Diessen, May 15, 1944

To the Ahnenerbe

Waischenfeld
Bavaria / Bayreuth / Upper Franconia

Brief Report
On the information gathering trip to Norway and Denmark
Of April 23, 1944 – May 13, 1944

The goals of the trip were

1.) To look into the opportunities for collaboration with Scandinavian scholars;
2.) To set goals for a greater Germanic oriented comparative research on dialects.

Both of these were achieved to a desirable extent, despite the fact the political atmosphere must be described as extraordinarily unfavourable.

On Point 1 it must be said that the collaboration with those scholars active at the individual institutes or universities of the occupied Scandinavian countries must be carried out privately and personally. Any official backdrop would lead to a break-off of the relationship, as the scholars in question would face a complete boycott by their colleagues and students, if not worse from political assassins. Apart from these political inhibitions, a broad openness was evident toward the scientific problems in question and a readiness for collaboration, which is unfortunately missing in many analogous German scholars.

On Point 2 it can be said, that my work on a comparison of the research methods applied thus far in Scandinavia and south German areas must be restricted to the realm of folk language. As soon as this comparison has grown sufficiently, the following can occur on its foundation:

1. Developing a plan for a common Scandinavian language atlas;
2. Moving closer to the realization of the idea of a common Germanic language atlas.

In practical terms it is important above all else to train essential employees for such far-reaching undertakings. As it is fairly hopeless to try to find ourselves the necessary forces in Germany currently and at the same the necessary extensive language knowledge is only present in Scandinavians, I propose we release from their camps and enlist the service of two Norwegian students as active employees in my institute. They are currently detained in Germany and I heard of them while I was in Norway. They have worked diligently in the area of dialect research. I request that steps be taken immediately to accomplish this. The names of the two are as follows:
1. Grip Olaf, who worked on a West Norwegian dialect; 
2. Mr. Nielsen from Mandal in southeast Norway, who has also written on dialect.

An application for the release of these two has already been submitted to the Reichskommissar for Norway by Professor Dr. Schwalm and I assume he will report the results of his efforts on this matter immediately to Waischenfeld or Berlin. I ask therefore for immediate communication, so that I can at once carry out the preparations for accommodation of the two students here. I ask also that I be provided all instructions on this topic. Ms. Professor Dal, Germanist at Oslo University, presented me the prospect of in the future being able to locate a Norwegian student to serve as polyglot employee until fall (about September) and it would likewise be possible to acquire through my relationships with Danish scholars one or two employees for the Danish relations.

The prerequisite for fruitful work in regard to the broad-reaching plan is at least a half year of training for the staff in uniform work methods. Naturally the foreign employees will expect full compensation for their travel costs and reasonable pay. I ask that these issues be settled from the outset, so that I know exactly what I can offer people.

As soon as the Scandinavian employees are adequately incorporated, the exact planning will be tackled for a common Scandinavian Atlas, which includes above all the preparation of word lists and question books, which according to my preliminary estimate must reach at least two thousand words. These lists will be cultivated in such a way that the pick out the most fertile words in terms of dialect geography as well as culture and history, which can later be expanded for the creation of a common German as well as common European Atlas.

Behind closed doors I was told by both the Norwegian and the Danish scholars in question how greatly interested they were in our South German research and research results and that they had already previously desired contact and collaboration, but were currently hindered by the politically induced hostility of their colleagues and students. Professor Kolsrud in Oslo, in charge of dialect research, has long wanted to acquire German comparative material for the reference library of his institute, but has not been able to risk making such a request to his superior. I will try to provide him with my own special prints and other such documents, but particularly important for him would be to possess the installments of the German language atlas (I believe there are twelve) which have been issued up to this point, published by the bookstore Elwert in Marburg / Lahn. These installments of the language atlas were sent at no charge to all secondary schools in Germany by the Reich Ministry of Education and I believe it would certainly be possibly to set aside a complete copy for the Molföre Archive in Oslo, which would constitute an important step toward future collaboration. Perhaps there are other relevant documents available for this purpose?

I ask for a prompt reply on the points touched upon above, so that the planned Scandinavian work can progress at a quick pace.

Heil Hitler!

Dr. Schweizer