

# Black Mountain College Newsletter

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## Ninth year begins in new quarters

The opening of Black Mountain's ninth year on September 22 found the College at its permanent home on the Lake Eden property. At a general meeting held that evening, the College community—seventy students and twenty teachers—heard Robert Wunsch, Rector, and Josef Albers, speak of the plans for the year and of some of the ideals on which the College is based.

"Black Mountain is a liberal arts college", said Mr Wunsch. "The emphasis here, however, has not been solely on the getting of knowledge as in so many liberal arts schools, but on learning to live harmoniously with other people as well . . . Knowledge is a way of life, and life is richer than any of its ways . . . An educated man is only a spectator of life. A man with an education is a unit of life and light. We shall continue to try to wed knowledge to living . . . We shall try to learn all we can intellectually about the Southern Negro, but at the same time learn to live beautifully with the people in the kitchen who serve us; we shall study seriously and deeply the psychology of the child but not forget to apply this learning in our relationships with the children about the College . . . We must learn the responsible use of freedom, the willingness to hear diverse opinions debated and weighed within the College; that inner devotion to the common welfare that

makes coercion needless, the voluntary assumption of the duties that democracy entails."

Mr Albers spoke briefly of his year away from Black Mountain. "I taught at a place proud of a three centuries' tradition. But it was not discouraging for me to compare its status after three hundred years with the status of another educational place which has existed for only eight years, an institution in which I believe. I remained hopeful in spite of six millions of books compared with only eight thousand, despite seventy students and twenty teachers on the one side, compared with thousands of the one and hundreds of the other . . .

"We finally are on our own grounds. And in face of the architectural works of the last year we see that the sacrifices and hard work of both students and teachers have been worthwhile. Here I hope we will continue our belief in our aims and our enthusiasms for our work.

"Since our job here is education, which means personal growth—of teachers as well as of students—and since life means change, our aim is forward. It must be like real science and art which naturally strive for more, namely for the future.

"What we should carry on, I think, is our belief that behaviour and so-



cial adjustment are as interesting and important as knowledge. That besides statements and statistics we must cultivate expression and metaphor. That the manual type, as well as eye or ear people, are as valuable as the intellectual type.

"Towards a healthier development we must balance intellectual studies with practical work. We must use tools beside books."

Robert Babcock, who was coordinator of the work program for the last few weeks of the summer, outlined the progress of the building project over the summer months, and the work still to be done. Most of the old students at the College were back a week early, working eight hours a day to prepare housing for the community: installing ceilings and partitions, building chimneys, and finishing sleeping quarters for the hundred-odd community members.

Work for the immediate future is being concentrated on finishing the housing and equipping rooms in the new Student-Studies Building for classes, for student and faculty studies, and for faculty apartments. Students were urged to volunteer for at least two or three afternoons of work a week.

### Student meeting

The next evening a student meeting was called to explain to new students the function of the student in the government of his community. Harold Raymond, Student Moderator for the year, discussed the reasons for student participation in government, some of the mechanisms of that participation, the duties of

the student officers, and the acceptance of student agreements as standards for living. After a period of discussion, agreements for the year were made covering the respecting of do-not-disturb signs, recognition of Dr Straus as authority in health matters, and observance of the College schedule as to vacation dates.

### Temporary handicaps

For the first few weeks of the year the College is operating under distinct difficulties. Student studies are not yet ready for use and studying must, for the present, be done in bedrooms, in the library, or in those faculty studies made available for student use. Heating is not complete but will be before cool weather sets in. Much ingenuity has been shown in the arrangement of student rooms which for the time being must be used for both sleeping and studying: some have triple-deck beds, others counterweighted beds which rise to the ceiling when not in use. And amid the minor chaos that marks the beginning of a new stage in the development of the College, the academic work of the year is under way.

### Enrollment

Twenty-two states and four foreign countries are represented in the enrollment for the fall semester. As in former years, New York and Massachusetts are first in numerical representation, New York having sent thirteen students and Massachusetts twelve. California is next with six students; New Jersey fourth, with five; and Connecticut fifth, with four. Other states represented include Alabama, Colorado, District of Columbia, Florida, Illi-



nois, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin. There is one student from China, one from Denmark, one from Germany, and two from Spain; all five of them are now United States residents.

There are twenty-two new students at the College. They are: Shirley Allen of Wilton, Connecticut; Marilyn Bauer of Shaker Heights, Ohio; Homer Bobilin of Garwood, New Jersey; Samuel E Brown Jr, of Wilton, Connecticut; Aurora Cassotta of New York City; Hope Greer of Mount Kisco, New York; William Hanchett of Evanston, Illinois; Dora Harrison of New Orleans, Louisiana; Eric Haugaard of Cambridge, Massachusetts; Gail Keith-Jones of Evanston, Illinois; Elizabeth Kulka of New York City; Ruthabeth Krueger of Wheatridge, Colorado; Robert Marden of Boston, Massachusetts; William McLaughlin of Easton, Pennsylvania; Faith Murray of Charleston, South Carolina; Ruth O'Neill of Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Arthur Schneider of Asheville, North Carolina; Jacqueline Tankersley of Saint Louis, Missouri; Henry Tuttle of Shaker Heights, Ohio; Nancy West of Hartford, Connecticut; Helen Wright of Watertown, Massachusetts; and Dick Wyke of Miami, Florida.

### "Psychology of Architecture"

On the evening of September 17, Erwin Straus spoke to the College community on the "Psychology of Architecture."

Dr Straus began with a discussion of the psychological origins of archi-

tecture. The needs for shelter and protection are fundamental in man, and in these needs can be found the seeds of architecture. But can all architecture be explained in this way?

"I will take you," said Dr Straus, "to a hillside overlooking a mediæval European town. From there we can distinguish clearly two types of buildings. Little houses like nests of birds cluster around a tall edifice, usually a cathedral or a castle. The shape of the small buildings is hardly noticeable for they are really nothing more than an extension, a second floor as it were, of nature. In contrast to them, the towering building is superimposed upon nature. Its plan, its location, its structure, all testify to a will, a scheme. Why? What prompted men to raise a building so differently planned and constructed? The answer is not in religion alone, nor does it lie solely in economic or political considerations. It is not a difference between public and private, between large and small, which makes the palace, the cathedral, the city hall, the center of the town. The answer—and in this answer is the ultimate source of any architectural scheme which goes beyond the bare needs of shelter—lies in the existence of *community*."

"The term is an ambiguous one. We use it carelessly, casually, to indicate groups which are only aggregates, only communal in location, by accident, for a moment. The members of such groups are in no way related to or part of a whole; what relations exist are merely between individual members. Each individual has his own purpose, and after leaving the group becomes



again what he was before he joined it. Such a group is not a community, yet it may become one: a fire, a disaster, an event of great importance may provide a common purpose, a common fate, for all the members of the group. But the community thus created will exist only so long as the situation exists; when the event has passed, the community becomes once more a group or disintegrates entirely.

"But we are beginning to understand the secret of community. Human community is possible only because men can share with each other one and the same all-embracing order. Belief in a common order, compelling and directing the lives of men into one many-sided pattern, shaping the individual fate to one common fate, brings about community in the truest sense of the word. Fate is an order which demands to be lived. The most perfect community is, therefore, one where this fate is based on an interpretation of the most perfect order—the order of the universe as a whole.

"By its nature such an order is a spiritual, an intangible, an intellectual thing. To tie it to the concreteness of human life, it needs tangible representation. And architecture—as a fine art rather than as utilitarian housing—is one of the possible symbolic representations of this order. It makes visible the invisible. So, returning from the psychology of the community to the architecture of that community, we can understand that, for instance, the central and unique position and plan of a cathedral, a palace, a city hall, symbolize the unity of the whole world, just as the solid material out of which these edifices are built represents the stability

and the lasting character of the universe.

"What happens if unity, plan, order, are no longer felt? Architectural style will tend to reproduce the lack of unity, will emphasize the absence of a center by all the means at its disposal. It will, for example, transform light perceived as a cosmic substance into mere lighting; it will try to hide the boundaries as determined by the walls of a structure, to create the impression of an infinite multiplicity of shapes within and around the building. This is the trend of architecture today, as well as of interior design. This is the immediate impression we get in looking upon a town of our own day. The whole aspect of architecture as we know it and as we practice it expresses our attitude towards a world in which, strictly speaking, we no longer perceive a universe."

## Faculty appointment

Nathan Rosen, Professor of Physics, left during September to take a research and teaching position at the University of North Carolina. Largely through Mr Rosen's co-operation, Peter Bergmann, who spoke to the College last year on the Theory of Relativity, is joining the Black Mountain Faculty as Assistant Professor of Physics.

Like Mr Rosen, Mr Bergmann comes to Black Mountain from the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, where he has been doing research under Albert Einstein. Born in Berlin, he was educated in Freiburg, Dresden, and at the University of Prague, from which he has his Ph D. His work at Princeton began in 1936.



Mr Bergmann is a member of the American Physical Society and of the American Mathematical Society. He has published research papers in Czechoslovakia and in America; his *Introduction to the Theory of Relativity* is now in process of publication.

## Surette music collection

The last issue of the Newsletter reported the death of Dr Thomas Whitney Surette, former member of the College Faculty and of the Advisory Council. Since then, Black Mountain has received from his estate his entire music library.

The collection includes about 400 books, 20 albums of records, and an extensive collection of musical scores. Among the books, which include most of the standard musical biographies and reference books, critical essays, and books on musical education, there are several of historic interest. The most unusual of these is a book called *Music in Nature*, which belonged at one time to Ralph Waldo Emerson and which is annotated by him.

The musical scores in the collection are of almost all types—choral music, piano music, chamber works, and scores for full orchestra. Represented are such classic composers as Bach, Brahms, Beethoven, and many modern composers, such as Honneger, Holst, Schoenberg, Randall Thompson, and Vaughan Williams. The collection includes more than 275 miniature scores for symphonic works and chamber orchestra, some of them no longer available.

Shelved with the College's already sizable music library, the bequest

gives Black Mountain an exceptionally inclusive and valuable collection of scores and reference books in musical fields.

## Alumni guests

Tasker Howard Jr, who has a position with the National Labor Relations Board in Washington, D C, spent several days of his vacation at the College in July.

Leslie Katz, now working in an advertising office in New York City, spent his two weeks' vacation as a member of the Work Camp.

Mitzi Martin visited the College while on a trip through the South with her parents, Dr and Mrs H Walford Martin.

Bedford Thurman spent a few days at Lake Eden before going to Manteo, N C, to take part in Paul Green's *The Lost Colony*. He is now in New York City.

Emil Willimetz was a member of the Work Camp for several weeks. During the month of July he was on the staff of the International Student Service Work Camp at the Highlander Folk School in Monteagle, Tennessee.

Dr Herminio Portell-Vila, professor of history at Black Mountain from 1935 to 1938 and now at the University of Havana, stopped briefly at the College with Mrs Portell-Vila. He was on his way to the University of Chicago where he taught during the summer session.

## Summer visitors

Mr and Mrs Fred Wale and their three children, of Winnetka, Illinois,



spent their vacation at the College. Mr Wale is director for rural education of the Julius Rosenwald Fund, and in this capacity visits schools and colleges throughout the South.

Dr and Mrs Irwin Panofsky of Princeton, New Jersey, were at Lake Eden for three weeks. Dr Panofsky, who is a well known art historian, is a member of the faculty of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. During his visit he gave an illustrated lecture for Work Campers and their guests on the art of Albrecht Durer.

Dr and Mrs Arthur Raper and their family, of Greensboro, Georgia, spent about ten days at the College at the close of the Work Camp session. Dr Raper is an economist who is well-known for his studies of the sociological problems of the South. He gave a series of four lectures: "Southern Agriculture and Landless Farmers," "Industry and Organized Labour," "Race and Class Pressures," and "The South Strains Towards Adequacy." Dr Raper is at present Social Science Analyst for the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in the Department of Agriculture.

Mr Leopold Weil and his sister, Miss Gisela Weil, were guests at Lake Eden during August. Mr Weil is a bio-chemist at the Benjamin Franklin Institute in its Newark, Delaware, branch.

Because of the postponement of the college opening until September 22, a revised calendar for the year has been adopted. Winter vacation will be from December 21 to January 12, the fall term will end on January 31, spring vacation will be March 22 to April 5, and College will close on June 6.

Dr and Mrs Egon Wissing of Boston, Massachusetts, were guests at the College early in July. Dr and Mrs Wissing are both physicians and are on the staff of the Massachusetts Memorial Hospital.

## Karl Terzaghi

"The father of soil mechanics", Dr Karl Terzaghi, visited the College early in September. Dr Terzaghi is an engineer with a world-wide reputation. In his special field of earth study he has been a consultant in the building of subways and tunnels, in highway engineering, and in other construction problems, throughout this country and Europe.

While at Black Mountain he examined the construction of the College buildings and talked with architect A Lawrence Kocher about the engineering problems involved in the Work Program and in the development of the property.

Dr Terzaghi's most important work has been in classifying and analyzing different types of soil, and in setting up, on the bases of classification and analysis, some general scientific principles in a field which had been almost completely neglected or ruled by superstitions and suppositions. The birth of the new science of soil-mechanics was the publication, in 1925, of his researches, in *Erdbaumechanik*.