Agathe and Erich Aurich

Photo courtesy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists Archives.

Aurich, Erich (b. 1899)

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Erich Aurich was a German Adventist missionary to China. His work focused on Manchuria.

Early Years and Marriage

Aurich was born January 5, 1899, in Saxony, Germany.[1] He married Agathe, a professional nurse, October 20, 1912. Aurich must have "gone through a Red Cross Course"[2] but he originally worked as a mechanic and electrician for some time. From 1919 to 1925 he attended Friedensau Missionary Seminary. There he learned, in

addition to Greek and Latin, the English language.[3]

Beginning of Denominational Work

After graduation from Friedensau, Aurich worked as an evangelist in the Brandenburg Conference, Germany, for three years. Under the leadership of Walter K. Ising, he and Karl Schroeter, another evangelist, were appointed to go to China as missionaries. According to Ising both were on the same level of evangelistic skills, but the Division Council only voted to ordain Schroeter. This action raised Aurich's opposition. He wanted to be ordained as well.[4] Later, both were sent without ordination;[5] and the China Division finally ordained them in 1930.[6]

After the General Conference confirmed their appointment to China in January 1928,[7] the Far Eastern Outlook informed its readers in February 1928 and stressed that Aurich as well as Schroeter "have some years of experience in soul-winning work".[8]

Ministry in China

On February 5, 1928 Aurich and Schroeter sailed from Hamburg for Shanghai.[9] Immediately they started their language classes at the Shanghai School of Mandarin Studies (31 Nigkuo Road), but Agathe Aurich's language classes were interrupted by the birth of a daughter on June 17, 1928.[10]

The Aurichs spent a year in Shanghai. On May 15, 1929, he was appointed to work in Mukden in Manchuria (now Shenyang, Liaoning Province).[11] In the spring of 1930 Aurich was assigned to open a new mission station in Newchwang (Yingkou, Liaonian Province). On September 7, 1930, he reported that about eight individuals were baptized in an evangelistic effort. However, it is not clear if this was the result of his labor, for the baptisms did not take place in Newchwang, suggesting that he was not able to baptize any soul in his new place of work. He assured readers, though, that he continued to pray for fruits of his labor.[12]

End of Denominational Work and Return

Church administrators had little patience with Aurich's lack of success, and Aurich received word that he had been released from his duties. On April 8, 1931, Division president Henry W. Miller wrote Aurich a letter, explaining that Aurich's superiors were dissatisfied with the meager results of his evangelistic work. Miller wrote that they would have searched for an alternative call for him in another Chinese Union if not for the financial pressure of the Great Depression. They had to cut jobs and they started with individuals with whom they were not satisfied. Aurich's baptismal numbers were too small; as Miller wrote, "the results of your work have not been as some had hoped".[13] Aurich seems to have resisted, arguing that he had worked in China just a short while. However, Aurich also appears to have had a "critical attitude" toward a leader in his field, at least in the

eyes of some administrators. Evidently Aurich wanted to remain in China, but not in the Manchurian Union with the superiors with whom he had encountered frictions. Miller interpreted this as meaning that it was not clear to the Division that Aurich really wanted to remain in China at all.[14]

In 1932 Erich Aurich was listed as living in Regensburger Strasse 22, Berlin, Germany, but without a position,[15] and from 1933 onward his name was not listed as employee in the Adventist Yearbooks any longer. No further information is known about his life.

Contribution

As an Adventist missionary in China Aurich did not play a major role, but his case shows how important baptismal numbers must have been for administrators at the time, and under what strong pressure employees worked in the mission at times. The year of Aurich's death is unknown.

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NOTES

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2. W. K. Ising, Letter to E. Kotz, December 18, 1927, in Erich Aurich, Record ID 45145, Box 9821, General Conference Archives, Silver Spring, Maryland.

3. W. K. Ising, Letter to I. H. Evens and C. C. Crisler, December 18, 1927, in Erich Aurich, Record ID 45145, Box 9821, General Conference Archives, Silver Spring, Maryland, 2.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., 2-3.

6. *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook*, 1930. Retrieved from http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Yearbooks/YB1930.pdf.

7. General Conference Committee, January 5, 1928, 469, General Conference Archives, accessed February 16, 2020, http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Minutes/GCC/GCC1928.pdf.

8. "Workers from Europe," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, February 1928, 9; "Division Notes," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, May/June 1928, 13.

9. They were expected on March 24, but only reached their destination April 9. See W. K. Ising, Letter to E. Kotz, December 18, 1927, in Erich Aurich, Record ID 45145, Box 9821, General Conference Archives, Silver Spring, Maryland; Without author, "Division Notes," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, May/June 1928, 13.

10. "Births," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, July 1928, 8.

11. "Assignments and Departures," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, June 1929, 16.

12. Erich Aurich, "Newchwang, Manuchria," *Far Eastern Division Outlook*, October 1930, 6.

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14. Ibid.

15. Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook for 1932. Retrieved from http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Yearbooks/YB1932.pdf.

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