

Karl Konig in America: A Documentation, Published by the Karl Konig Institute; 2nd Revised and Enhanced Edition: 2020; Edited by Richard Steel

This book chronicles Karl König's two journeys to America taken in the summers of 1960 and 1962. Less than one hundred pages long and printed in a large 8 x 11 inch format, this book consists primarily of passages from Karl König's diary, along with letters, reports on his two journeys to America, comments from others about the visits and photographs. The intention of the book is to honor the sixtieth anniversary of the first journey and the lecture course he gave at that time in Spring Valley on the "twelve senses." 2020 is also the 60th anniversary of the founding of Camphill in America and the 80th anniversary of the original founding of Camphill in Scotland. The front piece makes the book's intention clear:

This little booklet does not profess to be anything like a full account of Camphill's beginnings in America – this has already been done in a beautiful way by others. It merely gives one of many possible aspects, presenting also some of the historic documents that live in the Karl König Archive. But it is much more a token of the heart felt connection across the world, and as a greeting from the Karl König Institute to those living and working with the Camphill impulse in America, out of gratitude for the past, looking forward to ever new tasks.

The "opening word" of the book is from Deborah Grace, an American and long-time Camphill coworker. In her short essay she writes regarding Karl König's first visit to America, capturing the spirit of the book, that Karl König was aware of the opposing spiritual forces threatening to destroy America's soul. She then quotes from a letter by Karl Konig to a close friend:

... As I awoke on the first morning, my head was resting on the heart of the folk spirit, and I heard the words issuing forth from it: All human beings are brothers and sisters. The feeling of joy that grew from this was truly wonderful. Through this I felt I was allowed to experience one of the mysteries of the American people.

She then offers another quote from Karl König concerning the overarching task of America and also of Camphill in America:

The whole time during my visit over there, I had the impression that it is a nation on trial. God is moving the American hearts. He tests the reins of a people whom He expects will lead humankind into a better future.

Richard Steel, the editor of the book and the director of the Karl König Institute, provides an introduction to the book, drawing on his extensive knowledge of Karl Konig and Camphill. This introduction provides an initial view of the history of Camphill and the founding of Camphill work in America. He describes how a group of Camphill coworkers came to America and pioneered the Camphill School in southeast Pennsylvania and the Camphill Village in upstate New York. He explains that Karl König felt a call from the spiritual world to found Camphill in America.

The book includes the transcript of a lecture given by Karl König on his return to Scotland from his first visit. In this lectures he says:

... And somehow it seems that what did not happen in Europe might come about there. One can definitely have the feeling, and perhaps more than the feeling, that what was missed here still has a chance to come about there. Perhaps altogether this wonder of America was developed in order to give to the Europeans the possibility to achieve what in Europe was not possible due to continuous quarrel and fighting: the element of brotherhood.

This quote is deeply connected to important statements that Rudolf Steiner made in a series of four lectures given in Dornach to the first group of English members to come to Dornach after the end of World War I (see *Ideas for a New Europe*, GA/CW 194, 12/12-15/1919). In the third and fourth lectures Rudolf explains that the task of Middle Europe to bring about the threefold social order for the sake of humanity's social future was betrayed and destroyed by World War I. Now this task falls the Americans who will gain world dominion in the Twentieth Century. He explains that if American's do not take up this task from Middle Europe, they will bring death and destruction to the world. These lectures and Karl König's words shared in this book create an image of a spiritual bridge between Europe and America regarding the responsibility for humanity's future. It is clear from the reading of this book that Karl König experienced that Camphill was part of the building of this bridge and was deeply moved by this experience.

Karl Konig already alluded to the passing on of the "true" destiny of Middle Europe to the west when he arrived as a refugee in London at Christmas 1938. He describing sitting alone in a room lit by a candle, feeling the doom of the beginning of war in Europe, and how he could carry a morsel of the true Middle Europe with him in his new life in England. He considered this moment the inner birth of the community impulse behind Camphill. This book tells the story of the bringing of this morsel of the true Middle Europe cultivated in Camphill to America to join the already established anthroposophical work in America. As Carlo Pietzner, one of the founders of the Camphill work in America, once wrote to me, it is still an open question if this morsel will be received by America and the spiritual bridge between Europe and America will grow and develop. This matter of destiny is a essential question for the anthroposophical work in America that includes the Anthroposophical Society in America and the established daughter movements (Biodynamics, Waldorf Schools, the healing practices -- doctors, nurses, therapists, Eurhythmy, Camphill). In regard this question of destiny, the book provides a window into the reality of the inner task of anthroposophy in America.