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## Letter from Martin S. Allwood to Hubert Creekmore

Martin S. Allwood

*Hobart and William Smith Colleges*

Hubert Creekmore

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OUTLINE  
of  
AN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE IN SWEDEN

Background

There is an international college at Elsinore, Denmark. There are no such colleges in Sweden, Norway, or Finland. However, at Marston Hill, Mullsjö, Sweden, a beginning has been made. An Anglo-American Summer School was founded there in 1924 by Charles S. Allwood and C. S. Fearenside, and is still working. During its twenty-six years of activity more than 1000 persons have studied at Marston Hill, and the present capacity of this center is about 75 students during the summer. There are at present only winter facilities for three or four teachers and a library.

Mullsjö is a small town of 1200 inhabitants, situated in the heart of the highlands of southern Sweden, with excellent communications to Stockholm, Oslo, Copenhagen and Gothenburg by rail and road. The altitude is 1000 feet. The scenery is outstandingly beautiful, and there are four lakes for swimming and fishing. At the nearest lake there is a modern sports establishment with a swimming stadium, tennis court and football ground for summer use, and a ski jumping tower, a slalom hill and many tracks for winter use. Local taxes are the next lowest in Sweden, and the cost of living generally very advantageous. There is a doctor and a dental clinic.

In 1941 the first Swedish community survey was carried out in this town, inspired by the American Middletown surveys (by Robert and Helen Lynd). It was published in 1943 under the title of "Medelby" (Middlevillage).

Thus, as a site for a future international college, this little town can offer the following advantages:

1. Central location and good communications.
2. Uncommonly beautiful natural surroundings.
3. The existence of an Anglo-American Summer School with twenty-six years of work and experience behind it.
4. The first Swedish community survey having been made here.
5. Unusually good sports and athletics facilities.

Proposed International College

Summer Activities

I. Continuation of the present Anglo-American Summer School.

This school and its role in Swedish educational life is described in detail in "Experiment i Mullsjö" (Experiment in Mullsjö, publ. 1948 by Hugo Gebers Förlag, Stockholm.)

In this connection it may be pointed out that three or four American and English students can be given a free summer in Sweden every year by teaching at the Summer School. This arrangement has already been carried out successfully for over 15 years.

II. Creation of an Anglo-American Summer Camp.

It is proposed to create a Summer Camp for English and

American students, who would stay for about two months, and do regular work in the community (farms, textile industries, lumber mill etc.) for three or four hours in the morning. During the middle of the day they would be free. In the afternoon there would be discussion meetings with the staff, when the problems encountered during the day's work would be explained and related to their larger context of Scandinavian social and economic life. There is no need for the students to learn Swedish, but those who wished to do so could get elementary language instruction. In the course of these discussions with the staff the students would gain an understanding of the economic and sociological problems of the community, and especially of the change from an agricultural to an industrialized type of ~~society~~ society. The results of their experience of work and study would be written up in essay form, and handed in to their American college teachers upon their return to America in the fall.

Membership of each session of the Summer Camp would be limited to 20 or 25 carefully selected students. Air transportation could be provided by Youth Argosy planes at low rates.

### III. Creation of Nordic authors' cottages.

A Norwegian, Danish and Swedish cottage are planned, where authors from these countries could spend the summer practically free. If they wished to, they could learn English and establish contact with British and American literature. There would be facilities for artists from these countries to get to know the Scandinavian artists. It is hoped that each of the Nordic countries would finance their own cottage.

## Winter Activities

### I. Creation of a small Institute of Social Research.

The Institute would build on the foundation laid by the 1941 community survey, and would be mainly concerned in its field work with continuous surveys in the area of the college. A fairly good sociological library has already been collected, and one room is now available for office use.

For a considerable period of time the Institute would necessarily be concerned with spreading knowledge of American sociology. (There is virtually no teaching of sociology at all in Sweden, with only one teaching post in the whole country at the University of Uppsala). But the Institute would also attempt to publish a series of Scandinavian monographs in the social sciences, mainly in English. Finally, plans have been made for the publication of a "Scandinavian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology", reporting bi-annually in English the best work from the Scandinavian countries. The main object of the Journal would be to give information about social research in the Scandinavian countries to the English-speaking world.

### II. Creation of a small two-year college.

In the first year, the subjects of instruction would be mainly practical: domestic science, child care and elementary psychology, hygiene, and elementary sociology. The only foreign language taught would be English. A large portion of the students would probably be the children of farmers and workers, who had completed their elementary school education.

In the second year, the core of instruction would be the reading of the great books of the Western tradition (in translation),

on the same lines as the well-known Columbia Humanities Course. Classes would be conducted in the form of discussions with the teachers, and the students would be invited to consider not only the disintegration of Western culture, but also its underlying strong unity and spiritual meaning. The Humanities Course has at present no counterpart in any of the Scandinavian countries. The courses in sociology and economics would be continued, as well as the teaching of English. The best cultural content of the Anglo-Saxon countries would be presented to the students, in order to counterbalance the impression that America produces nothing but films, comic strips, and jazz music.

Internationalism, like charity, begins at home. The Scandinavian countries have often neglected their immediate neighbours. In order to introduce the students gradually to the ideas of cultural relativity the teaching staff of the college would be made up of teachers from the different Scandinavian countries. Fortunately, linguistic differences between these countries are so small that such an arrangement is not impossible.

#### Needs

All schools in the Scandinavian countries are operated by the state. An experimental college of the kind outlined above will therefore hardly be in the first line of consideration from the national point of view. The college must rely, at least during the initial period, on the public-spirited interest of private individuals who have the cause of international understanding and education at heart.

The existing school is tolerably well equipped for summer use, although many things can certainly be improved. The main need is, however, for one building, equipped for winter use, and with a model kitchen for the domestic science instruction. This building should house 40 students in double rooms, and also provide a kitchen, a dining-room, and reading-rooms. The library needs to be enlarged, especially in the field of American art, music, and literature.

The planned Scandinavian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology will need some support, at least in the beginning.

Individual research projects, e.g. on the impact of neo-industrialization, will need support for the field work and for publication.

The cost of a winter building naturally depends<sup>would/</sup> on its size, but would hardly be less than \$80 000 if the quality is to be first-class. The land for this building has already been acquired. If aid can be secured for the erection of this building, it is most likely that support for the running expenses would be forthcoming from Scandinavian sources. If need be, the students and teachers will do the work of maintenance - for those who sincerely believe in the cause of understanding between the peoples are willing to sacrifice something for it.

Respectfully submitted by  
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