

Report from Lübeck

by Mara Cambiagli

From March 3 to March 7, 2009 I participated in a teacher exchange in the Friedrich-List-Schule in Lübeck, Germany. The exchange was part of an ongoing programme of cooperation among the *Istituto d'Istruzione Superiore J.C. Maxwell* and its affiliate *Istituto Professionale Settembrini* in Milan and the *Friedrich-List-Schule* in Lübeck, as well as other schools from countries such as Sweden and Finland which have also been involved. The overall framework of the programme falls within the COMENIUS project titled 'OCCUSA investigating and developing the teaching of occupational safety in European countries'. Thanks to the excellent liaison existing between the two schools and the kind effort of Maria Grazia Cupini and Gudrun Möllnitz, who have coordinated and made my stay in Lübeck possible, I received an all-round introduction into the workings of the Friedrich-List Schule, a technical secondary school offering pupils three different types of courses and qualifications, i.e. part-time vocational training with an emphasis on business and trade (*Fachschule für Betriebswirtschaft*), full-time vocational training for business assistants (*Berufsfachschule für Kaufmännische Assistenten*) and an advanced secondary course specializing in economics, leading to the final college entrance qualification or else to the *Abitur* (*Berufliche Gymnasium – Wirtschaft*).

Pupils of the Friedrich-List-Schule opting for part-time vocational training receive specific instructions for their job in companies and also take regular class lessons according to their chosen course of study. The specific school programme matches the requirements of the German dual system, which allows trainees to combine theoretical and practical training within their overall course.



Notwithstanding the excellent introduction and very warm welcome I received from all the teachers of the Friedrich-List-Schule led by the enthusiastic effort of Gudrun Möllnitz, whom

I wish to thank especially, I was also allowed to indulge one of my literary passions of long ago, when I was a part-time student and an employee in the Faculty of Humanities of University College

London. Lübeck was indeed home to one of the most literary German families of the twentieth-century and since it was a Welshman who first led me through the intricacies of Thomas Mann's work, I was touched when I found that the teachers of the Friedrich-List-

Schule in Lübeck had inserted a double German session on *Buddenbrooks* into my schedule. The class was held by Bettina Dudek for her final year pupils of the *Gymnasium*. Hearing young Germans discussing the pros and cons of the latest film version of Thomas Mann's novel as against the intrinsic literary merit of the original, stirred a feeling of *déjà vu* in my youthful memories and I was moved, all the more so as all this was happening in the very heart of Lübeck. As well as Maria Grazia Cupini, who initiated my exchange programme in Milan, I wish to thank Colleagues at the Friedrich-List-Schule especially for adding this very personal touch to my programme. Yet, this is not all, since Rudi Laake, who also teaches German in the local *Fachgymnasium*, literally changed the content of his lesson on Lessing's drama *Nathan der Weise* in order to accommodate part of an equally famous Italian classic, i.e. Boccaccio's *novella* on Melchisedec the Jew and Saladin contained in the *Decameron*. Both texts focus on the parable of the three rings and the underlying plea for religious tolerance and wisdom. The need to evaluate human worth well beyond any preconceptions caused by ideological fanaticism became the message derived from this German class in its comparative encounter with Italian culture. Again, I was grateful for this subtle acknowledgment of my presence in the Friedrich-List Schule.

Let me offer you here a detailed description of my exchange programme in Lübeck. On March 3, I was escorted from the airport (Ryan-Air Hamburg/Lübeck) into town by Gudrun Möllnitz who guarded over my well-being, was an exquisite host and treated me to lunch in the characteristic Heinrich Böll restaurant in down-town Lübeck. She also provided my first introduction to the Friedrich-List-Schule and to the teaching staff led by school director



Stephan Cosmus. We then made our way into the city centre and took a stroll among the main cultural highlights to meet in the late afternoon with colleague Regina Gabriel. Regina was very kind in taking a break from her duty as a mother of three small children in order to accompany me to the cinema and see a film based on a nineteenth-century literary masterpiece, *Effi Briest* by Theodor Fontane. Needless to say, I was thrilled since the film version of the novel is excellent, albeit different from the earlier Fassbinder version which I also remember. Eventually, we were joined by Roland Portz for dinner in an interesting local restaurant.

On Wednesday, March 4th I visited classes in English on *Safety at work* held by Anke von Ivernois for part-time pupils of the vocational school (*Berufsschule*).



The pupils were very well-behaved, raised their hands in order to answer questions and learnt vocabulary with technical content concerning the failed dispatch of ordered material.



I then joined an English class in the technical secondary school (*Fachgymnasium*) held by Stefan Bürger. Here, pupils were involved in a written test and in an oral presentation.



I saw an engaged and well-behaved first-year class, involved in three hours of English lessons per week.

Regina Gabriel's class on storage and staging addressed a group of fourteen part-time pupils from the *Berufschule* training to become warehouse assistants. Regina succeeded in making her class even more lively by distributing samples of colourful pasta letters to illustrate her teaching and elicit basic concepts on the logistics of goods.

My afternoon programme took me all the way to Travenmünde, a charming village on the Baltic coast. It took me only a twenty-minute ride by train to reach this small seaside resort, already celebrated by Thomas Mann in one of the chapters in *Buddenbrooks*, where the young Toni experiences a happy though short-lived romance without the blessing of her family. The local small museum, small fish restaurants and the long coast line offered me sufficient appeal for the entire afternoon and early evening. On the train, I exchanged a few words with an unknown and amicable local passenger who kindly showed me the way into the village when we left the small train station together. Only later, did I recognize her face in the photo shown on the leaflet which was handed out to me at the local museum. I then learnt that she is a

cultural historian from Lübeck specializing in the history of German post-unification and the experience of bordercrossing within Germany. Without knowing it, I had accidentally met Karen Meyer-Rebentisch, the author of *Grenzenerfahrungen* and I was left wandering for the rest of the evening about this uncanny if pleasant encounter.

On Thursday March 5th, I recouped my working schedule. Gudrun escorted me again from my hotel to school where I met with Roland Portz and his pupils learning economic geography.



His session addressed a group of about twenty-six pupils from the twelfth class of the technical *Gymnasium* and focussed on the causes of poverty and famines. The class was motivated and spurred on further by an additional trainee teacher who took over the teaching from Roland Portz.

My morning session continued with Anja Gribisch's class on economics focussing on juridical aspects concerning business contracts. This was a class of about twenty pupils which also included a so-called *Mentorübung* for a trainee teacher in business management. All material handed out to this class was also kindly handed out to me and Anja made sure I received a copy of Martin Wendt's teaching plan, as well as a copy of the evaluation form she would complete while supervising Martin's class. This kind of *Mentorübung* takes place twice a year for trainee teachers. I noted the careful preparation during the various stages of Martin's class, as well pupils' active participation throughout.

My last session on Thursday took me to Stefanie Sengenc's class on economics for trainees as



logistics managers. This was a lively class of about 23 pupils who normally spend two days a week at school and three days at work in a company.

Here, they are involved in learning various concepts of management referring to the social theories of Max Weber and Kurt Lewin, entailing different notions of authority which occasionally

overlap: autocratic and patriarchal, charismatic, bureaucratic, authoritarian, cooperative as well as laissez-faire....



There was enough food for thought to keep everybody musing on the basic notions of social organization, but time stopped and the class was soon over. My day ended with an 'exquisite' visit to Lübeck's famous Niederegger café opposite the town hall, offering the most delicious cakes and marzipan.



I then made my way towards the illustrious *Buddenbrookhaus* for a much agonized and nostalgic look into the world of Thomas and Heinrich Mann.

My final day at the school was a treat for my literary interests. As I have already mentioned, the experience touched my soul on Friday. Yet, more was still to come, since Gudrun Möllnitz promptly picked me up from school in the late morning and took me all the way to.... Hamburg! Here, the highlights of the newly re-designed harbour, with its modern buildings protruding out of or in front of refurbished warehouses, provided a fascinating view of this modern North German city and an added picture to that of the city centre.

On returning to Lübeck, very warm hospitality was extended to me at both Gudrun's home and Regina Gabriel's, where we were joined by Roland Portz and Regina's lovely family over a delightful dinner, for which I was truly grateful.

To all of you at the Friedrich-List-Schule I wish to extend therefore my sincere thanks for a most enjoyable and fascinating stay in Lübeck and for your very warm hospitality under the auspices of COMENIUS!

The Comenius Teacher Exchange Project in IISS J.C. Maxwell on 16-20 March 2009.

A REPORT written by Arja Voss (the teacher of English at Vantaa Vocational College, Finland)

I and my colleague Soili Ojanen from Vantaa Vocational College (Finland) had a great opportunity to take part in the Comenius Teacher Exchange Project in IISS J.C. Maxwell in Milan, Italy from 16th to 20th March 2009.

Our host was Mrs. Maria Grazia Cupini and she did a wonderful job introducing us to many teachers and students of the school. We visited several classes of electronics, mechanics and aeronautics. The students were friendly, active and they made many interesting questions about Finland, Finnish history, school system and the Finnish way of life. We also saw some excellent power point presentations given by Mrs. Cupini's students.

Several teachers, like Fabio Mancini, Andrea Duchi, Marco Santoro, Walter Florentini and Maria Teresa Trabucchi from Settembrini among others, let us take part in their lessons. We were able to compare the labs, the classroom work and teaching methods between Italy and Finland. We were also able to study the curricula and the contents of some courses.

On Wednesday afternoon we visited the Brera Art Gallery and saw many magnificent masterpieces. In the evening we had a delicious Italian dinner with some teachers and the Principal Giuseppe Sammartino. It was also very kind of him to take us to a sightseeing tour around the beautiful city of Milan.

On Thursday evening we went to see the musical "Jesus Christ Superstar" at Teatro Nuovo with Maria Giovanna Musarra and Maria Grazia Cupini. We enjoyed it a lot.

On Friday we flew back to Finland with many wonderful memories and new, interesting experiences for which we want to thank Maria Grazia Cupini and her colleagues in IISS J.C. Maxwell.



My European experience in Finland

by Pietro Sarpa

March 2009

My personal experience in Finland , Vantaa vocational school started with a technical inconvenience: the airline from which we were supposed to fly had previously cancelled the flight advising the travel agency but not our school. So after a delay of some hours the students and I got to Vantaa a little bit exhausted! ! On our journey to Finland the stop in Copenhagen gave us the opportunity to admire the long bridge that links Denmark to Sweden!

The following morning Mr Makinen, our Finnish referent and Comenius coordinator picked us up at the hotel and gave a lift to the school.

During the first meeting we planned all the activities of the week, we had lunch in the school canteen and in the afternoon first visit to Helsinki by the school van .

Our first day ended with a dinner together with the students in Tikkurila, the small town where the hotel was located.

The following day in school the teacher of English Mrs Arja Voss introduced her students to the Italian ones keeping in touch with each other and through the communication in English starting the first step of socialization and mutual collaboration in pair-work.

It was very pleasant and useful initiative; in fact the boys not only told about the history of their hometown and their educational system but as they got on so well with each other they arranged the extra meeting in the afternoon and at dinner too!

In the following days the meeting with the students from the different departments were followed by the visits to some companies of the surrounding area!

The students had the opportunity to learn about the Finnish educational system and the school link with the working market.

On our way back to the hotel the referent Mr Mauri Immonen let us visit and explore the beautiful and iced Finnish lakes !!

On Saturday, free from the school duties, we improved our knowledge of Helsinki by visiting the old market and Suomenlinna Swedish fortress, Unesco world jewel!!

Tired but happy we came back home...

A thank you to.....Comenius and Mrs Cupini!



