

## R E P O R T

on Conference of OMGUS Youth Activities Officers held at Bremen (US Enclave) Germany  
on 13 - 14 November 1947

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The Youth Activities Officers from each of the Lands in the US-Zone of Germany meet monthly to exchange information and to discuss matters of policy and administration. The principle topics for this conference were "Sports" and "Work Camps". Edward Ladd, the Bremen officer who was host to this conference, had been one day at the Askov Work Camp Conference and there he had invited Basil Eastland, Heinrich Carstens and me to attend this meeting in Bremen. A list of personnel follows :

Lawrence E. Norrie,	<u>Chief</u> , Youth Activities OMGUS E.R.A. Berlin	
Theron A. Johnson,	" " " " "	APO 742
Howard Johnston,	Y. A. Off., Berlin, US Sector	APO 755
Harold C. Patrick,	Y. A. Off., Hesse at Wiesbaden	APO 633
Raymond J. Spahn,	Y. A. Off., Bavaria at Munich, Tegernseer Landstraße	APO 170
Ewald L. Swanson,	Y. A. Off., " " " "	APO 170
Aksel Nielson,	Y. A. Off., Wurttenburg-Baden at Stuttgart 21 Neue Weinsteige	APO 154
Edward T. Ladd,	Y. A. Off., Bremen Enclave at Bremen	APO 751
Maj. W. H. Merthinsen,	Liason Off., AUS - OMGUS /Y.A.	APO 751

( and the following guests for one or more sessions )

Basil Eastland	IVSP/BRC, Brit.Zone at Vlotho/Weser,HQ 5 BRC tel: Rhine Army 2490, or 2770, 2494 (between 8:30 - 21: hr)
Heinrich Carstens	Pres. I.Z. (SCI Germany) at Hamburg-Blankenese Caprivistraße 59; tel Hamburg 462586 (evenings)
Ogden Hannaford	AFSC, 17 rue Notre Dame des Champs, Paris 6 tel: LITre 8104, 8148, 8512. cable ADSERCO Paris.
Capt. C. R. Jeffs	USN Deputy Director, Bremen
Dr. Burk	CRALOG, Bremen, (formerly with Brethren Service Comm.)

13 Nov. Morning

Reports and suggestions from the various Lands.

13 Nov. Afternoon

Sports : Some questions raised about the Youth Act. Officer's responsibility for seeing that sports organizations are duly registered led to a discussion of OMGUS aims and methods which was most interesting to me because the same policies appear to be applied to all youth activities, including work camps. The basic aim is to help the Germans to help themselves (& each other) rather than to try to give them something they may not want. The Y.A. Officer is supposed to encourage any local group which shows initiative. He or some other outside agency may even go quite far in promoting that local interest but OMGUS will not assist until it has evidence that there are local sponsors for any projected activity.

A group which elects officers and adopts a constitution is said to be an organisation and is then required to register with the Kreis Committee or Lands Y.A. Officer depending on its size. This is done by depositing a copy of the constitution and names of officers at the appropriate agency. The constitution does not have to be approved by OMGUS. Organizations are not recognized by OMGUS above the "Land level". (From this I assume that the Internationale Zivildienst, for instance, would only be recognized separately in each Land when it had local groups there, but could never be officially recognized on a zonal, national or international level under present policy).

The creators of OMGUS policy felt it inadvisable to permit activities to organize on the zonal level because it would

- (a) tend to solidify the present division of Germany into zones of occupation and
- (b) it might add to the difficulties of unifying the country after a peace treaty had been made.

Mr. Norrie asked whether the youth movement had matured to the point where it was no longer necessary to require organizations to "register". "We must be alert to relinquish control just as fast as the Germans are capable of controlling themselves" and "perhaps just a little faster" added another delegate. (Note: these are not verbatim quotes). The group was not unanimous in feeling that the youth movement had attained sufficient maturity and the clinching argument was this that since the Y.A. officers were held responsible for information on all activities within their region, they needed the device of registration to obtain that information.

#### Growth of Youth Activities:

Some startling statistics came out in the course of the foregoing discussion. "We now have a million kids in organized groups where last year we had only ten thousand". 92% of Germans between 14 and 18 yrs are not enrolled in regular schools. But 50% of the youth of the US Zone are organized (1947) as compared to only 24% on the youth in the United States (1944).

#### Need for Positive Aim:

When the discussion had returned to the subject of controlling youth groups again, Mr. Norrie commented somewhat as follows: "I am not so much concerned about any wrong direction they may be taking, as the lack of any direction evident in their development!" The movement obviously does not need the Participation of greater numbers but it needs help in finding a positive aim for itself. In order to help youth activities to find a positive direction in which to develop, the following steps should be taken, said Mr. Johnson in summary:

- (1) Break down the isolation of German youth by exchange of personnel and program materials with the outside world.
- (2) Encourage leadership training for youth activities.
- (3) Promote planning of activities on a community-wide basis.

(The conference was reminded of the danger of using "program materials" as a crutch. We might find ourselves promoting programs instead of boys and girls.)

#### 13 Nov. Evening

Private showing of a portion of the film "Hitlerjunge Quex" which had been produced as a full length propaganda film early in Nazi regime. This version of the film (from the Mus. Modern Art Library) was interrupted at appropriate intervals with commentary from an American psychologist who analysed the methods employed by the producers.

#### 14 Nov. Morning

This session, which I did not attend, was said to be a continuation of the general subject Sports.

#### 14 Nov. Afternoon

**Work Camps:** The Y.A. officers were first asked to report on any past experience or future prospects of work camps in their Land. Ed Ladd spoke of last summer's plan for an international work camp to do reconstruction in Bremen, and told how it had had to be abandoned for lack of adequate leadership and because the proposal had not been sufficiently explained to local labour unions. Local people are not discouraged however and they will try again next year. Heinrich Carstens then told of the I.Z. camp at Ludwigstein last year, and said that he had heard that there was interest in the work camp idea among group of students at the University of Würzburg and in War Resisters group at Munich.

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I added that the purpose of my present visit was to investigate the possibilities of projects for three proposed AFSC camps in the US Zone. Mr. Swanson asked whether the rebuilding of the Askar

Polytechnic School by the students would be called a "work camp" and that led to a call for a definition of course,

Askov Definition :

Basil Eastland quoted the definition which had been formulated by the Askov Conference Work camps aim ". . . TO BUILD PEACE THROUGH SMALL INTERNATIONAL GROUPS WORKING, LIVING AND LEARNING TOGETHER"(That's the short version of a 1/2 page definition).

OMGUS /Y.A. Requirements:

Mr. Norrie said that they would heartily endorse specific proposals from known agencies which could evidence of

- (1) experience in leadership,
- (2) a worthy project which is "self sustaining" in the sense that it is not a drain on Germany of US Army resources, and
- (3) that the total number of persons to be brought into the Zone will not be unduly large (20 - 30 foreign volunteers for three camps did not sound unduly large).

Exchange of Vols:

No difficulties were foreseen in the matter of obtaining permission for Germans to leave to participate in camps outside the Zone. They will encourage and facilitate it. They will also facilitate the entry of volunteers provided that all problems of feedind and housing within the Zone have been satisfactorily solved.

Transport of food and equipment:

Some help might be had from G.Y.A.

Procedere :

Details of a particular project should be clarified in correspondence between local sponsors and outside agency, with copies going to the Y.A. Officer of the Land. Formal proposal should be made to Land Officer who will in turn forward it, if approved, to OMGUS Y.A. in Berlin. Mr. Norrie felt that such a proposal could be cut through on the basis of existing policy and that it would be easier and safer then asking for a new policy from OMGUS.

15 Nov. Morning

Although the conference was over, Mr. Ladd arranged for a car to drive Norrie, Eastland, Carstens and me to the FAU /PWS Unit near Farge but just outside the US Enclave. There we had about an hour to talk with the five men in the unit and to look around the grounds of the Evangelische Hospital and old people's home where they are doing a miscellaneous assortment of useful jobs at the moment.

Conclusion :

The conference was most valuable to me as an occasion to meet all the Y.A. Officers, to be encouraged by their interest in work camps, and to learn something of OMGUS policy and procedure.

Ogden Hannaford, 17 Nov.'47