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Uberraschend - Six and a Half Years!

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Uberraschend . . .

Six and a half years!!

by Faye Kochheizer
Science Sophomore

THE ROOM HAD modern furniture, a telephone and even fresh flowers. A pretty young woman, looking every inch an American college girl in her sweater and skirt, talked shyly of her experiences as a teacher.

But conversation progressed rather slowly, accompanied by rattling dictionary pages, apologetic smiles and long pauses as both of us pondered over how best to express ourselves. Her English was rusty from little use, and my German—well, it just wasn’t adequate to explain the questions in my mind.

“Germany’s history is rich and old—a country filled with quaint houses, several hundred-year-old churches, traditional songs and dances,” she related haltingly. “But many things are new, too—the profession of home economics is one of them—25 years new to be exact.” Today there are still only 600 to 800 young women who study in the six special German schools. But in Germany it isn’t called home economics at all (in fact it took me five minutes to explain to my friend what I meant by the words). “Our school is called Berufspädagogisches Institut,” she told me. “And it takes 6½ years of study and practical experience to get our degree!”

In case you’re feeling overburdened here at Iowa State, here is the typical schedule she cited for a future teacher in Germany:

- 6 months studying cooking and sewing—these girls don’t worry about making meringues or pie crusts because desserts, especially rich ones, just aren’t in a typical German diet, she explained.
- 3 months of practical experience with a family of six children. Modern time-saving gadgets are seldom in the average German home. The German family I lived with owned a car and hired a part-time maid, yet all the ironing was done on the kitchen table with an iron that had just two possible settings—off or on! The washing was either boiled for several hours in a huge pot on the stove or scrubbed by hand on a board precariously balanced over a rusty old tub. Grocery shopping is an every-day task because few refrigerators are found in German homes—food is stored in a small pantry. And even though Elvis Presley and Pat Boone have invaded the country, many household tasks are still done practically as they were 15 or 20 years ago.
- 3 months experience in a large hospital kitchen.
- 3 months sewing in an orphanage.
- 1 month in a nursery
- 1 month of social work.
- 1 year back at class studying cooking, sewing, washing, ironing and some theoretical work.

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- 3 years in a college-like atmosphere where students may choose between three main fields of study—law, history or social sciences. Chemistry and vocational education are also included.
- 1 year practice teaching which is mostly observation.

All this schooling costs only $250, but to most German girls this is a huge sum, especially when most of them have to pay all their own expenses. One of the nicest features of the German school is that the girls are not graded on every course they take. In fact, I also had difficulty explaining what a “test” is until we finally discovered that the Germans know them as examinations. These examinations are taken only after the first half-year of study, after the third year of college and at the end of the practice teaching year. Foods uniforms seem to be a universal custom because German girls, too, grumble as they wear their blue outfits to class.

No extra-curricular activities for these students—they’re too busy working in their spare time. But the girls feel lucky these days anyway—there are no gardens and animals to be cared for as in Germany’s first schools.

Graduation

At last graduation day—job opportunities? Well, the German home economist has two choices—she may either be a teacher or a seamstress. Most women choose teaching because of higher pay and more varied opportunities. My friend spoke of teaching in a “gymnasium,” which is similar to our high school, or a “berufschule,” which is like a vocational high school in the United States. Starting salary is about $125 per month with a $10 raise after two years. “Of course, many graduates, like American college women, don’t worry about professions anyway,” she smiled. “They put training to use in their own homes.”

Such is home economics in Germany now. What’s in the future? “I would guess the field will remain small unless the pay is raised and the time required for schooling is shortened,” answered the quiet young teacher.

In Your Thanksgiving Pie

Hold an apple in your hand. You hold the miracle of an orchard. It was May when the fruit buds swelled. Then over-night a sea of pink that turned to frothy white in a chrysolite of green. Days of drenching sweetness. A symphony of bees diving among the bloom-laden boughs. The foliage thickened; so did the little green bullets of fruit. In a summer orchard of checkered light came the first blush to stain the apples’ cheeks. Then the harvest—apples roll into the pickers’ wide-mouthed sacks—crisp apples crunch between strong young teeth. Apples in the market are piled in shining pyramids. Now apples go to school; apples come to dinner.

—Clementine Paddleford

November, 1957