problems of free textbooks and tuition, compulsory school attendance, child labor and vocational education,
the education of teachers, reading, school architecture and many other important matters relating to the equalization of educational opportunity in the United States.

In 1838, Henry Barnard was able to convince the people of Connecticut that this would be more easily accomplished if there were a state board of education which would select a scholar and administrator to assist the board in the consideration and adoption of educational policy and to exert leadership in developing a more effective educational program throughout the state.

A FEW YEARS after having established the state board of education, Barnard determined that the one place to learn about educational reform and progressive educational development was in Germany. He, therefore, spent considerable time visiting, observing and learning about education in Germany at that time. He brought back to Connecticut many ideas which were published as state documents. These were widely read throughout our country. The idea of the kindergarten, the grade system of the elementary schools, school buildings, the education of teachers and many other ideas are reported in these published documents. Subsequently some of the German reforms of that era became part of our educational system.

One hundred years following Barnard's search for the best in German education we meet to bring evidence of what wise leaders in other countries have sought and attained during the past 15 years, and to aid the German people in accepting leadership in the reconstruction of a world which has drifted toward materialism at the expense of moral values and spiritual enlightenment.

The educational and cultural interests of the world can prevent the occurrence of another catastrophe. We recognize more and more that education in any nation limited to the development of the mind or to the hands is incomplete without provision of the development of the inner man.

AN EXAMPLE of the desire to liberalize German technical education is contained in the Tuebingen University studies for the year 1926.

In presenting a plea for a liberal education in the technical fields, that report stated:

"It is perfectly clear that only those whose personalities have been fully developed can hope to perform work of the very highest standard such as is demanded today of each individual. Anyone planning to study for a technical calling must feel from the very outset a real inclination for the kind of work he will be called upon to do and be prepared to strive with all his strength to attain his goal. It is not merely a question of how and where he can probably make a living. Professional idealism of this sort presupposes as a matter of course the more careful cultivation of the whole inner man."

The history of German education is filled with evidence of the liberal thinking of men like Froebel, Herbart, Francke, Basedow, Ziller and others. Out of the many private experimental schools came many forward looking ideas; such concepts as: (1) character will be molded by a balanced educational program affecting the whole child—body, mind and soul; (2) self-government; (3) parent-teacher-scholar councils; (4) equal opportunity for all gifted children; (5) importance of manual work; (6) replacement of rigid discipline by teacher-pupil cooperation in working communities, and many more.

But then came the Nazi concept of education and the final aim of all education, according to the Nazi doctrine, was the creation of the political National Socialist human being. It was the basis for every subject in the curriculum. All of this in spite of Germany's great contribution to education and culture in the past.

No group of educators ever faced a more formidable task than those of Germany today, for in their hands is vested the exceedingly difficult task of earning the confidence of all educators who are devoted to the principles of freedom and who believe not only in intellectual education but in the moral and spiritual development of man. It is to be hoped that the non-governmental agencies—educational and cultural—may work together so that the freedom to learn and to teach will not be violated again, and that we may construct a world based on law, order, justice and humanity.

(Continued from page 4)

Birth of A Nation

To bring to the new institutions the most benevolent and the most effective aid. Particularly, they will not neglect to seek means by which international intervention can contribute to the resolution of the population problems, so heavy upon you; their wishes correspond with yours; they hope that the young German democracy, having become a factor for order and for peace, will be able to take its place in the bosom of the future organization of Europe, which itself is supported at the same time upon economic and political bases."

Estabishment of the new republic and the formal end of Military Government has meant a whole new organization and approach to the occupation of Germany. The Office of the US High Commissioner for Germany is in the process of being established to be guided in its relation to the German government by the Occupation Statute. Committees are being set up by the High Commissioners to carry out the details of this relation. They are the general, political, foreign trade and exchange, economic, finance and law committees, and the Military Security Board.

Meeting together at the agreed-upon headquarters at Petersberg, across the Rhine from Bonn, the three High Commissioners settled down to their new tasks.

The indecisions, congratulations and "first historic meetings" were over. A new phase in occupation government and a new experiment in democratic rule had begun.

End

Shoddy Shoemakers Shut Shops

Two small footwear manufacturers in Lower Saxony have had to close down because they could not produce the highly competitive type of footwear now in general demand. Both manufacturers were makers of the wartime shoddy type of footwear.