

Bennington College  
September 16, 1940

Memorandum to: Mr. Leigh

From: Francis Fergusson

Re: Dr. Goetz

I had a long talk with Dr. Goetz on Friday afternoon, and we came out with the following titles for his five afternoon lectures:

- The European Drama*
1. Storm and Stress, the German Chance and Tragedy
  2. The Historic Hero and the Dramatic Author -  
The Maid of Orleans and Schiller  
Faust and Goethe
  3. Expressionism in Drama
  4. The Russian Theatre as I Saw It
  5. War in Drama as It Reflects National Attitudes

These are the titles which Dr. Goetz had thought of, and I thought it best to encourage him to do things that he was interested in and thought he could do well. I doubt after talking to him that he will prove to be a very exciting person; he is pathetic and full of conventional ideas. There are two further points about him which I should like to ask you about:

1. He asked to come to classes in drama and volunteered his services for advice and "help". I should like to be as cordial as possible to him, but on the other hand, the classes are so constructed that help of this kind might be confusing. Perhaps I should invite him to the classes but make it clear to him that he is not expected to say anything. What do you advise?

2. With regard to introducing him when he makes his speech on "The Medieval Conception of Hell", I should prefer not to, if we can figure out some better way to do it. Since I have no official responsibility for him or for his lecture, it would be difficult to introduce him unless I said a few kind things about his career. I can't find out anything about his career except what is on the memorandum you sent me. I do not know anything about his ideas on Hell, but I strongly suspect that this is a set-piece which he has been repeating for the last twenty years, ever since it started out as a thesis for the University of Vienna. I do not wish to be in the position of urging this on the community on its own merits. My suggestion is that he should be presented as an exile whom we are glad to help out for one term rather than as a speaker whom we are eager to hear. If so, it seems to me that the General Meetings Committee, or whoever it is that is responsible for the whole idea, should introduce him as part of the whole scheme.

All this sounds a little ill-tempered, but I am willing to attempt to arrange ways for him to talk to the students in small groups informally, along lines in which he is good. I think that that would perhaps make him feel that he was doing something for us and still not interfere with our machinery.