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THE GROWTH OF A GERMAN CENTRE FOR EDUCREATION - TRAINING AND THERAPY

The word Educreation was found by Dr. Paul Ritter, a Reichian and close friend of A.S. Neill (the late). It means 'Education for Creation, Growth and Change.'

Ritter's ideas are expressed in his books and magazines:

1. Education, Oxford (Pergamon) 1964.
2. Free Family and Feedback, London (Gollancz) 1975 and Orgonomic Functionalism, Nottingham (Ritter Press) 1954-64.

In my booklets 'Paul Ritter, Educreation etc.' and 'Educreation - Alternative Education and Therapy' I carried on the idea and described the history and methods of Educreation.

In this article I want to describe the short history of a Workshop-Centre, the idea of which is to foster

the freedom of children
the ability of adults to cope better with children
the emotional and physical health of adults, juveniles and children.
the responsibility for fellow-men
the development of educational and therapeutic training in methods of Humanistic Psychology, such as Bionergetics, Educreation, Gestalt, TA etc.

In September 1972 - after having worked as Educators and Psychologists on their own for a couple of years Hanfred Frings and I started a project-group that was called 'Workshop Educreation - Child-centred Education.'

Paul Ritter and A.S. Neill agreed to be patrons of the workshop. The Workshop Educreation had close contacts with Ritter's PEER Institute for Planned Educreation and Environment Research, to Andrew Mann's Children's Rights Workshop and the German Association of Adventure Playgrounds (IBS).

The aims of the workshop were:

listing literature and institutions for Free Education
running training courses on Educreation
counselling
helping other educative institutions
publishing brochures on Educreation

Besides the already mentioned booklets the workshop published: 'The Future of Our Children Lies in Mud - How to Build and Organize an Adventure Playground', Aachen (Educreation Press) 1974. 'Child-Centred Education 1 + 2', training-manuals, Aachen (Educreation Press) 1973/74.

In February 1974 the workshop started a new project, the building up of a Parent-Child-Group in order to run a Private Kindergarden: Gemeinschaftszentrum Educreation e.v. the work of which was in the beginning based on 6 ideas:

1. Education should always be related to the physical and psychic conditions and abilities of a child.
2. Education should be self-regulative in a development - positive surrounding.
3. Freedom not Licence.
4. Education means to support the child's activities.
5. Sexuality should be regarded as a natural phenomenon.
6. Education should always help men to become happier.

For various reasons, this did not work out and I next developed a training concept on 'Co-Counselling and Conflict Organisation in Education', based on the ideas of Ruth Colin, Thomas Gordon and Carl Rogers.

Social worker Waltrand Schaffrath joined as assistant and in December 1974 we started to work for our institute WESPE (WHASP): Workshop for Educreation and Applied Social Psychology.

Before that psychotherapist Heiner Hellmann and I had made up our minds to found the German Association for Humanistic Psychology, but we postponed the idea to 1975/76.

Dagmar, my wife is WESPE's secretary and Dieter, Waltrand's husband is the administrator.

Since February 1975 WESPE offers counselling, therapy, marathons and theme-orientated interactional workshops on the roots of Humanistic Psychology in order to give adults the opportunity to experience that a therapeutic attitude is not only good for their children but also good for themselves.

The aims of Wespe-Workshops are:

- the promotion of self-regulation and self-responsibility of workshop clients
- the development of Here and Now feelings

the promotion of the client's responsibility for his fellow men
the development of educereational concepts for teaching and therapy
based on the ideas of Norman Liberaman's idea of Living Learning.

WESPE also offers professional training in:

1. 'Co-Counselling and Conflict Organisation in Education',
2. 'Transactional Analysis' and
3. 'Gestalt-Therapy'.

WESPE is at present related to the following institutions:

The Fritz Perls Institut (Prof. Dr. Hilarion Petzold), Germany.
The Faculteit voor mens en gemeenschap (Drs. Richan van Egdom), Belgium.
The P.E.E.R. Institute Perth (Paul Ritter, Ph.D.), Australia.
The A.S. Neill Trust (Ray Hemmings), England.

We hope that the work of WESPE will provide one possible answer to the question of how we can give more freedom to our children, this means our own children and the children in us.

Joan Gilbert

A Traumatic Experience

I run Encounter Groups in the North East on Tyneside and have done so for two years. For four years I have been also going to Encounter Groups, Re-evaluation Counselling groups, Clinical Theology Seminars and Group Dynamic courses, to find out about me, *to grow* to learn all I could about Humanistic Psychology. I am a teacher and trained School Counsellor.

Suddenly I have to go into hospital for a Hysterectomy operation.

Everything I have learned and believed in, and now teach, is contrary to what happens in a hospital ward. Every time I cried in pain, the curtains were quickly drawn round my bed so as 'not to upset the other patients'. Usually I was left alone, unless eventually I asked for another pain killing injection. A quick stab of the needle, and then solitude again. Gratitude for the easing of the pain, but oh, such longing to hold a hand, or feel a hug, or an arm of comfort around my shoulders, if only for a minute . . .

And then one day I did 'The Unforgivable Thing'. They tried Pheno-barbitone that night, but I was very sick in the morning. Then I had to have an Enema. After sitting alone on a commode for half an hour and nothing happening, I started to cry. The curtains were drawn round me, I was put back into bed, but I *couldn't* stop crying. I *needed* to *really* howl for a long time.

A kindly staff nurse finally came and patted my hand and said, unthinkingly, in all good faith, but knowing nothing about me, 'Would you like me to ring your Mother dear?'