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THE VOLKSHOCHSCHULE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ADULT EDUCATION IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY AND THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Concept of Adult Education

It has been argued by writers concerned with education, among them Bernard Bailyn and Lawrence Cremin, that the enterprise of education as a whole and the process of education in particular, can no longer be viewed and delineated in a purely institutional context. Variables peculiar to psychological and sociological influences contribute to the complexity of a national system of education and it is through an awareness of the cultural context, both in terms of its promises and its weaknesses, that the act of teaching becomes a challenge, to those involved in it in more than a superficial capacity. The writings of Martin Buber regarding the human relation in teaching tend to suggest that the unique confrontation inherent in the joint experience which is education in its real dimension, has the potential of culminating in human commitment. The function of education then, so frequently and so widely described in the pedagogical literature both here and abroad, yet less frequently attained in its actuality, would seem to be a realization on the part of participants in the process that their potential and their purpose lead
to the "forming of a standard which is personally significant and of more than personal validity."¹

If the essence of the educational process is to be regarded as human encounter within a framework of experiences which we call the school, and the product of such encounter is to be the reassessment of one's frame of reference and commitment to one's purpose, adult education can be seen as a meaningful extension of this process of personal re-examination beyond formal schooling and throughout adult life. Such a view of education would necessarily involve emphasis upon the individual's situation and would have relevance to all members of society, since it is the social sphere in which the contributions of each attain their ultimate significance. To maintain a sense of coherent direction in national as well as international affairs, it would seem that focus should be centered on the needs of the population as a composite whole, rather than to regard the educational needs of a people as discontinuous processes of the complex endeavor we call education. To ascribe to the educational institution a function as extensive and as indefinite, yet as relevant to the individual, as such a premise would seem to suggest, would consequently require both a sense of commitment and a distinct role for the enterprise of adult education.

At present the state of adult education here and abroad is characterized by diversity, by the relative absence of a rigid institutional dimension in contrast to other levels of education. In the entire educational structure, however, institutions for adult education in this country as well as in Germany present themselves as something of an anomaly. Their students are older than and differently motivated from 'regular' students. Their purposes are additions to the main purposes of the public schools and are in many ways dissimilar. Their organizational structure is separate from any sequence of grades.  

In the literature this institutional separation has been referred to as the "marginality" of adult education.  

The question as to marginal status shall serve in this study as a major point of comparison for the state of adult education in the Federal Republic of Germany and that in the German Democratic Republic. Although "marginality" is a concept commonly mentioned in sociological literature, the meaning attributed to the concept as it is used here is peculiar to the field of adult education and was first

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introduced by Burton R. Clark in his study of "institutional insecurity" in 1956. It is his contention that

adult education enterprises are marginal because of their relative position and status within an administrative structure. No agreement within our society, therefore, that adult education is worth while is enough to assure adult programs a favorable treatment. Adult programs must compete for a share of the resources of the total organization, where relative ranking counts. To win permanent security, therefore, the adult organization needs to achieve equality with the programs or units historically recognized as centrally important. 4

It should be noted, however, that this marginality, in the light of the role attributed to the process of adult education in the preceding paragraph, has also been regarded as a source of potential for innovation, since "this quality of flexibility fostered by a marginal status may be a far more important asset, enabling adult education to meet the rapidly changing needs of our society, than greater stability and resulting conservatism." 5

If the educational process at all levels is to be seen as the individual's encounter with the reality of change, the flexibility growing from marginal status would seem most conducive to the internalization of such change to personal values and one's frame of reference. By the very fact that one's certainty is ultimately achieved through the

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re-examination and reorganization of one's beliefs, a marginal system would seek to foster the development and to accommodate the manifestation of personal will. Erich Fromm has advocated the embodiment of educational humanism within the school at all levels, in order to attain the "vulnerability" of the process of education or its openness and responsiveness to the interests of students. A marginal system, it would appear, could prove to be more conducive toward a realization of such "vulnerability." In a similar sense, C. Wright Mills had suggested that "what the college for adults ought to do for the individual is to turn personal troubles and concerns into social issues and rationally open problems." Only such a path, he concludes, can lead to the liberation of the human spirit from the parochialism which tends to restrict it. The extent to which such a philosophy of adult education is extant in the countries to be studied here, shall serve as a center of focus in this dissertation.

Basic to any attempt in comparative analysis is obviously the matter of terminology. This task is particularly significant here, since the application of comparative methods to adult education is a

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most recent trend and agreement on internationally acceptable definitions is virtually non-existent. The concept of adult education takes on varying connotations in different countries to the extent that the very term signifies different philosophies. Professor W. D. Halls has suggested that the content of adult education in the developed nations comprises four areas: additional general secondary education, professional or vocational education, general cultural courses, and post-school preparation for higher education. The essence of adult education in the various nations changes, however, since the emphasis on these four categories is different in each country, reflecting not only ideas regarding adult education but the orientation toward education generally. It is in the context of the factors determining the emphasis on certain aspects of education, that comparative approaches are most useful.

The problem of an internationally meaningful terminology received significant attention at the First International Conference on The Comparative Study of Adult Education, held in 1966 at Exeter, New Hampshire. Although the term adult education serves in the literature as a broad label for varied programs in the education of adults, the Exeter Conference resulted in an agreement on the following

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definition:

Adult education is a process whereby persons who no longer attend school on a regular and full-time basis (unless full-time programs are especially designed for adults) undertake sequential and organized activities with the conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, knowledge, understanding or skills, appreciation and attitudes; or for the purpose of identifying and solving personal or community problems.  

Although neither West nor East Germany was represented at the Exeter Conference, the definition is nevertheless applicable to either system, and shall be used in this study as a basis to determine essential differences between the two ideas and systems of adult education. In a similar sense, the definition of the "adult" is relevant here as it was accepted at Exeter in the following manner: "An adult is a person who no longer attends school as a primary or full-time activity and who is over twenty-one years of age." Without a deeper understanding of the reasons underlying the meaning of adult education in a particular national context, the concept can only remain an ambiguous one.

The formulation of concepts and terms which would be universally meaningful to researchers and practitioners in adult education


10Ibid.
has not yet begun. An essential step in that direction would apparently be the identification of those terms, the meaning of which remains the same in different countries. The combination of common understandings regarding various aspects of adult education could then result in a more widely acceptable definition. It is after such initial understanding as to what adult education means in varied national contexts, that the question of comparative method becomes significant.

A cursory examination of the literature regarding German adult education reveals that the term "Volksbildung" was generally used to describe the process of adult education from its beginnings in the nineteenth century through its period of revision in the "new direction" era of the 1920's. After 1945 the idea of "Volksbildung," a rather vague concept indicating popular education or education for the people, gave way to the more frequently-used term "Erwachsenenbildung" which specifically refers to the education of adults. Whereas the agencies for the promotion of "Volksbildung" were almost as indistinct as the concept itself, post-war West German "Erwachsenenbildung" came to be the clearly defined objective of Catholic and Protestant religious institutions, the labor unions, and the association for adult education which is called the Deutsche Volkshochschul-Verband. East German efforts in adult education after 1945 began with a two-fold purpose of political orientation on the one hand, and
the dissemination of practical knowledge on the other. With the re-
organization of the entire East German educational system in the
early fifties, however, the idea of "Erwachsenenbildung" or adult
education was modified into a system of "Erwachsenenqualifizierung"
or adult qualification, a process whereby the person qualifies him-
self for "Socialist" life and ideology.

It is noteworthy that a single institution, namely the "Volks-
hochschule" or people's college, has served the purpose of adult edu-
cation from its nineteenth century beginnings to the complex
challenges which it faces in present-day West and East Germany.
The "Volkshochschule" idea has consequently endured varied con-
notations as to the purpose of adult education over a considerable
period of time, and has in the process proved its adaptability to the
idea of education as perceived at the outset of this study, especially
in the light of ideological differences. It has served not only in
securing for Germany a sense of national direction, as had been its
primary function in the Scandinavian countries over a hundred years
ago, but it has also provided her with an avenue for restoration of
spirit and renewed political orientation after two devastating wars in
the present century. The claim is not made here that progress, both
social and technological, insofar as it has been truly realized in
Germany, was singularly the result of the existence of the "Volks-
hochschule," but it is felt that its role in the social history of the
German people has been definitely underestimated. An examination of its historical development and current status in two separate countries which share, however, a common tradition, shall be the basis of this study. Although adult education is carried out in institutions beyond the "Volkshochschule," such efforts will be considered only peripherally, inasmuch as they have bearing on the people's college. The term "Volkshochschule" is translated into the English equivalent "people's college" and constitutes the "third branch of education" in a recent survey of the German educational system by Professor Joachim H. Knoll, a West-German adult educator. 11

The existence of regional Volkshochschulen does not mean, however, that adult education is solely the responsibility of that institution. Programs corresponding to the idea of continuing education are often maintained as was suggested previously, by industrial and labor organizations as well as the churches and play a more than casual role in the matter of adult schooling.

Before engaging in an analysis of the historical development of the Volkshochschule and a comparison of the present-day conception of its role as an agent for adult education under differing ideological orientations, an assessment of the relevance of comparative methodology to adult education would be in order. The first step of

such a study would seem to be the selection from among the various methods of comparative education those pertinent to an investigation of this nature. It is clearly necessary to review the historical development of adult education in unified Germany for the three-quarters of a century preceding the dissolution of the nation in 1945. On the basis of an examination of the differing concepts of democracy in both the Federal Republic and the Democratic Republic, it will be possible to proceed with a systematic analysis of the state of adult education in each context. From such analyses then, will arise an understanding of the persistent common elements of adult education in the two Germanys and of some significant differences.
CHAPTER II

COMPARATIVE EDUCATION AND ADULT EDUCATION

To this time, very few attempts to compare systems of adult education have been initiated and the role of comparative analysis and, moreover, its relevance to adult education, have not been fully realized. It should be noted that both UNESCO and The Council of Europe have published surveys of adult education in a number of countries, but such studies are limited by their descriptive and non-interpretive character. An examination of the meaning and function of comparative approaches in education generally, would therefore constitute an assessment of their value when applied to adult education and provide a limited exploration of their possibilities in the course of the present study.

The Value of Comparative Approaches in Adult Education

In the absence of a formal structure, characteristic of adult education generally, it is not a simple matter to attempt an application of comparative methodology to adult schooling in differing national contexts. It is the marginal status of adult education and its diversity
of purposes which by themselves dictate the formulation of a rather flexible approach in comparisons of ideas on adult education. Obviously the answer is not in the selection of any one of the several methods readily available in comparative education, but in the identification and subsequent combination of those features contained in such varying methodologies, which appear to lend themselves conveniently when applied to adult education.

In defining the concepts of method and technique in adult education, Professor Coolie Verner noted the following:

Methods of adult education develop out of a specific cultural context, cannot be transformed successfully to a different culture, and will disappear when no longer appropriate to the culture; while techniques are essentially independent of any specific cultural context and thus can be used effectively in a variety of different cultural situations and will survive longer than methods. ¹

In this sense, therefore, the "Volkshochschule" has served as that institution in which the methods for "Volksbildung (popular education) and "Erwachsenenbildung" (adult education) represent revisions in the light of cultural changes. The question of method in adult education takes on particular importance then in the process of comparison, since the methodology is shaped to a large extent by the Zeitgeist which is its genesis. Studies of adult education processes have been

classified by Verner into two types, the first of which "are cross-cultural studies which test the hypothesis stated early on the transferability of methods and techniques from one cultural context to another. "2 The second type of research described is "that which assesses the influence of elements within a culture or sub-culture on methods and techniques of adult education. "3 Although this study will in the historical analysis identify the social forces which served to shape particular conceptions as to the "Volkshochschule" idea, the essential purpose here will be the application of Verner's first definition to the role of adult education in both East and West Germany.

Functions of Comparative Education

An attempt to assess the potential function of comparative method when applied to adult education would certainly become more meaningful through an examination of the varying conceptions and purposes ascribed to comparative education. Outstanding among contemporary ideas about comparative studies in education is I. L. Kandel's contention that the methodology is governed by three essential requisites, which are the acquisition and categorization of factual data,

2Ibid., p. 27.

3Ibid.
the construction of a "historical-functional" framework to provide information as to the causes of particular problems to be considered, and finally a "melioristic" orientation so as to improve existing conditions.

Related to Kandel's "historical-functional" aspect is Franz Hilker's recent definition of comparative education as "an examination built on a broadest experience-basis and most careful analysis of the cultural factors acting in the individual case, leading to the exposition of value-structures and seeking from them a dominant one, by which new educational knowledge is attained." The emphasis here is on the description of the peculiarities of the extant system and not, as in Kandel's idea, on the borrowing and subsequent improvement of one's own state of the educational enterprise. The transposition of a value-structure from one context to another, however, is not only an exceedingly prohibitive task, but it is also capable of generating unpredictable social friction as the American racial situation, for instance, clearly illustrates. Melioristic efforts with regard to the transfer of values appear less likely to be successful in an organizational context, but could become meaningful through the direct application to and juxtaposition of existing conditions on the

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part of the individual student. This approach, therefore, would necessitate the orientation toward the educative process as set forth in the introduction to this study. The question of a change in values becomes particularly significant in adult education where it is felt in many quarters, that the values held by adults are too deeply rooted to be transformed in any actual way. 5 The exposition of cultural differences and a recognition and understanding of the reasons behind these, appears to be a workable application of comparative method to adult education. It is on the basis of such contrast that individual conclusions are drawn and "new educational knowledge" is generated.

The unifying factor in both Kandel's and Hilker's positions on comparative method is the contention that education is not an autonomous enterprise, but that it must be viewed as the product of a historical progression involving the study of the economic, intellectual, political and social forces. More recent American and British exponents of Kandel's historical approach to a comparison of educational systems are Robert Ulich and Nicholas Hans, whose ideas as to methodology reflect his view that "comparative education may be considered a continuation of the study of the history of education into the present." 6 In the process of adapting the present to its


historical past, a particular country delineates certain national traditions. In the historical method of comparison, therefore, the study of "national character" will serve in an analysis of the extent to which functional activities meet the national requirements of the country under consideration. Both Ulich and Hans place considerable emphasis upon the understanding of the national tradition as a prerequisite to any comparative study, since seemingly identical functions of education presently, may have been generated by differing national demands in the historical past.

With the application of methodologies in the social sciences to the study of education in general, there has evolved a line of reasoning among comparative educators more closely related to anthropology and sociology than to history. Maintaining that education on an international scope frequently is shaped by unique social forces which cannot be applied to a temporal framework, these writers seek to study such unique, non-temporal events in terms of the "problem approach." Such a method for comparative analysis has been developed by G. Z. F. Bereday in this country and by Brian Holmes in Great Britain. The problem-centered method in comparative education differs essentially from the historical approach in that it utilizes techniques which make possible replication of the study and a certain degree of predictability. The uniformities which a physical scientist seeks to establish in the laboratory so as
to provide the foundation for further study are the result of the process of scientific investigation which the social scientist applies to the analysis of social phenomena to ascertain regularities in describing such conditions. While the problem-approach de-emphasizes historical methodology, it may nevertheless lead to melioristic ends. It should be noted, however, that such a procedure is limited to a consideration of a certain issue or a restricted topic. The topics of concern which constitute the several volumes of the Yearbook of Education, for instance, clearly illustrate specific and delineated areas of investigation.

It is the purpose of the present study to examine the topic of adult education in two countries which can only become understandable, however, as the product of a historical development of the idea of adult education in Germany. Without the continuity rendered by a historical treatment, the subject under consideration could only remain fragmentary. The method as applied here, was utilized by Professor Robert Ulich on a definitely broader scope in the writing of his volume, The Education of Nations: A Comparison in Historical Perspective. Beginning with the historical background shared by European educational systems, the author then proceeds with a description of the evolution of national contexts, and concludes with a synthesis. Generalizations are then drawn on the basis of his findings about European nations, as they bear on similar problems in the
developing nation. Hence it is quite possible to combine the process of historical investigation and the analysis of a particular problem, without embarking upon a prohibitive task.

A further method relevant to adult education is one involving the philosophical orientation which gives rise to national styles, proposed by Joseph A. Lauwerys. The assumption is made that since one can speak, for instance, of French existentialism, British empiricism, and German idealism, one can also make reference to a mode of philosophical arguing peculiar to a national context, which would then be particularly evident in that nation's ideas regarding the means and ends of education. It would then be possible to assess why certain attitudes toward education could be introduced in one context and not in another. Since such an approach seeks to define what is likely to occur under certain circumstances, one of its significant aspects appears to be to make possible the formulation of predictions. In a world in which change on all fronts is reality and where no single philosophical stance can serve as the abstraction representative of a diversity in educational aims, the application of the philosophical approach to comparative education would at best remain highly limited.

Although the most frequently mentioned methods of comparative education have been pointed out here, the range of differences has only been indicated and by no means exhausted. The variety of premises underlying the various methodologies is rather obvious. It can be said that in spite of differences in methodological considerations, the overriding functional aspect of comparative education is one of facilitating the understanding of divergent educational purposes. In the light of growing international contact it becomes almost imperative that one be able to comprehend the ideals peculiar to a people and their educational system, as well as the methods by which these ideals become part of the new generation.

A survey of ideas regarding comparative education reveals that the nineteenth-century efforts of Horace Mann and Henry Barnard in the United States, and the slightly later efforts of Matthew Arnold and Michael Sadler in England, were dominated by an interest in educational reform. Their studies were consequently empirical and practical, intent on selecting from the foreign scene those principles which would be applicable in the solution of domestic educational problems. Their twentieth-century successors can be adequately classified as academics, whose designs for comparative education consisted in the main of outlines of educational systems, lacking the earlier emphasis on details, and resulting in broad general frameworks with reduced emphasis on particular situations or problems.
It was this group of scholars, among them Nicholas Hans, Isaac Kandel, Robert Ulich, and Friedrich Schneider, who sought to isolate the Triebkräfte or guiding forces underlying educational systems, from which certain judgments as to national character could be rendered.

During the decade of the fifties a renewed emphasis on empirical studies, educational reform, and melioristic aims began to serve as the major source for criticisms of the academic, theoretical approaches. Three factors come to mind in an assessment of this definite trend. First, comparative education came to be recognized by scholars and politicians alike, as a worthwhile tool in instituting educational reform. Second, the emerging nations and the drive for independence and nationalism in Africa and Asia presented situations which pointed to immediacy, and which did not readily lend themselves to be studied in terms of large, theoretical systematizations. Third, technological progress became not only the object of international competition, but more importantly, it served for an examination of curricular validity and the revision of educational imperatives. Not only questions regarding comparative education were important here, but the role of adult education as an agent in securing such reform in the light of comparative studies emerged as an area of concern. The new role of comparative education it was hoped, wrote Professor W. D. Halls recently, "like other branches of
the educational field, might delineate the means by which ends could be achieved and indicate the consequences of following one policy rather than another." In regard to adult education, this combination of purposes is now only beginning.

Arguing for a "systems-approach" in comparative education, Professor Don Adams suggests "that considerable progress can be made in comparative studies in education by simply utilizing some of the concepts and procedures readily available in the social and behavioral sciences." The historical studies carried out by Kandel and Hans, he contends, are the product of a methodologically impoverished period of comparative education since they did not in any real sense utilize the analytical tools, or the concepts and generalizations of the social sciences in determining the idea of "national character." Adams is equally critical of the comparative method proposed by Bereday, regarding it as too general a procedure which places only minor emphasis on the ordering of factual data. In the quest for a suitable method he further dismisses the various textbook approaches as inadequate in facilitating the process of comparison, since the question of method is generally obscured by the


9 Ibid., p. 31.
author's reporting on a particular field of interest. His basic as-
sumption apparently, one which holds import for the whole of educa-
tion, would appear to be that a process as indefinite and as complex
as adult education, for instance, cannot be studied within the limita-
tions of a one-discipline approach and a lack of consideration of the
social forces underlying the goals of that process. Rather, com-
parative studies in education could become more meaningful and
directed toward particular problems, if they were to be based upon
an "input-output" analysis. In proposing a systems-approach in
comparative education, Professor Adams seeks to include

a. Societal features such as norms and goals and the
derivative educational objectives.

b. The intrasystem dynamic variables affecting the
educational process;

c. The outputs of the educational system which become
inputs into the economy, social stratification and
other systems. 10

Although the interdisciplinary direction of the "systems-
approach" concept of method is laudable indeed, its emphasis on
detail and factual data is also its limitation, particularly since studies
regarding the development of adult education in an international level
are only beginning to be considered. Only through substantial des-
criptive comparisons of adult education involving the historical

10 Ibid., p. 34.
dimension, will certain particular problems or aspects become apparent, which will then necessitate the analytical study provided by a "systems-approach." One may raise the question justifiably, as to whether the several methods available presently in the field of comparative education do in fact lead to diverse ends or categories of findings, or whether their products, when seen in a practical light are really one and the same. Since the nature and scope of the problem to be studied are determined by the individual in a particular case, it would appear to be advantageous, if not necessary, that elec-
ticism in regard to method be maintained. For as new findings af-
flect the course of the comparative educator's investigation, the theory and the method must be sufficiently flexible to allow for changing circumstances. It would seem to be particularly important, in light of an absence of comparative studies in adult education, that the app-
plicability of the various methods be examined so that such approaches may be developed for adult education. Whatever the utilitarian aspects of such investigations may prove to be, it is obvious that adult education will come to serve both as the synthesis and the con-
tinuing expansion of the educational enterprise. Clearly, such a role must involve an understanding of the ideas and the practices of other nations and that, whatever the method, is doubtless the general goal of comparative education.
Since the scope of the present study involves the evolution of the idea of adult education in Germany, the comparison of the Volkshochschule as an adult education movement in both the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany would become more meaningful through an understanding of the forces which shaped the people's college concept. What follows, therefore, shall be a chapter on the historical development of German adult education as it was manifested in the Volkshochschule, so as to provide a sense of perspective for the subsequent process of comparative analysis.
CHAPTER III

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF
ADULT EDUCATION IN GERMANY

The assumption underlying a historical investigation as to the beginning of adult education in Germany is that history can illumine or disclose, but that it is not to be seen as tracing backward a chain of causes and effects. Man, argued Ernst Cassirer, cannot mold the form of the future without an awareness of his present conditions, as well as of the limitations of his past. Since each period in history is shaped by a diversity of forces, and since the ideas of man in relation to his particular context are transformed with the dawn of each new era, one would be in error in making history the source of one's predictions about the mind of man. At the same time, however, history is more than Nietzsche's assertion that it is that gruesome dominion of nonsense and accident. Once we have attained a new line of vision in our thought, it becomes necessary for us to revise our judgments and it is here that an historical perspective serves as a requisite for progress.

The absence of various historical studies regarding German adult education has made it difficult to assess its locus and
significance in both the past and present educational systems. The traditional, institution-oriented approach to the history of education has failed to provide information as to the education of adults and those persons not involved in a formal process of schooling. One might assume that an understanding of the development of the concept of adult education could lead to more reasonable judgments about the course which education as a whole is to take in the future.

**Beginnings in the Nineteenth Century**

The very beginning of adult education in Germany is a source of disputation among scholars in the field. It is argued by some that any history concerned with the schooling of adults should have to commence with a study of Luther's translation of the Bible and should include Comenius' *Pampaedia*. Other writers suggest, however, that one can only regard a movement, the impact of which affects the course of institutions other than the educational, as a historical force. Both groups concur, nevertheless, that the widespread realization of the need for adult education in the nineteenth century had as its basis the concerns of the Enlightenment. In his definition of the concept of Enlightenment, Immanuel Kant wrote in 1784 that it represents the departure from man's ability to make use of his rational powers only under the direction of another, and a striving toward the realization of the autonomy of intellect.
Although ideas about the education of adults were contained in the literary works of the Enlightenment period, such a theory of the emancipated man did not manifest itself in actuality until the nineteenth century. While the ideal of a rational, free and equal man remained the subject of academic contemplation, the social and political structure of the German states did not, in general, reflect such a view of the individual. The social function of education, according to Frolinde Balser, was seen in Germany during the eighteenth century in no way as the extension of the rights of man. The Prussian schools in particular, characteristic of the period, did not rest on the premise of free and equal man, but they stressed rather the demands of the state in relation to its subjects.  

It shall be the hypothesis of this historical analysis that this conflict in purposes was peculiar not only to adult education in its beginning stages during the nineteenth century, but that this condition still surrounds the current state of German adult education.

The need for popular education, or "Volksbildung," during the first half of the nineteenth century resulted mainly from the pressures of industrialization and urbanization. In addition, the movement for agrarian reform was felt to some degree in several German

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states, making provisions for further education a necessity. Guild regulations in many instances led to economic pressures among the segment of the population engaged in various trades. It is not surprising, therefore, that a combination of these factors and a rapid increase in population, fifty-seven per cent between 1800 and 1850, threatened the onset of poverty for a significant portion of the population of the German states.²

Two schools of thought, rooted in the Enlightenment and influenced by French social theorists of the eighteenth century, emerged along liberal and democratic lines as the antithesis to the predominant political, social, and economic institutions which sought the extension of absolute monarchy, a feudalistic social order, and a mercantile tradition. A liberal orientation sought an emphasis on the individual and his achievements and a way of life free of regulation by the state, in order to achieve its end. The democratic faction on the other hand, stressed the equal rights of all men, which, when seen in their totality and union, could lead to the firm foundation of a new social order. Practical attempts to generate means for adult education developed as a result of efforts by these alternative positions, in the light of growing social discontent. Yet, fear on the part of the liberal privileged class, manifested in a confusion as to the reforming

²Ibid., p. 16.
or revolutionary trend of the idea of democracy new in Germany, led to victory and reactionary measures on the part of conservative forces after the revolution of 1848.

German adult education, it must be noted, did not develop as part of German political idealism, but it rested instead on the idea of human rights possessed by individuals within a state, and was advanced by the influence of early socialism and liberalism on the one hand, and by the need of the industrial age on the other. The first realistic steps toward adult education were made by attempts toward labor education and its extension into adult life. This development was due in part to the slow realization of social mobility and the example provided by the British "mechanics' institute" movement which strongly influenced German thought on the education for the working classes during the first half of the nineteenth century. From its very beginning, therefore, adult education developed as a means of extending the social function of education to those in need of further occupational training so as to meet the requirements of a new economic era.

Further evidence regarding the emergence of a trend toward social awareness and unity among members of the social strata is seen in the development of literary and workers' associations in the years prior to the revolution of 1848. While agrarian associations
sought to disseminate scientific findings and to explore their practical application to agriculture, workers' associations in urban areas were more often concerned with the political and social structure than with the formulation of a framework for adult education. To maintain political stability in the light of growing social unrest, all states prohibited the infusion of political matters into the proceedings of such associations between the years 1816 and 1848, a policy which was reinforced in 1849 by reactionary conservatism. One may also observe that the nature and the activities of the associations served to indicate the social-class structure of early nineteenth century Germany.

The onrush of the revolution was hastened by the fact that reading circles and the increasing distribution of daily newspapers as well as a reassertion of the earlier idea of free and equal man generated political and social questions on the part of people in all classes. The growing interest to combine the objectives of adult education with the formulation of a political consciousness, although barred temporarily by legal provisions, served to establish the essence of adult education in the second half of the nineteenth century. It must not be forgotten that the writings of Karl Marx and the founding of a community party and its program of action in 1848 did not pass unnoticed by the German workers.

\[3\] Ibid., p. 55.
At approximately the middle of the century, the earlier programs for the schooling of adults, such as trade associations, reading circles, and public libraries, came to be recognized as means for popular enlightenment, or "Volksbildung." In the course of her research on the beginning of German adult Education, Frolinde Balser found that during the reactionary period following the revolution, the concept of "Volk" was increasingly identified as comprising the lower-class levels of society. Not only did such a classification significantly determine the attitudes toward adult education for the remainder of that century, but even the present-day West German "Volkshochschule" is seeking to destroy that connotation. In spite of a restoration of political power in 1849 to the conservative forces who sought the curtailing of educational opportunities for the general population, the principle of education as a human right had been established in Germany by the brief presence of the democratic faction in the political arena. As a result of renewed regulations against any form of political education or social criticism, the responsibility for adult education was assumed primarily by the churches, and more directly by the Catholic church. The development of adult education in the first half of the nineteenth century then, included to some degree, (1) a humanistic concern, (2) a political consciousness, (3) the

\footnote{Ibid., p. 251.}
dissemination of knowledge, and (4) an awareness of the need for labor education. 5

The beginning of adult education in Germany in summary, was generated by the influx of ideas ascribed to the Enlightenment. Although the conservatism of the "Biedermeier" period, the German equivalent to Victorianism, did not in any way lead to the realization of such ideas, the notion of a free and equal man had nevertheless effectively been introduced in Germany. Although adult education was regarded as a means for the development of a sense of nationalism, such unity of purpose was not achieved, since the social class structure expressed itself most profoundly in the very idea of adult education. The diversity of institutions, ranging from reading societies to labor education associations, served only to reflect the differing functions of adult education. The most pronounced factor of change in early nineteenth century Germany was doubtless the Industrial Revolution. As a result, "the group in German society which felt itself most affected by the convergence of new social, economic, and political forces was the working class and the industrial workers in particular. "6


In his comparative study on adult education, Professor Robert Peers concludes that "the impact of economic and social change in the nineteenth century was too drastic to allow for any comparable process of adjustment, and the later, even more catastrophic breaks with the past still further emphasized the discontinuity of German social evolution." 7 In view of conservative attitudes toward education apparent in Germany after 1848, those teachers who had engaged to a large measure in the promotion of adult education in the 1840's, were prevented by governmental decrees from pursuing their interests. The Stiehl Proclamation, for example, issued by the Prussian government in 1854, sharply curtailed the education and preparation of public school teachers. The regulation was based on the fear that the lower social classes could receive inspiration for more knowledge and education, and could, as a result, promote agitation for greater involvement in the processes of government. The Proclamation, it should be noted, remained in effect until 1872. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the concept of "Volksbildung," which came to be the designation applied to all efforts in the education of adults, served only to distinguish further between the classes. In general, "adult education came to be associated with

education for the lower classes as education for the retention of a
folk culture and education for political agitation. 

Not until 1860 did labor associations, such as the trades-
men's union of Berlin, resume their activities which included, in
several instances, the active support of university professors. Such
a union of interests among laboring and learned men was short-lived,
however, as political concerns predominated over the formulation of
programs for the education of adults. By 1869, labor education as-
associations had for the most part been transformed into political agi-
tation centers, which combined in that year to form the Social
Democratic Party. It was labor's dedication to the premises of
Socialism which finally severed the fragile ties that had existed
between the labor movement and the middle class. The efforts of
labor organizations were no longer directed toward the education of
its members but rather toward the development of a political platform.
It was this shift from educational to political goals on the part of the
German labor movement, which marked the end of the first epoch of
German adult education. Whereas adult education came to an end in
Germany, a national movement for the education of adults grew
rapidly in Denmark during the decade of the 1860's. The Danish folk
Hojskole, first proposed by N. F. S. Grundtvig in 1832, was not only a

8Pirtle, op. cit., p. 57.
reaction against classical education, but more significantly it stressed the importance of national ideals, the development of character, and the emphasis on folk traditions and the mother-tongue. It was this institution which was to become a major influence on the development of the German "Volkshochschule" a generation later.

With the unification of the German states in 1871, the liberal segments of the middle class advocated in both books and periodicals the re-establishment of adult education. Their efforts resulted in the formation of the "Society for the Diffusion of Adult Education" in the same year. Although the Society had hoped to unite all adult educators throughout the German nation, this goal was never achieved. The Society, it should be noted, "was established by representatives of the middle class and remained essentially a middle-class institution. . . . the working class turned to religious and political groups which offered them adult education on their own terms."9 The Society was indeed founded by the middle class, but its purpose was extended largely to those persons who had obtained only the rudiments of education. The "dissemination of knowledge" was not intended for the individual's emancipation, but was rather seen as a means of imparting political or citizenship training, to avoid discontent among the lower classes. Once again, the value of adult education was

9Ibid., p. 99.
determined by social class needs and the drive for political stability, and not in terms of its potential to enlighten all members of society, regardless of social position or political orientation. Although one may wish to question the nature of adult education after 1871, one must, on the other hand, take note of the fact that it had become a flourishing enterprise with the potential for becoming a mass enterprise. 10 The Society for the Diffusion of Adult Education had served to unify varied adult education programs, and had established the foundation for the development of free adult education ("freie Volksbildung").

During the decade of the 1890's, a "new direction" marked the difference between the traditional concept of adult education, and the idea of a "freie Volksbildung." The "new direction" was characterized by (1) a critical attitude toward the traditional role of adult education, (2) the development of the "Volkshochschule" as an institutional model, and (3) the application of pedagogical theory to adult education. 11 Free adult education implied that the interests of the state or of particular social classes were not to be regarded as the


determinants of a program for adult education. Only the individual, it was argued, could adequately determine the extent of the education which he sought. New developments, which embodied both the criteria for the new direction and free adult education, were the "Rhein-Mainische Verband für Volksbildung" (Rhine-Main association for adult education) and the "Ausschuss für volkstämmliche Universitäts-vorträge der k. k. Universität Wien" (Committee for popular university lectures of the University of Vienna). In the years before 1900, German adult education was influenced by developments in Britain and in the Scandinavian countries. From England came the idea of a university extension movement, which had achieved considerable proportions at German and Austrian universities by 1896. The Scandinavian concept of a residential college for adults served as the model for the Volkshochschule, which was soon to become the characteristic institution of the adult education movement in Germany.

Although the second phase of German adult education had its beginnings after the formation of the German Empire in 1871, it is possible to speak in terms of a national movement only after 1890. Among outstanding developments indicating a renewed interest in adult education was the establishment of numerous public libraries throughout Germany. Under the guidance of the Society for the Diffusion of Adult Education, the work of labor education associations gained a new level of significance. Traveling lecturers were common
throughout Germany and lecture institutes and university extension programs made knowledge in such areas as the natural sciences, public health, and economics accessible to the public.

The first epoch of German adult education, it can be said in summary, sought the expression of man's political concerns, while adult education after 1871 was dedicated to developing the ethical and cultural interests of the individual. Traditional "Volksbildung" had never been able to emerge without delineating social class lines or subscribing to political platforms, whereas the "new direction" sought to maintain a distinct neutrality and a validity for all members of society. The content of early German adult education clearly revealed its emphasis on labor education, while the "new direction" in adult education sought to popularize the academic disciplines. In contrast to the diversity of programs which constituted the first phase of German adult education, the concept of free adult education was based on the development of the "Volkshochschule" as the institution peculiar to adult education. The extent to which the "new direction" would be realized in the twentieth century would depend in part on the neutrality which it sought to maintain.

**Developments in the Early Twentieth Century**

Although the "new direction" in adult education greatly emphasized the need for individual concerns and interests in the schooling
of adults, German university professors as a rule did not regard academic education as appropriate for the general public. In spite of the efforts on the part of adult educators to make popular education accessible to all who sought it, the idea of adult education as an enterprise peculiar to the lower social strata had not yet disappeared in Germany. The "new direction" had already demonstrated since the 1890's a general dissatisfaction with the formal lecture approach and the mechanical aspect of mass methodology. Traditional adult education was repeatedly condemned for having emphasized society and collective man while neglecting the individual. Personal interaction and the formation of dialogue between the adult and the educator were proposed by exponents of the "new direction" as more meaningful alternatives. Only through a process of intensive education, it was argued, could the individual escape from the chaos of society and strive to attain relationship to his culture. 12 Such an education necessitated the small-group situation in contrast to the mass approaches of earlier adult schooling. The "new direction," therefore, served to shift the emphasis in adult education from the mere acquisition of factual knowledge to a consideration of the facets of the individual's personality. 13

12 Ibid., p. 11.

The major institutions for adult education embodying the goals of the "new direction," which continued from the 1890's into the twentieth century, were the "Volksbildungsvereine" (associations for adult education) and the "Volkstümliche Hochschulkurse" (popular university lectures). It was a combination of these two forms of adult education which served in the formation of the "Volkshochschule" concept. It should be noted that the university extension idea had attained greater significance in Austria than it had in Germany, in view of a lack of interest among German university professors to participate in adult education (Volksbildung). Characteristically, "the leadership in German universities never believed it the responsibility of their tradition bound institutions to provide education for the general public."  

Since the 1890's, the literature on German adult education had included the terms people's academy (Volksakademie) and people's university (Volksuniversität). The Danish folk colleges provided German adult educators with a model, where the English idea of a round-table discussion group and the insights of the "new direction" could be combined. The essential difference, however, between the Scandinavian "Volkshochschule" and its counterpart in Germany was that the former were resident schools, whereas the latter were lecture institutes.  

\[14^{\text{Pirtle, op. cit., p. 133.}}\]
\[15^{\text{Vogel, op. cit., p. 93.}}\]
attention of German adult educators was increasingly drawn to the development of the "Volkshochschule" idea in northern Germany, where a people's college was established in rural Schleswig-Holstein in 1905. The new people's colleges, closely resembling the Danish model, "were designed to be resident schools for men and women which would provide five months of study for men and three for women. The social atmosphere of the school was supposed to simulate that of the family and recreation was to be combined with study."16

Indicative of German interest in Scandinavian adult education is the fact that the discussions during the Third Volkshochschule Conference in Dresden (1908) centered chiefly on the explication of Grundtvig's theories on popular education and the possibility for their implementation in Germany. It should be understood that his concept of adult education did not imply a refusal or denial of the scholar. In short, his stance was not an anti-intellectual one. On the other hand, the scholar was not to regard the Volkshochschule as a mere preparatory institution, but rather as an independent and complete entity which sought to combine the practical with the intellectual.17 While not everyone would become a scholar, it was quite possible to prepare

16 Pirtle, op. cit., p. 178.

an enlightened citizen and this, Grundtvig had contended, could be achieved through the general education provided by the folk college. This argument in fact, was the very basis of his reaction against the classical studies offered in the upper schools and the universities of his time. Since they denied common man a higher level of learning, he regarded them as essentially undemocratic; instead, he proposed an education based on national ideals, one which would teach men how to live. He objected to academic training and accused it of separating life and learning because of its emphasis on book learning and its apparent contempt for ordinary occupations.\textsuperscript{18} Education was not to be the mere accumulation of facts in preparation for examinations, but rather the development of students' personalities. In the final analysis, the Danish folk college was intended to be a "school for life." Although the preoccupation of German adult educators with the Danish people's colleges had no real practical consequences, its influence was nevertheless significant in the combination of Grundtvig's ideas on nationalism with the goals of the "new direction."\textsuperscript{19}

A further indication of growing interest in the Nordic concept of adult education was the publication in 1909 of Anton Hollmann's book

\textsuperscript{18}Matzat, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 32.

Die dänische Volkshochschule (The Danish People's College), a concise description of Grundtvig's theory of adult education and its role in the development of a popular culture in Denmark. The "Volks­hochschule," as Hollmann defined it, was not to be restricted to a certain social group, but it was rather a college for the entire population. Unlike exclusive institutions of higher learning, its purpose was not to disseminate academic knowledge, but to render instead a general education, the development of a "Weltanschauung," accessible to the population as a whole. Through lectures and small-group seminars the student could attain a personal relationship with his culture and the intellectual life of the nation.

It has been suggested that the influence of Danish adult education led to the development of people's colleges in both Schleswig-Holstein and the Sudetenland during the first decade of the twentieth century and served to maintain and to strengthen German customs and a spirit of nationalism in these border areas.

Although the residential college for adults (Heimvolkshoch­schule), which had been established in the rural areas of Germany, was a direct copy of the Danish institution, the German Volkshoch­schule was a combination of ideas from the English tutorial class and

of Grundtvig's principles on adult education. While serving as Professor of Pedagogy at the University of Berlin, Friedrich Paulsen had advocated the establishment of the Volkshochschule in 1904, in order that the masses could obtain a general education (allgemeine Bildung) which had heretofore been reserved for those engaged in higher education. Paulsen, unlike most of his colleagues, regarded popular enlightenment as a requisite to the development of cultural life in Germany.22 The idea of a true German Volkshochschule had appeared only in print before the first World War, since the lack of support for adult education among the general public could only be overcome by the national catastrophe which befell the German people in 1914. While the theory of the German people's college had been developed well before 1914, it was stated in that year that "as yet no such institution could be found anywhere in Germany."23

It is somewhat ironic that German adult education, which had been formulated with the ideals of the Enlightenment in its very beginning, assumed in the twentieth century an increasingly anti-Enlightenment position. The people's college sought to attain its


educational objectives, the formation of character and of free will, "by means of an irrational rather than a rational process: faith in the humanity of man was to replace the Enlightenment's emphasis on reason and science." The acquisition of factual knowledge had become a lesser goal for German adult education, while the ability to exercise good judgment and to learn from experience had become of prime importance. The "new direction" then, sought intensive rather than extensive adult schooling, and an organic rather than a mechanical methodology.

In spite of the chaos which it brought for the German people, the first World War nevertheless served to demonstrate the need for the unity which adult education had sought to develop. During the war years, the Volkshochschule came to be regarded as a means for strengthening the culture, morale, and spirit of self-confidence, which had been seriously shaken by the terror of war. Whereas the German people's college had only appeared in print before 1914, practical results were achieved during the war. Field folk colleges (Feldvolkshochschulen) were established in 1918 behind the western front, and soldiers who were considered politically 'unreliable' (unzuverlässig) were sent for a period of three weeks to participate in an educational program of 'reorientation.' In time, the

24 Pirtle, op. cit., p. 183.

25 Werner, op. cit., p. 179.
field folk colleges were made available to all soldiers, not simply the unreliable. 26

It was through the example set by these institutions, that the Volks-
hochschule increasingly abandoned the neutrality which it had sought to maintain.

During the years following the first World War and throughout the life of the Weimar Republic, Germany entered into an exercise of democracy, one which was to end in the tyranny of Hitler's Third Reich. Theirs was the choice of a people to break with past tradition, yet they lacked the political understanding to ensure a stable transition. Since they further lacked the unity so necessary in an attempt at reconstruction, a thorough and lasting social reorganization remained merely an end to be desired. While the confused and tense masses were regarded as potentially dangerous, the leading families, owners of capital and industry, succeeded in appeasing them at least temporarily, and regained strategic positions in the governing affairs of the nation. In view of the Republic's favorable attitudes toward the old official powers, all warnings from the Left remained unheard. Thus Hindenburg's leadership continued to retain the romantic notion attached to militarism, inviting rearmament yet failing to raise the intellectual level of the populace. Germany was not in

26 Pirtle, op. cit., p. 203.
need of the sentimental memories of past glory, but needed instead the strength to overcome the effects of war internally.

German education of the post-war period did not, however, provide the necessary inspiration. Although elementary-school teachers were generally sympathetic to the Weimar Republic, their colleagues in the upper schools, conscious of their social status and conservatism, failed to direct their efforts in education toward the democratic ideal. Rather than to seek the support of institutions of higher learning regarding revised or new plans for social reorganization, the social-democratic public chose to manifest its disrespect for universities in bitter criticism, indeed in a sense of hostility. While some denounced the German university, which had been regarded as the model by foreign nations in the previous century, as the major contributor to the deplorable state of affairs of 1918, others condemned the upper schools as the strongholds of backwardness.

The Weimar period can best be described as one of irreconcilable contrast. On the one hand was the leadership of the conservative order, longing for a return to monarchy, and on the other the socialist elements with newly acquired freedom and power, but inexperienced in the task of developing a functioning democracy.

Political power had finally been transferred from the hands of a

27 Hollmann, op. cit., p. VII.
minority to the responsibility of the public, but the necessary cultural and social transformation had not yet been achieved in Germany.

Adult education and the Volkshochschule in particular were regarded by the participants in these movements as the panacea to overcome the disasters of the first World War. Yet, German social and political life reflected more than ever before the deep divisions which separated the social classes. The attempt toward social reconstruction was greatly complicated by the inflation of the 1920's which

destroyed the old middle class and added to the numbers of those who found themselves impoverished and uprooted in the midst of economic uncertainty and widespread unemployment. The characteristic feeling was one of insecurity and drift, a complete loss of faith in the old aristocratic leadership, and a casting about for new solutions. ²⁸

The purpose of adult education, therefore, was to unify the German people, who lacked both direction and national identity. While the people's college prior to the war had been a residential institution (Heimvolkshochschule), the post-war alternative had become the "Abend-Volkshochschule," which consisted of evening discussion groups and seminars during vacation weeks. ²⁹ It was proposed by adult educators that a variety of Volkshochschulen be established,


²⁹ Vogel, op. cit., p. 95.
different both in form and philosophy, so as to incorporate the diversity which existed within the German culture. The years after 1918 were marked by a vigorous movement for adult education in Germany which resulted in the establishment of numerous Volks-
hochschulen almost overnight.

The motive for adult education in the post-war years was not merely a social reconstruction, for after the fall of the monarchy in November 1918, the ensuing revolution led to an intellectual re-
vival of the German masses. The movement was marked by a quest for knowledge in the hope for solutions to pressing problems on the one hand, and for the training of a proletarian leadership on the other. In all German states, the combination of socialist thought and educa-
tional reform was a distinguishing feature of the revolution. 30 It was in adult education that the questions of reform and the formulation of new objectives were expressed first and most clearly. The Prussian Ministry for Science, Art and Popular Education issued a decree in February, 1919, instructing that people's colleges "serve in restor-
ing the intellectual connection between all segments of the population and to regain an understanding for mutual values of work which had been lost."31 It was also recommended that the organization of


31Ibid., p. 508 (author's translation).
people's colleges shall not become a centralized effort, but that it should represent an association with a common purpose. To prevent government interference and control, there existed general agreement among adult educators that the Volkshochschule should be supported by private funds. The course of post-war adult education then, clearly necessitated a state of marginality so as to encourage the participation of diverse sectors of the German public.

Although adult education during the Weimar Republic period was characterized by experimentation on behalf of independent associations, trade unions, political parties, and religious groups, the people's college generally included lecture courses, usually of short duration... in a great variety of subjects and, in addition, "Arbeitsgemeinschaften," or, discussion groups, modeled on English experience and arranged under qualified leaders. The larger institutions included many other activities: hobbies, housecraft, music, play-producing, dancing and the like. In the largest centres, the Volkshochschule itself often formed part of a wider association for adult education, which included many other popular organizations of an educational character. 32 Adult education, as had been the case before the war, lacked the cooperation or association of the higher schools. Whereas indifference on the part of professors to extend their efforts to popular enlightenment was the chief factor in the separation of purposes before the war, the new movement after 1919 had declared its rejection of academic

schooling in the following manner: "The Volkshochschule will help forward all those who, through knowledge, desire to penetrate to the problems of life which lie behind knowledge. The University (Gelehrten-Hochschule) transforms life into science; the Volkshochschule attempts to re-transform science into life."  

The "new direction," which had determined to a large extent the course of German adult education since the 1890's, served to define adult education in the Weimar period as the conclusive rejection of mass-methods and mass-efforts and demanded instead a method which focused on the individual and involved sincere work in small groups of receptive persons. Adult education was seen as an intensive process, based on a consideration and study of the divisive forces, both philosophical and political, by means of the discussion group as well as the formation of dialogue as a prerequisite to common activity. Only such a process, it was argued, could restore to the individual being a spirit of community. The "new direction" no longer stressed neutrality as a major condition for adult education.

It has been suggested that to many, the most hopeful development in adult schooling during the Weimar period was not the

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33Ibid.

Volkshochschule, but rather the Heimvolkshochschule, since here the guidelines of the "new direction" could be most effectively applied. The residence concept led to a realization of the "Arbeitsgemeinschaft," the dialogue between tutor and student. Although party, trade union, or religious bodies established such institutions for their particular ends, there also existed "free" people's colleges, where allegiances were not reflected. In the residential adult schools established by the Metal Workers' Union, however, "the emphasis was upon Marxist economics, but with a vigour of teaching and discussion which was sometimes lacking in 'free' or 'neutral' adult education."\(^{35}\)

In spite of such differences, however, it was proposed that the formation of people's colleges could only be achieved by structuring them on the basis of the same institutions operating in Denmark and Sweden.\(^ {36}\) One of the outstanding proponents of the "new direction" Volkshochschule idea was Eduard Weitsch, who later became director of a Heimvolkshochschule. It was his basic contention that the masses would not benefit from new and larger libraries or from books in general. He likened them, in fact, to the beginning student in his first term, who is overpowered by the number of lectures.

\(^{35}\)Peers, op. cit., p. 296.

\(^{36}\)Eduard Weitsch, "Was soll eine deutsche Volkshochschule sein und leisten?" Die Tat, X (July, 1918), p. 243.
The distribution of books, he argued, would merely increase popular discontent by permitting some, those who would avail themselves of the opportunity, to create an intellectual status ladder. The concept of the masses, it might be noted in passing, is one which appears repeatedly in expressionist German literature which flourished in the same decades. In the dramas of Georg Kaiser and Ernst Toller for instance, the idealism of the leader and the materialism of the people are clearly depicted. Weitsch sought to take from the public the willing and able worker who, with training, would learn to perform the ordinary with extraordinary spirit, and then to restore him to the masses where he could serve as an influential force and an incentive to his fellowmen.\(^{37}\) He would be a controlling and encouraging element at the same time.

The German Volkshochschule was to have essentially three characteristics which, to be sure, were also those of its Nordic model. First of all, it was defined as being a school with serious objectives which would serve young men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one and would provide them with the environment conducive to the development of their "Weltanschauung" and real purpose in life. Secondly, the people's college was an upper school; it was not to be mistaken for a proletarian university. It was to be free of

\(^{37}\)Ibid., p. 242.
any educational form of dogmatism, free in fact, of any partisan influences whatsoever. Such neutrality was regarded as necessary in view of popular distrust for all measures of higher education. Most importantly, however, the German folk college was intended to be free of any material gains to be acquired by its students, for it was excessive materialism which was considered to be the basis of Germany's social discontent. As in Denmark, the emphasis was on teaching young people how to live and not to seek a life of examinations to be passed, one of competition and elimination. Lastly, popular education (Volksbildung) was intended for the public as the very name suggests. It was not designed, however, to serve as an alternative for academic training or as some lower form of higher education. 38

The curriculum was not chosen to impart to youth the knowledge or even the essence of the studies of the learned. Rather, people's colleges were thought of as the antithesis to academic learning. The student would not be misled by a mere superficial memorization of facts, he would not be burdened with books for which he lacked all interest, but he would be encouraged to take interest in the present, the practical, indeed to be aware of the needs of the moment.

38Ibid., p. 244.
Weitsch perceived youth to be naturally idealistic; in the Volkshochschule they would encounter practical reality and thus develop their idealism into an intellectual, ethical, and cultural awareness. In order to become a leader among his fellowmen and to serve as an incentive to others, a student would need not only the ability to serve in such capacities but needed also the combination of two other elements. Weitsch defined these as the realization of the common cultural heritage and the awareness of those conflicts with which his fellows struggled in their daily lives. 39

Indicative of the success of the post-war German Volkshochschule was the number of such institutions in operation by 1922. People's colleges existed at Berlin, Jena, Cologne, Remscheid, Meiningen and Ernsththal, to name only a few. Yet in spite of the apparent stability of the movement as of 1922, Dr. H. Robert Ulich, then serving in the Prussian Ministry of Education at Dresden, voiced his reservations regarding its success while not denying, however, his general approval of the idea of popular education. With reference to the school's interest in stimulating young people between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one, Professor Ulich argued that Denmark was essentially an agriculturally-oriented nation, where this aim could be realized. In Germany, on the other hand, in view of its largely

39Ibid., p. 249.
industrially-oriented nature, people's colleges were and could only continue to be, centers for adult education where students would range in age from twenty to thirty years. Charging the Volkshochschule as being merely an imitation of the English "university extension," he further criticized the institution's entertaining rather than educational nature. To gain the public's trust, Dr. Ulich contended, the German folk colleges needed to free themselves from leftist influences and communist elements. To realize their objectives to the fullest, he concluded, support of the public as a whole was a pressing and imperative requisite.

Between 1919 and 1922 then, the Volkshochschule abandoned the neutrality which was characteristic of the "freie Volksbildung" idea before the war. In so doing, its purpose closely resembled the role which Grundtvig had ascribed to his folk schools:

(1) it became the object and means for social reform and the search for national identity in Germany, and

(2) it became anti-academic and condemned the University and Hochschule establishment. It should be noted in addition, that the Weimar period of adult education saw a continuation of the practical attempts to establish the Volkshochschule which had been begun before the war. At the same time, radical theoretical changes were generated in the area of adult education, which failed, however, to alter its basic direction.

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40 H. Robert Ulich, "Der Stand der deutschen Volkshochschulbewegung," Die Tat, XIV (July, 1922), p. 245.
41 Ibid., p. 251.
42 Matzat, op. cit., p. 49.
The needs of German industrial society in the 1920's led to the decline of the residential people's college and promoted in its place the Abendvolkshochschule. A survey in 1927 indicated that 215 evening people's colleges and only fifty-two of the former institutions existed in Germany. 

The residential institution, it was argued, "took men away from their work and their ordinary associations, out of the struggle in which all, but especially the working classes, were involved, and sent them back discontented and more uprooted than ever, perhaps even finding it difficult to get back into employment." 

The inspiring tutor, whom Weitsch sought to identify and to utilize as an incentive to others, received little more than a working man's wage, since the students paid whatever they could afford. The problem of inadequate financial support of adult education was complicated further by the high rate of unemployment during the 1920's. In the light of such problems, nevertheless, the years between the wars were characterized by vigorous experimentation to institute adult education in Germany. The utmost purpose of all efforts in adult education was regarded by Robert von Erdberg, a major exponent of the "new direction," as the formation and the education of a people to a unity of intellect, or perhaps even the creation of a people.

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43 Ibid., p. 44.

Prussian Ministry of Public Worship and Education summarized his thought in defining the concept of Volkshochschule as "a study group of intellectuals and workers, whose goal is the creation of a common spirit of intellectual life which shall encompass the entire nation."45 The idealism which nurtured the vigor of those participating in adult education, sought to establish a new culture comprising all classes, in an unfavorable environment during a period of crisis. The history of German adult education indicates, however, that its theories were not founded upon the reality of the German social order which has steadily demanded an elite, but that they were based instead on a Germany which does not even yet exist.

A study group for adult education, comprising leaders of the "new direction," was founded in 1923 under the name "Hohenrodter Bund" (Hohenrodt League). The League met annually until 1930 and discussed problem areas regarding the Volkshochschule in order to achieve a commonality in adult education. Disagreements as to the ends and means of adult schooling on the part of diverse groups served to create the League, and it was the increasing number of superficial attempts in popular education which the "Hohenrodter Bund" condemned. 46 The group's singular purpose was to convene

45Matzat, op. cit., p. 40.

46Henningsen, op. cit., p. 10.
each year to assess the development and to direct the course of the adult education movement in Germany. It is interesting to note, that by the mid 1920's only adult education in Prussia and Saxony was characterized by the Volkshochschule, while all other states retained the term "Volksbildung" to describe their efforts and programs in adult schooling, a fact which indicates the divisive temper of German adult education. At the meeting of the League in 1925, Wilhelm Flitner submitted that adult education cannot exist without a practical goal, that of helping the individual to understand and to better perform his daily duties. 47

With the guidance of the Hohenrodt League the "German School for Folk-research and Adult Education" was formed in 1926 in order to prepare personnel for the people's colleges. Flitner, who was a founder of the "German School," regarded its major role as the training of teachers for the Volkshochschulen. In view of conflicting objectives, however, the "German School" and the national organization for adult education, the "Reichsverband der deutschen Volkshochschulen" founded in 1927, created a separation of interests which would only end with the abolition of the adult education movement by the Hitler regime in 1933. By 1929, it might be added, the Hohenrodt

League had dissolved under pressure from the Reichsverband, but its function of assessing the trend of adult education had been assumed by the "German School." As a result of the schism created by this diversity of interests and the ensuing power struggle in German adult education, it was evident by the late 1920's that the unity which had been sought earlier appeared to be unattainable.

Conflicting purposes and the increasingly chaotic economic situation marked the end of the Volkshochschule experiment, well before the National Socialists ended the Weimar era of adult education. In the absence of a unified direction and definite goals, the people's colleges abandoned their original purposes and many "began to appeal, in the subjects which they offered, for instance commercial studies and modern languages, and in the popularization of their lecture courses, to lower middle-class elements—clerks and minor officials—rather than to manual workers." Toward the end of the Weimar Republic then, the Volkshochschule failed to serve the needs which had determined its original purpose. Once more in the history of German adult education, the educational interests of the worker were abandoned, until they were to be fulfilled not through the process of general education but rather in a planned program of political indoctrination.

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48 Matzat, op. cit., p. 49.
The extent to which the role of the people's college had changed by 1931 was obvious in the following definition of the Abendvolkshochschule, as it was accepted at the Prerow Volkshochschule conference held in that year: "Like every school, the evening people's college serves the primary goal of providing a planned program of instruction. It requires the formation of areas of instruction on the basis of syllabi, insofar as attendance permits this." Rather than stressing the liberating nature of the educational process, the Prerow conference limited adult education to the process of instruction, and represents, therefore, a compromise between the representatives of traditional, mass-oriented popular education and those of the "new direction." The Prerow formula (Prerower Formel), as it was called, no longer regarded adult education as a separate process, an entity in contrast to extant systematic education, but saw it instead as a segment of the educational system. Whether the Prerow definition indicated the beginning of a new phase of German adult education, or only marked the fall of the "freie Volksbildung" movement is a question which was obscured by political developments of the new decade. Whatever the motives surrounding the developments at Prerow in 1931 may have been, they did mark the end of another period of adult education in Germany. Although adult education had

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50 Henningsen, op. cit., p. 147. (Author's translation).
failed in its role of unifying the German people, and had left the laboring segment of the population in a state of frustration and despondency by 1932, people's colleges still announced, "we want the complete person who stands firm in the present, the person who is active in the widest sense, with insight and the will to act." The Volkshochschule, it appears, addressed itself only to the middle class, who were separated from the workers both in terms of tradition and national culture, while sharing, however, economic plight.

After the unification of the German states into a nation in 1871, adult education, before the rise of the Hitler regime, covered essentially four phases. To the three periods suggested by Robert von Erdberg must be added a final brief interval, which incorporated the Prerow prescriptions. Beginning with the 1870's, "freie Volksbildung" was determined by "national" goals. Efforts in adult education were directed toward the formation of a national identity and the realization of national ideals. The second phase, extending from approximately 1890 until 1905, sought to promote German "culture" and to involve all people in a cultural renaissance which was,

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however, ended by the first World War. The third period of adult education focused on the "individual," a trend which began with the chaotic social climate of post-war Germany and continued under adverse conditions until 1931. The Prerow conference resulted in a new trend, emphasizing the "institutional" aspect of adult education, a development which ceased with Hitler's rise to power in 1933. It was from the diversity of these goals and the shock of yet another war, that present-day adult education in Germany was to emerge. Theoretically at least, and only to some extent in a practical sense, did German adult education during the Weimar period attain the definition of adult education which was suggested in the introductory chapter of this paper. The decline of the Volkshochschule in the light of political developments in 1933 only serves to indicate that the idea of individual worth and personal commitment had not been achieved to any significant degree.

The Eclipse of the Volkshochschule, 1933-45

As late as 1932, residential people's colleges were established in Germany for the unemployed. It was the purpose of such institutions to emphasize the individual's capacities and to reduce social tensions. In view of rising rates of unemployment and a worsening of Germany's economic condition, a federal regulation issued in July, 1932, led to the establishment of the "Freiwillige
Arbeitsdienst" (voluntary labor service), which would "unite young Germans in voluntary service to perform necessary labor, while at the same time uplifting them bodily and morally." At its conference in October, 1932, the national association of German people's colleges (Reichsverband der deutschen Volkshochschulen) charged the directors of both "Abendvolkshochschulen" and "Volkshochschulheime" with the responsibility of combining the functions of the voluntary labor service and the institutions for adult education. Although many adult educators welcomed the recognition which such a union afforded their efforts, they realized on the other hand that the life of their project was limited. Political developments growing from the Reichstag elections of July, 1932 increasingly indicated the rise of the National Socialists (NSDAP). It was obvious that the voluntary labor service would not serve the purpose of adult education, but that it would instead become a useful tool in the totalitarian state.

Within only months after the election of Adolf Hitler to the office of Chancellor of Germany, "all leaders of the pre-1933 adult education movement were forced to resign and forbidden to participate in adult education." By the end of 1934, all intellectual movements in Germany, such as adult education, had been stripped of their intellectual content and had become agencies for the promotion

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53 Matzat, op. cit., p. 59.
54 Pirtle, op. cit., p. 338.
of National Socialist ideology and political power. Prominent figures, among them Eduard Weitsch, were the victims of Hitler's political scapegoatism and "racist" policies. Weitsch, for instance, was barred from activity in adult schooling for supposedly subscribing to Marxist ideas. The Nazi regime denounced earlier adult education for its neutral, liberal, and rationalistic tendencies, placing "adult educators in the impossible position of defending themselves against charges about which they were, in general, proud." The year 1934 also marked the end of state and national organizations for all agencies involved in adult education, as well as the cessation of "new direction" journals and other publications. The resources and assets of such organizations were transferred to Robert Ley, education director of the Nazi Party (NSDAP). While most of the smaller and less developed residential people's colleges were quietly disbanded, those with more elaborate facilities "were occupied and their property confiscated and their facilities utilized as 'training castles' of the Nazi organization." On the basis of a final newsletter of September, 1935, the last "free" residential college to close its operation appears to have been the Volkshochschulheim at Edewecht.

55 Ibid.
56 Ibid., p. 351.
Whereas the residential Volkshochschule was either abandoned or transformed to become part of the Nazi educational system, the evening people's college continued to operate as the Volkshochschule, or "Volksbildungsstätte", on the local level. In addition, regional publications pertaining to the function of the people's college continued in circulation. The role of the Volkshochschule resembled that of vocational schools and paralleled the efforts of Nazi organizations such as the Work Front (Arbeitsfront) and the group called "Strength Through Joy" (Kraft durch Freude). 57 The objective of people's colleges under the National Socialist regime was defined in an announcement of the Volkshochschule at Hamburg in 1937 as follows:

It is the purpose of the people's college to serve the general educational needs of the population in the interest of a uniform expression of will . . . it shall insure that the greatest possible segment of the people act in every phase of life not according to experience, but in clear recognition of the national socialist point of view. 58

Clearly, the role of adult education, in contrast to the diversity of objectives before 1933, was the commitment to an indoctrination of Nazi ideology. The Volkshochschule, under new goals and direction, offered its audience remnants of the structure that had been characteristic of "free" adult education, such as lectures, courses, and

57 Ibid., p. 338.
58 Matzat, op. cit., p. 61. (Author's translation)
discussion groups. One might take note of the fact that the method of instruction in view of its formality was more akin to traditional adult education than to the "new direction." The content of the Volkshochschule at Stettin, for instance, comprised the areas of (1) race and territory, (2) national characteristics, and (3) political instruction. 59

In light of the fact that Nazi people's colleges sought to conduct their programs on a mass-basis with a uniform core of instructional content, they operated on an "extensive" rather than "intensive" orientation. Void of experimentation and a necessary degree of marginality, the Volkshochschule under National Socialism failed in the improvement of individual judgments and the development of personal commitment. Nazi educational programs were formulated to a large extent by Ernst Krieck, Professor of Pedagogy at the University of Heidelberg. While defining the objectives of such programs, he concluded that

the principle of a national way of life had triumphed with the national socialist revolution, on the basis of which the state, the laws, the culture, and education shall be established. As a result, the new orientation is not directed toward the autonomous individual, as had been the case in the age of liberalism, but rather as a definite mode of living in accord with the interests of the nation. 60

59 Ibid., p. 63.

60 Ernst Krieck, Wissenschaft, Weltanschauung, Hochschul-reform. Leipzig: Armanen Verlag, 1934, p. 6. (Author's translation)
The formula of "struggle-obedience-silence" (Kämpfen-gehorenchenschweigen) led to a war-economy, occupational organization, and mass-training. The goal was the collective society, which ignored the life of the individual and his capacity for independent thought. Adult education, as it was carried out by the Hitler regime, resulted not in the emancipation and well-being of man through a realization of his purpose, but it served to suggest instead that even the adult can be conditioned, once his individual needs and aspirations are forgotten. Only after the chaos and desperation of the second World War could adult education demonstrate its usefulness in asserting the worth and potential inherent in individual man.

The Re-emergence of the Volkshochschule Idea in Post-war Germany

Following the destruction of the second World War, the German people once again experienced despondency and the lack of a national purpose. In their efforts to aid the Germans in emerging from their demoralized existence, the occupation forces of the four allied powers declared the "democratic re-education" of the defeated nation as their primary objective. The goal in general was to

61 Werner, op. cit., p. 211.
insure that

the German cultural pattern must be so modified as to remove
the authoritarian class system which gave rise to militarism
and resulted in state domination of the individual. . . . Des-
sirable democratic tendencies are latent in the German educa-
tional tradition, but experience of recent decades has proven
that realization in sufficient measure to affect the course of
German life and thought will occur only to the extent that an
effective program of educational reconstruction makes this
possible. 63

The extent, however, to which such "democratic tendencies" have been
achieved in both East and West Germany remains yet to be seen. From
the outset, then, the objective of adult education in post-war Germany
was political orientation, which tended to reflect the guidelines and in-
fluence of the particular occupation authorities directing the educa-
tional program. It must be realized, nevertheless, that adult edu-
cation could not have been instituted as widely and developed as
rapidly as early as 1945, without the financial support made available
in its behalf by the occupation forces. The development of adequate
programs, to be sure, was also contingent on the facilities and the
teaching staff available. In many instances, the allied forces fur-
nished German adult educators with locations and advisers throughout
the post-war years. In the light of such assistance, numerous Volks-
hochschulen were either founded or re-established throughout the
country in the years 1945-46.

63 Office of the U. S. High Commissioner for Germany, A Guide
to Education and Cultural Relations. Bad Nauheim: Office of Public
Affairs, Education and Cultural Relations Division, July 1950, p. 15.
The year 1946 was marked by several regional conferences, where plans for the extension of the people's college idea were formulated. In the following year a series of study groups for the Volks-
hochschule were organized in the various states, which united in 1949
to form a central agency which was to become the "Deutsche Volks-
hochschul-Verband" (Association of German People's Colleges) in
1953. At present, the DVV serves as the clearinghouse for all
adult education activities carried on by the Volkshochschulen in the
Federal Republic. A significant factor in the growth of people's col-
leges during the post-war years in both sectors of Germany, was the
return of many pre-1933 adult educators, whose participation in the
new efforts resulted in the extensive distribution of diverse publica-
tions on the theoretical and practical aspects of adult schooling.
Many such publications, however, particularly journals, ceased to
appear by 1949 due to financial difficulties. The first and only post-
war conference of the "Hohenroder Bund" met in 1948 only to find
that a common purpose in German adult education no longer existed.
Clearly, the years immediately following the fall of the Nazi regime
reflected a renewed effort on the part of adult educators of the Weimar
period, to replace temporary programs established by the occupation
authorities with a continuation of pre-1933 ideas and plans. They soon

64 Matzat, op. cit., p. 69.
discovered, however, that a new Germany, which sought to emerge from the chaos of 1945, required new approaches in adult education. Only in the states of Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony did the efforts of "new direction" adherents lead to practical results. In the former, the Heimvolkshochschulen disbanded by the National Socialists were re-established, and a joint project under the name "Arbeit und Leben" (work and life) was instituted by the labor unions and people's colleges in the latter. It was obvious, nevertheless, that a new generation of adult educators had emerged in Germany by 1949, whose goal it was to promote a working-class movement in order to develop the enlightened citizen (Mitbürger). Professor Peers has suggested, however, that the post-war Volkshochschule in the western zone tended to be mainly lower middle-class in character... with its concentration on post-war education, commercial studies and recreational interests, although alongside these elementary, recreational and vocational studies are to be found some intensive "Arbeitsgemeinschaften" or discussion groups whose main interest is in social and philosophical studies; and studies of this kind are the dominant interest in the more continuous and more intensive work of the "Heimvolkshochschulen."66

The following table, taken from the work Adult Education: A Comparative Study by Peers, clearly indicates the social-class

65 Werner, op. cit., p. 214.
66 Peers, op. cit., p. 300.
distribution of post-war adult education in western Germany:

Percentage Social Grouping of Persons Attending Volkshochschulen\(^{67}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Scholars &amp; Students</th>
<th>Manual Workers</th>
<th>Officials</th>
<th>Clerks</th>
<th>Professions</th>
<th>Housewives</th>
<th>Independents</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In contrast to the middle-class audience of Volkshochschulen in the western zone, the people's colleges in the Soviet sector of Germany were directed by an order of the High Command of the Soviet Military Administration in January, 1946, to operate their programs within a schedule which would permit the attendance of the working population. By 1949 it was announced that new means were needed "to involve greater segments of the laboring population."\(^{68}\)

Whereas the beginning organization of adult education in West Germany had been open-ended by nature, the order of the High Command in the eastern zone required "the delineation of a network of Volkshochschulen for the year 1946, the staffing of such institutions with

\(^{67}\)Ibid., p. 299.

administrative and teaching personnel, and the organization and registration of participants. \(^{69}\)

In general, adult education after the second World War was directed more toward the political reorientation of the German people and toward meeting their material interests, rather than seeking a cultural awareness on the part of the individual, as had been the case after 1919. The post-war Volkshochschulen in both parts of Germany tended to reflect local needs and peculiarities more than had those after the first World War. They were, in effect, more of a local orientation in contrast to the national awareness which was emphasized after 1919. By 1950, however, in view of practical manifestations of the guidelines which were established in both sectors in 1945 by foreign powers, it is possible once more to speak of national movements of German adult education.

After 1945, the four powers began the program of "democratic re-education" of the German people. The Office of the United States Military Government for Germany and the High Command of the Soviet Military Administration in Germany proposed and instituted plans to achieve a democratic German state in light of their own differing ideological orientations. The present countries, the Federal Republic of Germany as well as the German Democratic Republic,

\(^{69}\textit{Ibid.},\ p. 7.\)
although separated by the consequences of their national policies, claim to operate within a democratic framework. The different basic aims and different practical consequences arise, of course, as the result of differing connotations attributed to the concept of democracy in each country.
CHAPTER IV

THE IDEA OF DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL ORIENTATION
BASIC TO THE VOLKSHOCHSCHULE IN EAST AND WEST

The literature regarding adult education in both East and West Germany contains frequent references to the democratic nature of the process of education in general and the institutions for adult education in particular. On the political front, however, relations between the two countries are strained by mutual accusations as to the lack of democracy in the internal functioning of each. The idea of democracy, therefore, as it is manifested in the political structure and as it is consequently reflected in the concept of adult education in the Federal Republic of Germany and in the German Democratic Republic, warrants closer examination.

The Concept of Democracy in the Federal Republic of Germany

The constitution which was framed by the West German parliament in Bonn during August, 1948 following the democratization program of the occupation forces, embodies the concept of a representative democratic order and a pluralistic society predicated upon the rights of the individual. Although there is no outlined provision for a certain
economic system, the constitution nevertheless stresses the democratic responsibility of the state, that the basic values of German society such as freedom of private ownership and freedom to consume, be protected and maintained. At present, three political philosophies represent the possibilities for diversity in the functioning of the Federal Republic. The conservative position, which emphasizes the traditional Christian view of man, society, and the state, is represented by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). The Free Democratic Party (FDP) seeks a liberal direction, emphasizing the autonomous, self-responsible development of the individual, without state interference in economic life and free from religious domination of cultural affairs. The third alternative is provided by the socialist position, wherein the highest possible degree of economic equality for every individual represents the ultimate goal. The efforts of the German Social-Democratic Party (SPD) are directed toward the involvement of the worker in the economic processes in a decision-making capacity. ¹ It is by means of the democratic process then, that each of the three political parties can direct the course of national affairs in the Federal Republic. Through the pluralism of

varied political orientation, the interests and social values of a particular party enter into the formulation of public opinion. Not only does representative democracy result in the free expression and interchange of such differing political views, but it also leads to public evaluation of other opinions and values and their possible implementation for political practice.

The essence of the West German democratic process then, is to allow for the expression of all possible alternatives in the matter of national affairs and to institute legally the will of the majority, a will which must be justified in terms of its consequences before the entire public, including the minorities. Ideally, the formulation of policy should be preceded by a free discussion regarding the demands of the minority, so that the diversity of views can serve to generate the highest possible degree of agreeability and acceptance. Such a concept of democracy, it is argued, necessitates both the intellectual cooperation and the criticisms of opposing political factions in order to insure its stability and survival. The West German constitution reflects a political order, in which the people as a whole are regarded as being the source of political power. Since such a premise requires a regard for the value of the individual and seeks to foster his

\[^2\text{Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland vom 23. Mai 1949, "Artikel 20." Tirschenreuth: Nickl OHG, n. d. p. 69.}\]
development and participation, the institutions of adult education perform a necessary role in the functioning of that political order. In a nation with a population of sixty million, however, the individual's involvement in the processes of government can only be achieved indirectly, by the cultivation of a personal relationship with one's fellows (Mitmenschen) and the state. ³

Democracy in the Federal Republic, therefore, is not defined as paternalism, whereby a political and social order provides for the well-being of its subjects. Rather, the citizen, in view of his right to participate in the decision-making process, assumes his share of the responsibility to execute public policy. The state, on the other hand, is obligated to keep open the means for political discourse in order that intellectual conflict and the exchange of differing views can be promoted. ⁴ Such a requisite is not only regarded as desirable, but it is, in fact, necessary for the functioning of the democratic society. The fulfillment of the idea of individual freedom and participatory democracy rests in the final analysis upon an enlightened and involved citizenry. While serving as "Bundeswirtschaftsminister" (minister of economics), Ludwig Erhard regarded West German

³Heinisch, op. cit., p. 47.
democracy as a class-less society, where personal worth is no longer determined by one's social position. A recent survey of the effects of school reform in the Federal Republic has indicated, however, that "there are four groups which contribute significantly lower percentages of 'Abitur' graduates than their shares of the school age population at large. These are children from rural areas, children from working class families, girls, and Catholics."

In order to realize the practical consequences of its democratic orientation, West Germany's educational system cannot continue to maintain a distinct social separation which now exists between "occupational" and "general" education. It is a result of this separation, to be sure, that adult education has come to be regarded as a lesser form of education. Such an attitude, consequently, serves only to promote the marginal status of West German adult education. The participation of the population as a whole, predicated upon the ideas of equality and worth of the individual, can only then serve to establish a democratic order, when economic and educational levels are not the determining factors for such participation.

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The Aspects of Democracy in the German Democratic Republic

Like the Federal Republic, the German Democratic Republic is a product of the post-war democratization program of the occupation authorities. The essential difference, however, lies in the fact that the East German political structure was modeled after the Soviet system and was based from its inception upon Marxist-Leninist doctrine. The political and social order of East German "Volksdemokratie" (popular democracy) is founded upon the premise that "not only the development of nature itself, but also the development of society transpires according to objective laws, which are independent of the will of man."⁷ Such laws, it is argued further, are not derived from the realm of the supernatural or a particular deity, but are instead inherent in the very reality of existence. On the basis of belief in such objective reality then, East German society has developed into its present form. Although democracy in both the Federal Republic and the Democratic Republic represents the quest for human dignity as the ultimate goal, the social order of the two countries and the means of attaining that ideal are separated by fundamental differences.

East German ideology defines the history of mankind as a scientific process whereby the social order evolves along a telescopic pattern from tribal beginnings to the slave-holding state, then to a feudalistic order and to a subsequent capitalistic system. The final

⁷Heinisch, op. cit., p. 53.
and most complete form of societal development is said to be found in that Communist society wherein the Marxist-Leninist philosophy becomes the way of life and the full realization of the democratic ideal. 8 Perfection, therefore, is regarded to be the uniformity comprising all social ideas and institutions within that order. The concept of democracy in the German Democratic Republic is seen not merely as the process for maintaining a political order based on pluralism and representation, but it is defined rather as a way of life (Demokratismus), free from exploitation and subordination.

The establishment of East German democracy began after 1945 with the abolition of the Hitler regime and its remnants, and with the dissolution of corporate ownership and bourgeois capitalism. The subsequent coalition of farmers and workers represented "proletarian democracy," since the majority had for the first time triumphed over the minority who had been the locus of economic and political power. Proletarian dictatorship was regarded as a necessary means for the development of proletarian democracy, whereby the democratic ideal was extended to the entire laboring population not only on a political basis, but also in directing the areas of

economic life and culture. Such democratic centrality, it is argued, was not contained in the "bourgeois democracy" of pre-1933 Germany. The unified will, which permeates the structure of proletarian democracy emanates from the communist party which actively involves the population in its regional and local mass-organizations. The extent, therefore, to which the individual realizes his obligations to the social order ultimately determines his sense of well-being. It is the purpose of East German adult education generally, and the Volkshochschule directly, to promote the development of "Volksdemokratie" and to effect the realization of socialist unity. To achieve its end, the Volkshochschule became an integral part of the educational system in the Democratic Republic, and unlike its West German counterpart, it is no longer a marginal institution.

The development of popular democracy (Volksdemokratie) in East Germany began with the introduction of an "anti-fascist and democratic order" by the Soviet military-administration in Germany. The formation of a "unified front of anti-fascist-democratic parties" constituted the first stage, or the "democratic phase" of the proletarian revolution. Although the "unified front" initially comprised the German Communist Party(KPD), the Social-Democratic Party

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9Heinisch, op. cit., p. 81.

10Gutsche, op. cit., p. 38.
(SPD), the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the consolidation of democratic elements within the four political entities resulted in the decline of the CDU and LPD by 1947 and the merger of the KPD and the SPD into the German Socialist-Unity Party (SED). The first phase of the socialist-democratization program (1945-1949) involved the transition from private to public ownership, the introduction of proletarian political leadership, and the beginning of a program of democratic educational reform. This first period of development served to establish the difference between the idea of socialism in the Democratic Republic and in the Federal Republic.

The second stage (1949-1952) was the transition to popular democracy and represented the "socialistic phase" of the revolution in East Germany. The SED, under the leadership of Walter Ulbricht, was strengthened by the elections of 1949 which resulted in the centralization of its mass organizations and secured political victories by representatives of the laboring class. In addition, delegates from the "German People's Congress for Unity and Peace," which had been formed in 1947, convened in October, 1949 to create the "Provisional Government of the German Democratic Republic." By 1949 the

11 Heinisch, op. cit., p. 90.

12 Ibid., p. 92.
structure of East German "Volksdemokratie" had been established in the first "German State of Workers and Farmers" (Arbeiter- und Bauernstaat).

Following the formation of East Germany's political structure was the third phase (1952-1957) of the development of popular democracy, which constituted an intensification of the leadership by the working class and the implementation of socialist democracy. The result was the transition from five states (Länder) to a network of fourteen districts, all of which were directly connected with the German Socialist-Unity Party (SED). The demarcation of East Germany's territorial boundaries and the centralization of all social institutions were regarded to be trends toward the realization of socialist democracy. By 1957 then, the Democratic Republic had become a national entity.

The period since 1957 has been referred to as the completion of socialism in the Democratic Republic. By 1960 agriculture and labor were completely merged into the co-operative society, and science, education, and the arts reflected a uniformity of purpose; both developments are regarded by the East German government as the firm foundations for the formation of socialist democracy. 13

Whereas the democratic concept in the Federal Republic

13 Ibid., p. 95.
recognizes the individual's function in the social context, it nevertheless stresses the individuality and the rights which emanate from the idea of personal worth. Although the democratic ideal in East Germany recognizes the existence and the rationality of the individual man, it emphasizes his function and obligation to the social order of which he is a member; it stresses his identity in terms of the collective rather than in individual terms. Unlike the Democratic Republic's clearly defined system of political and social uniformity as the source for democratic action, democracy in the Federal Republic is a process which seeks to accommodate diverse political and social interests through the concept of majority rule. It is, therefore, the means to an end, an end which must always be open to change and to influence initiated by opposing factions, if the ideas of equality and free thought are to be maintained. Whereas West German democracy is applied mainly to the political context, the East German concept permeates all social institutions.

While Herbert Spencer argued that "new democracy is but old despotism differently spelt," Romano Guardini defined it as an "ever changing balance which requires awareness, selflessness, and discipline." More recently Reinhold Niebuhr wrote, "ideally democracy is a permanently valid form of social and political organization..."

14 Ibid., p. 44.
which does justice to two dimensions of human existence; to man's spiritual stature and his social character; to the uniqueness and variety of life, as well as to the common necessities of all men. "15 The characteristic common to the concept of democracy in both East and West Germany is the idea of majority rule. In the former the majority of working persons serves as the basis for democratic government, while the latter maintains a democratic process whereby the will of the majority can find expression. There is, however, no assurance that the will of such a majority is always right, good, or moral, since such values are not determined by a mere difference in numbers. It is necessary, therefore, that the democratic state allow the individual to assess the rightness, the goodness, or the morality of the majority will. The ideal democratic order, argued Niebuhr, "seeks unity within the conditions of freedom; and maintains freedom within the framework of order."16

A democratic society in the final analysis, is composed of a body of individuals, equally informed and concerned, but disposed by their basic attitudes and instincts to act differently. Unless this potential for diversity can be accommodated into the concept of


16Ibid.
democracy in both the Federal Republic and the Democratic Republic, that concept can only remain a utopia. It is in creating a sense of "individual responsibility," that the West German Volkshochschule fulfills its role, while the goal of its East German counterpart is in developing within the person a high degree of "social consciousness." In the two chapters which follow, the theoretical and practical aspects of the Volkshochschule in both countries shall be considered in more detail, so that its function in the society as a whole can be assessed.
CHAPTER V

SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS: THE FEDERAL
REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

Developments in Adult Education Since 1945

It has been observed earlier that post-war West German adult education, although re-established in part by representatives of the Weimar period's "Neue Richtung" (new direction), was not a continuation or expansion of the ideas or the philosophy of that position. With the first Volkshochschule Conference held in September, 1951 and in light of the guidelines for adult education adopted by the Deutsche Volkshochschul-Verband after its formation in 1953, a new period of German adult education had its beginning. In addition, the trends which tended to distinguish between West and East German objectives in adult education, at least on a theoretical level, had been clearly established by that time.

The development of the Volkshochschule as the leading institution for adult schooling in the Federal Republic since 1945 is perhaps best reflected in the four Volkshochschultage (Volkshochschule Conferences). The first such conference since 1945, which was convened in Frankfurt and Königstein in the autumn of 1951, was the
combined effort of representatives of the West German people's colleges and of the League of German Labor-Unions (Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund). Since any attempts to combine earlier ideas on adult education with current needs had been abandoned, the primary goal of the conference was the formulation of objectives for the German Volkshochschule and a delineation of its responsibilities. An assessment of the people's college's role was further necessitated by the existence of approximately 1200 Abendvolkshochschulen and twenty-five Heimvolkshochschulen by 1951, whose membership had grown to about two million people.  

The first topic of consideration was the involvement of the Volkshochschule in labor education (Arbeiterbildung), which had never before been clearly established. In 1951 again, the debate over that question remained unresolved since delegates to the conference could not agree upon the sociological dimensions of the concept of "Arbeiterbildung," and the extent to which they were part of the program of the Volkshochschule. Although the Volkshochschule sought to serve the needs of the worker, it was concluded that the unions' "Arbeit und Leben" (work and life) adult education program could more adequately accommodate the interests of the laborer than could a mere course offered by the people's college.

Popular education in rural areas (Volksbildung auf dem Lande) served as a further area of discussion. The topic was not only to include ideas on agricultural education or to focus on the interests of farmers as a social class, but to provide adult education to persons living in rural areas. Included among these persons were refugees, displaced persons, and industrial workers. In view of such diversity the purpose of rural adult education was defined as comprising (1) enlightenment as to the role of the individual, (2) citizenship education, and (3) agricultural continuing education.\(^2\)

The third topic of deliberation in the proceedings was the matter of "politics at the Volkshochschule." Although "the political independence and the objectivity of the Volkshochschule in political matters" were established unanimously, the delegates at the conference nevertheless concurred on the people's college's function in serving to maintain a democratic state, while denouncing the misguided political views of the 1930's.\(^3\) While earlier adult education was to be "free" from political considerations, the post-war people's college sought to reduce the general apathy regarding political matters in Germany. The means with which to begin this task and the methodology necessary to undertake such a function remained,

\(^2^{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 161.\)

\(^3^{Werner, \ op. \ cit., \ p. \ 217.}\)
however, completely unresolved. The conference did establish the position that the Volkshochschule would not become the tool for partisan political activity and that it would remain independent of influences on behalf of the state. 4

Questions as to the Volkshochschule's participation in occupational training constituted the fourth and final point of emphasis at the conference deliberations. The delegates agreed generally, that training for a particular area of employment was not within the responsibility of the people's college, but that such projects deserved rather the attention of industry itself. It was decided, however, that the need for courses complimentary to the participant's vocational interests could best be determined by the particular institutions on a local basis, whose option it was to structure programs according to the demands of their membership.

Although the conference of 1951 resulted in proposals for soliciting the Volkshochschule idea and for the formulation of its programs and offerings, the lack of public reaction to the proceedings, as well as the diversity of views among the delegates themselves, served to indicate the weaknesses and difficulties which confronted adult education in the post-war era. While excursions and commercial studies constituted the greater portion of Volkshochschule

4Der Senator für Volksbildung, op. cit., p. 149.
activities, efforts to include the social sciences and the humanities or to involve more varied segments of the population appeared to have attained only minor consideration. The people's college, after all, represented a rather significant means to initiate a reorganization of the German social structure and to partake in the realization of a democratic state. The function of the Volkshochschule, to be sure, was influenced greatly by financial considerations and the appeal was "to numbers in order to increase income from student fees, and the programmes tend to be those likely to attract the maximum support in the form of grants from the Ministries of Education of the different Lands and from the local authorities." In addition, the universities failed, with only few exceptions, to contribute to the stability of post-war West German adult education by their lack of interest in its development. Yet the participation of several university professors in the interest of the Volkshochschule was rendered "often at the cost of prejudicing their own prospects of preferment, which depends upon the pursuit of scholarship in the narrower sense." It was evident by 1951, that only a complete reorganization and change of attitude could lead to the beginning of a new period of German adult education.

Joint discussions as to the role of adult education held by state associations (Landverbände) in 1949 indicated the need for more

5Peers, op. cit., p. 301.

6Ibid.
centralized management in order to promote the Volkshochschule movement. The efforts of the regional people's college associations toward this end resulted in the formation of the "Deutsche Volkshochschul-Verband" (Association of German People's Colleges) in 1953, the purpose of which was "the preservation of mutual interests and the promotion of mutual responsibilities while maintaining the autonomy of the individual state associations in the Federal Republic." The Association, located in Bonn, represents West German people's colleges on a legal basis and serves as their central business office. Since 1953, the responsibilities of the "Deutsche Volkshochschul-Verband" have been,

(1) to establish interaction between the several state associations in order to exchange materials and experiences,

(2) to serve as the representative of German Volkshochschulen for federal authorities and the committee of the Ministry of Culture and Education,

(3) to initiate contact with the education offices of large national organizations, such as the League of German Labor Unions and the Farmers' Association, and to establish communication with the educational agencies of both denominations (Catholic and Protestant),

(4) to uniformly represent the people's colleges outside Germany and to promote international relations with UNESCO and the adult education associations in other countries, and to assume the position of representative in the German UNESCO Commission, and

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(5) to promote and to develop methodology, seminars, continuing education courses, and citizenship education, as well as to coordinate theoretical and practical developments.  

In view of the rapid growth and extension of the Volkshochschule movement during the 1950's, the Association opened a Pedagogical Development Center in Frankfurt in 1957, which serves in maintaining archives and in the procuring and disseminating of practical aids and research findings in adult education. Although the people's college idea had increased both numerically and in terms of diversity, its central function, its goals, and its significance as an educational institution had been developed to a much lesser degree.

In order to assess and to establish the responsibilities of German adult education, the Second Volkshochschule Conference was convened in Frankfurt in the fall of 1956. The program centered around the theme, "The German Volkshochschule in the situation of the present" and included such topics as "adult education and a new enlightenment," "the common educational needs of Christians and Non-Christians," "adult education as citizenship education," and "the psychological and sociological requisites of adult education." In his address on "Thoughts concerning 'free' Adult Education," Hellmut Becker, then president of the Deutsche Volkshochschul-Verband, pointed to the need for dealing with crucial concerns and the abandonment of

8Ibid., p. 274 (author's translation).

9Werner, op. cit., p. 228.
vocational studies and general education as goals of the people's college. The disbanding in 1953 of the study group "Arbeit und Leben" (work and life), which had been the mutual effort of the Volkshochschulen and the unions, signified the trend for centrality and autonomy in adult education. It objective, according to Becker, is simply "to answer the need of the individual in modern society."¹⁰ In its emphasis upon adult education "free" from interference on the part of the state or the church, and upon the need of man to return to himself, and the call for a new enlightenment, the Conference tended to reflect considerable similarity to the ideals which constituted pre-1933 "Volksbildung." The new aspect of the proceedings, however, was the recognition for the need of a political awareness which was regarded as necessary in the realization of citizenship education.

While the relevance of adult education in the lives of all people was emphasized, statistical data would appear to suggest, however, that such universality of the Volkshochschule's mission remained as yet an end to be desired. A survey regarding the occupational status of Volkshochschule participants revealed by 1956, that clerks and minor officials constituted 30.4 per cent, students and apprentices 30.3 per cent, housewives 12.3 per cent, laborers 11 per cent, independent tradesmen 4.9 per cent, professional

¹⁰Ibid., p. 90.
persons 4.3 per cent, agricultural and forestry workers 2.6 per cent, and unemployed persons and others 4.2 per cent, of those attending people's colleges. Age distribution data for the same period indicate that almost one-half of the participants in Volkshochschule activities were under 25 years of age, while 35 per cent were between 20 and 50 years old, and only 15 per cent were over 50 years in age. A study of the content of people's college programs in 1956 suggested that offerings in the arts, such as art appreciation and related excursions, enjoyed the greatest popularity, with foreign languages and vocational courses in second place, the natural sciences in third and the social sciences in fourth place. Like the people's college of the Weimar period, therefore, the modern Volkshochschule chiefly serves the interests of the middle class.

The Second Volkshochschule Conference was significant then, in that it served in assessing the status and function of the Volkshochschule, that it expressed unified commitment in focusing on crucial concerns, and that it sought to attain a unity of purpose while retaining the independence and diversity of Volkshochschule programs. Unlike its predecessor of the early twentieth century, the modern

11 Der Senator für Volksbildung, op. cit., p. 8.
12 Ibid., p. 9.
people's college had reached the conclusion that only by means of analyzing and by involvement in solving the problems of the time could it begin in educating the German people socially and politically, a responsibility which had not been realized by the institutions of higher education.

A further reassessment and evaluation of the Volkshochschule's function on a national basis was provided in the "opinion on adult education" (Gutachten zur Erwachsenenbildung), issued in 1960 by the Federal Committee on Education (Deutsche Ausschuss für das Erziehungs- und Bildungswesen). The Committee suggested, for instance, that the cultural sense of responsibility of a particular community can be measured in terms of its promotion of the Abendvolkshochschule and other institutions for adult education. 14 Adult education was defined as that process whereby the person seeks to establish a continuing understanding as to his purpose in the world, in order to become a member of modern society, and not its victim. The extent of his success in such a process of 'education' determines his individual worth; the extent to which a sufficient part of the population is 'educated,' will determine the future of the democratic way of life and of humanity itself. 15


Adult education, according to the Committee, is no longer a substitute for the "privilege" of traditional higher education, it can no longer be defined in terms of "knowledge is power" (Wissen ist Macht), which had served as the slogan for earlier adult schooling, and it can no longer be relevant to a mere segment of the entire population. The present concept of West German "Erwachsenenbildung" comprises the total society, and implies a commitment on the part of each individual to realize social change and to search for an awareness based upon an understanding of new needs. 16

The Third Volkshochschule Conference which was held in Frankfurt during November, 1961, examined the validity of "transmitting knowledge" as the educational goal of all institutions involved in adult education. Its purpose was to ascertain a commonality of objectives which characterizes not only German "Erwachsenenbildung," but which serves to integrate such interests internationally. The educational character of the Volkshochschule, it was agreed, is not determined by private but rather by a public responsibility to aid all persons in formulating a framework of values, which requires the "affective participation" of the individual. 17

16 Joachim H. Knoll and Horst Siebert, Erwachsenenbildung op. cit., p. 152.

defined as "Erziehung" (instruction) to assure a mastery of scientific knowledge, but rather as a process of "Bildung" (education), which involves participation and results in the individual's engagement in that process. Once again, the mission of the Volkshochschule as expressed with considerable unity by delegates to the 1961 Conference tended to summarize the ideal function, rather than to focus upon actual practice.

While international involvement in the "era of adult education" had only been suggested during the Third People's College Conference, the topic was explored in greater detail at the Fourth Volkshochschule Conference in Frankfurt in October, 1966. The program of activities emphasized the theme "International Adult Education," and included the participation of representatives from seventeen countries. In order to be effective in adult education, West German institutions would need to participate in European efforts to establish closer relations, particularly in view of common economic needs and interests.\(^{18}\) It should be noted, that study-tours and exchanges with personnel from several developing nations had been initiated and conducted by the Deutsche Volkshochschul-Verband earlier. To attain the unity necessary for European co-operation in adult education, however, it was seen as imperative at the Conference

that the concept of continuing education must become an integral part of the educational structure in the several German states.

It should be noted that official recognition as an educational institution has been afforded the Volkshochschule in West Germany only in more recent years. Various proposals have been formulated at the state level to coordinate Volkshochschule programs with the requirements of elementary and secondary schools, so as to enable participants in adult education to attain certification for further formal schooling. Hessen and Nordrhein-Westfalen, for example, are states in which such reforms are at least in the planning stages. Presently, it is only in the latter state, however, "that the people's colleges have been conceded the right to prepare students for the final examination of the primary school and to take part in the respective examinations."19 It is unfortunate that an occupation does not become honorable in West Germany until its members have established close connections with the university. The lack of such recognition in part, has traditionally served to attribute to adult education its marginal status. A result of more recent university reform has been the integration of adult education as an area of specialization at the newly-founded Ruhr University of Bochum, which opened in 1965. The

program of studies for practitioners in adult education, referred to as the "Bochum Plan," is part of the chair for Practical Pedagogy in Research and Teaching. 20

At present then, the Volkshochschule in the Federal Republic functions both as the Abendvolkshochschule and as the Heimvolkshochschule. As an indication of their growth since 1945 it may be noted that there are now over 1200 institutions of the former type and seventy-three of the latter in existence. The development of either form is largely determined by regional needs, such as urban or rural. The Abendvolkshochschule, on a numerical basis, is by far the largest and most widely known institution for adult education in Germany. Developed to serve the purpose of social integration, it was from the beginning accessible to all, regardless of age, sex, creed, and political conviction, and was regarded throughout as a democratic institution of education. 21 The Heimvolkshochschule, on the other hand, has been successful only in rural areas. Although its program constitutes residential adult education lasting from eight days up to six months, its aims are identical to those of the evening people's college. 22 The programs of West German Volkshochschulen

20 Joachim H. Knoll and Horst Siebert, op. cit., p. 17.


22 Ibid.
generally include liberal education courses as well as courses related to professional and vocational education, with the emphasis and range determined by the particular institution. Participation in the educational activities of people's colleges is entirely voluntary and does not at present lead to certification. In addition, the Volkshochschule is not subject to state control and inspection and acts, therefore, in complete autonomy in structuring its program of courses.

West German people's colleges characteristically reflect wide variations in size, objectives and programs, and in the quality of their work. Immediately after 1945 only a few Volkshochschulen functioned in their own buildings, while others occupied school buildings and public libraries on a part-time basis. At present, however, nearly all Volkshochschulen are located in centers of their own; the current trend of establishing branch locations in larger cities is indicative of the increasing security and popularity of the people's college. For the most part they are organized by interested groups of citizens as "independent entities, although in some of the Länder the municipalities, with some financial support from the Land government, have assumed responsibility for them." 23 In order to maintain a necessary degree of financial stability, the offerings in particular institutions tend to be determined on the basis of their appeal in terms

of the greatest attendance figures. The result is not only institutional autonomy in devising the programs and activities offered, but also in their evaluation and promotion. The absence of a uniform mode of operation and financial support has made it necessary that the people's colleges "rely upon part-time tutors drawn from the various types of schools, including even the Volksschulen (elementary schools), from the professions, the trade unions, and only to a small extent from the universities." 24

In many instances, local communities provide the necessary physical plant in the organization of a Volkshochschule, while the extent of development of programs and the staffing of the institution generally reflect its popularity within the particular community on the basis of attendance. It has been found that vocational courses and single lectures by well-known personalities provide the source of highest revenue, "so that financial considerations operate to the disadvantage of the more continuous and more intensive activities which appeal to smaller numbers." 25 In view of differing attitudes on the part of the individual state governments, it is difficult to generalize in assessing the status of the Volkshochschule in the Federal Republic. With the exception of North Rhine-Westphalia, where grants

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid., p. 310.
to people's colleges have been instituted by law, it is an obvious fact that both states and local communities have not yet assumed the necessary degree of responsibility in financing and maintaining adult education. In the following section, the philosophy and role of the people's college shall be considered in view of its stated objectives.

**Philosophy and Role of the Volkshochschule**

In historical perspective, the purpose of the Volkshochschule in Germany was to make a liberal education available to the general public. Before 1933, this idea of liberal education was widely interpreted as the individual's acquaintance with diverse areas of knowledge, since such a person was regarded as the educated man (der gebildete Mensch). The definition ascribed to liberal or general education in the period after 1945, is characterized by what may be termed the "existential dimension." It is the function of the modern people's college "to help the individual in developing the potential to be reasonable, in a world which is no longer reasonable."26 Such liberal education then, as it was proposed in the opening pages of this paper, would seek to emancipate the person from the parochialism which all too frequently tends to restrict him from bringing forth the best within himself. The very existence of the

Volkshochschule is predicated upon the needs of modern man. By means of promoting intellectual discourse, the people's college is expected to serve in developing that potential within the individual, which will enable him "to live in a technological world, to realize his role as citizen in a political world, and to exist as a working contributor in a world in which the demands upon his occupation constantly change."  

The forces which served to evoke the idea of German adult education in the late eighteenth century, the processes of industrialization and democratization, are the very roots of the need for the present-day Volkshochschule. Whereas the aims of adult education before 1933 have been regarded as over-idealistic and removed from reality, the post-war increase in social mobility of West German society has enabled the Volkshochschule to pursue the goal of integration among the social strata, with greater adherence to reality.  

The influence of sociological thought in adult education has transformed the people's college into an institution which no longer strives to impart popular culture (Volkskultur) but one which

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27 Ibid.

critically analyzes cultural developments in the present context. The philosophy basic to the function of the Volkshochschule is enlightenment (Aufklärung), so as to penetrate and to explicate that which is, so that it must not be absolute and unchangeable. The people's college is committed to the task of promoting among its participants the necessity for intelligent action as the alternative to passive resignation. It maintains the position that problems which result from misunderstanding and error in judgment can best be resolved by means of personal insight and will. Such a program of enlightenment can best be understood by relating the role of the Volkshochschule to the educational system, to occupational training, and to participation in political matters.

Agencies for adult education, in contrast to all other educational institutions, are entirely voluntary and are not limited by prescribed temporal boundaries. Education in the Volkshochschule is a life-long process which can lead to the quest for the truth about oneself, a quest which remains as unfulfilled now, as it was for Goethe's Faust. It has been found that the people's college is attended more frequently by adults who have attended or completed secondary schooling, than by those who concluded their formal education with the

29 Der Senator für Volksbildung, op. cit., p. 11.
elementary school. Self-realization and enlightenment, one could conclude, are not the inevitable by-product of education in the academic sense, but are instead a manifestation of the process of adult education.

In view of its very nature, the Volkshochschule more closely resembles an association rather than a school, with the emphasis on participation rather than on instruction. The essential differences between the Volkshochschule and formal schooling are characterized by the systematic, long-term accumulation of prescribed subject matter in the latter, whereas the former constitutes a short-term mosaic which stresses information, orientation, and confrontation. In contrast to the "closed" system of the school and its relatively homogeneous student-body, the people's college represents an "open" system, whose audience is diversified both in terms of age and social background. While the school system at all levels operates in accord with uniform plans of instruction (Lehrpläne) based on legal requirements, the agenda (Arbeitspläne) of the Volkshochschule may readily change and are formulated according to local needs and the facilities of the


particular institution. It should also be noted that the staff in formal schools tends to reflect uniformity in regard to professional preparation, whereas practitioners in adult education, who generally perform their function on a part-time basis, reflect considerable diversity in their occupational backgrounds. Although schoolteachers from various levels form the majority of workers in the people's college "(most Ministries of Education encourage teachers to do part-time work in adult education), doctors, clergymen, lawyers, civil servants and others are also to be found teaching in Volkshochschulen."

In view of such differences, the role of the Volkshochschule has been regarded traditionally and erroneously, to be sure, as the antithesis to the process which constitutes formal education. Only more recently, has such a position been subjected to criticism in the literature of German adult education. Numerous proposals, among them examinations and leaving certificates, are seen as attempts to clarify the relationship and continuity which exists between the school and the people's college.

Unlike institutions of higher education or vocational schools, the Volkshochschule is not directly involved in the area of occupational training. Rather, it seeks to develop within the individual a sense of

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awareness and confidence which could lead to a more thorough understanding of and commitment to one's occupational responsibilities.

Although vocational education had been maintained by adult schools during the latter nineteenth century, such programs were not continued in the Volkshochschule under the "new direction" of the 1920's. Since that period, German adult education has been essentially non-vocational while including these activities, nevertheless, which would contribute to the promotion of varied occupations. Among the courses which serve to advance "professional responsibility" are commercial correspondence, bookkeeping, shorthand, mechanical drawing, and foreign trade. 33 The Volkshochschule does not seek to prepare its participants for certain occupations but does provide them with the opportunity to pursue further understanding in areas related to various vocational endeavors. Recent surveys regarding the role of adult education have indicated that the public ascribes to the Volkshochschule the primary function of providing "courses for vocational advancement." 34 With regard to the area of occupational training, the Volkshochschule could perhaps best serve in reducing the traditional German contrast between general and vocational education.


34 Wolfgang Schulenberg, op. cit., p. 25.
Contrary to public opinion, however, the ultimate goal of the people's college is to make possible individual study so as to aid the participant in "his continuous effort to understand himself, the world, and society, and to behave in accord with such understanding."\(^35\) In developing the expression of individual judgment, the Volkshochschule can provide confrontation and divergent points of view, by encouraging participation in the study of political affairs. It is a distinct characteristic of the people's college, as an agent for "free" (independent) adult education, that both teacher and student are given the constant opportunity to deliberate theoretically and factually on political matters.\(^36\) While educating the individual in the mastery of his existence (Daseinsmeisterung), the Volkshochschule performs its function of citizenship education. Its programs for such citizenship education comprise two phases, that of analyzing the differences underlying the East-West conflict on the one hand, and education for the realization of participatory democracy on the other. The Volkshochschule's goal of preparing the enlightened citizen was contained in the opinion of the Deutsche Ausschuss


of January, 1960, in the following definition of adult education:

Adult education is being given wherever people are being trained to form independent decisions with the object of pointing the way to a deeper understanding of life, to a realization of the inter-relationships in the political and social fields, and of stimulating them to fulfill the tasks of civic responsibility and of service to the community instead of isolating themselves in groups.\textsuperscript{37}

The fact that the Volkshochschule contributes to an understanding of the function of formal education, of one's occupation, and one's political awareness, while not surrendering its neutrality in the process, constitutes the idea of free adult education (freie Erwachsenenbildung). In conclusion then, the people's college's commitment to strive for enlightenment and self-realization on the part of its participants, manifests itself most clearly in its role as the agent for citizenship education and continuing occupational training.

\textbf{Content and Processes in the Volkshochschule Program}

Education, it has been said, is that continuity of thought which remains after all factual detail has been forgotten. The usefulness of adult education, therefore, is not seen as the accumulation of further factual data within the several knowledge areas but rather as the attempt to relate their structures into a meaningful whole. Through such a process, the Volkshochschule strives for relevance

\textsuperscript{37}Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 33.
in a time in which ready-made answers and premature judgments can no longer serve as solutions. As the individual's manner of living is continually influenced and often directed by the import of scientific knowledge, it is only reasonable to expect that the content for adult education be closely related to new developments within the fields of knowledge.

Anton Hollmann had concluded earlier that the areas of mathematics and natural science can only become meaningful in the Volkshochschule when the student is permitted to derive their basic principles in a process of personal examination and discovery. The study of history and the application of historical investigation to all other categories of knowledge, he argued, is primary to any content considerations in the Volkshochschule. In the literature regarding current West German adult education, however, content is no longer organized on a historical basis, but rather in a way which would tend toward viewing the relationships among the fields of knowledge. The emphasis now is upon the perspective to be derived from juxtaposition rather than historical inquiry. In such an organization of content, it is suggested, adult education can more adequately complement the treatment of content by the communications media. Whereas developments in various areas of knowledge are descriptively imparted by

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38 Anton Hollmann, *Die Volkshochschule und die geistigen Grundlagen der Demokratie*, op. cit., p. 112.
the media, the people's college offers its participants the opportunity to integrate such findings on a normative basis. In their criticism of formal schooling, adult educators contend that these institutions engage only rarely in the subjective assimilation of the various "subjects." Although the linear approach to content is of considerable value in the laboratory, it is not regarded as desirable in the program of the Volkshochschule.

The traditional reluctance, if not refusal, of academicians to involve themselves in the proceedings of the people's college has been challenged in this paper. Whereas the "popularization" of academic fields on the part of earlier adult education had been the cause for such an attitude, the present de-emphasis upon specialization and the definition of "relevance" as the totality of knowledge are seen as the reason for the current aloofness by German university professors. While scientific thought and academic pursuits are limited to those qualified for them, argued an adult educator and professor recently, knowledge in itself is accessible to all and is a necessary requisite for citizenship education. 39 There is no question among those in adult education as to the relevance and need for the inclusion of academic knowledge fields in the Volkshochschule programs. It is further agreed that scientific developments require "translation" for

use by the layman. How such content should be selected, organized, and translated, however, is a matter of disputation among practitioners in adult education. With regard to the substance of programs in the West German people's college there exists a great degree of diversity, since the responsibility for content organization rests with the particular institution. In the absence of a centralized curriculum authority, the Volkshochschule's offerings are determined in the main by the participants themselves. Such a lack of uniformity, it has been suggested, is desirable in view of the response to individual demands which are necessarily unfulfilled by the various means of mass-education and their emphasis on uniformity of content.

Content, therefore, serves to clarify a particular concern or problem of the audience in the people's college. In the assumption of adult responsibilities, for instance, economics as an academic field can find direct application in the participant's own situation and his standard of living. The understanding of basic economic concepts thus derived, can then be used in a study of national conditions and policies or in an assessment of the so-called West German "economic miracle" (Wirtschaftswunder). It has been found in general that a

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40 Ibid., p. 187.

41 Ibid., p. 225.
combination of content with timely issues has significantly increased participation in the Volkshochschule programs. 42 The following sequence of topics for example, constituted the program for the Volkshochschule of Cologne during the autumn trimester for 1957:

Religion, Philosophy--Literature, Theatre, Film, Music--Fine Arts--Man and Nature--Guided Tours and Excursions--Practical Aids for Better Living--Speech, Choir, Composition, Gymnastics, Dance, Popular Drama--Lettering, Drawing, Painting, Fashion, Workmanship, Photography--German and Arithmetic, Mathematics--Business Studies--Shorthand--Typing--Foreign Languages. 43

Whereas one of several theoretical positions regarding the methodology of American adult education consists of both methods and techniques, whereby methods unlike techniques are culturally determined, no such distinction exists in the methodology of German adult education. 44 The various processes, such as the lecture, the discussion group, the excursion, and correspondence study, are designated as the methods of the Volkshochschule and adult education. It should be noted, however, that methodology in Germany is regarded as more than mere format and that its theory represents the attitude toward, function of, and need for education in a particular cultural context. Professor Franz Pöggeler, an adult educator at the

42 Ibid., p. 258.

43 Ibid.

44 Reference is made to Chapter II, footnote 1, p. 11.
Pädagogische Hochschule Rheinland, has criticized practitioners in the field for their general disregard of methodological considerations due to a widespread fear of "institutionalizing" (Verschulung) adult education. Within adult schooling are methods unique to the area, he argues, so that the frequent borrowing of methods from formal schooling is not necessary. In spite of its long history, it has only been within the last several years that the possibilities of method in German adult education have been explored.

The various processes (Arbeitsformen) of current "Erwachsenenbildung" and their application to the content of people's college programs necessitate planning and pedagogical organization if they are to become meaningful to the participants. In a recent publication, the address (Einzelvortrag), the lecture series (Vortragsreihe), the discussion (Diskussion), the courses of instruction (Lern-Kurse), the artistic workshop (künstlerisch-tätige Arbeitskreis), and the theoretical workshop (theoretische Arbeitskreis) were defined as the processes most frequently employed in the Volkshochschule today. Since the education to be gained from the Abendvolkshochschule is by its very nature fragmentary, however, no one process can be said to

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45 Franz Pöggeler, Methoden der Erwachsenenbildung. Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Herder, 1964, p. V.

be characteristic. Although the offering of the various content categories is extensive in scope, the combination of the method to be used and the participant's needs will lead to an intensive educational process. 47

West German adult educators are in general agreement that the distinction between academic study and popular study is one of method, and that the intellectual and social separation of the two endeavors can no longer be justified. If adult education is to be the expression of democratic education in its true sense, it must maintain an openness to all areas of knowledge and must demonstrate its commitment to the removal of the educational separatism, the traditional adversity between general and vocational education, which still exists. 48 Clearly, the role of content and processes in the West German Volkshochschule is not to assess and to reinforce the boundaries and limits of the several knowledge categories, but rather to serve in finding among them mutual necessities and points of emphasis, so as to stress not the singular validity of an area of knowledge but to assert its universal value in that composite which is life in present-day society.

47 Horst Ruprecht, "Grundfragen methodischer Arbeit in der Erwachsenenbildung," in Bilanz und Perspective, ibid., p. 163.

48 Pöggeler, Inhalte der Erwachsenenbildung, op. cit., p. 235.
CHAPTER VI

SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS: THE GERMAN

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Developments in Adult Education Since 1945

In the period since 1945, the Volkshochschule in the Democratic Republic has undergone a variety of changes so as to serve in the realization of Marxist-Leninist ideology and the development of a socialist state. Between 1945 and 1947 the movement of adult education represented the direction toward a popular front (Volksfront-kurs), with the objective of introducing the population beyond school age to the new political and economic philosophy. Although the people's college in the Soviet zone had assumed its responsibilities very early in the democratization program of the occupation authorities, it has been suggested that the participation of adult educators of the Weimar period obstructed the organization initiated by the Soviet administration.  

In both East Berlin and in the Soviet zone numerous Volks-
hochschulen were established on private initiative in 1945 by non-
Communist educators, whose efforts in adult schooling had ceased
with the advent of the Hitler regime in 1933. The states of Saxony
and Thuringia, it should be noted, had been centers of intellectual
activity in adult education throughout the life of the Weimar Republic.
It is not surprising, therefore, that the objectives of the old adult
schools and the newly re-established Volkshochschule appeared at
least superficially to be similar. While the direction toward a popu-
lar front sought "democracy, anti-fascism, anti-militarism,"
educators of the period before 1933 adhered to the following prin-
ciples: "adult education was completely voluntary; it provided the
types of programs desired by the enrollees; and it was locally admi-
nistered, financed, and controlled, with a minimum of assistance
from central governmental sources." In the actual theory and
practice of adult education, however, these principles differed
fundamentally from the "Socialist" concept of democracy defined
earlier in this paper, and the function of the people's college as the
instrument to "qualify" its participants in fulfilling their responsi-
bilities to party and state.

2Paul S. Bodenman, Education in the Soviet Zone of
The occupation authorities regarded the formation of a centralized system of adult education as a necessary part of the "democratic revolution" which required the re-education of East Germany's adult population. In an effort to establish the structure and distribution of the Volkshochschule, private efforts were continued throughout 1945 and the diversity of content and method were maintained at least temporarily. Communist educators in the Soviet zone generally viewed the centralization and trends toward uniform administration of the people's college as indications of progress in contrast to the eclectic cultural activity of pre-1933 German adult education. "The Volkshochschule is no longer merely tolerated," it was announced, "but it has instead become part of the state's interest and is generously supported."³ By 1946 the people's college was seen as a necessary means in the realization of a Socialist democratic order which was to be based on the needs of the working population and progressive intellectuals.

The trends toward centralization of both organization and work of the Volkshochschule were officially declared as the objectives of Order Number 22, issued by the Soviet Military Administration on January 23, 1946. Its provisions included the establishment of people's colleges "in larger cities in order to disseminate general

and political knowledge among adults and youth. " Both the Order and an attached statute regarding the direction of the Volkshochschule were characterized by the demand for centralized control and a prescribed course of study. The new responsibility for adult education was set forth in the following five points:

(1) they were to conduct their work according to a unified course of study which was to be issued by the German Central-administration for Public Education and to be authorized by the Soviet Military Administration; (2) the Volkshochschulen were to be directly supervised by the Minister for Adult Education of the five Länder; (3) the local communities were obligated to support their people's colleges financially; (4) the directors of the particular institutions were to be selected by the German Central-administration for Public Education and to initiate its program; and (5) the faculty (Dozentenrat) was to consist of representatives of the political parties, the Cultural Councils, the Free German Trade Union Federation, and Anti-fascist committees, who were to guide the ideological work of the people's college.  

With the implementation of the provisions of Order Number 22, it had become an obvious fact that the East German Volkshochschule would differ radically from its predecessors in both structure and objectives.

By 1949 a basic network of people's colleges had been established, consisting of institutions in all major cities of the five Länder. It should be noted, however, that the Abendvolkshochschule was by far the most common form of the people's college in the

4Paul S. Bodenman, op. cit., p. 117.

5H. Gutsche, op. cit., p. 31 (author's translation).
Soviet zone, a fact which can be attributed to the relative shortage of time as a result of working schedules. A further regulation issued by the Soviet High Command in January, 1948 was Order Number 5, which called for "the expansion of the system through the development of new schools in county seats and larger cities and the establishment of branches in small towns and in large industries." In order to attain a democratic re-education in Germany which would comprise all social strata, the Order required the immediate expansion of the network of people's colleges particularly in rural areas, where the education of adults had been traditionally neglected. Clearly, the East German Volkshochschule had been prepared administratively and structurally to support the objectives of the two-year economic plan (Wirtschaftsplan), which was introduced in 1948 to raise the level of the productivity of labor.

The two-year plan represented the "Planned Direction of Social Progress," comprising the period 1948-1950. The primary responsibility of the people's college was seen as the occupational qualification of the working population in accord with the needs of economic planning. The basic principle underlying the development of adult education in the Soviet zone, to be sure, was the need for

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6 Bodenman, op. cit., p. 118.

unity of organization as a prerequisite to ideological unity. The "Volksfrontkurs" period had served in establishing the former, whereas the latter was the immediate responsibility of the "Direction for Social Progress." The ideological objectives of the Volkshochschule were publicized at the people's college Congress which met in the Soviet sector of Berlin during April, 1948. The new goal of the Volkshochschule was

the unification of the population through political and scientific courses of instruction, the training of industrial workers, engineers, technicians, clerks, and agricultural workers in the basic principles of Socialist production and utilization of resources, and to conduct courses so as to enable the laboring and farming population in attaining academic qualification for admission to polytechnical and agricultural colleges.  

The success of the people's college in instituting the two-year plan was evaluated at a Conference of directors of Volkshochschulen in East Berlin in November, 1948. In summarizing the achievements for the first year of operation, the directors cited the following figures:

One hundred and six adult schools existed with 241 branches; 12,047 courses with 284,070 students in 1947-48; 24 per cent of the students representing the working classes, 39 per cent, administrative officials; 2,784 teachers, 1,704 of whom were university graduates.  

Although substantial progress was acknowledged, the system of

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9 Bodenman, op. cit., p. 118.
people's colleges was criticized for its failure to attract a sufficient proportion of students from the laboring and agricultural population, commensurate to their importance in the new social order. The Volkshochschule as a whole, it was objected at the Conference, lacked the necessary schooling characteristics, such as examinations and certificates; in view of the scientific and methodological weaknesses on the part of the faculty, for the most part, an insufficient number of people's college branches had been established within industry and in rural areas. 10 As a consequence, the guidelines for 1948-50, issued by the Adult Education section of the German Central-administration for Public Education required the formation of at least one Volkshochschule in every city and county, and one Heimvolkshochschule in each of the five states. The guidelines also provided for the creation of inspection districts in order to insure the completion of the adult education program under the two-year plan.

It was observed in chapter four of this study that the government of the German Democratic Republic was officially constituted in October, 1949. A report issued in the following year indicated that the people's college had reached an audience of 500,000 persons, a figure which more than satisfied the requirements set forth in 1948. 11

10 Gutsche, op. cit., p. 39.

11 Ibid., p. 43.
Although the formation of Volkshochschule branches within industry had already been undertaken during the two-year plan, the industry people's college (Betriebsvolkshochschule), a concept unique to the Democratic Republic, was introduced in 1951. The new institution was based upon a "system of 'delegation' under which workers were assigned to particular courses during working hours."\(^\text{12}\) The emphasis on meeting the needs of the workers was strengthened in light of this development and resulted in the fact that laboring persons constituted the majority of Volkshochschule participants. The first five-year plan, introduced in 1951, provided for the explicit occupational qualifications of working people in the area of adult education. To attain the projected enrollment of one million in the Volkshochschulen by 1955, "contests, premiums, certificates, and similar devices, just as in industry, were introduced to assist in meeting quotas and objectives."\(^\text{13}\) Under the five-year plan, directors and teachers in people's colleges were required to structure their work in the manner of a school, to administer examinations, and to operate within a framework of Socialist ideology by abandoning private educational measures. In order to achieve the necessary degree of unity in adult education, the directorship of the Volkshochschulen had been

\(^{12}\text{Bodenman, op. cit., p. 119.}\)

\(^{13}\text{Ibid.}\)
staffed since the formation of the Democratic Republic by members of the Socialist Unity Party (SED).

By 1952, those people's colleges which had successfully developed curricula leading to university entrance were designated as evening secondary schools (Abendoberschulen) and were recognized as separate institutions in the East German educational system. The continuity which existed between adult education and the various institutions of higher education including the universities were intended for "the recruitment of a new generation of intellectuals from the ranks of the working and agrarian population." With the establishment of the Democratic Republic's Ministry of Culture in 1954 a major change in administration occurred with regard to the Volkshochschulen which became, as a result, the responsibility of that new office. The transition was of further significance in that it involved the formation of fourteen administrative districts after the disbanding of the five Länder. By means of such centralization educationally and politically, adult education became a part of "mass cultural work." In the course of the five-year plan, the cooperative programs of the people's colleges and the Free German Federation of Trade Unions (Freie Deutsche Gewerkschafts-Bund) proved to be an

14 Gutsche, op. cit., p. 49.
15 Bodenman, op. cit., p. 119.
important development in East German adult education. Under the two-year plan the tasks of the two institutions were clearly separated, so that the former conducted general polytechnical courses, while the latter was responsible for courses in specific occupational areas. After 1951, however, the Volkshochschule began to assume most of the Federation's educational activity, whereby the Unions remained active only in a cooperative administrative capacity. As a result, the people's colleges were enabled to strive realistically toward the projected enrollment of one million participants. In June of 1955 Otto Grotewohl, then Minister-President of the Democratic Republic, announced the operation of 224 city and county Volkshochschulen with 3,000 branches in local communities and in industry. 16

By 1955 the people's colleges had attained a considerable degree of continuity with institutions of higher education. During the two-year plan period, "worker and farmer chairs" (Arbeiter-und Bauern-Fakultäten) were established at all universities and at several colleges within the Soviet zone. It was the primary purpose of such faculties to aid children from working and farming families in achieving admission to higher schools by means of a special sequence of

16 Gutsche, op. cit., p. 63.
educational experiences. In the mid 1950's, as preparation for the final phase in the development of the Socialist state, adult education in the Democratic Republic was directly affected by a series of developments within the entire educational system. Among these measures were "the introduction of evening and correspondence courses in technical schools; correspondence courses at universities; and the expansion of vocational and technical schools in industry." In order to re-define the function of people's colleges in light of such changes, the Politburo of the SED instituted the transfer of the responsibility for the Volkshochschulen from the Ministry of Culture to the Ministry of Public Education in 1957. In his study of East German adult education during the 1950's Heinz Gutsche identified three major points of emphasis characteristic of "Erwachsenenbildung" in the Democratic Republic. Through uniform national measures, in the first place, adult education sought not only the participation of every "comrade" (Genosse) in the programs of the Volkshochschule, but it promoted the development of bodies of activists, committed to the ideals of the East German social order. While personal aims in adult schooling were de-emphasized, group

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17 Ibid., p. 87.
18 Bodenman, op. cit., p. 119.
19 Gutsche, op. cit., p. 86.
identity among the participants and the formation of cadres (Kader) was vigorously encouraged. Secondly, adult education had become one means in a highly diverse system of "cultural mass work" or "cultural enlightenment" in order to promote ideological and political cooperation among the population beyond school age. "Cultural mass work" represented the centralized effort on the part of all institutions, political and social, as well as the communication media in attaining the required "Socialist unity." The third characteristic was the fact that adult education had largely become the evening school for adults (Abendschule), comprising the "Abendoberschule" and similar curricula in the Volkshochschulen. The evening schools emphasized the content of the elementary, middle, or secondary schools, administered respective examinations, and issued certificates of value equal to those of the formal schools. By 1959, the Western idea of free "Erwachsenenbildung" had as its counterpart, a highly centralized and politically active system of East German "Erwachsenen-qualifizierung."

The function of the people's colleges and all other agencies for adult education in serving to increase the economic strength of the Democratic Republic was established in the seven-year plan which was issued on October 1, 1959. The goal of a "Socialist
national culture" required of each person

(1) complete dedication to the state (patriotism, moral and political unity of all citizens, bolshevist party affiliation),
(2) education for work (new attitude toward labor as an honorable endeavor, socialist contests, heroism of the masses in struggle and in work), and (3) conscious discipline in the collective (identity of interest in both the individual and collective sense, awareness and self-criticism as democratic methods in the development and fulfillment of the personality). 20

It is Heinz Gutsche's conclusion that the present system of adult education in the Democratic Republic represents a copy of the structure extant in the USSR, and that its very development was coordinated in light of the Soviet Union's industrial and agricultural requirements. Such an assertion would appear to indicate that East Germany has completed its final phase of societal development, namely the completion of a Socialist state. At the fourth Party Conference of the SED in 1963, previous educational achievements were critically reviewed and a complete unification of the educational structure (Vereinheitlichung) was ordered. Consequently, the House of Deputies of the Republic passed the "Regulations governing the unified Socialist-educational system" in February, 1965. With the purpose of intensifying the country's economic basis and technological progress, all educational institutions were declared as being

"pervious (durchlässig), by providing in various yet clearly defined means the attainment of higher education including university study.\textsuperscript{21} The philosophy and role of the East German Volkshochschule in the course of its development and within the unified educational system shall be examined more thoroughly in the following section.

**Philosophy and Role of the Volkshochschule**

As early as 1946, Volkshochschulen in the Soviet zone of Germany were established by order of the Soviet occupation authorities to aid in the realization of a general culture and a general level of education so as to provide the basis for democratic life. From this very beginning their curricula emphasized the theoretical and practical implementation of the philosophy of Marxist-Leninist dialectical materialism and reflected the dual purpose of political education and continuing vocational training. In the period since 1945, consisting of several phases of development leading from the Soviet occupied zone to the German Democratic Republic, the role of the Volkshochschule has changed from education for Socialist democracy then, to training for vocational competence and industrial progress, to education for political activism, and finally to the

the qualification for higher education and occupational advancement.

At the first cultural conference of the German Communist Party (KPD), held in Berlin during February, 1946, the purpose of the East German adult education program was defined as follows:

The transmission of this knowledge general and political, schooling in the spirit of democracy, does not take place for its own sake, but to train the students of the adult schools as activists in the struggle for democratic reconstruction. The adult schools do not have the objective of transmitting knowledge for its own sake; their goal is to make this knowledge a weapon for our practical, social, and political work.22

The function of the Volkshochschule was to participate actively and directly in establishing a democratic concept new to German culture, so as to develop mass-culture and mass-education as the means for a class-less Socialist society. The role of the Volkshochschule during the "Volksfrontkurs" period (1945-47) clearly indicates that a carefully planned program of reorganization of German society could not begin without an understanding on the part of the adult population of the concept of mass democracy. The literature regarding the function of people's colleges throughout this initial period consistently emphasized the qualities of "democracy, anti-fascism, and anti-militarism" latent within the German people.

Training for vocational competence and industrial progress, summarized in the slogan "technical qualification of workers,"

22 Bodenman, op. cit., p. 117.
increasingly came to be the function of the Volkshochschule under the previously-mentioned two-year plan and during the period of "social progress" (1948-50). The two-year plan represented the program of action whereby the working classes were to assume the direction of East Germany's new economic order. An increase in the productivity of labor, it was argued, could only be attained through the awareness on the part of all workers in their social obligation and their commitment to Socialist production. Although all mass-organizations emphasized this goal, it could be most efficiently established in the process of adult education. The Conference of Volkshochschule directors at Berlin in 1948 declared the primary objective of the people's college as being "the practical and ideological support of the working class in its struggle for the fulfillment of the two-year plan. Its goal is the training of politically conscious, vocationally qualified activists from the ranks of the adult working classes." To achieve its end, the work of adult education was in 1948 directly connected with the needs of industry and its continuity to the programs of formal schools was outlined and emphasized. It should be noted that although a residential people's college (Heimvolkshochschule) was established in


24Bodenman, op. cit., p. 118.
each of the five Länder under the two-year plan, its only role was to serve in the education of teachers for the regular Volkshochschulen. Although the philosophy underlying the work of both institutions was identical in view of the need for uniformity, their content, however, reflected their different purposes.

With the introduction of the industry people's colleges (Betriebsvolkshochschulen) in 1951, a further delineation of responsibilities ensued. Whereas the new industrial institution was directly involved in vocational training and the formation of public factories (Volkseigene Betriebe), the traditional Volkshochschule assumed greater responsibility for general and political education, for the education toward political activism, and for continuing occupational training. The need for political activism, while stressed by the provisions of the five-year plan, had been intensified with the organization of the governing body of the Democratic Republic in 1949. Not only fully committed to Socialist ideology, but also manifesting the combination of personal ambition and social consciousness, political activists were to become the product of the people's colleges. In carrying out this objective, the Volkshochschulcn were required to convene annually at least one week-long conference for "audience activists." 

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25 Gutsche, op. cit., p. 43.
As a result of the reorganization of adult education in 1956 and the formation of the "Abendoberschule," a new role of the Volks-hochschule was announced by the Ministry of Public Education in July, 1957. To serve in the qualification of adults for higher education and for further occupational advancement, people's colleges were to "present systematic courses of study based on the courses of study of the general school" which were to end with an examination. In addition, certificates issued after successful completion of the new programs were to have documentary validity. A regulation for the planned and systematic process of "adult qualification," a term which was introduced with the seven-year plan in 1959, was issued in September, 1962, for the completion of the "Worker and Farmer State." The regulation acknowledged the Volkshochschule as the institution responsible for the coordination of all programs for public adult "qualification" in each of the fourteen administrative districts. Its educational function comprised the areas of political, general, and vocational education. The people's college's role in executing a comprehensive program of adult education in the areas

26 Bodenman, op. cit., p. 120.

of content, methods, and organization was to comprise the following:

(a) in the area of general education, particularly the social sciences, mathematics, and natural science,
(b) for vocational qualification, inasmuch as it cannot be conducted by other educational establishments,
(c) for women in preparation toward an occupational activity corresponding to the needs of the national economic situation,
(d) for the pedagogical and methodological qualification of part-time teachers of adult qualification,
(e) for the participants of radio network and television adult education. 28

The active participation in the development of the Democratic Republic by all adults, it is argued, is not automatically attained by advanced age or one's vocational activity, but it can only be realized through a continuous process of education. Only through systematic and ideologically-oriented adult qualification, suggested East Germany's Premier Walter Ulbricht during the seventh Party Conference of the SED in 1967, can the "cultural level" of each citizen be developed. 29 As a result, adult education in the Democratic Republic is seen as an inseparable necessity in the functioning of that state.

**Content and Processes in the Volkshochschule Program**

Like the changes in the role of the Volkshochschule throughout the course of the Democratic Republic's development, a study of

28 Ibid., p. 85 (author's translation).

29 Ibid., p. 169.
the content in the people's college programs is also characterized by periodic revisions. As the first people's colleges were founded in the Soviet zone soon after the cessation of hostilities and the demarcation of the occupied zones in 1945, their curricula consisted largely of foreign languages (primarily Russian, English, and French) and vocational training. In their first year of operation the Volkshochschulen in East Germany widely demonstrated the diversity in their programs which had been the tradition of that institution before 1933.

As a result of economic planning during the following two years, "more and more emphasis was placed on the adult schools as training centers for the improvement of technical workers and the development of industrial and agricultural personnel."30 Courses were offered in dialectical materialism, Marxism, and political economy which, during the initial period, appeared to diminish attendance figures for the Volkshochschulen. Gutsche had found in the course of his analysis that in the early years (1945-47), both content and processes were still widely determined by the participants and were only rarely manipulated by the occupation authorities. The new social sciences did not, in general, permeate the programs of instruction, although their increasing emphasis was manifested first in the areas of literature, biology, and art.31 In the overall Volkshochschule

30 Bodenman, op. cit., p. 118.
program, however, "ideological courses" represented an isolated area and only later heavily stressed the ideas of Marx and Engels in the humanities and Darwinian thought in the natural sciences.

In spite of such early separatism of thought, the expansion of the Adult Education section of the German Central-administration for Public Education and the creation of inspection districts, required the formation and regulation of uniform content and processes in the people's colleges. The guidelines for 1948-49, issued by the Central-administration, introduced

new courses of study in the foundations of scientific socialism, history, history of world literature, law, industrial economics, techniques of intellectual work, geology, journalism, current affairs, economic history, economic geography, technology, scientific agriculture, systematic philosophy, economic planning, and statistics.  

New curricular proposals not only reflected the objective to relate theoretical matters to practical considerations, but indicated additionally the combination of Socialist thought with the several knowledge areas. The guidelines proposed further that course sequences, which would meet the requirements for university entrance, were to be developed.

With the transfer of complete responsibility for the entire adult education system from the Soviet Military Administration to the government of the German Democratic Republic in 1949, a uniform
program of operation (Arbeitsplan) was issued for the "improvement of extant centralized lesson plans for political economy, history of philosophy, German Language and Literature, Darwinism, Mathematics, Education, Physics, Chemistry, Russian, Botany and Zoology." The formulation of such programs was to be the combined effort of people's college faculties, the representatives of public factories (Volkseigene Betriebe), and authorities of the Ministry of Public Education. While the lecture (Vortrag) and the workshop (Arbeitskreis), traditional processes in German adult education, were retained in the East German Volkshochschule, the general manner of operation by 1950 corresponded to that in the formal schools. Gutsche suggested that adult education had become a goal-directed, rigid, and Party-oriented process. In order to lend effectiveness to the processes in the people's college, the authorities introduced the use of incentives, such as contests, certificates, and premiums, a practice common in the Soviet Union.

In the industry people's colleges which were first established in 1951, a unified course of study was implemented in 1959. In the process of this development they have become separate institutions and have more recently been referred to as industrial academies

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33 Gutsche, op. cit., p. 41.
34 Ibid., p. 54.
(Betriebsakademien). Under the seven-year plan, their curriculum has come to consist of the following areas:

(1) Social Science, (a) Marxism-Leninism (dialectical and historical materialism as well as history of international and German labor movements); (b) Industrial Economy (political economy, labor economy, labor law, economy of the industrial sector); (c) Psychology (materialistic psychology, analytical psychology of labor establishments and psychology of utilization of labor time); (d) Pedagogy (pre-school, school, and post-school education, independent schooling, pedagogy and professional schooling, polytechnical education). (2) Technology and Natural Sciences. (3) Questions of Cultural Politics. 35

In view of such a plan of study, the "goal-directed" character of the Betriebsvolkshochschule is an obvious matter.

The structure of the regular Volkshochschule's program comprises four major categories:

(1) a sequence of evening classes with systematically arranged courses which lead to completion of the eighth, the tenth, or the twelfth year of elementary schooling;
(2) preparatory courses of study which can lead to admission for vocational higher schools, higher trade schools, or colleges for several professions; (3) courses of instruction for continuing vocational education; and (4) single courses with and without concluding examinations. 36

The last category consists of courses in the areas of social science, education, psychology, foreign languages, mathematics, the natural sciences, art, and literature. The Volkshochschule, therefore,


36Karl A. Grünner, op. cit., p. 246 (author's translation).
affords each citizen the opportunity to pursue "qualification" in a variety of vocational and knowledge areas for the purpose of either occupational advancement or enlightenment. The processes in the people's college are by necessity different from those of formal schooling since the majority of participants are actively involved in the East German industrial and agricultural sector. The characteristics which tend to distinguish the participant in Socialist adult "qualification" have recently been identified as follows:

(1) the participant is primarily involved in work; (2) the social consciousness and the identification with the working classes is more strongly marked in the worker-participant; (3) the worker-participant possesses a greater degree of occupational and life experience; (4) the worker-participant is more fully and more clearly aware of his interests toward the process of instruction; and (5) worker-participants bring to the qualification process highly diversified educational levels. 37

It should be noted in conclusion that the German Democratic Republic requires of each citizen the highest realization of his potential and its application in the practical endeavors which lead to economic and social progress. In view of such a relation between individual and state which is said to represent the manifestation of Socialist democracy, not only students and academicians, but persons active in the processes of production as well, are in need of

continuous learning. Adult qualification (education), with its major emphasis upon the practical and the useful, is seen as the primary agent in furthering both individual and social progress.
CHAPTER VII

COMPARATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE TWO SYSTEMS

AND GUARDED CONCLUSIONS

The present study is not political in nature. It was not intended here, as is so often the case in the relations between the Federal Republic and the Democratic Republic, to view the matter of adult education within the narrow confines which are immediately imposed by ideological limitations. Rather, the objective in completing the analyses with a comparative assessment is to examine the function of the Volkshochschule within the context of each political state so as to ascertain both the similarities and the differences where they are found to exist, and not in evaluating the theoretical and practical developments of one country in terms of a set of standards relevant only to another. Ultimately, the value of the very process of adult education itself can only be defined and determined by the participant in that process. The goal of adult education, as it is perceived by this writer in the introduction to this study, is not regarded as an apology but rather as the frame of reference for the ideas which will be derived by means of a comparative assessment.
Philosophy and Role of the Volkshochschulen

In both the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic adult education, although conducted by a variety of social institutions, is nevertheless the primary purpose of the Volkshochschule. Each of the two countries regards the people's college as the overt manifestation of its democratic process, yet it is as a result of this dichotomy regarding the concept of democracy, that the term "Volkshochschule" represents a completely different institution in each of the two nations. Whereas the democratic concept basic to adult education in West Germany is founded upon the combination of representation and participatory decision-making in the processes of government, the East German idea emphasizes egalitarianism beyond the political context which is to be found in its class-less proletarian mass democracy. Consequently, the people's college in the former society is a completely autonomous and locally-controlled institution, while in the latter it demonstrates very little local control and is highly centralized. Participation in adult education in the Federal Republic is entirely voluntary and based upon the needs and the will of the individual. In the Democratic Republic, although it is largely a voluntary matter, the individual's obligation to his state necessitates participation in the process of adult "qualification."
While West German "freie Erwachsenenbildung" (free adult education) follows the tradition which began in the 1890's, namely to be completely independent of political ideology and church domination, its East German counterpart represents an integral segment of the state's system of "mass culture" and is marked by heavy emphasis upon political activism. In contrast to the Federal Republic's stress on liberal and general education in the Volkshochschule program, general education is considerably less emphasized in the Democratic Republic. Such curricular emphasis could perhaps be attributed to the fact that in the former country a lesser degree of importance is given to the establishment of a rigidly organized economic and political order. As a further indication of this trend one may note that in the West the Volkshochschule is an institution distinctly separate and different from the formal schools, whereas in the East it is an important part of the unified Socialist educational system (particularly since the regulation of February, 1965) and is complementary and similar in structure to formal education. While the Heimvolkshochschule offers residential adult education on a prolonged and more systematic basis to participants in the Federal Republic, the residential people's college in the Democratic Republic is no longer intended for the participants in adult "qualification" but has become instead the institution for the training of teachers for the Volkshochschule. The difference in purpose is due to the need for committed
activists who can best serve in the formation of cadres of worker-participants. The objective of such training is the promotion of Socialist ideology in all areas of work and study.

The period since 1945 in both countries represents in general the collapse of a traditionally rigid system of social classes, which has manifested itself increasingly in social mobility and in the development of a fluid society. In West Germany the result of such mobility is seen in the increased standard of living and in the completion of the economic miracle (Wirtschaftswunder) as the consequence of its system of corporate capitalism and private enterprise. In East Germany, on the other hand, economic and social progress have been regarded as the result of the successful implementation of state capitalism and the introduction of Socialist life with the idea of collective ownership (Volkseigene Wirtschaft). While the Federal Republic, in view of its economic needs, maintains in adult education only some degree of vocational training which is to be seen as continuing education for occupational advancement, adult qualification in the Democratic Republic consists of extensive course programs for vocational education. The establishment of the "Betriebsvolkshochschule" serves as an example of the Socialists' emphasis upon the preparation for practical work. In contrast, vocational training in the West is the direct responsibility of industry and the various
vocational schools since the Volkshochschule is not an official part of the overall educational system.

In summary then, the role of adult education in the West is primarily citizenship education with considerable emphasis upon individual decision-making. In aiding the person in the process of mastering his existence (Daseinsmeisterung), the people's college fulfills its purpose. The process of adult qualification in the East represents the objective of education for political activism and cadre responsibility, whereby the individual realizes his self and his state of being in the collective.

Content and Processes in the Volkshochschule Programs

The sharp contrasts regarding the philosophy and role of the Volkshochschule between the Federal Republic and the Democratic Republic are also to be found in terms of the content and processes of adult education in both countries. While it may be noted in general that adult educators in the former context frequently express concern over the institutionalizing (Verschulung) of the people's colleges, the opposite exists in East German adult education where the Volkshochschule has in fact become a "school" in the institutional sense. The people's college staff in West Germany is characterized by diversity in training as well as personal objectives, whereas the faculty in its counterpart is uniformly trained and generally demonstrates a
uniformity of purpose. Such uniformity of content has been seriously questioned by Pöggeler in view of its implication for democratic action. When adult education is transformed into a mass-process for the popularization of ideology, he argues, the adult is not afforded the opportunity to examine content critically and to evaluate its truth; adult education becomes a prescription and ceases to be an incentive for independent thought. ¹ One must observe, however, that the application of academic content and the various knowledge areas all too often does not involve the participation of representatives from the West German institutions of higher learning. In the Democratic Republic, on the other hand, considerable continuity of structure exists between the people's college and higher schools which also involves the cooperative planning by the faculties of both institutions.

Curricular emphasis in Volkshochschulen of both countries would appear to suggest that adult education in the Federal Republic stresses further occupational and professional training, whereas vocational courses and worker education for industry and agriculture constitute the major responsibility of adult education in the Democratic Republic. The program in the West German people's college consists largely of content from the academic and theoretical knowledge fields reflecting some emphasis on its practical application,

¹Franz Pöggeler, Inhalte der Erwachsenenbildung, op. cit., p. 207.
while the several knowledge fields in East Germany are seen in terms of Marxist-Leninist philosophy and almost exclusively in light of their implementation in practice. In contrast to the Federal Republic's diverse and locally-determined curricula in adult education, those of the program for adult qualification are highly centralized and relatively uniform in structure.

The similarity of people's colleges to formal schools in the Democratic Republic has already been indicated. The processes of adult education there, are generally uniform throughout the country and are similar to the methods of regular schools, while processes in the West German Volkshochschulen vary among the institutions and are different from the methodology of formal education. The "schooling" nature of East German adult qualification is further reflected in its "Lehrpläne" (instructional programs or lesson plans), as opposed to the more loosely organized guidelines or "Arbeitspläne" (plans of work or programs of operation) which are characteristic of people's colleges in the Federal Republic. In addition, a survey of adult education in the Democratic Republic reflects an emphasis upon examinations and certificates in order to maintain its continuity with formal schools and to insure its utilitarian nature. West German adult educators, on the other hand, have only recently begun an exploration as to the feasibility of examinations and certificates in the work of adult education, which has resulted in several proposals for their
introduction in the programs of the Volkshochschulen. In order to
 gain academic status, numerous West German Abendvolkshoch-
 schulen have sought to become "Abendgymnasien" (evening secondary
 schools) by means of revising their curricula and by administering
 the necessary examinations. Pöggeler contends that as a consequence
 of their inclusion into the unified Socialist educational system, the
 East German people's colleges have deviated from the traditional con-
 cept of adult education and have become the state's responsibility.²
 Adult educators in the Democratic Republic, however, justify their
 position in terms of the occupational needs which resulted through a
 transformation of that country's entire social structure. In the com-
 pletion of the Socialist state, it is argued, the rigid incorporation of
 adult education into the national educational system was deemed as
 necessary.³

 Finally, the relevance of content in West German adult edu-
 cation is determined by the individual participant and is only then, in
 view of his needs and his potential, applied to the social context. The
 content of East German adult qualification, however, must be socially

 ² Franz Pöggeler, Methoden der Erwachsenenbildung, op. cit., p. 352.

 ³ Erdmann Harke, "Einige Ergebnisse einer Untersuchung
 zu den Besonderheiten erwachsener Teilnehmer im Unterricht an der
 Volkshochschule Halle (Saale)" in Institut für Erwachsenenbildung (ed.),
 Beiträge zur sozialistischen Erwachsenenbildung, op. cit., p. 381.
significant and relevant to national goals and needs in order to be relevant to the individual participant in his responsibility to the state. It should be noted in the final analysis that the Volkshochschule in the Federal Republic is not radically different from adult education in the people's college before 1933, while that institution in the Democratic Republic, with its emphasis upon adult "qualification," represents a new concept of the Volkshochschule which has been formed since 1945.

**Summary and Conclusions**

Adult education in Germany has a long tradition which reflects the quest for attaining human dignity and well-being as the ultimate goal. In fulfilling its purpose, adult education has, since its beginning in the independent German states of the early nineteenth century, sought to attain objectives which tend to reflect the Zeitgeist in which they had originated. Until 1871, as the result of increasing industrialization and the democratic concept of free and equal man, the purpose of adult schooling was labor education. In spite of domination in political and social life by the upper class and German nobility, the development of a middle class of industrial management officials was to effect a transformation in the social structure which would manifest itself most significantly in adult education. With the unification of the several states into the German nation in 1871, the emphasis in adult education during the period from 1871 until the
1890's was marked primarily by political education and nationalism. The "Neue Richtung" (new direction) period in adult schooling (1890's-1920) reflected a sense of political neutrality, while stressing the popularization of academic knowledge areas. It was in this period that the concept of a "Volkshochschule" was developed in Germany. The three streams of thought which were influential in the formulation of the German "people's college" were the English ideas of (1) university extension courses (Volkstümliche Hochschulkurse) and (2) round-table discussion, and (3) the Danish concept of popular education. In the years from 1920 until 1933, largely as the consequence of destruction through war and the chaotic economic situation, the Volkshochschule sought to initiate a German renaissance whereby a new level of cultural awareness and nationalism could be realized. In the hope of restoring to each person a sense of individualism as the alternative to the threat of an increasingly technological way of life, adult educators of the Weimar period tended to idealize the withdrawal to the tranquility and romantic existence of the nineteenth century Danish folkschool. The unrealistic nature of the Volkshochschule thus conceived marked the end of the "new direction" and the beginning of a period of adult schooling under the Hitler regime where all individualism had vanished in the face of National Socialist ideology.

From 1945 until the present, adult education in the Volks-

hochschule has developed in both the Federal Republic of Germany
and the German Democratic Republic in response to varied national goals and distinctly different orientations as to the meaning of democracy. Whereas the Volkshochschule in the former context strives toward citizenship education emphasizing the individual's role in a democracy, and vocational continuing education, its goal in the latter represents a combination of education for democratic "Socialist life" and vocational education. It is concluded here, that social progress in the Federal Republic has been achieved indirectly as the result of adult education, whereas it has been attained in considerable measure as the direct result of adult "qualification" in the Democratic Republic.

The literature from both countries tends to indicate that the Volkshochschule as the primary institution for adult education in each, is presently in a period of revision in West Germany. Although its objectives have long been established, its structure and the means in achieving its ends have been critically reviewed and proposals regarding such changes as the introduction of examinations have been formulated in a number of states. The people's college in East Germany, on the other hand, has in the period since 1945 been fully developed to meet its purposes, which unlike its counterpart in the West are issued by the national government and not by the particular institution itself. In general, however, adult education in both countries has reflected an increasing emphasis upon citizenship education (Mit-
bürger in the Federal Republic, Genosse in the Democratic Republic) as compared with the stress on national ideals and cultural tradition of pre-1933 German adult education. It may be concluded that the West German Volkshochschule, while asserting its relevance to the total population, has failed in its responsibility of meeting both the intellectual and social needs of the worker.

The idea of freedom in the Federal Republic implies "academic emancipation," while freedom in the Democratic Republic is to be attained by means of "vocational emancipation." It is suggested here, that the completion of an academic course of study frees the individual in West Germany for participation in the economic, political, and social aspects of his existence. Through the realization of his function in contributing to the increase in the level of productivity and by commitment to the social order and its needs on the other hand, the East German is free to participate economically, politically, and socially. In view of its isolated and terminal nature, the West German Volkshochschule's programs do not presently lead to the necessary academic qualification. In addition, it does not appear likely that the traditional emphasis upon certification will be banished at once in order to institute the idea of free and equal man. It is obvious, therefore, that adult education as it is conducted in the West German Volkshochschule is a marginal enterprise. In contrast, however, the program of the East German people's college leads both to
academic qualification and admission to all levels of the educational structure, as well as to vocational qualification in various areas of agricultural and industrial work. From its inception in 1946 until the present time, the Volkshochschule in the Democratic Republic has developed into a non-marginal, highly integrated educational institution.

From its beginning in the nineteenth century until 1933, adult education in Germany was referred to as "Volksbildung," implying popular education or referring to the education of a people in the collective sense. It should be noted that the word "Volk" during this period carried a class distinction and in certain instances of usage a derogatory meaning. Adult education consequently had come to suggest education for the lower social class. Not until the advent of the Nazi regime did this linguistic implication change, when the term "Volk" acquired the meaning of national identity. Territorial expansion, "racial" policies, and National Socialist ideology as a whole were almost synonymous to the word "Volk." Adult education after 1945 assumed the term "Erwachsenenbildung" to indicate primarily that the Volkshochschule and its programs were intended for the education of the adult population. While serving to define the scope of adult education on the one hand, the new term invested the process of adult schooling with a sense of respectability on the other. Whereas "Erwachsenenbildung" has continued in use in the Federal
Republic until the present, the Democratic Republic introduced the concept of "Erwachsenenqualifizierung" with its nine-year plan in 1959, a word which is most descriptive as to the objective of qualifying adults academically and vocationally.

It must be noted that at the present time relations between the two countries do not contribute to the exchange or interaction with regard to adult education. A significant number of adults in West and East Germany still maintain the necessity for political unification. A unification of purposes, whether political or educational, between the Federal Republic and the Democratic Republic is unrealistic as well as impossible, since the two are different societies whose ends and the means to attain them, do not reflect similarities and are no longer compatible. The diversity in adult education for example, is so great that the very concept has attained a different meaning in each of the two countries and that the only similarity is to be found in the word "Volkshochschule." Although the need for intellectual exchanges and visitations between the two does exist and is regarded here as desirable, continuing references to the Democratic Republic, which was established as a political entity in 1949, as the "Soviet occupied zone of Germany" by such writers as Paul Bodenman, Heinz Gutsche, and Franz Poggeler, do not encourage such relations.

In both countries the Volkshochschule has developed on the basis of a common origin, yet its differences in each context reflect
the needs and the aspirations of the society wherein it exists. In the final analysis, however, the function of the people's college can be evaluated only in terms of its relevance to the individual. The Volkshochschule has been regarded as "the school for life." Progress in adult education is seen here as the product of creative efforts on the part of teachers and participants in fulfilling through adult education their objectives and their purposes in life. In conclusion, therefore, adult education, like art, seeks to bring forth the best that is within the individual and which serves as the reflection of his attitude toward life.
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