Political Youth in Berlin

By William F. Heimlich

The FDJ, Die Falken is truly a youth organization inasmuch as its leaders are young Germans without particular training and with only vague Marxist ideology and lacking the stern discipline which characterizes the FDJ. In the Allied Kommandaturred, applications were received to recognize the FDJ and Die Falken, causing lengthy debate in committee and by the Commandants. The American position was that both youth organizations should be identified with their party: namely, the FDJ should be known as the Communist Party Youth Organization and Die Falken as the Socialist Party Youth Organization. It was also insisted that the door be left open for the admission of other youth organizations.

"Political Youth in Berlin" was adapted by Mr. Heimlich from a speech which he delivered before the American Women's Youth Group of the Berlin Woman's Club. Mr. Heimlich, who was on the original planning staff for the occupation of the US Sector of Berlin, was chief of intelligence for OMG Berlin Sector for a year and a half before civilianizing as deputy chief of the Civilian Administration Branch, OMG Berlin, in September 1946. He is now acting chief of the branch.

This proposal was opposed by the Soviet representatives apparently with the idea that by disguising the true political nature of the youth organizations, greater numbers of youth could be induced to join the FDJ. It was only after extensive effort that a recognition of only one youth organization and exclusion of all others was avoided.

It is common practice for totalitarian states to insist upon single youth, labor, and cultural organizations, vertical structure with control exercised at the top by a very small tightly-knit, highly-disciplined group. The British and American Commandants insisted that this was not in conformity with their ideas of democratic procedure and insisted also upon clear-cut expressions and identifications as to party affiliation, youth program, freedom of speech within the organization, secret ballotings for officials, and all of the other safeguards which appear necessary to us to preserve individual liberties.

These points were won in the Kommandaturred, and, in addition to the FDJ and Die Falken, two other youth organizations were recognized: the Demokratischer Jugendverband (Democratic Youth Union) and the Bund Deutsche Jugend (group of German youth), each with rather vague political ideologies and very loose ties with the other two parties recognized in Berlin.

The result has been that in Berlin youth are free to select any of the four recognized organizations, and there is no compulsion or pressure to join any of them. In the meantime, considerable progress is being made in non-political orientation through the GYA program in bringing to the youth of Berlin an idea of what can be in store for them in a democratic Germany which in the future may again take its place in the society of nations. Practical applications of the American democratic concept of freedom of speech, rights of the individual, and private initiative are carried out in lecture groups, craft instructions, entertainment, discussion of political questions, and wholesome entertainment.

7,900 Properties Returned

Approximately 7,900 properties held by US Occupation Forces have been returned to the German economy since the consolidation of small US Army units and detachments into barracks and similar housing facilities, and since the elimination of small army unit recreational buildings was ordered last May.
Export-Import Business Extended to Shippers

New regulations for 1948 permitting German shipping, forwarding and transportation firms to resume normal functions in conducting export-import business in the combined economic area were announced by the Joint Export-Import Agency of the Bipartite Control Office.

Prior to the war these forwarding and transportation agencies at Bremen, Hamburg, and the German river ports played an important role in handling movement of goods and traffic. Following the war and until now, Military Government regulations prohibited German firms from making agreements with foreign firms to engage in shipping, forwarding and transportation operations.

In order to maximize recovery of foreign exchange for the bizonal export-import account, emphasis will be put on reestablishing German firms in the movement of German and international commerce.

The new JEIA regulations applied to persons and firms engaged in handling traffic and freight by land, sea or inland waterways as agents for foreign business firms.

New Permanent Stamps on Sale

A new five-mark postage stamp in permanent design—the first of that denomination to be printed in Germany since the beginning of the occupation—went on sale in all German post offices in the American, British and Soviet Zones, and Berlin on Feb. 1. Four other denominations available for the first time in the permanent designs were the 10, 15, 30, and 50 pfennig stamps.

Beginning Feb. 1 all 20 denominations of stamps being issued in Germany, excluding the French Zone, were available in the five permanent designs selected in a competition of German artists by a quadripartite panel of judges and approved by the Coordinating Committees Sept. 15, 1946.

Deemed non-essential since the reduction of international postal rates for Germans by quadripartite action of Sept. 15, 1947 from treble to double the pre-occupational rates, the 45 and 75 pfennig denominations are being discontinued, and are not to be available after the present supply is gone.

All permanent stamps for the German postal system, including special issues, are produced by the State Printing Office in Berlin, utilizing materials allocated from the zones concerned.

The French, at present using temporary stamps of a different design in their zone, are agreed in principle to the production and issuance of uniform, permanent stamps for all of Germany, but prohibit distribution in the French Zone of the stamps currently used in the other zones and Berlin, pending settlement of political questions involving the establishment of central German agencies.

1,118,817 Fed by GYA

Children entertained at Army-assisted Christmas parties for German and displaced persons' children throughout the US Zone of Germany totalled 1,118,817, the GYA Section of EUCOM Headquarters announced.