Progress in GYA

COOPERATION is gradually replacing competition among German youth under guidance of the Armed Forces Assistance Program to German Youth Activities. Throughout the US Zone and Berlin there are indications that boys and girls as well as adults are coming to recognize the need for youth programs which cut across religious, political and social barriers.

A positive effort has been made to get more and more capable German volunteers interested in a program for all of the youth of the community. American participation diminishes as the Germans take a more important part, although the time has not yet arrived when aid of American soldiers, airmen, sailors, civilians and dependents can be withdrawn without endangering the effectiveness of the mission. German youth leaders are encouraged to work as volunteers in GYA while American personnel are still available to give the leaders guidance in democratic techniques.

IN MANY military posts German parents work as volunteers in girls' sewing and knitting classes. Some of the fathers have volunteered to help as instructors in woodworking and other handicrafts for boys during the evening sessions. In many places parents and other civic leaders are members of the adult advisory council for the youth center.

In Karlsruhe 12 mothers were counted one afternoon helping in the sewing classes. Some were cutting patterns too difficult for the small seamstresses while others were instructing the technique of a new stitch. They were enjoying themselves immensely. They were becoming acquainted with the Americans and learning that the youth center is a decent, wholesome place for their daughters to visit during leisure hours.

They were just as curious as their daughters about any innovations which the Americans suggested as to group procedures. Some said they were amazed at the dignity and dispatch with which business could be transacted when using parliamentary procedure while at the same time allowing the majority of the group to achieve its aims.

IN BREMERHAVEN, a German mothers' club meets at the Park House Center. There are 70 mothers in this group. They not only serve as volunteers in various craft groups, but also follow activities such as English and cultural classes for their own benefit, and engage in welfare activities to help some of the neediest participants in the center.

In Augsburg, there is an advisory committee of 11 mothers for the youth center. Sontheofen and Fuessen have volunteer German ladies working with girls' groups. In many little villages in the Heidelberg Post the mothers have assumed the responsibility for sponsoring girls' activities with assistance from GYA. Rural parents show a greater willingness than those in the large German cities to cooperate in a community program for youth which cuts across political and religious differences.

In Nuremberg a German lady has become interested in the GYA Little Theater Group. She not only coaches their productions but arranges helpful publicity to increase the attendance at their plays.

In the Wetzlar Post alone, there are over 150 German volunteers assisting with GYA groups. Some are sports instructors, ballet teachers, handicraft teachers or music teachers. All contribute their time in order to help the youth of their community. In Oberammergau volunteer mothers started lessons in spinning. The yarn was donated by the local farmers.

SOME GERMAN communities are beginning to realize the benefits which derive from a coordinated effort to provide wholesome leisure-time activities for all the youth of their district. In Neuglablonz-Hart, a small Sudetan refugee community which has been built in a bombed area near the Kaufbeuren Air Base, there are 300 refugees who have begun a new life in a new country. With the help of the engineers at the Kaufbeuren Air Base, a sports field was made for their young people. Then a wooden building was built to house a youth center. There are no paid employees at this center. All the activities are sponsored by volunteers.

No one is excluded because he is not a member of the correct group. An advisory council of interested adults meets with the youth to discuss and offer suggestions for the improvement of the center program. The little center boasts a thriving dramatic society, sports groups, sewing and knitting classes, music groups and discussion groups. Last summer the youth of the center had a large garden project and the yield of this garden helped feed the whole community. GYA gives assistance in supplies and transportation. But the center is one which the community provided, which they staff with volunteers and which is open to every young person in this small village.

At Limburg, a sub-post of Wiesbaden, a few German mothers with the help of the MG official in the area decided to have a GYA center in their town. GYA personnel from Wiesbaden give assistance whenever possible. The youth program in Limburg is managed by a group of mothers of

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youth who wish their children to keep busy with worthwhile leisure-time activities and who wish them to know more about democracy. This is a beginning of what will become a community consciousness of the needs of all the youth.

In Pforzheim, which is largely destroyed, there is a Kreis (county) Youth Committee which realizes responsibility to all youth, not just the organized groups. This committee has worked with the Heidelberg Post GYA officers, the city officials, the MG officials, the schools and the parents. The city has provided a building for the youth center. Because it is considered inadequate for future needs, a plan is ready for immediate execution which includes the building from rubble of a new and larger building for the youth. It will be in the middle of the city and will be surrounded by large sports fields. In this community all of the interested agencies work together as friends in a common cause—the betterment of local conditions for their children.

Many such instances can be cited. A PTA Club in Geersthofen, outside Augsburg, has secured better conditions for underprivileged youth. One of their members has been elected to the city council, giving the mothers a voice in the city government.

The youth centers, established by GYA, have been the core of the success youth groups have achieved in self-government. Most of the centers have youth councils made up of representatives of all the youth groups using the center. These councils operate according to parliamentary procedure, have a constitution, elect officers, discuss freely and abide by the judgment of the majority. All of these things were foreign to German youth and had to be slowly and sometimes painfully learned. The democratic techniques practiced in these council meetings are taken back to each organized group and disseminated to the members so that they too may try them.

In Berlin, for example, 10 of the 11 youth centers have such councils. A center in Stuttgart has one of the oldest and most successful of them. In Miesbach and in Butzbach, a juvenile court handles the disciplinary problems in the center.

Through a zone-wide handicraft program, GYA has succeeded in helping hundreds of girls' groups to organize and carry on their business in such a way that they practice self-government. These thousands of German girls also follow parliamentary procedures in their meetings, have a constitution, elect officers, discuss freely and abide by the judgment of the majority. They are learning by doing.

It is difficult to find evidence of youth groups working together consistently, but there is progress in this area, too. In Wetzlar there is a youth forum where all groups meet to discuss questions of mutual interest and to exchange ideas. Nearly all counties in the Wetzlar Military Post have attended simultaneously by members of different organized groups. Some youth groups are cooperating in planning and holding youth exhibitions and expositions such as those organized at Nuremberg and Heidelberg. In Bruchsal and Pforzheim, organized groups are cooperating in the construction and financing of a building for use by all the youth in the community. Such illustrations could be multiplied to quite some extent showing that the old concept of competition and jealousy between youth groups is being challenged. When each community can boast of similar instances, then German youth will have become democratic in another important sense.

These are only some of the ways in which progress is apparent. There are community youth programs where a few years ago there had been a state youth program; there are German volunteers where previously highly trained Hitler Youth leaders had reigned supreme; self-government is slowly replacing the Fuehrer-Prinzip (leader principle), and youth activities are cutting across party, religious, racial, economic and social lines. Youth groups accustomed to considering each other irreconcilable enemies are cooperating. All these activities point to an awakening in Germany of the conviction that young people are not to be exploited but assisted to grow into the citizens of tomorrow.

Survey of Police Women
Miss Barbara Denis de Vitre, assistant inspector of constabulary, Home Office of the United Kingdom, London, is making a survey of the US Zone for the Public Safety Branch, CAD, OMGUS, on the operations of police women in Germany. Miss Denis de Vitre, Great Britain's senior police woman, will make recommendations on their further utilization in police activities.

Ends Reparations Work
Mr. Ernest J. Bootz, chief of the Reparations Section, OMG Hesse, has returned to the United States to engage in industrial engineering. Mr. Bootz was in charge of reparations and restitution in Hesse since 1945.