

Student life in Zurich

LIFE AMONG THE POLYGLOTS

BY ROBERT WEIDMAN, '31

HARD, staccato Hungarian, soft, spineless Polish, the by now quite familiar and pleasant sound of German, musical French and Italian, unintelligible and indescribable Chinese and Egyptian, English as spoken by the natives of The Bronx and Brooklyn, Dutch and the Swiss dialect, which sound like a throat ailment—all these, and more—are heard in the Studentenheim of the University of Zurich and the Federal Polytechnical Institute. The Studentenheim, a kind of a Student union, is where a large number of the cosmopolitan student population comes to eat a good meal for thirty cents, to listen to the radio, to read the *Pester Loyd*, the *Allgemeende Handelsblad*, the *Corriere della Sera*, and thirty other newspapers from everywhere, to play or kibitz chess, cards and billiards, and simply to loaf. If there were more pretty girls, coca-colas, and no chess games, it would be just like the Union at Norman.

Polyglot is the word for the student body here. Nearly everyone can speak from three to five or six languages; the word of greeting is the French *salut*, the conversation is usually in German, and the word of parting is the Italian *ciao*, pronounced *chow*. The combined enrollment of the two schools is around three thousand; about a fourth are foreigners, and among the Swiss themselves four languages are spoken—German, French, Italian, and Romanisch.

Life in this international atmosphere is friendly and interesting. But the atmosphere at the university itself, where most of the students are Swiss, is quite a contrast. At a quarter past the hour the bell rings, and the students quickly enter the classroom, for when anyone comes after the lecture has started the whole class loudly shuffles its feet on the floor and makes the tardy one dart into the nearest seat with a pink smile of embarrassment. The professor enters, mounts onto his kind of pulpit affair, says, "Ladies and gentlemen," and then lectures for forty-five minutes; the lec-

ture is learned, marvelously organized and developed, and usually humorless and colorless. If the class is especially impressed by the lecturer, it stamps its feet in approval when he makes his entrance, when he says something during the lecture that meets its special approval, or when he makes his exit.

The bell rings at the end of the period, the professor steps down from his dais, marches out the door and into the room where he and his colleagues wait until the next class. If a student wants to ask for advice, he usually has to look on the bulletin board in the hall, where he will find that Professor Schmidt's conference hour is Saturday from eleven to twelve in his home. Personal contacts among the students are almost as difficult to make as with the professors. Unless you went to the same preparatory school, or met on a skiing trip up in the mountains, it is not likely you will even nod to each other, although you may have the same class together every day. Because cutting is unrestricted and hence no roll is called, it is not at all impossible to not know a single fellow student even by name at the end of the semester. Fortunately, however, this chilly atmosphere dissipates from time to time and you finally make a few friends, so that if you look for them you may find someone to talk to between classes.

There is no student social life as we understand it. It is true there are several fraternities, but their activity consists of wearing circus band caps and carrying canes, shaking hands with each other, and drinking beer together. There is practically no duelling here in the fraternities; anyone with a scar on his left cheek is immediately known for a fraternity man from a German university. Dates with the coeds are very rare; not much dancing is done, for the dance floors here are small and crowded, and the orchestra quits at eleven.

There are no varsity or intramural athletics, the university having no facilities for them. Instead there are student tennis, rowing and hockey clubs

that use private facilities. The biggest sport here is skiing. Excellent skiing fields are within an hour or two from Zurich, while some of the most famous in the world are two and three hours away—Davos, Arosa, and the Engadin. Special sport tickets on the Federal railway give the opportunity for hordes of people to make weekend skiing trips into the mountains.

The American student colony here is quite large. There are about sixty medical students from New York City who came here principally because they could not gain admittance to an American medical school on account of their racial descent, and a half dozen others studying other subjects. The boys from New York are making a good bargain out of it though, for the medical school here is one of the best, and living is somewhat cheaper than in America. I avoid them as much as possible, because I can't learn any German when I am with Americans. They can easily be distinguished at sight by their dress and by their table manners—I still hold my fork in my right hand too! At the immatriculation ceremony they were plainly distinguishable. The ceremony consists of an address of welcome to the new students by the rector, followed by the presentation of their university credentials. The European students would march up to the front of the auditorium when their names were called, and snap into a bow and click their heels as they shook the rector's hand and received their papers. The Americans would walk up, and and shaking hands with the rector, their entire posture and movement would express something like, "Thanks a lot, Prexy."

The most important thing one receives at this ceremony is a Legitimationskarte or identification card. With the photograph of the bearer on it, it serves as a kind of privilege card. Many stores, and all book stores, honor it for a ten per cent discount; with it good seats at the opera, theater, and concert hall can be obtained for a fixed price of sixty cents, and at most cinemas for from ten to twenty cents less than the usual price.

Living in general is cheaper than in the states, sixty dollars a month, exclusive of money for clothes, being enough to live on quite comfortably. Compared to the rest of Europe, however, it is very expensive here, according to the complaints of the foreigners.

Much has been said and written about the superiority of European students to American. When comparisons are made it should be remembered that the European students are usually two years older in their first university year than the American. They are all men and wo-

(TURN TO PAGE 370, PLEASE)

to organic unity with the great scheme of higher education of the so-called extra-curricular activities. Just in proportion as we see the meaning of adolescence, youth, as of great bundles of instincts, hungers and thirsts, high and low, just as we recognize the legitimacy of every one of these instincts in its place, and in due proportion, has come the attempt to weave these trends and passions of youth, and lead them into captivity by the great intellectual condition of our race, to humanize and to intellectualize this heritage of the natural man.

And our youth of yesterday and until today fed on the current literature of the cave man, are turning unmistakably, of their own choice to that other great party in literature, the party of discipline, the party that recognizes that not only lust and anger and fear reflects the voices of extinction but triumphant generations that speak through youth, but also there is within us a regulative passion, a desire to put one's life in order, which comes down from a remote past. Man is the order-making creature. And this hunger for discipline is all about us, growing in intensity every since the backwash of the Great war.

This, then, represents the countermovement to the mechanization of life, and to the philosophy that grew out of it, and I cannot close without again quoting from that great representative thinker who represented the new freedom of this new country, Mr Emerson, who said, "We call these millions, men. They are not yet men, half engaged in the soil, pawing to get free. Man needs all the music that can be brought to disengage him. If love read love with tears and joy, if war with its scourge, if war with its cannonade, if art with its portfolios, if science with her telegraphs through the deeps of space and time can by loud taps on this tough chrysalis break its wall and let this new creature emerge erect and free, make way and sing paens, the age of the quadruped is to go out, and age of the brain and of the heart is to come in."

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WHAT IS GOOD MOTHERHOOD?

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 362)

Mrs Ferguson's newspaper career was interrupted when the Fergusons sold the weekly and removed to Oklahoma City where Mr Ferguson assumed the vice-presidency of the city's largest bank. But during the years of enforced absence from the newspaper office which followed, she never lost her desire to write, and when G. B. Parker, now editor-in-chief of the Scripps-Howard newspapers, but then editor of the *Oklahoma News*,

invited her to write for that newspaper, she accepted.

So great was the success of her column that she was soon engaged to write for all Scripps-Howard newspapers—where it is read daily by thousands of men and women throughout the country. With the new freedom for which she used to campaign won, Mrs Ferguson has turned her attention to the manner in which woman has adapted herself to the new conditions and to the problems involved in the association of men and women.

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STUDENT LIFE IN ZURICH

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 355)

men who are more or less serious about their work, for they come to the university to study more than to train themselves to live well; if they do both it's so much the better. But they fall down on one side as much as the Americans do on the other. My impression has been that the Europeans are better students, but poorer men. I don't think at all they are more intelligent than intelligent Americans, their book worms any wormier, or their Philistines any less Philistine. In fact it's as hard to get some one among the students to go to one of Schiller's plays here as it is to one of Shakespeare's at home. I have tried it and have had to go alone many a time.

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BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 352)

"I felt that the growth of the university would continue after my time. I remember certain people proposed a plan to pave the road directly back of the Administration building. I did not want to do this because I felt that some day the space there would be needed and used for beautiful buildings. Someday someone would build real buildings on the campus, not the little bungalows I had been building. Your beautiful library now stands where the paved street might have been.

"Many of the old landmarks have disappeared. Buildings which stand in their place are worthy of a fine institution. By the way, where is that old gymnasium? I always meant to tear the old thing down, but never got to it.

"During the war when the Student Army Training Corps was stationed on the campus, regulations were very strict. A student sentry refused to let me pass a certain section. I argued with him but he was determined that I was not to pass to see one of the officers. Finally he said 'who are you? Aren't you just one of the fellows helping around here?'

"That pleased me exceedingly. I always tried to be just 'one of the fellows helping around here.' I wanted first of all to preserve and build for the future. That faith I had that the university would grow into a great thing has been justified. I am happy to see old friends. Many of the faculty members on the platform with me were employed by me, or were teachers when I came to the university. I feel happy to be here."

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OUR CHANGING VARSITY

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 357)

ment of philosophic concept concerning the nature of the human self.

The project method is based upon the principle of purposeful activity. Pragmatism, a philosophy of experience, advocating a psychology of purpose, gives support to this method. But is the assumption that the child is actually or potentially a purposive being a valid assumption?

The research of this dissertation is concerned with the discovery of the philosophical foundations of the concept of purpose.

The thesis stated above is first supported through historical evidence. Certain aspects of conflicting theories of education are examined in their relation to the concept of purpose. It is shown that philosophies have their issue in psychologies and thus become translated into educational theories. The thesis then serves as a basis for the larger problem.

Evidence for or against the validity of the purposive nature of the individual is sought in the conflicting theories of life, reality and knowledge as leading to the problem of the nature of the self. The point is reached where it seems justifiable that the individual is purposive.

In its historical approach the thread of purpose is traced from the earliest Greek philosophy to modern scientific and philosophic thought. Further investigation consists in a critical analysis of experience as a basis for determining the validity of the concept of purpose. This analysis includes both a study of epistemology as based upon the philosophy of Critical Realism, chiefly as advanced by Sellers, and of the categories as applied to the theory of Emergence. Purpose is thus discovered as an emergent quality of the self.

In the field of philosophy is discovered the foundation of the fundamentally important educational concept of purpose. The research has thus made explicit, that which was implicit in the pragmatic assumption of the purposive nature of the individual.

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Roland Lycurgus Beck

Roland Lycurgus Beck, who obtained his A. B. degree from Oklahoma Baptist university in 1923 and his M. A. from the University of Oklahoma in 1926, was awarded a doctor of philosophy degree by the university at the June 7 Commencement. His research subject was "The Reliability and Validity of a Natural Test in English Composition for High School Seniors and College Freshmen." Dr. N. Conger of the Oklahoma state department of education, was invited to sit with the examining committee May 10. Doctor Beck was born in Thomas, Oklahoma October 4, 1900. He has served as professor of education and psy-