Training Youth Leaders

— — Growth of Groups Creates Need

THE RAPID, almost phenomenal growth of German youth organizations in the US Zone to a membership of more than a million in the first two years of the occupation has created a critical need for trained adult workers.

Denazification standards eliminated from the adult leadership of these organizations Nazi or militaristic individuals. But the more positive and difficult objective of finding adults able to give youth through their organizations constructive, objective and individual guidance persists as the crucial and most fundamental need in the youth field.

German adult advisers of youth, like the youth themselves, are so caught in the traditional cultural patterns of Germany that they lack perspective to judge what is needed. Even if they opposed nazism, the years of isolation and repression have so restricted their vision and so dwarfed their knowledge that they do not know, even if they wish to, how to give new content and perspective to their own work with youth. The training and reorientation of these adult workers is as fundamental in this field as teacher training is to reform of the school system.

THE NEED for reorientation and training is manifested in four major ways:

1. The hierarchial pattern of most German youth organizations tends to create the kind of leadership which prevents local initiative, cramps independence of thought and action on the part of the youthful membership and fosters narrow partisan or sectarian views.

2. Adult workers have little understanding of the psychological needs of young people and how to make the activities of the group serve these needs. Emphasis is put upon mass activities, in which the individual and his particular interests and needs tend to be swallowed by the group.

3. The techniques of group processes such as parliamentary practices, committee organization, program and policy-making with the youth membership, discussion and forum techniques are virtually unknown. Without adult advisers who can offer these skills plus a philosophy recognizing and appreciating democratic values and methods, youth organizations will not help young people to face and assume the responsibilities of citizenship.

4. The recent appointment of increasing numbers of youth workers (Jugendpfleger) introduces still another urgent need for trained personnel in the field of public administration. The youth worker, who is paid out of public funds, is in a strategic position to use his office either to serve or to control the voluntary organizations and either to foster or to squelch private community initiative. There is at this time no school where such youth workers can receive educational and professional training for their work.

RECOGNIZING these needs, each state Military Government has launched a variety of projects to train adult youth workers. Berlin opened the first training center in February 1948 at Wannsee. At present, 90 percent of the operating budget for the center comes from Military Government, and approximately 10 percent from other sources, which include contributions from faculty members and interested individuals and tuition fees from students.

With the exception of a few weeks in mid-winter the Wannsee center has attracted a continuous stream of young people, chiefly between 18 and 25 years of age for one- or two-week or weekend courses. It has emphasized particularly free, non-partisan discussion of political issues, taught certain arts and skills, encouraged independence.

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of thought and attempted by the very organization of the center to teach group program planning and participation.

The services of Miss Lucille Day, provided partly by government funds and partly by a private foundation grant, have contributed immeasurably to the richness and quality of the program. More than 700 individuals participated in one or more courses in the first year, approximately 50 percent of whom were individuals without specific organizational affiliation.

The second major event was the opening of a school at Ruit, near Stuttgart, in May 1948. In spite of financial insecurity, it has received the steady support of the state youth organizations, has won the active support of the ministry and has attracted public attention by its efforts to raise money. Approximately 80 percent of the operating expenses come from Military Government; the remainder from the Ministry of Culture and student fees. It is estimated that approximately 1,500 individuals have participated in one or more courses since the opening of the school in May 1948.

Emphasis at Ruit is being placed on the training of sports and physical education teachers as well as upon the more general field of youth work. The contents of courses, according to qualified observers, still follow German traditions too closely. A non-German resident is urgently needed to give fundamental guidance to the development of curriculum, methods of teaching and general plan of organization.

**Military** Government in Hesse has undertaken a very ambitious program of local community training. It has instituted training courses in local communities and also set up weekend training courses at Oberreifenberg for specialized needs.

Typical of these courses were training conferences for 300 camp leaders in April and June of 1948. By December 1948 approximately 800 different persons had participated in this course. In addition, plans for a permanent center for youth training in Hesse have been in the making since early 1947. Villa Lily now provides such a place. In addition, four consultative committees to work on problems directly related to leadership training have been set up in Hesse. These committees meet regularly and provide channels for all types of youth organizations to discuss these problems.

Certain factors have contributed to the success of all these enterprises. Deutsche mark grants have been essential; all major voluntary organizations have given their support; and boards of committees have been established in each state to help make policy, appoint the faculty and assume some responsibility for public relations. The fact that these efforts are still in their somewhat crude beginnings does not minimize their significance as a cooperative German and Military Government effort to meet a situation of unparalleled opportunity.

Closely allied with these individual state efforts have been a series of interstate consultative conferences to discuss problems of leadership training common to all, looking forward to the development of professional standards in this field. The first such meeting was held in Wiesbaden in August 1948. Approximately 30 representatives of the major organizations came together upon invitation from

OMGUS. The discussions concluded with the election of a working committee to continue the consideration of leadership training problems and with the unanimous recommendation that a longer workshop be held within the next two months.

The conference at Stein in October was the answer to this recommendation. It was marked by great freedom in the exchange of ideas between Germans and Americans, and the recognition on the part of the Germans present of new areas which should be included in leadership training. Again, the participation of leading representatives from the major youth organizations laid the foundation for cooperative work on this problem.

A conference in Ruit in December 1948 enlarged the circle by bringing together representatives from the training centers and organizations of the British and American zones, one representative from the French zone and MG officials from the three zones. This conference emphasized the need for trained youth workers as well as covered again many of the same problems discussed at the conferences at Stein and Ruit.

The development of a united concern for the problems of training has been manifested as a result of these conferences. Not only have organizational representatives discussed their own training institutes objectively and critically, but they have shown growing concern for the establishment of non-sectarian training schools and for the establishment of certain common professional standards. A basis of trust and mutual respect between the Germans and MG officials has been established. Germans attending these conferences have become more critical of their own practices, and indicate a willingness
The World Council of Churches, the Young Men's Christian Association and the American Friends Service Committee have also sent professional staff members to Germany who have demonstrated good group practices and by direct and indirect ways have sought to improve the quality of German leadership.

The sending of Germans to other countries for observation and study of teaching methods and content is expected to bring significant results in this field. International organizations, such as the Catholic Girls' Society, theYWCA and YMCA, have invited Germans to attend training conferences in various European countries as well as in the United States.

Particular mention should be made of a Rockefeller Foundation grant to finance the study of nine carefully chosen youth workers in graduate schools of group work in the United States for a period of four to ten months. The same foundation also financed two months of training in Great Britain for nine youth leaders from the American Zone. Germans returning from such experiences give evidence of more ability to judge German practices critically and objectively and of increased zeal to attempt new constructive experiments in the youth field.

Only a beginning has been made in the development of professional literature and educational materials for youth work. This is as fundamental to good group work as textbooks are to education. A beginning in the work of translation of American book and pamphlets and in the writing of original material was made in Hesse in 1947 and expanded in 1948. Although still in its beginning, this represents a fundamental approach to leadership training. Once the basic philosophy and principles of group work are understood, competent Germans should be encouraged to write material for use by Germans based upon German problems and experiments in the field of youth work.

These are only initial steps in the development of a body of professionally trained and competent youth workers. The fact that the MG youth staff is working cooperatively with a small but growing nucleus of German leaders in this field is the underlying achievement of this year. Such foundation of mutual confidence and cooperation is necessary to all other developments and marks a significant forward step.

Title to Former Reich Property Clarified

To remove uncertainty as to title of property which belonged to the former German Reich and to the former German states, MG Law No. 19 has been promulgated in the US Zone. Under the terms of the new law, title to such properties is generally transferred to the present German state for which the property is located, following a momentary vesting of the title in Military Government to facilitate the transfer of control and ownership to the appropriate German authorities.

Heretofore, uncertainties of title to former Reich properties have seriously retarded repair, rehabilitation, remodeling and utilization of the properties for the most beneficial economic uses. The new law is designed to remove at once, any obstacles to full use. Although the future German government would be competent to deal with this problem itself and is not precluded from doing so when it is established, the time lost before a new government would be able to establish appropriate legislative processes to cope with the problem would represent an additional costly delay to the German economy.

In certain instances, trade unions, cooperatives, political parties or other democratic organizations will receive title rather than the new state or federal government, if such properties were taken from the organizations by the former German government. With regard to Berlin, the law further provides that properties having the nature of public utilities, such as the Reichsbahn or Reichsport, which are part of an economic unit operating in more than one sector of Berlin, are not affected by the law unless further orders or regulations are issued by MG.

Reich properties presently used for occupation purposes will remain under requisition until released, although title passes to the German state at once.