

# Gerhard Lauck The Education of an Evil Genius

#### Part 3

# What Planet Am I On?

When the world started to go insane in the 1960's, I asked myself one simple question: *What planet am I on*???

Many people, including friends and family, did the same thing back in those days.

I didn't trust the mainstream parties or conventional approaches. In search of answers, I started to read a wide variety of literature. Some, I hated. Some, I loved. While still in junior high school, I found the answers I wanted. Within the next few years, I even converted some kinsmen. I hesitate to call it a "new faith", because we had believed in the same basic ideas for years without even knowing it. Leastwise not by name. It was neither a "religion" nor an "ideology" in the conventional sense. It was a "worldview".

This "conversion" or "enlightenment" process has already been described by other people. Both leaders and rank-and-file. I won't bother doing so again. Basically, I am an administrator, organizer, analyst and strategist. Not an author, theoretician or ideologist.

Nonetheless, I remember a discussion with George and Mark about the relative merits of "healthy instinct" versus "good reasoning", when it comes to choosing one's basic political philosophy. My conclusion: Both are good. But a combination of both is best.

Mark helped to choose our newspaper's name, *NS Kampfruf*. He was proud of the fact that he had spent a few weeks in the same prison as Hitler! He had been arrested for putting up NSDAP/AO stickers.

#### My Father & Mentor "FW"

In the 1940's, my father graduated from college with an engineering degree. He was soon hired by a large manufacturing company. Eventually he earned an additional degree.

During the war he worked very long hours. Mom said she hardly ever got to see him. But I think she may have exaggerated a little. After all, she had babies during the war...Then again, my father joked that grandpa had once asked grandma why the babies stopped after he bought a refrigerator and got rid of the icebox.

In the 1950's, the company promoted him to head of long range research. I remember visiting his plant as a child. My first impression was this: *Boy, daddy has a BEAUTIFUL SECRETARY. I wonder if MOMMY knows about this!* 

He showed me one of the new products that he had helped to develop. That product is still in wide use today. Whenever I happen to see one, I think of my fa-ther.

My father proved himself so valuable to the company that it decided to invest in advancing his skills. It hired some of the nation's top mathematicians to tutor him one-on-one. His knowledge eventually rose to the equivalent of a PhD in Mathematics, even though he did not have an official degree in mathematics.

Years later, a high school math teacher told us to ask our parents how much math they knew. Rightly or wrongly, I perceived this as a dig. So I asked my father to be thorough. He listed over *twenty* different kinds of math he had studied. The math teacher had *never even heard* of some of them!

In the 1960's, FW decided to go into teaching. He said he was alarmed by the declining quality of the nation's engineering students. So he became a professor of engineering at a state university.

Of course, this meant a big cut in salary. But he didn't seem to mind.

When we moved to our new home on the very edge of the "city", I was shocked and disappointed. Our new home was very modest compared to our old country estate. But I didn't say anything.

FW created and taught a very special course. It was designed to give his students some *practical experience in industrial engineering*.

Visiting small manufacturing firms in the area, he made them an offer they could hardly refuse. "Let my students TRY to solve your engineering problems. If they

fail, I'll come out at the end of the semester and solve them FOR FREE."

And that was exactly what he did!

The result was a lot of happy businessmen. Some sent letters of praise to the university. In addition, even years later, he received letters from former students expressing their gratitude. One of them wrote that he had learned more in this *one course* than in *all of the other courses put together*.

This also gave him an insight into the general nature of these firms.

Typically, these companies start out with just two guys. One is good at technology. The other is good at business. As their company grows, it eventually reaches a point where they need outside help.

Back then, my father provided the *engineering* help. Many years later, I provided the *business* help.

He also made another observation:

Engineers and businessmen have trouble communicating with each other. They talk different languages. Also, the best engineering students are not good at writing or public speaking.

Years later I noticed computer technicians and businessmen often have the same problem.

Therefore, he urged his students to join a group called *Toastmasters*, which promoted skill in public speaking. He joined it himself.

FW had a reputation for being very tough, but also very fair.

For example: His students were instructed to identify their papers *only by social security number*. Not name. He didn't want to know their identity during grading. Only later, went posting those grades, did he learn that. This was his way to prevent any, even unintentional or subconscious, bias.

His students had a saying about his weekly ten question quizzes:

If you're a good student, you can answer the first three questions. If you're a genius, you can figure out the next three. But only God and Professor FW know the answers to the last four!

When he told me one of those "last four", I soon figured out the answer. Unlike my father, I have no attitude for mechanics and technology. But I did inherit his analytical mind and knack for problem solving. Despite our different fields, we thought a lot alike. FW often commented that we applied the *same* principles to *different* fields. We just called them by different names.

His best students loved him and his worst students hated him.

One of his students was *literally a genius* when it came to engineering. My father tutored him one-on-one. For free. Smiling, he told me: *It was a joy to teach him. His mind absorbed knowledge like a sponge. He learned more in one week than the average student does in six months.*  FW later left teaching and started his own engineering consulting firm. I got an impressive title in the corporation, but I was really just a figurehead.

In the next few years, FW became licensed as an engineer in more and more states. When he took the New York State engineering test, they demanded to see his birth certificate to prove he was a U.S. citizen. *His score was so high that they could not believe he had received his education in the USA!* 

### Cars

My father always had at least five cars. He'd buy big old Buicks, fix 'em up and drive them until something major went bad. Like an engine or transmission. Then he'd cannibalize them for parts. He was so thorough that the junkyard dealers sometimes wanted him to pay them to tow them away. Not the other way around.

One time he got \$95 from an insurance company, because the other fellow had dented his fender. The car had only cost \$100!

Being the youngest and least skilled, I got the boring jobs. Like rotating tires or tapping spark plugs. Or just sitting there bored to death handing him tools. Maybe that's one of the reasons I never developed an interest in mechanics.

One time the neighbor's goat came over to help. But it had an ulterior motive. The goat liked tobacco. It tried to steal the tobacco pouch out of my father's pocket, while he was working under the car.

Once we came home and saw a long wooden pole next to the back door. My sister explained she needed it to fend off the goat. When she went out to bring in the laundry from the line, it tried to butt her!

One time I got down on all fours and butted heads with this goat. Then I looked up. The goat and I stared at each other for a moment. Then the goat turned and ran off. To this day, I don't know whether it was my hard head or my face that made it do that.

I didn't have my own car in my teenage years. I didn't need one.

Most of the cars I've owed in my life were built in the 1970's. The cheapest one cost \$500. The most expensive one was \$1,500. The "worst" car I ever bought cost \$700 and only lasted me three years. It had belonged to a high school student. His parents had bought him a new car as a graduation gift. My two favorites were both a 1975 Buick Electra Limited. One cost \$895 and lasted ten years. A friend commented: *This isn't an automobile. It's an aircraft carrier!* 

My most amusing car purchase went like this. My father-in-law and I went together while my wife stayed at home. We negotiated the purchase with the private owner in three languages. When we got back home, my wife's only question was: *What color is the car?* Neither of us remembered the color of the car we had purchased only an hour earlier! This made her nervous. But when she saw the car, she was quite pleased.

A work colleague had a similar experience with his wife. When he asked her what kind of car she wanted, she said: *blue*!

Over the next several years, she had about ten minor accidents with that 1975 Buick Regal. Two on one and the same day! The second time, she locked bumpers with a police car in front of the police station. I was so furious I refused to go help her. Her father did instead.

## I Was a Teenage Supervisor... NOT a Werewolf

I worked in a factory each summer to earn money for tuition and books. While still a teenager, I was promoted to a low-level supervisory position and had a crew of seven under me. I was the youngest of the lot.

How did I get that promotion?

Here's the story.

The factory had just launched a new product. Initially, production was scattered across different departments. Each of those departments tended to view the new product as a diversion from their real work. The portion assigned to them was shunted off to the side.

This was my third stint at the factory. When I reported to my old supervisor, he led me to another part of the plant. It was so far away from his department that we couldn't even see it! I joined two workers already there assembling components.

It was nothing personal. Nonetheless, I had been exiled. Assigned to work on that darn new product. Out of eyeshot.

He rarely checked on us. Or was around, when we needed help... Not even when we pleaded for more parts, because we had run out and work had come to a standstill!

One day a young engineer, new to factory procedures, kindly offered to help us out. He walked over to the warehouse and brought over some parts. Without telling anybody or doing the paperwork.

So we turned to him in the future as well. Somebody in the front office eventually found out what he was doing. He got balled out.

One manager from the front office in particular would walk by and ask me a question. I answered as best I could. This happened a few times.

Only a few weeks after I started, he walked up to me and said that I had been

promoted. You're the only person who knows anything about what's going on around here!

This took me by surprise. Naturally, I was pleased.

Soon the production for that product was consolidated in one area. A higherlevel supervisor was appointed over the roughly thirty people. In military terms, he was the equivalent of a lieutenant commanding a platoon and I was a sergeant leading a squad.

But there was still one tiny little problem.

*The products didn't work!* The reject rate was around 50%!

Nobody could figure out *why*. In desperation, the same front office manager asked me what I thought.

I made an observation and offered a theory. He had somebody fetch the necessary equipment to check it out. (I didn't know how to use it, but he did.) The mystery was solved. The reject rate dropped radically. Obviously, we had fixed at least *part* of the problem.

But the reject rate was *still* too high. The manager and I discussed this problem for a few minutes. Then I came up with another theory. He thought it made sense and we should check it out.

He brought over some *even more sophisticated equipment* – this time we had to bring in a *college trained technician* who knew how to use it – and tested my theory. My suspicion was confirmed!

Technicians and even full-fledged engineers had sweated blood over this problem for *weeks*. Then I found the solution in a matter of minutes.

At the time, I chalked this up to a combination of common sense and good luck. It didn't dawn on me at the time that there might be anything more to it.

From then on, that technician and his equipment were an integral part of the production line. He always checked the "problem child" component for that invisible defect before assembly. The defect rate dropped to an acceptable minimum.

Question: *How could a nineteen year old kid - with NO technical training - solve a TECHNICAL problem that nobody else could figure out?* 

Answer: Observation, analysis and plain old-fashioned common sense!

This factory had been founded by a man who was a *genius inventor*. He had started the business *in his parent's garage while still in high school!* 

His genius for invention is matched only by the stupidity of his relatives in the front office, another worker commented.

Unfortunately, when he expanded the plant for the manufacture of a new product, he overextended himself. When that product was suddenly rendered obsolete by another advance in technology, the company went bankrupt. The factory closed. The employees were dismissed. The locals cursed him. And he moved out of the state.

By then, I had already moved on to other pursuits.

#### I Start to Write

While still a teenager, my first articles (aside from a poem in a high school publication) started appearing in the publications of non-profit organizations.

At first, I simply subscribed to several periodicals in both the USA and Europe. These included *The Voice of the Federation*, *Der Deutsch-Amerikaner*, *Nation Europa*, *Mut Magazine*, *Deutsche Nachrichten*, *Deutsche Wochenzeitung*, *Deutsche National- und Soldatenzeitung* and more.

But I soon began to submit letters to the editor and later articles, too.

One essay I submitted to a writing contest for young authors made the semifinals. It was published along with all the other semi-finalists in the sponsoring magazine, *Nation Europa*.

This magazine was very "highbrow". It published articles by many prominent people. Apparently, I had gained some attention in the right circles, because I received letters – and even invitations to visit - from some of them. Some of them came from retired *senior government officials, scholars and highly distinguished military officers*.

While still in my teens, I was invited to address an international conference in Europe and did so, namely the first *Nationaleuropäischer Jugendkongress*. I had a great time and met many fascinating people.



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