

THE INSTITUTE FOR SEMANTOGRAPHY

A Non-Profit Institution for the Promotion of Semantics and Semantography

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SEMANTOGRAPHY SERIES NO. 114.

SEMANTOGRAPHY AND SYDNEY UNIVERSITY STUDENT PAPERS.

Semantography Series No. 77 carries the Title "The Societies of the University of Sydney and Semantography". In issue No. 99, I referred to the result of the aforementioned issue. As my application to the Sydney University Extension Board for being included in the panel of lecturers failed, Professor Mitchell gave me the advice to lecture the Sydney University Societies. He did this because my lectures to students in the Wallace Theatre and to the Physical and Geological Society (see Issue No. 37, 38, 43 and 44) have been successful. I wrote then Issue No. 77 but as told in issue 99, the result was nil. I made then one last attempt and wrote to the editor and officers of the two student papers of Sydney University, namely Honi Soit and Union Recorder. Both these papers have brought notes about my aforementioned lectures (which have been inserted by officers of the Physical and Geological Societies see Semantography Series No. 50) and therefore I hoped that the editors will do something by way of an article in their papers. I, therefore, wrote the following letter to the editors of both papers.

Sydney 10th October, 1952

The Editor
and Officers of
UNION RECORDER
University of Sydney

Dear Sirs,

This letter is quite unusual and so is my story. I am writing to you, because you are the exponents of the students of Sydney University. I am the author of "Semantography". Before that, I was director of the Patent Department of a large industrial concern. In this capacity, I carried out researches in the history and development of new ideas. I found that these histories are in most cases tragedies for the inventors. Being "ahead of their time", they found no support whatever, not even from the men whose business it is to transmit and to foster new ideas. Instead of being put to work on their idea, those inventors had to go down in debt, desperation and death, until decades later, the value of their work was recognized and provided many people with the work and decent living which the inventors themselves could never find.

As a student, I believed that those times have passed. The lofty speeches of many protagonists of progress convinced me that in our time, the originator of new ideas will find understanding and help for carrying on his work. I believed so, until I found myself in the unenviable position of a pioneer of a new idea. Then, I found that apparently nothing has changed. Studying the records of the last generations and centuries I found that the speeches then were just as lofty as they are today. Apparently something is wrong somewhere. There is no provision made to help a man and his idea along at a time when his idea seems strange and unorthodox, no court of justice where his plea could be heard and his case examined, and no court of appeal against his condemnation to a slow death of oblivion, bitterness and waste. This is the fate of those pioneers which help mankind along. They deserve a better fate.

I believe however, that one group of people are ready to recognize unorthodox ideas, the students. As my lectures were quite a success, and as I saw no other way, I sent the attached pamphlet to the Societies of Sydney University, following the advice of Prof. A. G. Mitchell. Now, as the months are passing, slowly one after the other society turns it down. I am therefore writing to you. You should know about it and you might do something about it. Somebody has to realise the responsibility that a day may come when it will be said of Sydney University and its students that they have not recognized the value of a new

THE INSTITUTE FOR SEMANTOGRAPHY - 2 -

idea. Fortunately, a number of enlightened librarians and scholars abroad have done this, and they have begun to collect all my writings. Whatever you do or do not do for Semantography, you are doing - in the words of Bertrand Russell - for mankind.

411

Yours sincerely,

C.K. Bliss, B.Sc.

The result was dismal. There was no answer at all and I began to learn from this and similar experiences that editors of papers and magazines consider themselves, as a "race apart". Indeed as one young American editor told me cynically he is "presiding over the wastepaper basket". It is true that everybody wants to get into the act and break into print and therefore newspaper and magazine editors are deluged with contributions. This makes them quite haughty and they treat the poor contributors accordingly.

The disappointing results with the students of Sydney University have lead me to reconsider the part which students play in the progres of a nation. In my youth, living in Europe and studying at the University of Technology in Vienna, I was witness of student demonstrations and rioting in Vienna and elsewhere. Since then I believe that students are ready "to go on the barricades for the progress of humanity". To-day I have reversed my opinion about the part which students have played in Europe and which they play to-day in Asia. I remember my talks with students of East Asia when I was in Shanghai.

Students going to University are doing it for one purpose only, namely to learn a professional job which secures a good income. In Europe, as elsewhere, the nationality problem is paramount. Polish students and Ukranian students and Czech students and students of other nationalities demonstrated in Austria against German students because in Austria the German element was predominant, and the German professional men had a vital interest not to allow too many of other nationalities to practice. German students in turn demonstrated then and against Jewish students as it became apparent that Jewish doctors, lawyers and engineers are sought after because of their industry and faithfulness to their jobs. Then there were those students who clamoured for a good job in the Public Service. In the large Austria monarchy where over 20 nations lived together, the top positions in the civil service were in German hands and this was the cause of grievances in the various national provinces where non-Germans clamoured for those jobs. A similar situation I observed in China.

I have now reversed my opinion. I mistook the clamour and demonstrations for national equality for a desire for the progres of humanity. To-day I believe that they do nothing but clamour for good jobs. A few students only are really interested in the progress of new ideas for the betterment of mankind and I cherish those few who expressed their appreciation of my work. Some of them have helped me in my struggle.