

BRAILLE PRODUCTION IN THE GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

by

Herbert Jakob

I'll make a brief statement only. At first I like to thank the university and particularly Prof. Werner for his invitation very much. We are glad that we may participate in this conference because we share many problems with all the other printing houses for the blind in the world.

At first I want to describe our operations to demonstrate what kind of problems we have. We produce literature in Braille and also on recorded tape. In this way we unite both kinds of reproduction and we produce Braille not only in print but also in single copies for our library by hand. We feel that this form is very necessary because Braille is very space consuming and central institutions as the Zentralbucherei für Blinde in Leipzig are practically the best storages of knowledge for all the blind that read and hear with us.

It happens that handwritten Braille books are needed in very small editions, for example, two, three, four and five specimens. In particular if it is special literature, for instance, for scientists. For these reasons we have contacted a large factory and tried to develop machinery that is able to operate five machines simultaneously controlled by one unit and which in addition produces one paper tape that may be reused later on. At the same time we have provided the ability of this machine to be driven by punched cards or paper tape.

This machine of course could be used to drive an embossing machine. We do not intend, however, to produce our own program because we feel that all people should share something that is already completed and available. The program developed at the University of Münster can be used by us because we have computers that are very similar to those available in the Federal Republic of Germany or by IBM. Yesterday we have heard very much about international cooperation and I am really glad that Prof. Werner and I have agreed that the Zentrale Blindenbucherei of the German Democratic Republic may use the results of the computation center of the Westf. Wilhelms-Universität, Münster. Just as I am more generally of the opinion that the only means and the only way to come along is true and good international cooperation. A proof for this cooperation of the German speaking countries is the reform of our Braille Grade 2.

In closing I'd like to make a proposal. With us in the German Democratic Republic we have an information and documentation center for the international world of the blind. This center for information and documentation gathers all international publications on blind work and concerning blind work including technical publications. In regular periods it produces indexes giving in short form the announcements of the newest publications. I feel, this institution should particularly be used with respect to technical developments for instance, I think of publications concerning printing-techniques and similar things. Therefore we would like to suggest that all international publications should be sent to us so that we can publish it and announce it appropriately. I would be happy if we could contribute our share to the international cooperation in this way. Thank you very much.