



## Soldiers as Educators? The GYA: Army Assistance to German Youth Activities in Nuremberg

by

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The following text is an updated chapter from Harald Leder's groundbreaking doctoral thesis *Americans and German Youth in Nuremberg, 1945-1956: A Study in Politics and Culture* (Louisiana State University, 1997). We would like to thank the author for making available his most instructive account to our visitors.

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The US Army's German Youth Activities Program began as an informal affair at the end of hostilities in May 1945. American combat troops almost immediately started seeking contact with young Germans in spite of strict non-fraternization orders. After taking out their baseball bats or setting up their Basketball courts, it seemed only natural that they wanted to show the curious youngsters that watched them how it was done. It did not take the Army leadership long to recognize the value of these informal efforts because they had the potential to keep the soldiers out of the black market and channel their energies away from fraternizing with the opposite sex which was leading to unprecedented levels of new venereal disease cases. While the program never reached the goal of keeping many soldiers out of trouble, it dramatically expanded and created the foundation of an entirely new approach to youth work in Germany that can still be felt today.

Nuremberg in many ways is an excellent example for the struggles, but also long term successes of the program. It developed from small beginnings into a full-fledged operation with a wide variety of programs. The concept was designed especially for those who did not want to join a youth organization. Besides a warm place to stay and the famous candies and cookies, the Army centers of the Nuremberg Military Post offered a wide range of activities, many of which were either educational or even offered hands-on experiences in democratic procedure, respect, or individual initiative. This open door approach offered an attractive alternative to the strictly regimented life the younger generation had come to know in the Hitler Youth and which the Free German Youth continued in the Soviet zone. An impressive number of young Germans in the region took advantage of the many GYA programs. Many German youth leaders, however, resented this encroachment on their traditional turf. Nevertheless GYA served as a model for progressive German educators and youth workers.

### Laying the Foundation

Just like everywhere else in the American zone of occupation, American soldiers and their units in and around Nuremberg began to start making contacts with young people early

on. The Army directive of April 1946 made youth work an official responsibility of the local commanders. GYA activities in the region initially consisted almost entirely of sports. Some officers in Fürth had established boxing teams, other Americans introduced young Nurembergers to American sports such as baseball, football, or basketball, since equipment for German sports was not yet available. Weekly stage shows in the Fürth opera house provided youth with the only GYA-sponsored cultural activities. In Nuremberg 1st Lt. William Schroeder, the officer in charge of the city's extensive sports facilities which the Army had requisitioned for GIs, was the first man to become active for GYA. He soon was well known among D.P. children who lived in a camp close to the sports facilities, but also to young Germans, many of whom inhabited a nearby refugee camp.<sup>1</sup>

Mark Selsor received his appointment as head of the Nuremberg Military Post's German Youth Activities program in August 1946. He remained with the assignment until May 1950 and became one of the most important and respected figures in the city's and the region's youth work. The Nuremberg Post area for which he was responsible included the city of Nuremberg, the entire region of Upper and Middle Franconia as well as parts of the Upper Palatinate.<sup>2</sup>

Selsor was well equipped for the job. He had spent time in Germany during the twenties and spoke German well. A difficult childhood had helped him to develop a deep understanding for the problems young people faced during hard times. As a professional soldier, Selsor was able to combine these gifts and a high degree of idealism with a profound understanding and respect for the organization he was serving. From the outset, he and his family not only tried to give something to young Germans, but actually made an attempt to share some of their misery with them. The Selsors decided to skip one meal a week and donate the proceeds to needy people. Soon, many families of the military community did the same. This combination of inside knowledge, skills, and dedication enabled Selsor to secure support of his superiors and to mobilize the enormous facilities the Army had to offer in spite of constant difficulties in the personnel sector. Capable officers and enlisted men were transferred and could not be replaced, and qualified indigenous personnel was equally hard to locate. The major's dedication, qualification, and tact also earned him the respect of the German youth leaders, with whom he remained in close contact, and the admiration of many of the young people who experienced firsthand Selsor's and his wife June's work in Nuremberg. Originally assigned to work at the IMT, the major immediately volunteered for the job as youth officer for the entire Post when it became available. From the start Selsor cultivated good relations between German authorities and his office. Even more important, he successfully reached out to the German youth organizations in Nuremberg, but also offered alternatives to those who did not find their way into youth groups.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Office of Military Government, Bavaria (hereinafter OMGBY), Det. B-211, Monthly Historical Report, July, August, September 1946. National Archives (hereinafter NA) Record Group (hereinafter RG) 260 OMGBY, Field Operations Division (hereinafter FOD), Det. B-211, Box 1426, 9/124-1/2. Hanns Bader, personal interview, 12 August 1994. Lore Falter, personal interview, 29 June 1995. "Good Luck, Lt. Schroeder!" Young World (hereinafter YW) vol. 1, no. 2, 1 Feb. 1947: 2.

<sup>2</sup> All of the interviewees who were directly involved in leadership positions in Nuremberg youth groups remembered Selsor well and expressed their respect and gratitude for the American youth officer, although they did not always see eye to eye with him about youth activities in the city. See also Werner Maar, *Die Jugendarbeit der U.S.-Army nach dem Kriege in Nürnberg*, Pentalog, 1995, 106.

Selsor retired as a Colonel and never lost his willingness to lend a helping hand. In spite of serious difficulties with his health, he and his family were extremely helpful in providing me with very valuable information and documents for my research.

<sup>3</sup> OMGBY, Det. B-211, Monthly Historical Report, August 1946. NA RG 260 OMGBY, FOD, Det. B-211, Box 1426, 9/124-1/2. "Ein Porträt: Nürnb ergs Jugendoffizier," [A Portrait: Nuremberg's Youth Officer] *Nürnberger Nachrichten* (hereinafter NN), 11 Jan. 1947: 6. For Selsor's permanent struggle with adversity see especially his almost complete monthly narrative reports for 1948 in NA RG 260 OMGBY, Education and Community Relations Division (hereinafter E&CRD), Group Activities Br., Box 43, 10/44-1/9, Box 47, 10/19-3/16, Box 34, 10/43-1/4. See June Selsor, "Is German

One of Selsor's main objectives was to support German youth groups as much as he could. The Officers from Military Government, which was a separate entity with a small staff was only able to assist German groups with the help of the tactical command. All of the material and assistance the Army provided in the Nuremberg region went through the GYA office.

The major and his co-workers were not content with the rather limited approach of the program for which he had taken responsibility. In September 1946 GYA made it into Nuremberg's newspaper for the first time. In the sports section Nurembergers could read in an interview with another GYA officer, Lieutenant William Schroeder, that he was planning to introduce a city-wide youth sports club open to everyone. Young Germans would be able to become acquainted with American sports but would also have the chance to revive the traditional German disciplines under American supervision. The officer told the press that the Americans would provide all the equipment necessary for these activities. Although the interview appeared on the sports page, Schroeder went far beyond the realm of physical education. Probably with the blessing of Major Selsor, he provided the *Nürnberger Nachrichten* with a complete outline of the program which the GYA intended to establish for the city's youth. During the wintertime young people would not only be able to use local gymnasiums for playing ping-pong or chess, but the Americans would also try to provide them with "spiritual values." Schroeder counted on the generosity of the local troops to donate food and candies so that the events would have a nutritional value for those who would attend. The first lieutenant explained that the Army would make club rooms available which were not used to capacity by local units. Trucks would provide safe transportation home for those who came during the long winter nights. Obviously impressed by this news, the interviewer noted that the city administration should be grateful for the initiative and should support it above all through the schools.<sup>4</sup>

Schroeder did not deliver empty promises, although he left Nuremberg just four months after his interview.<sup>5</sup> The Nuremberg Military Post initiated an all encompassing program throughout the region. While GYA's first attempt to bring young Germans to the requisitioned Nuremberg opera house did not meet with an enthusiastic response, Schroeder did not give up. An amateur theater performance of Erich Kästner's "Emil und die Detektive" broke the ice. According to the local paper, the function attracted many young Nurembergers and was a tremendous success for everybody involved.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless GYA did not reach all or even most young Germans. The Military Government's Information Control Division (ICD) collected contradictory information about the program. While a study of March 1947 concluded that about 50% of all Germans in the American zone knew GYA and about 10% of the zone's youth participated in it, a second survey - conducted just two months later - reversed the positive findings. The new study stated that very few people knew the program and an even lower percentage were actually involved. Questionnaires of the Nuremberg ICD unit, which were apparently part of the latter survey, elaborated on the more negative findings. According to them, adults usually thought that the Americans either wanted to educate young people for democratic ideals or simply wanted to keep them out of trouble. Both surveys revealed, however, that almost all of the

Youth a Lost Cause?" unpublished typescript, June 1950, 10, in the possession of the author, for the meal skipping initiative. The manuscript provides a unique and very thoughtful perspective of her family's four years in Germany, as well as her and her husband's work for GYA.

<sup>4</sup> "Wir Amerikaner helfen Nürnb ergs Jugend: Der Stadion- Sportoffizier entwickelt in einem Gespräch mit den 'N.N.' seine großzügigen Pläne," [We Americans Help Nuremberg's Youth: The Stadium Sports Officer Develops His Generous Plans in an Interview with "N.N."] NN, 21 Sep. 1946: 6.

<sup>5</sup> "Good Luck Lt. Schroeder!" YW, vol. 1, no. 2, 1 Feb. 1947: 2.

<sup>6</sup> "Emil und die Detektive," [Emil and the Detectives] NN, 12 Oct. 1946: 7.

parents would not object to their children attending American youth activities. Boys and girls were curious and signaled their willingness to participate, but in general did not have any opinion about the purpose of such a program.<sup>7</sup>

### Going to the Movies or Having them Delivered

The survey was conducted only two months after Selsor had introduced the GYA youth film hour which soon would become one of the most successful American programs in the city and assured that GYA became widely known. The 35 mm film program came just in time to provide young people with a warm place to go to during the cold winter months. For a mere thirty Pfennigs young Germans could attend functions in the opera house from December 1946 on. Under the guidance of Ignaz Wühr, a qualified and dedicated German volunteer who owned one of Nuremberg's movie theaters, the film program became one of the major attractions for young people in the city. By March 1947 already 24,000 children and adolescents had visited the American movie hour. Selsor made sure to establish close contact with city officials. The schools took care of ticketing and the collection of the fees, and German as well as American officials were at hand to explain the significance of certain movies to the young audience. Not even four months after its inauguration Selsor could celebrate the fiftieth function and announced that over sixty thousand children had visited this GYA program to date. It continued to be part of the Nuremberg youth activities for many years. A little over twelve months after the first show Selsor informed the press that 120,000 tickets had been sold for the one hundred functions the program had given so far. In January 1947 sixteen American, two Swiss, one British, one French, one Soviet, as well as three German feature films stood at the program's disposal. Charlie Chaplin's "Gold Rush" was one of the favorites, but "Young Tom Edison," "Union Pacific," or "Madame Curie" also filled the theater. Twenty-one documentaries dealt with topics which covered American technical and governmental achievements as well as life, history, and culture of the United States.<sup>8</sup>



(Source: YW, vol. 6, no. 7, July 1952: 6)

<sup>7</sup> Adolf Küfner, Bericht über die Freizeitgestaltung der Jugend, 28 January 1947. Küfner, a German ICD employee, seems to have based his report on a rather small sample of sixteen adults and sixteen children. The sample included one member of the upper class, one member of the upper middle class, and one member of the lower middle class. The rest of the people polled were members of the working class. In spite of its obvious limitations, it probably is a good indicator for German sentiment in Nuremberg at the time, although GYA did receive attention in the press. The two surveys are Information Control Weekly Review no. 15 (15 March 1947) and no. 23 (10 May 1947). NA RG 260 Office of Military Government (hereinafter OMGUS), Information Control Division (hereinafter ICD), Opinion Surveys Br., Box 158, 5/234-2/5 and 5/234-2/6a.

<sup>8</sup> "GYA Movies," YW, vol. 1, no. 1, 2 Jan. 1947: 3. List of films available for German audiences, 23 Jan. 1947. NA RG 260 OMGUS, E&CRD, Community Education Br., Box 147, 5/296-3/5. The GYA film program became a regular feature in the *Nürnberger Nachrichten*. See, for example, "Jugendfilmstunden im Opernhaus," [Youth Film Hours in the Opera House] NN, 30. Nov. 1946: 7; "Jubel um Tom Edison," [Cheers For Tom Edison] NN, 25. Jan. 47: 7. "Jugendfilmstunde - sehr beliebt," [Youth Film Hour - Very Popular] NN, 15 Mar. 1947: 5; "Jugendfilmstunde hat Jubiläum," [Youth Film Hour Has Anniversary] NN, 5 Jul. 1947: 3. "100. Jugendfilmstunde," [100th Youth Film Hour] NN, 28 Jan. 1948: 5.

GYA field work leaped ahead of the policy makers as well as Military Government activities. In March 1947 EUCOM decided to integrate film programs into GYA. Officers were instructed to use “suitable motion pictures [...] to the fullest as a means for illustrating democratic life.” Entertainment films needed Military Government approval and had to be combined with documentaries. Selsor was sorry about the limited number of films and the rather poor physical condition of the available copies, but he thought that they were better than nothing. Success proved him right. The program expanded further in 1948. During the second quarter of the year over 316,000 young people in Nuremberg, Hof, and Bamberg took part in the film hour.<sup>9</sup>

Currency reform, which for a time had saddled GYA with considerable debts, almost eliminated the program, but Ignaz Wühr, the heart and soul of the program who had been mainly responsible for organizing the films, managed to overcome that crisis as well. In December 1950 he could look back to 400 performances, 400 different films and over 300,000 guests. To celebrate the occasion, Wühr provided an audience of teachers and 1,200 students with the fully dubbed German version of “Lassie Come Home” in color. To accommodate some people who criticized the choice of the films GYA had announced in the summer of 1950 that it was planning to introduce a screening committee consisting of educators, Catholic and Lutheran representatives, and GYA which would be responsible for selecting the movies. Until such a committee could be organized, however, the film hour would continue in its traditional manner.<sup>10</sup>

One year later the film hour moved to a new Army theater next to the opera house which the city had constructed with considerable HICOG help to regain full use of the opera house. By then participation had increased to 430,000. Almost every show was sold out. Wühr tried his best to organize valuable films. In January 1950 “The Jungle Book” made its debut before a packed audience. For the 500th show he was able to obtain the Swiss film “The Search” which had been shot partly in Nuremberg and nearby Ansbach. The film ran for the first time in Germany and received a very positive review in the papers. One of the last shows once more demonstrated the popularity of the film hour. In spite of competition from Hollywood, quality films still attracted large audiences. 2,000 young people tried to get one of the 920 tickets available when “All Quiet on the Western Front” stood on the program.<sup>11</sup>

The days of the film hour were numbered, however. In March of 1952 the GYA officer and the director of the city’s youth office reached an agreement that the Army would cease its operations as soon as the new city youth home, which also housed a small movie theater, would be opened in fall. Some city fathers continued to attack the quality of the program. The city council’s art committee initiated an investigation about the “educational value” of the youth film hour, especially about the selection procedure for the films. Apparently the investigation touched a raw nerve with Otto Barthel, by then the city’s school superintendent. He reported that in view of some questionable choices, the city had attempted to establish a

<sup>9</sup> From EUCOM to Field Forces. Directive re.: Motion Pictures, 11 March 1947. NA RG 260 OMGUS, E&CRD, Community Education Br., Box 141, 5/295-3/7. Nuremberg Military Post, GYA Quarterly Report for Second Quarter 1948. NA RG 338 Unit Records, Nuremberg Military Post, Box 125, [1].

<sup>10</sup> “Nürnb ergs Jugendfilmstunde feierte Geburtstag: 400 Vorstellungen, 400 Filme und 307 000 Gäste: Trotz Kritik: Die besten Filme für die Jugend!” [Nuremberg’s Youth Film Hour Celebrated its Birthday: 400 shows, 400 films and 307,000 guests: In spite of Criticism: The Best Films for Youths!] YW, vol. 4, no. 12, December 1950: 3. Interestingly, this article did not have its English counterpart in the paper. Often the authors modified articles under the same headline specifically for the German or American audience. “Council Named for Youth Films,” YW vol. 4, no. 8, Aug. 1950: 2.

<sup>11</sup> “Jugendfilmstunde geht weiter,” [Youth Film Hour Continues] YW, vol. 4, no. 1, 1 Jan. 1950: 4. “Nurnberg Youth Movie Hour lights 4th Candle: 400 Performances, 400 Films, and 307,000 Youth,” YW, vol. 4 no. 12, Dec. 1950: 3.4. “Youth Movie Hour In Its Sixth Year: Performances Now at New Post Theater,” YW, vol. 5, no. 6, Oct./Nov. 1951: 3. “2000 wollten ins Kino: „Im Westen nichts Neues,” [2,000 Wanted to Go to the Movies: “All Quiet on the Western Front”] YW, vol. 7, no. 6, Nov./Dec. 1953: 6.

screening committee in 1950. According to Barthel, Wühr had not cooperated in the venture which had resulted in a considerable controversy in the press. Apparently upset by Wühr's independence, Barthel had refused to continue the promotion of the program in the city's schools. Andreas Staudt, however, did not share Barthel's negative evaluation. He reported that most of the movies were very valuable, although some of them seemed to be too difficult for the young audience. Staudt thought that the city should not revive the controversy since the administration would take the film hour under its wings when the new city youth house would be finished.<sup>12</sup>

35 mm films were not the only movies for young people. In 1948 GYA also became involved in a 16 mm film program which the Military Government's ICD branch had initiated. As was often the case, Selsor had to find out by himself what policy OMGUS officially pursued. Directives from headquarters informed him about the five hundred projectors OMGUS was making available throughout the American zone and Berlin. Apparently unaware of similar by Military Government efforts in Nuremberg along the same lines, Selsor reported in July that the initiative was well accepted in spite of the lack of suitable films and that he would try to include schools and other German institutions in the program.<sup>13</sup>

Selsor and his successors were able to establish a successful venture by using the versatility of the smaller format to their advantage. The Nuremberg GYA center no. 1 had its own full time staff and film library which included educational, cultural, and entertainment movies. Three film projectors and one for slides were available to show the material. Movies came mainly from the Office of the High Commissioner which replaced Military Government in 1949 and the Army, but GYA also acquired German documentaries as well as entertainment movies. The German Shell Corporation supplied some technical films. All youth groups and schools could either borrow them for a nominal fee or arrange for a complete performance which included a projectionist, the equipment, and the movies.<sup>14</sup> In 1950 GYA Nuremberg obtained a four wheel drive Dodge Army pick-up truck which was converted into a film car, enabling a German driver and projectionist to reach out even to the most remote villages in the region. Just when everything was in place, however, the program had to take a first setback. In November 1950 GYA announced that it was not permitted to show 16 mm feature films anymore. Apparently commercial theaters were afraid of the competition.<sup>15</sup>

Although young Germans had a number of choices to see American movies after the currency reform, GYA remained very busy in this field. Practically all youth groups took advantage of the program. The trade unions were among the most frequent users, followed by sports clubs, the YMCA, the protestant youth groups, and even the socialist youth group Falcons. Youth groups in factories arranged for showings. GYA also provided camp Valka, a nearby Czech refugee camp, with shows. In this way the Army introduced several thousand young people each month to American culture, to the United States, but also to the principles of democracy. A certainly not unwelcome side effect of the very popular shows was that it filled the coffers of youth organizations with the new currency which was otherwise hard to

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<sup>12</sup> Nurnberg Post Journal, 31 March 1952. NA RG 338 Unit Records, Nuremberg Military Post, Box 122. Minutes of Committee for School and Cultural Affairs 4 July 1952. Nuremberg City Archives (hereinafter NCA) C7/IX no. 1307.

<sup>13</sup> Directive from OMGUS to Field Detachments. Subject: Distribution and Use of Re-education and Reorientation 16 mm Films and Projectors. NA RG 260 OMGUS, E&CRD, Community Education Br., Box 118, 5/292-2/1. Headquarters, Nuremberg Military Post, German Youth Activities Section, GYA Staff Report, 20 July 1948. NA RG 260 OMGBY, E&CRD, Group Activities Br., Box 43, 10/44-1/9.

<sup>14</sup> "Film Library Starts Work Again After Inventory," YW, vol. 4, no. 9, Sep. 1950: 4.

<sup>15</sup> Photo and caption, YW, vol. 4, no. 6, 2 June 1950: 4. "Film Library Changes Hours: Feature Films No Longer Available," YW vol. 4, no. 11, Nov. 1950: 1.

obtain. Between 1948 and 1950 German youth groups in the region earned about 10,000 Marks, a substantial sum at the time.<sup>16</sup>

The trade union youth used the offer to feature a weekly show in their centers which attracted capacity crowds until the middle of the next decade. The increasing prosperity of young people, who by then were able to buy tickets to see commercial movies which GYA was not permitted to show anymore, brought about the end of the program. The trade unions, however, received a projector when the Army phased the program out and continued to use it for their own educational endeavors.<sup>17</sup>

## Youth Centers

Movie theaters were not the only place GYA remedied the desperate space situation for young people. Soon after he assumed his post, Selsor began to search for a suitable youth center in Nuremberg. As a first measure, American soldiers had decided to share their club facilities with young Germans during the cold winter months. The soldiers not only provided the facilities, but also initiated discussion groups and organized sports events.<sup>18</sup> In Nuremberg young people could use the requisitioned track and field installations and the swimming pool. During the wintertime the Americans provided them with opportunities for ice skating. GYA estimated that about 45,000 children throughout the Post area had participated in these activities during the first six months of 1947. The numbers increased substantially during the next year. Although currency reform alleviated the material situation in Germany, GYA continued to grow. In May 1949 it passed the 100,000 attendance mark for one month. At the end of the year over 140,000 young people in one way or another received GYA support. It was only natural that GYA supervisors and volunteers who took care of the installations began to instruct the children who came to their facilities. As a result American football and basketball matches between teams from different Posts became a feature. GYA also organized its own soccer league within the Post area as soon as it was able to obtain the proper equipment.<sup>19</sup>

Selsor soon began to look for a center which young people would have all to themselves. In early 1947 the major found a requisitioned restaurant in the suburb of Erlenstegen and made it the first GYA center in Nuremberg. The restaurant not only had a kitchen and rooms but also was surrounded by a park for outdoor activities. The fact that many German dignitaries attended the inauguration of the new center shows the importance German authorities attached to GYA. Even this generous space allocation, however, was not enough for the rapidly developing program. Just six weeks after the official inauguration of the first youth

<sup>16</sup> "Film Attendance Booming Again: May Report: 8,910 Participants," YW vol. 4, no. 7, July 1950: 4. "Summer Film Slump: Only 5,879 Spectators," YW vol. 4, no. 8, August 1950: 6. "10,000 DM brachte die GYA Filmbücherei deutschen Jugendgruppen in die Kassen," [GYA Film Library Netted 10,000 DM for Coffers of German Youth Groups] YW, vol. 4, no. 12, Dec. 1950: 3.

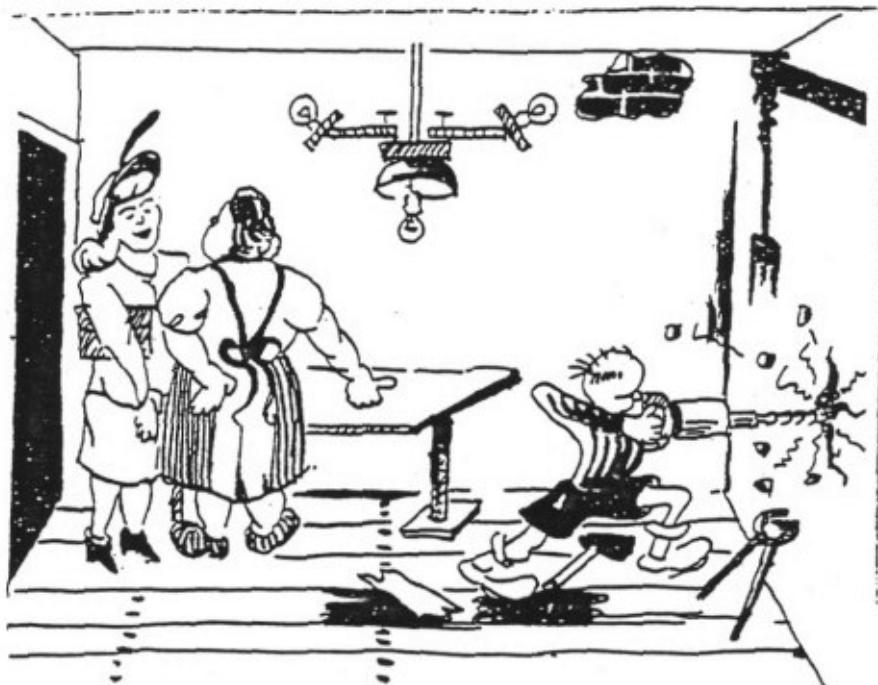
<sup>17</sup> Willy Gensmantel, personal interview, 10 August 1995. Trade Unionists agreed that the beginning of prosperity was the end of many of their activities. Hans Eckstein, personal interview, 6 July 1995. Also Birgitt Grieb, ed., *Mit Hordentopf und Rucksack: Zur Geschichte der Gewerkschaftsjugend in Nürnberg und Coburg nach 1945*, Oberursel: P.V. Werkdruck [1987], 41 (Horst Klaus). For the termination of the film program see Grieb, ed. 71 (Erwin Schönleben). It should be noted here that GYA and the US Information Service did not coordinate their film programs officially. Since cooperation between GYA and Military Government was good in Nuremberg, Americans there probably avoided duplication in effort and material.

<sup>18</sup> Newspaper clipping, "In Bayern," [In Bavaria] *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 1 Sep. 1946: n.p. NA RG 260 OMGBY, E&CRD, Group Activities Br., Box 36, 10/43-1/10.

<sup>19</sup> OMGBY, Det. B-211, Annual Historical Report, 1 July 1946-30 June 1947. NA RG 260 OMGBY, Field Operations Division (hereinafter FOD), Det. B-211, Box 1425, 9/124-1/6. Nuremberg Military Post, GYA Quarterly Reports for First, Second, and Third Quarter 1948. NA RG 338 Unit Records, Nuremberg Military Post, Box 124, 125. "Participation Booming," YW vol. 4, no. 2, 1 Feb. 1050: 2. The *Young World* reported in detail about activities throughout the post. See also Willy Gensmantel, personal interview, 10 August 1995, and "Education," *OMGUS Information Bulletin* no. 80, 7 Feb. 1947: 17.

center, GYA moved to a larger home with a park in a requisitioned huge villa not far from the Nuremberg party rally grounds. Selsor's close connections with the city helped him in remodeling the place quickly. While the Army provided the building materials and furniture, Mayor Levié was able to mobilize Nuremberg craftsmen to finish the job quickly. The new center not only had more rooms available to everyone, but also offered a kitchen where the young visitors often got ice cream, doughnuts, or candy and could learn about American recipes.<sup>20</sup>

The center soon became the focal point for many activities. The youth committee, trade union groups and many other youth organizations took advantage of the facilities, but the center from the start also offered its own programs for those who did not want to join a German club. The center's largely German staff had much to offer to young Germans: A music teacher and a singing instructor, a manual arts instructor and a sports teacher, as well as a librarian and her assistant occupied full time positions. All these professionals also were in charge of helping other military units in the region with setting up specific programs. Interestingly, MG officials noted that the IMT, which continued to prosecute German war criminals throughout the forties and maintained many of the international staff from the first trial, provided a considerable number of enthusiastic international volunteers who were willing to support the Army with its re-orientation efforts.<sup>21</sup>



*„Since Willy is a member of a GYA craftshop he is so very industrious!“  
„Seit mein Willy in der GYA-Bastelstunde ist, ist er mächtig fleißig!“*

(Source: YW vol. 2, no. 10, 1 Oct. 1948: 4)

The center's employees were always busy. Young Germans came to sing in an English choir, a children's choir and a choir for young adults. The repertoire ranged from traditional

<sup>20</sup> “Report Vacant Buildings,” YW, vol. 1, no. 1, Jan. 1947: 3. “Ein Haus für die Jugend,” [A House for Our Youth] NN, 16 Apr. 1947: 5. “GYA zieht um,” [GYA Moves] NN, 14 May 1947: 5. Lore Falter, personal interview, 29 June 1995. For the German help see correspondence between Selsor, Mayor Levié, and the local crafts association of April and May 1947. NCA C85/I Bürgermeisteramt, Registraturen der Bürgermeister, Handakt Levié.

<sup>21</sup> Lore Falter, personal interview, 29 June 1995; Arno Hamburger, personal interview, 11 August 1994; Helga Stadlänger, personal interview, 15 August 1995. Nuremberg Military Post, GYA Quarterly Report for First Quarter 1948. NA RG 338, Unit Records, Nuremberg Military Post, Box 124. OMGBY, Semi-monthly report, 25 June 1947. NA RG 260 OM-GUS, E&CRD, Community Education Br., Box 143, 5/296-1/18. See also Maar (107-110) for contacts between IMT interpreters and GYA youth groups.

folk songs to classical music. Since EUCOM permitted Americans to teach German youths handicrafts in June 1947, the new facility also offered workshops ranging from woodwork to photography. Sewing and needlework ranked high on the girls' agenda. Materials for their activities came either from Army scrap or directly from the United States where GYA was able to mobilize considerable support.<sup>22</sup> Boys and girls had the chance to take dancing lessons which they could put to good use in the graduation balls their schools frequently held in center no. 1 as well.

Early in 1948 Selsor was able to inaugurate the *Junge Bühne* in the villa's basement which featured a full-fledged stage. A serious lay theater group, the *Fränkische Volks- und Jugendspielbühne*, became the main beneficiary of the installation and attracted large audiences. The Nuremberg Post was not the only installation which could boast various theater groups, however. Within the Post area playing theater was a successful venture in the larger cities. Meetings and mutual visits of different acting clubs throughout the region and the American zone formed part of their activities. The room also served as the center's movie theater which usually attracted capacity crowds.<sup>23</sup>



(Source: NA RG 111 SC 1941-54, Box 133, 286778, 18 Aug. 1947)

Selsor continued to look for possibilities to improve the center for the benefit of young Germans. Shortly before he left Nuremberg in 1950, the major was able to inaugurate the center's own youth hostel which offered twenty beds for young travelers. In August of the same year participants of an international youth camp rehabilitated the park of the youth center and constructed outdoor sport facilities with the help of heavy Army equipment.<sup>24</sup>

GYA did much to support German summer camp activities. Those who were unable to join those camps or did not belong to an organization could take advantage of the camps the GYA offered. In 1947 9,000 children attended GYA camps in the Nuremberg Military Post

<sup>22</sup> Selsor managed to have various reports on GYA activities with appeals for support published in English and German newspapers in the United States. GYA received books, fabric, clothing, and shoes as a result. See, for example, "Friends, Helpers, and Visitors: Many thanks to all the friends from the United States listed below, who have assisted GYA Nürnberg with their gifts," YW vol. 4, no. 4, 1 Apr. 1950: 4.

<sup>23</sup> Headquarters Nuremberg Military Post, Consolidated Report, August 1947. NA RG 260 OMGBY, E&CRD, Group Activities Br., Box 45, 10/47-1/6. "Vom Schwimmbad zum Theater," [Swimming Pool Becomes Theater] NN, 23 Mar. 1948: 3. Caption on photo, 18 August 1947. NA RG 111 SC 1945-1954, Box 133, 286778.

<sup>24</sup> "International Youth Camp in Nbg. Dutzendteich Center," YW vol. 4, no. 8, Aug. 1950: 1.

district. Currency reform in June 1948 severely hampered the organization of summer camps by wiping out the entire German currency funds of the Nuremberg GYA, but still 5,000 children participated in the summer program. In 1949 the numbers rose to 9,000 again. In 1950 GYA sponsored or co-sponsored ten tent camps throughout the Post area. The returning prosperity, however, decreased the numbers. In 1952, its last year of operations, only a few hundred young people spent their time in one consolidated summer camp for the entire region. The army unit in charge of the camp made sure that the needy also would have a chance to attend by assuming the costs for those who were unable to pay the fees.<sup>25</sup>

From the start GYA provided young Germans with educational opportunities. One of the more popular choices for older boys and girls were the English courses many centers offered. During the first half year of its operations in Nuremberg, seven teachers taught nine English courses at center no. 1. GYA could count on a number of international volunteers who were employed by the International Military Tribunal at the time. Hans Lamm, a Jewish émigré who had returned to Germany as interpreter at the IMT, became one of the most popular teachers. As a member of the occupation forces he was living in rather luxurious accommodations in Nuremberg's undestroyed suburbs and invited his students there. Lamm was an excellent teacher who used progressive methods. He not only introduced his students to American literature, but also made them speak, something unheard of in German classrooms at the time. To overcome the language barrier and to induce his students to speak freely, Lamm rewarded those who were able to give presentations in English with much coveted contents of CARE parcels. Needless to say that Lamm always had a group of highly motivated students.<sup>26</sup>



(Source: NA RG 111 SC 1941-54, Box 155, 310899, 25 Oct. 1948)

<sup>25</sup> Nuremberg Military Post, GYA Quarterly Report for Second Quarter 1948. NA RG 338 Unit Records, Nuremberg Military Post, Box 125. Report from Headquarters, Nuremberg Military Post, Youth Activities Section, to Commanding Officer, Nuremberg Military Post. Subject: GYA Staff Report for week covering 26 June-2 July 1948. NA RG 260 OMGBY, E&CRD, Group Activities Br., Box 43, 10/44-1/9. Report from Headquarters, Nuremberg Military Post, Youth Activities Section to Commanding General, Headquarters EUCOM, ATTN: Director of GYA. Subject: Monthly Narrative GYA Report for August 1949. NA RG 338 Unit Records, Nuremberg Military Post, Box 125. "Tent Cities in Bavaria," YW, vol. 4, no. 7, Jul. 1950: 4. "Site for Summer Camp Wanted: Only One Camp Planned for NMP," YW, vol. 4, no. 1, Jan. 1952: 1. "GYA," Nurnberg Post Journal, 25 July 1952. NA RG 338 Unit Records, Nuremberg Military Post, Box 122.

<sup>26</sup> OMGBY, Annual Historical Report, 30 June 1946-1 July 1947, chapter IV, Youth Activities. NA RG 260 OMGBY, FOD, Det. B-211, Box 1425, 9/124-1/6. Gerhard Knöchlein, personal interview, 24 July 1995. Arno Hamburger, personal interview, 11 August 1994. Maar 113.

Books and reading materials became an important issue for Selsor and his staff. Initially GYA just supported the idea of a book drive of the local newspaper by supplying the necessary transport. Apparently a simple appeal was not very successful for filling the gaps on the shelves which the war and National Socialism had opened. Selsor found an additional incentive for youngsters to donate the books they did not need to the Army center. In December 1947 GYA announced in Nuremberg that there would be cake and ice cream as well as a free library card for every donor of a book. Those bringing more than one book would receive a special prize, a free pass to the GYA's film hour at the opera house. The results of the ensuing book party exceeded the greatest expectations, in spite of bad weather. The major and his wife made sure that all children received their promised rewards. By the end of the day the center had acquired almost 2,500 German books for its patrons. The Nuremberg public library helped cataloging them. Similar book drives in the towns and cities throughout the Nuremberg Post made sure that all GYA centers held an impressive number of suitable reading materials for their visitors. Many young people undoubtedly found their way to the center through their stomachs, but Selsor made sure that they got something more than food before they left. In March 1948 the center handed out its 1000th library card to a young Nuremberger.<sup>27</sup>



(Source: NA RG 111 SC 1941-54, Box 178, 335833, 25 Nov. 1949)

During the following years the library continued to expand. By June 1948 the Nuremberg Youth Center's holdings of youth books surpassed those of the city library. City officials also conceded that GYA in Nuremberg actually had more young patrons than they did. Selsor and other dedicated GYA workers were able to mobilize donors in the United States and bought many books in Switzerland. In this way the library in Nuremberg grew by about fifty books a week in 1949. Interestingly, young people shared their parents' interest in technical and scientific literature, but it was impossible to satisfy the demand in these fields. Nevertheless, three years after the inauguration of GYA Selsor could proudly report that six libraries throughout the Post had 22,000 volumes available to young readers. GYA center no. 1 in Nuremberg offered 6,000 books to its patrons and cooperated closely with the city's library.

<sup>27</sup> "Eine Bitte der NN," [A Request by NN] NN, 9 Nov. 1946: 4. Lore Falter, personal interview, 29 June 1995. "German Youth Activities Idea Exchange," 22 Dec. 1947. NA RG 260 OMGUS, E&CRD, Community Education Br., Box 140, 5/295-3/5. Narrative GYA Report for Nov. 1947, Nuremberg Post. NA RG 260 OMGUS, E&CRD, Community Education Br., Box 144, 5/296-2/1. Nuremberg Military Post, GYA Quarterly Report for First Quarter 1948. NA RG 338 Unit Records, Nuremberg Military Post, Box 124.

At the end of 1951 the Nuremberg Post GYA libraries had 15,600 German and about 9,000 English books on their shelves. In many towns, such as Ansbach, Americans ran the only library specifically designed for young people.<sup>28</sup>



(Source: NA RG 111 SC 1941-54, Box 153, 313582, 7 Oct. 1948)

To reach out even further to young people who did not have the chance to visit one of the GYA libraries, Selsor decided to furnish the Post's own book mobile, an idea which the Air Force had pioneered late in 1946. As had been the case with the creation of GYA, EU-COM followed the lead of officers in the field and transformed their initiative into official policy.<sup>29</sup> Headquarters furnished a 2 1/2 ton truck for each Military Post and instructed the local commanders to convert them into mobile libraries complete with their own German drivers and librarians. The program was supposed to be in place by July 1947. In Nuremberg a refurbished truck was ready for action in August. Apparently it was easier to get the truck than the books necessary to operate it. By November it had only about two hundred mostly American books on its shelves, - not enough to satisfy the demand of readers between the age of ten and twenty years in small towns throughout the region. Nevertheless Selsor reported in December that the book mobile finally had started operating, but once more it temporarily had to cease its activities just four months later because there were not enough books available to run it. In the course of 1948, however, the Post GYA was able to solve the problems. The mobile library became so busy that Nuremberg headquarters furnished a second truck for this mission during that year. The situation in other Posts was much the same.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> "Drei Jahre GYA in Nürnberg: Major Selsor und Lt. Hirsch berichten über das vielseitige Jugendprogramm," [Three Years GYA in Nuremberg: Major Selsor and Lt. Hirsch Inform About the Many-Sided Youth Program] NN, 16 Mar. 1949: 5. Caption on photo, 25 Oct. 1948. NA RG 111 Signal Corps (hereinafter SC) 1941-1954, Box 155, 310899. Caption on photo, 25 Nov. 1949. NA RG 111 SC 1941-1954, Box 178, 335833. "GYA Library Has Nearly 4,000 Users," YW, vol. 2, 1 Jun. 1948: 2. "Old Nurnberger in USA Sent Books to GYA," YW, vol. 2, 1 Jul. 1948: 1. "1000th GYA Reader to Get Fancy Cake: 2,000 Volumes Augmented Libraries in 1951," YW, vol. 6, Jan. 1952: 5.

GYA and the local U.S. Information Center or "Amerika Haus" did not officially cooperate. It seems, however, that the Amerika Haus staff referred children and teenagers to the GYA center for specific youth programs.

<sup>29</sup> The GYA book mobiles served exclusively the needs of young people and schools. U.S. Information Centers copied the idea. When GYA ceased its operations, the Amerika Häuser were able to pick up the slack.

<sup>30</sup> EUCOM, Directive re.: Bookmobiles, 20 June 1947. NA RG 260 OMGUS, E&CRD, Community Education Br., Box 141, 5/295-37. "Eine fahrbare Bibliothek," [A Mobile Library] NN, 26 Oct. 1946: 6. Headquarters, Nuremberg Military Post, German Youth Activities Office, Weekly Report of the Army Assistance to the GYA Program, 28 August 1947. NA RG 260 OMGBY, FOD, Det. B-211, Box 1427, 9/122-3/1. "Bibliothek auf Rädern," [Library on Wheels] NN, 1

Selsor tried to make sure that parents were informed about their children's activities. They received invitations to get to know the center. GYA representatives took the opportunity to explain to parents that their program was not intended to transform German children into little Americans, but rather to help them become responsible and articulate citizens. To assist parents and educators with the task, the major invited German parents and teachers to discuss the education of their children at home and at school and use the center's facilities for their meetings. Many teachers and parents responded to the offer. In March 1949 the Nuremberg newspaper reported that the city's school administration officially endorsed the program. According to the paper, Otto Barthel, Nuremberg's school superintendent at that time, thought that this type of cooperation between parents, teachers and the GYA could help all parties to solve some of the problems they were facing in this field.<sup>31</sup>



*Mrs. Augustus J. Regier, wife of Col. Augustus J. Regier of the Nuremberg Military Post, is shown after she pours the first cup of coffee at he first official German Youth Mothers and GYA Officials meeting. Approximately 200 Mothers of German youths, members of the Nurnberg GYA Club attended.*

Although GYA Youth Center no. 1 in Nuremberg remained the best equipped facility in the Post area, Selsor made sure to spread his efforts throughout the region. To communicate better with his co-workers, the major introduced an information bulletin in English immediately after his appointment in 1946, in which he informed them about the latest developments. In January 1947 the bulletin became a newsletter, followed four weeks later by a German version for GYA participants as well as for the employees. By May 1948, just two years after GYA's inauguration, *The Young World* made the transition from a mimeographed newsletter to a full-fledged printed bilingual newsletter with a circulation of two thousand copies. *The Young World* changed its format several times, but it always faithfully recorded American youth activities. As should be expected, the emphasis lay on successes and achievements of the Nuremberg Post's program. Even budget cuts and the Army's policy to turn the program over to the Germans after 1951 could not stop its publication. Capt. Lorraine Schultz, who had succeeded Selsor as Post GYA officer, approached the problem in typical American fash-

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Nov. 1947: 3. Nuremberg Military Post, Narrative GYA Report for Nov. 1947. NA RG 260 OMGUS, E&CRD, Community Education Br., Box 144, 5/296-2/1. Nuremberg Military Post, GYA Quarterly Report for Second Quarter 1948. NA RG 338 Unit Records, Nuremberg Military Post, Box 125, [1]. Report [n.d.] Nuremberg Military Post. NA RG 260 OMGBY, E&CRD, Group Activities Br., Box 39, 10/43-3/18.

<sup>31</sup> Caption on photo, 12 July 1947, NA RG 111 SC 1941-1954, Box 133, 286777. "Elternabend beim GYA," [Parents Meet at GYA] NN, 26 Mar. 1949: 6. See also Lore Falter, personal interview, 29 June 1995. "German Parents to Visit Army Youth Center Nr. 1," "Eltern trafen sich im Jugendhaus Dutzendteich: Deutsche Kinder sollen keine 'Amis' werden!" [Parents met in the Youth Center Dutzendteich: No Intentions to Transform German Children into "Little Amis"] YW, vol. 3 no. 4, 1 Apr. 1949: 3.

ion. In July 1952 she found a local sponsor for the paper. Nuremberg's largest supplier of photographic equipment assumed the cost of producing the paper and had it printed in his business's print shop. In return, he had one page of *The Young World* for promoting photography in general and advertising his products. The newsletter continued until the end of the program in 1954.<sup>32</sup>

Selsor's efforts to promote GYA beyond the city of Nuremberg within the entire Nuremberg Post area in 1947 were quite successful as well. During that year many units throughout the Post started their own programs under his and his staff's guidance. By 1948 forty-five centers were operating in the region for which the Nuremberg headquarters was responsible. Throughout the region an average of more than 60,000 young persons per month actively participated in GYA events which an average of 450,000 people attended. Three officers, three enlisted men, one American civilian and eighty-eight Germans worked full time for the recreation and re-education of young Germans.<sup>33</sup>

GYA efforts to help Germans with their own youth work did not always have the desired results, however. When the Kreis Youth Committee in neighboring Fürth asked the Army to derequisition a house so that it would be able to transform it into a youth center, the Army refused to oblige because it had made plans for constructing a bowling alley there. German youth groups in Fürth would have to wait a while longer for their own facilities in spite of Selsor's intervention on behalf of the project. In the meantime they continued to rely on various GYA centers in the city.<sup>34</sup>



*Wives of officers and enlisted men act as hostesses at the grand opening of the Erlangen Youth Center, which is operated by the Erlangen Air Force.*

<sup>32</sup> MG, Det B-211, Annual Historical Report, 20 July 1947. NA RG 260, OMGBY, FOD, Det. B-211, Box 1425, 9/124-1/6. See also Maar 47-49. Most issues of the *Young World* are in NCA AvPer 202.2 Apparently the newsletter found wide attention within Military Government. The first issue is in NA RG 260 OMGBY, ID, Box 52, 10/60-1/46. The first German issue is in NA RG 260 OMGBY, E&CRD, Group Act. Br., Box 48, 10/43-2/14. Nurnberg Post Journal, 11 Jan. 1952. NA RG 338 United Records, Nuremberg Military Post, Box 122. "USAREUR GYA Thanks Mr. Porst," YW, vol. 7, no. 6, Nov./Dec. 1953: 5.

<sup>33</sup> Monthly Report of the Deputy Commander in Chief, EUCOM, 31 May 1948. NA RG 260 OMGBY, E&CRD, Group Activities Br., Box 37, 10/43-2/3. Nuremberg Military Post, GYA Quarterly Report for First Quarter 1948. NA RG 338 Unit Records, Nuremberg Military Post, Box 124. Nuremberg Military Post, GYA Quarterly Report for Second Quarter 1948. NA RG 338 Unit Records, Nuremberg Military Post, Box 125, [1]. For a zone wide perspective see "GYA Civic Centers," *OMGUS Information Bulletin*, no. 109, 8 Sep. 1947: 7-8, 14 and "Army Youth Program," *OMGUS Information Bulletin*, no. 80, 17 Feb. 1947: 21-23.

<sup>34</sup> Letter Dr. Kaltenhäuser, Fürth KYC to LYC and OMGBY headquarters, 21 Jan. 1947. NA RG 260 OMGBY, E&CRD, Group Activities Br., Box 41, 10/44-1/3.

In spite of never ending obstacles, many units in the Post area emulated the example which the GYA center in Nuremberg set for them. Erlangen, for example, opened its own youth facility in March 1947. It featured a library of over 5,000 volumes, a sports clinic, and, from May 1948 on, its own 35 mm film hour. Together with most units in the area the local GYA offered summer camps for needy children and had a publication to disseminate its news. Like many others, the managers of the Erlangen center found that a garden project appealed to its patrons. But Erlangen also developed its own initiatives: The local GYA chapter introduced youth day rooms which permitted working mothers who did not have a husband to leave their children under supervised care. "Many and urgent requests" caused the local Post to expand this part of its program in 1948. By June GYA Erlangen was providing day care facilities for 160 children.<sup>35</sup>



*This acrobatic act is staged at the opening night of the Erlangen youth center. More than 2,000 youths belong and it is operated by the Erlangen Air Force.*

Of course the Army tried to make sure that the GYA activities were operating in the way they were intended to function. During 1947 the Army conducted extensive inspections in Upper Franconia which revealed an interesting picture. Major Townsend, the inspecting officer, found much praise for the majority of the youth centers he visited. None of them operated under similar conditions or could even rely on the same resources. In general the centers functioned to Townsend's satisfaction, although he thought that there was much room for improvement. According to him, GYA officers and enlisted men should pay more attention to the re-educational parts of their mission, not just the recreational side. On only two occasions the major recommended to remove personnel or to close down a center. Townsend harshly criticized commanders and officers of the army units stationed in the communities for being indifferent to the GYA program, for not providing the necessary personnel and support, and for the high rate of turnover which often left a good program in limbo and young German participants bewildered. According to him, another problem were German authorities who did not always render the desired cooperation. When American troops began to withdraw from

<sup>35</sup> "GYA Activities," Nuremberg Military Post, Erlangen Subpost, Historical Report April-June 1948. NA RG 338 Unit Records, Nuremberg Military Post, Box 119, [1]. Erlangen was a quite typical local operation. All of the posts had their own libraries by 1948, many offered summer camps and had garden projects for which Selsor was able to obtain seeds and other planting materials. Nuremberg Military Post, GYA Quarterly Report for Second Quarter 1948. NA RG 338 Unit Records, Nuremberg Military Post, Box 125, [1]. Day Care Centers also were not unique to Erlangen. See "Day Care Centers," *OMGUS Information Bulletin*, no. 113, 6 Oct. 1947: 2-4.

Kronach, for example, local authorities initially kept the GYA center and the youth hostel in the town's old fortress open. As soon as the Americans were gone, however, the city fathers dismissed the German manager allegedly because of lack of funds and closed the facilities at the fortress although the young people of the town urgently needed a center and a youth hostel and had demonstrated their support for the GYA institution.

On the positive side Townsend also detected a lot of creativity and innovative programs. In Coburg, which was practically surrounded by the Soviet zone from three sides, the major found a well managed youth center under GYA auspices which the local youth had constructed themselves. They also handled the administration of the facilities in a democratic fashion. The local GYA officer had kept the center out of political controversy, a task which was certainly not easy in the vicinity of the very different political outlook and content of the programs the competition offered. The state sponsored Free German Youth organization in the neighboring Soviet Zone of Occupation operated just a few miles away. Apart from the already familiar features, the young people who participated in the center's activities also had initiated a program for taking care of single mothers and their babies, most of whom had American fathers.<sup>36</sup>



*A soap box derby, sponsored by German Youth Activities, with the help of various German industries, was held for German children in Nuremberg on 29 May. Young dare devil wins the third race in his midget car.*

1948 saw the inauguration of a very successful zone wide GYA program which the Army designed to foster young peoples' sense of fair play and sportsmanship, apart from providing them with a meaningful occupation during their spare time. In December Nurembergers witnessed the first soap box derby in their city. To everybody's surprise the local population demonstrated a tremendous interest in the races. Over 40,000 people assembled on the ruins around the old fortress to see more than one hundred young boys and seven girls race down the steep hill on cobblestone streets. All of them had constructed their cars at GYA centers. Encouraged by the success, Major Selsor promised additional derbies for the coming year. The next derby was so popular that police had to terminate the event early because it was unable to control the crowds. From the start GYA enlisted the support of private sponsors

<sup>36</sup> Clifford Townsend, Headquarters EUCOM, to Commanding General, OMGUS, Subject: Reports of Inspections of GYA Installations, 8 Sep. 1947. NA RG 260 OMGUS, E&CRD, Community Education Br., Box 144, 5/296-2/1.

such as the German Shell Corporation, General Motors, or local factories. Successful racers could win new motorcycles and bicycles, cameras, plane trips from Nuremberg to Munich, vouchers for clothes, and rain coats made by GYA sewing classes from scrap materials the Army had donated. The Adam Opel Car Factory, a subsidiary of General Motors, provided the racers free of charge with axles and wheels from 1949 on. Many GIs, but also local HICOG Resident Officers, acted as sponsors or lent a helping hand during construction. German teachers in Fürth showed their interest by offering their help and expertise to soap box enthusiasts in their schools. In 1950 more than a thousand soap boxes participated in preliminary races throughout the Post area. The winners came to Nuremberg to participate in the regional qualifiers which 15,000 spectators attended. The champion of the zone-wide finals could look forward to becoming the owner of a motorcycle and a two week journey to the United States with all expenses paid by Opel and General Motors for the champion and his parents.<sup>37</sup>

The soapbox derbies enjoyed much attention of the local press right from the start. With corporate sponsors well established, GYA retreated from center stage in 1950, but German enthusiasm for this new sport did not wane. In 1952 12,000 spectators witnessed the races in Nuremberg. Of course the Army still was willing to lend a helping hand. Young Germans continued to build their soap boxes in GYA centers and Army Engineers built a ramp for the event at the former party rally grounds to make sure that operations went smoothly and safely.<sup>38</sup>

The following year a Nuremberg apprentice won the West German championship. He received a 5,000 marks prize to help pay his education, a trip to the United States, and an invitation to participate in the American championships. Extensive newspaper coverage accompanied him on his journey to the New World and reported in detail about his experiences at the championships in Akron, Ohio. Even the Department of State's official shortwave radio broadcast "Voice of America" featured the guest from Germany.<sup>39</sup>

Other GYA programs also received much publicity. From 1949 on, for example, the Army organized zone wide handicraft contests for boys and girls. Projects ranged from needlework and sewing to building boats and even constructing model roller coasters. As always, GYA furnished all materials and facilities for the young people. In 1950 over 3,500 boys and girls participated in the new program within the Nuremberg Post. The following year, judges had to evaluate the work of over 40,000 zone wide contestants. The Nuremberg region always did well in the contests, a fact the local press duly acknowledged. Exhibitions of the young

<sup>37</sup> James 34-35. "GYA Sponsored First Nurnberg Soap Box Derby: Big Hit With 40 000 Spectators," YW, vol 2, no. 23, 1 Dec. 1948: 1, 3, 4. "Over 1,100 Soap Boxes Ready to Run in NMP," YW, vol. 4, no. 5, 4 May 1950: 5. "Fürther Lehrer beraten junge Seifenkistlbauer," [Fürth Teachers Advise Young Soap Box Builders], YW, vol. 4, no. 5, 4 May 1950: 6. "15,000 see Grafenwohr Win 1950 NMP Box Derby," "Gen Handy Honors Winner of US Zone Soap Box Derby," YW vol. 4, no. 7, July 1950: 1. "GYA Rennfahrer auf der Strecke," [GYA Racers En Route] YW, vol. 4, no. 11, 1 Nov. 1950: 6. See also "Was ein richtiger Rennfahrer werden will ...: 40 000 Nürnberger wohnten dem Burgbergrennen bei. 'Nervenzersetzen' Rivalität' in Seifenkisten," [Who Wants to Become a Real Race Car Driver...: 40,000 Nurembergers Attended Race at the Fortress Hill. "Nerve Wrecking Rivalry" in Soap Boxes] NN, 22 Nov. 1948: 4. "Kinderjubel um das ,Seifenkistl'-Rennen," [Children's Cheers for Soap Box Derby] NN, 30 May 1949: 5.

<sup>38</sup> For German coverage of the events see, for example, "Was ein richtiger Rennfahrer werden will ...: 40 000 Nürnberger wohnten dem Burgbergrennen bei. „Nervenzersetzen“ Rivalität in Seifenkisten," [Who Wants to Become a Real Race Car Driver...: 40,000 Nurembergers Attended Race at the Fortress Hill. "Nerve Wrecking Rivalry" in Soap Boxes] NN, 22 Nov. 1948: 4. "Kinderjubel um das ,Seifenkistl'-Rennen," [Children's Cheers for Soap Box Derby] NN, 30 May 1949: 5. For the construction of the ramp in 1952 see photo and caption, YW, vol. 7, no. 4, June/July 1953: 6.

<sup>39</sup> "Ein Nürnberger Bundessieger," [Nuremberger the Federal Republic's Champion] NN, 20 Jul. 1953: 6. "Im Geleitzug durch die Straßen," [Grand Reception in the Streets] NN, 22 Jul. 1953: 5. "Heinz Martin schied aus," [Heinz Martin eliminated] NN, 11 Aug. 1953: 5. "Die Räder waren schuld," [Wheels to Blame] NN, 20 Aug. 1953: 5. "Wie ein Staatsmann empfangen," [Reception of a Statesman] NN, 24 Aug. 1953: 7. The newspaper continued its extensive and enthusiastic coverage of soapbox derbies throughout the fifties.

people's work throughout the Post area provided additional opportunities to generate public support.<sup>40</sup>



*Examining the items of the GYA handicraft exhibition at the GYA center are: Dorothea Erhardt, German handicraft teacher; 1st Lt. L.A. Schultz, Assistant Post GYA Officer, and Mrs. Harold Carroll.*

(Source: NA RG 111 SC 1941-54, Box 185, 344451, 3 May 1950)

In 1949 Major Selsor and his GYA staff began another ambitious project. The Nuremberg GYA initiated a zone wide program designed to revive West Germany's cultural life. From 1950 on Nuremberg hosted the *Meistersinger* contest for aspiring young singers of classical music. From the start Selsor tried to interest Germans in the project. He was able to assemble a committee of German musicians, music critics and other dedicated men and women close to the music scene in the city who worked out the contest regulations. The highest American and German dignitaries, among them High Commissioner John McCloy and the Federal Republic's first President, Theodor Heuss, acted as honorary chairpersons. Local firms and factories provided many attractive prizes which made the contest a resounding success from the start. Preliminaries took place throughout West Germany. The finalists met in Nuremberg and competed in the opera house before a carefully selected jury and a packed audience. The winners received considerable cash prizes. More important for their further development, however, was the publicity and scholarships in the United States which often helped them launch them into successful careers. Hermann Prey, one of Germany's most accomplished postwar singers, for example used the *Meistersinger* contest as his launch pad.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> James 35-36. "Handfertigkeitswettbewerb mit über 3.500 Teilnehmern. Mädchen: Nähen, Stricken und Schneidern überwiegt. Amerikaner und Deutsche in den Schiedsgerichten" [Handicraft Contest with over 3,500 Participants. Girls: Sewing, Knitting and Tailoring Most Popular. American and German Referees] YW vol. 4, no. 4, 1 Apr. 1950: 5. "München erster Sieger, Nürnberg zweiter im großen GYA-Handfertigkeitswettbewerb," [Munich First, Nuremberg Second in Zonewide Handicraft Contest] YW vol. 4, no. 6, 2 June 1950: 3. "9 Preise im Handfertigkeitswettbewerb nach Franken: Insgesamt beteiligten sich über 40.000 Jugendliche," [9 Prizes in Handicraft Contest for Franconia: Overall Attendance over 40,000], YW, vol. 5, no. 6, Jun. 1951: 3. "Craft Contest Highlights April Program," YW, vol. 6, no. 4, Apr. 1952: 3. "All Youth Invited to Join In 1954 GYA Handicraft Contest," YW vol. 7, no. 6, Nov./Dec. 1954: 5. For coverage in the German press see, for example, "45 Meisterbastler erhalten Preise: Feierstunde im Armee-Theater," [45 Master Tinkerers Receive Prizes: Celebration at the Army-Theater] NN, 25 Apr. 1952: 10. "Verdienter Lohn für gute Arbeit: Die 81 ersten Gewinner im GYA-Handfertigkeitswettbewerb wurden ausgezeichnet," [Deserved Premium for Work Well Done: 81 First Prize Winners in GYA Handicraft Contest Received Prizes] NN, 25 Apr. 1952: 9.

<sup>41</sup> James 36. Both, the *Young World* and the local newspapers reported about the *Meistersinger* contest throughout its existence. See, for example, "Mrs. and Mr. McCloy Ehrenprotoktoren im Sängerwettbewerb," [Mrs. and Mr. McCloy Honorary Chairpersons of Singing Competition], YW vol. 4, no. 3: 1. "Meistersinger Working Comm Sets Dates for 1951 Con-

## Reorientation

Although GYA focused on recreational and educational activities, Selsor and his successors never lost sight of the re-orientation aspect of their work. In November 1947 the Nuremberg Military Post reported that steps had been taken to organize German advisory councils for the three largest centers in the Post area. The idea was a success. In Erlangen, for example, 450 parents discussed the next year of program activities in 1950 and elected their representatives to the advisory council.<sup>42</sup>

Selsor and his superiors also tried to make sure that American and German employees received adequate training for their rather difficult mission. MG criticism initially had prompted the Army to create training programs for American GYA officials. To improve the program further, headquarters hired an American civilian youth specialist to become its official adviser. In September 1948 GYA also began to establish training schools for its German employees. In addition to that, MG and GYA representatives met at regular intervals to discuss their problems. To be able to assess the situation better on the state level, they invited representatives from the Bavarian Youth Committee – an institution that came out of the Military Government's re-education projects - to their conferences from 1950 on. On the local level Selsor initiated round table conferences for all American and German employees within the Post area. The turnout was not always satisfactory, but Selsor also maintained personal contact by means of frequent inspections of the centers throughout the Post. In addition to that German employees and volunteers of the Nuremberg GYA had the opportunity to attend courses in youth leadership schools such as Ruit near Stuttgart.<sup>43</sup>



*Dr. Weldon Shofstall, left, Dean of Stephen's College, Columbia, Missouri, at present German Youth Activities civilian adviser for the European Command, conducts a discussion on "discussion procedure" with a group of German youth leaders at the Berghaus Sudelfeld, Germany, a former SS officers' recreation area. This meeting is held to bring about better understanding among youth leaders throughout the first military district. Twelve of the group present are chosen to participate in a discussion. The rest of the group acts as the audience. Members of the audience are given rating sheets, on which to write their criticisms and opinions and answers of the discussion group.*

*Carl Stordel, who is acting as his interpreter, is with the GYA in Bamberg. He teaches English to the girls of the GYA girl's club.*

(Source: NA RG 111 SC 1941-54, Box 143, 292388, 14 Feb. 1948)

High ranking members of the OMGUS youth section which had relocated from Berlin to Nuremberg when the Berlin blockade began in 1948 did not think much of Selsor's efforts.

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test: Seven Equal Prizes for the Winners - Age Limit from 18 to 25," YW, vol. 4, no. 9, Sep. 1950: 1. "President Heuss and High Com McCloy, John Handy as Meistersinger Co-Chairmen," YW vol. 6, no. 3, Mar. 1952: 1. "1952 GYA Meistersinger Proclaimed," YW, vol. 6, no. 6, Jul. 1952: 1.

<sup>42</sup> Nuremberg Post, Narrative GYA Report for Nov. 1947. NA RG 260 OMGUS, E&CRD, Community Education Br., Box 144, 5/296-2/1.

<sup>43</sup> Headquarters, EUCOM, memorandum, 25 September 1948. NA RG 260 OMGBY, E&CRD, Group Activities Br., Box 36, 10/43-1/8. "HICOG and GYA Personnel Will Meet in Nurnberg," YW vol. 4, no. 6, 2 Jun 1950: 1. "GYA Personnel to Receive Special Training: Parliamentary Procedure First on Schedule," YW, vol. 4, no. 11, Nov. 1950: 1. "I Visit a Youth Leader Training Course," YW, vol. 3, no. 4, 1 Apr. 1949: 7. For one of Selsor's many complaints about participation in training conferences see Nuremberg Military Post, GYA Office to Commanding General, Headquarters EUCOM, Attn.: Director of GYA, 16 August 1949. Subject: Monthly Narrative GYA Report for July 1949. NA RG 260 OMGUS, E&CRD, Community Education Br., Box 154, 5/293-2/7.

In July 1949 Selsor prepared two training conferences for German GYA employees of the Nuremberg Military Post. He invited Lawrence Norrie, the director of Military Government's Group Activities Branch to participate in a panel discussion. Selsor explained in his invitation that

conversations with both Americans and Germans have shown that there must be a meeting of the minds of German youth, German parents, German youth officials, and those Americans who are endeavoring to build up a program towards the reorientation of German youth, the preparation of German youth for participation in future democratic Germany.

Apparently Norrie was not impressed with Selsor's efforts and decided not to participate. A brief handwritten note on the invitation stated: "Not important. Only suggesting a discussion between GYA, MG, and Germans."<sup>44</sup>

While all support activities lay well within the reorientation framework of MG, GYA carried its mission further. Whereas OMGUS always made it a point to remain in the background, the Army reached directly out to young people. The American sponsors of GYA activities did much to help them gain a new perspective on their place and responsibilities in society and in the world. Activities within the centers offered many opportunities to practice democratic procedures. GYA encouraged youth groups to write their own constitutions and to elect representatives. At the start the undertaking was not easy. Many young people had never participated in elections or taken over responsibilities for a group. In 1950 GYA center no. 1 invited all youth groups and individuals connected with its activities to form a youth council whose task it would be to develop operating procedures, to support those groups who needed help, and to participate in the scheduling and planning of all events within the center. Selsor's successor, Major Robert A. Norman, was satisfied with the first meeting, but also noted that the young people had wasted considerable time because they were not acquainted with democratic procedure. The council would provide them with the opportunity to practice.<sup>45</sup>

GYA officers in other communities carried the idea of democratizing young people a step further. In February 1950 Charles Emerick, the High Commission's Resident Officer in Fürth, discussed the possibility of having a "mayor for a day" program with local authorities and the GYA representatives in Zirndorf, a small town in the vicinity of Fürth. According to him, the response was immediate and positive. Without any further help from Mr. Emerick GYA officers and local officials cooperated closely in implementing his proposal. In March 1950 students of the local schools elected their own student officials to occupy the most important positions in city hall, which the adults quite willingly left to them for that day. The Nuremberg radio station even provided the town with its own program, on which a young reporter supplied the news of the day. Apparently the young Germans were good students of democratic procedure. Emerick thought that all candidates the young people had selected were "exceptionally good". As a first sign of changing times, the young people chose a girl for second mayor. She was the first female ever to hold office in the town. All parties involved agreed that the idea had been a success and should be carried on the following year.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Invitation from Maj. Selsor, Post GYA Officer to Lawrence Norrie, OMGUS, 5 Jan. 1949. NA RG 260 OMGUS, E&CRD, Community Education Br., Box 140, 5/295-3/3.

<sup>45</sup> "Jugendbeirat im Haus am Dutzendteich," [Youth Advisory Council in Dutzendteich Youth Center] YW vol. 4, no. 6, 2 Jun. 1950: 5. "Dutzendteich Youth Center Accepted House Constitution," YW vol. 4, no. 11, Nov. 1950: 4. Many other youth centers had similar institutions. See, for example, "Bayreuth: Musterbeispiel eines Jugendrates," [Bayreuth: Fine Example of Youth Council], YW, vol. 5, no. 6, Jun. 1951: 3. See also Selsor 5-6.

<sup>46</sup> OLCBY, Resident Officer Fürth to OLCBY, FOD, 29 Mar. 1950. Special Report, Jugendregierung Zirndorf, Landkreis Fürth. Enclosure in Essential Elements of Information for the period March 10 to April 7, 1950. NA RG 466 OLCBY, ID, Elements of Essential Information 1950-1951. "GYA 'Youth day' at Zirndorf Deemed Success by Officials," YW, vol. 4, no. 4, 1 Apr. 1950: 1. "Die Jugend von Zirndorf hatte ihren großen Tag: Wahlurne, Abstimmung, Stadtverwaltung,

Hands-on experience in democratic procedures was just one of many GYA reorientation programs. Volunteerism always had been a major ingredient in American culture. It therefore was only logical to encourage young people to initiate or participate in community projects. They ranged from playing music in hospitals to constructing playgrounds or even opening new youth centers. To help them overcome the isolation in which they had lived during the Third Reich, the Army introduced a Youth Helps Youth program which provided groups and individuals with pen pals in the United States. In the Nuremberg Post area alone the Army was able to initiate contacts between more than 4,000 German and American boys and girls. GYA also supported many of the quiz bowl programs which HICOG initiated in the fifties by providing the necessary facilities.<sup>47</sup>

Of course much depended on the way staff and volunteers interacted with young Germans. The Nuremberg GYA acted exemplary in this respect. The young people often found a very personal partner. One participant had been a member of the *Bund Deutscher Mädel*, the Nazis' girls organization where she had mainly participated in folk singing groups. She took advantage of the musical possibilities the GYA center offered and decided to create a singing group. Since nothing else was available, she used a book the Nazis had printed. Besides the usual Nazi lore, the book also contained traditional, non-political German folk songs. The girl took great care to hide the book from American eyes, but one day Selsor asked her to show it to him. She was afraid that he would either confiscate her book or even might regard her as a Nazi and terminate her appointment as singing instructor. The major, who was certainly no stranger to the lack of suitable singing materials, however, did nothing of the sort. He took the book with a smile and promised to look the other way if he found anything that should not be in there. Instead of censorship and punishment, the girl got a valuable lesson in tolerance, understanding and respect which she never forgot.<sup>48</sup>

Surprisingly, even young people with a solid Nazi background participated in GYA activities. The Selsors took great care to be especially attentive to them, since they felt that this group needed reorientation the most. One girl came from an ardent Nazi family and in 1947 was the an enthusiastic and unapologetic admirer of Hitler when she visited the Nuremberg GYA Center no. 1 for the first time. June Selsor never challenged her convictions or excluded her from the girls' activities, but rather spent more time with her which even included driving lessons. On one of these excursions the car was passing in front of the tribune where Hitler had made his appearances during the party rallies. As if in a trance the girl stood up in the car with the Nazi salute and her foot firmly on the accelerator. Mrs. Selsor finally managed to push the girl's foot off the accelerator at almost fifty miles per hour just in time to prevent a nasty accident. According to Mrs. Selsor, the girl's Nazi convictions slowly subsided. She became a close friend of the family and remained in contact with the Selsors over the next five decades.<sup>49</sup>

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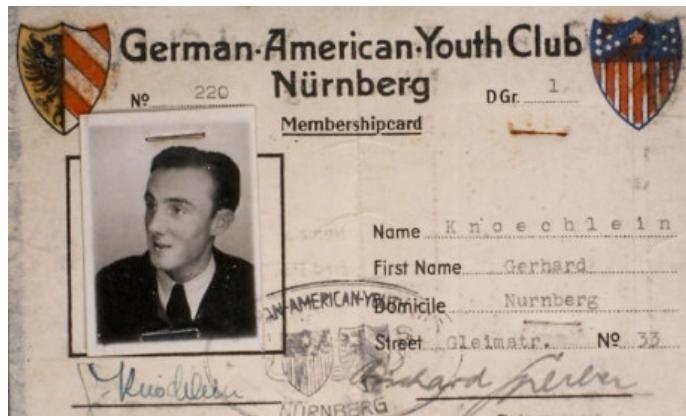
Rundfunk: Alles war für einen Tag in der Hand der Jugend," [Big Day for Zirndorf's Youth: Polls, Voting, Town Administration, Radio: All for One Day in the Youths' Hands] YW, vol. 4, no. 4, 1 Apr. 1950: 3. Military Governor S.P. Sussel, Military Governor of Kronach, actually pioneered the idea in Franconia as early as December 1948.

<sup>47</sup> James 36-38. "GYA to Copy HICOG with Reorientation Quizzes," YW vol. 4, no. 11, Nov. 1950: 1. "Quiz Programs enjoy Increasing Popularity," YW vol. 5, no. 4, Apr. 1951: 4. For specific activities in the Nuremberg area see, for example, "Dutzendteich Singing Group Practices Community Service," YW vol. 5, no. 6, June 1951: 5. "Sorghof Youth Center - Community Service Project," YW vol. 5., no. 13, Dec. 1951: 3. "4000 Deutsch-Amerikanische Freundschaften vermittelt," [4000 German-American Friendships Arranged] YW vol. 6, no. 4, Apr. 1952: 8.

<sup>48</sup> Lore Falter, personal interview, 29 June 1995.

<sup>49</sup> Selsor 13. Personal correspondence with Mrs. Selsor.

## The German-American Youth Club



(Source: Gerhard Knöchlein, Nuremberg)

One of the first initiatives in the realm of reorientation which Major Selsor supported caused a considerable stir within Military Government. Apparently unaware of the two very different administrative and command structures that existed between the local Military Government Detachment B-211 and the Nuremberg GYA, the *Nürnberger Nachrichten* reported in November 1946 that the “Office for the Support of the German youth of the American Military Government” (GYA) invited all young Germans between fifteen and twenty-five years of age to attend the initial meeting of a German-American discussion club. With the Major’s encouragement, his German secretary, Richard Sperber, had decided to create a club with German and American members to initiate the intellectual exchange between the two nations. The local MG public safety officer, however, refused to grant the new club a license because at that time joint German-American ventures were not officially permitted. Selsor decided to take the case to the leading youth officer in Bavaria, Hans Thomsen, who explained to him, however, that OMGUS was not able to accept several passages in the statutes as well as the name of the club, because German-American cooperation was still illegal. Selsor did not give up and ended up with Lawrence Norrie, Thomsen’s superior officer and the man in charge of all youth activities in the American zone. Norrie showed more understanding. He thought that the club could have a license as long as Selsor promised that he would supervise its activities closely.<sup>50</sup>

During the following months the affair reached melodramatic proportions. Apparently the news about Norrie’s permission to grant of the license did not reach the local detachment. In January 1947 the Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) became involved in the affair. Sensing the brewing of a subversive storm of sizable proportions, a special agent decided to conduct a “discreet investigation” after he had learned from the Nuremberg security officer that this new German-American venture was operating without a license. In best secret service fashion he employed an infiltrator who was working for the GYA in Fürth to become a member of the club for spying purposes. The agent dutifully reported that the club was still functioning and even accepting Americans as members in clear violation of Military Government directives.

<sup>50</sup> “Deutsch-Amerikanischer Diskussionsclub,” [German-American Discussion Club] NN, 23 Nov. 1946: 4. Hans Thomsen, OMGBY to Director, OMGBY, 5 March 1947. NA RG 260 OMGBY, Intelligence Predecessor Organizations, Box 11, 10/87-3/11.

He provided personal profiles of the two leading German members together with their Third Reich backgrounds. Further evidence included a membership card of the infiltrator, as well as an invitation to a costume ball in January 1947, undoubtedly an ideal setting for sinister purposes. Although the club received its license by the end of January, the CIC investigation made sure that it would receive further attention. In March the news about the illegal activities reached the director of the Bavarian MG Land Detachment who demanded and received an explanation from Hans Thomsen. Information control continued to keep a close eye on the club's activities, but obviously Norrie understood the complete nonsense of the whole affair. Apparently following his initiative, OMGUS issued new directives in July 1947 which permitted Americans to become involved in joint German-American ventures as long as they "promoted understanding of democracy" or furthered "worthy projects in the local communities." The Club and Major Selsor had made an important step towards officially changing the relations between victors and vanquished into those of more equal partners.<sup>51</sup>

The directive opened the way for similar ventures throughout the Nuremberg Post. In October 1948 Ansbach and Hof inaugurated their own German-American youth clubs. Erlangen followed suit in March 1949.<sup>52</sup>



*Approximately two hundred American and German youngsters gathered in the main court room of the Palace of Justice in Nuremberg, where Goering, Ribbentrop and other bigwig Nazis had to account for their atrocious misdeeds. The youth gathered in this impressive hall to discuss a question which may decide their fate and ours: "Will world government save us?" With amazing maturity and alertness, with refreshing candor and frankness, opinions were exchanged. There was no uniformity and no regulated thinking, but agreement on one issue; that the peoples of the world must learn to live together and must force their governments to adopt effective measures for preventing war.*

*The German youngsters, former members of the Hitler Youth, and the Americans, high school students, demanded world unity for freedom and peace for all peoples. A lengthy question and answer period was conducted in the style of American town hall meetings and gave youth the opportunity to express their doubts, hopes, and convictions. This is democracy in action, reeducation in practice and groundwork for a better future without ado and fanfares.*

(Source: NA RG 111 SC 1941-54, Box 160, 315814, 20 Dec. 1948)

Untouched by all CIC and internal Military Government investigations the Nuremberg club flourished. Oblivious to the illegality of the venture local MG and German dignitaries, among them the Bavarian Government's Representative for Middle Franconia, Lord Mayor Ziegler, and Mayor Levié participated in the inauguration ceremonies in December 1946, one month before the official license was granted. One year after its inauguration it boasted over seven hundred members.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Headquarters, Sub-region Nürnberg, Counter Intelligence Corps Region VI, memorandum Julius Stein, Special Agent, to Headquarters, 11 Jan 1947. NA RG 260 OMGBY, Intelligence Predecessor Organizations, Box 111, 10/87-3/11. Det. B-211, ICD to OMGBY Political Affairs Division, Bericht über den Diskussionsabend am 26.3.47 im Künstlerhaus. NA RG 260 OMGBY, ID, Director, Box 17 [Envelope containing classified material]. OMGUS, Commanding General, Berlin, 28 July 1947, Subject: Formation of Military Government (US) Discussion Clubs. NA RG 260 OMGBY, Intelligence Predecessor Organizations, Box 104, 10/86-3/7.

<sup>52</sup> "Two New Youth Clubs Open in Nbg. M.P.", *The Young World*, 1 Oct. 1948: 1. Erlangen Sub-Post, weekly information bulletin, 30 March 1949. NA RG 338 Unit Records, Nuremberg Military Post, Box 121.

<sup>53</sup> Chronik der Stadt Nürnberg 1945-49: 209, 7 December 1946. NCA F2.

From the start, one of the leading organizers, Hans Lamm, an émigré who had returned to Germany and worked as interpreter at the International Military Tribunal (IMT), tried to make the club a truly joint venture. Not aware of the drama that had played out behind the scenes in 1946-47 he made Lawrence Norrie, the director of the OMGUS Education and Cultural Relations Division which had just recently relocated from Berlin to Nuremberg, aware of the existence of the club in November of 1948. Lamm invited him “and all members of your Division” to attend a meeting in the club home located in the city’s youth bunker.<sup>54</sup>

Using his connections with the IMT, Lamm brought together members of his club and American high school students in the courtroom to hold their discussions there. Participants debated whether the tribunals were fair or if world government could solve their present problems. To help developing this spirit and apparently upon the request of the club members, Major Selsor provided the Club with 1,000 verbatim translations of the American constitution, of which 950 were distributed within a few weeks. The change of the rules in the previous year that made the club a legal venture and its very constructive activities apparently induced the local MG detachment to throw its full support behind the venture. In December 1948 it reported to headquarters that the German-American Youth Club was “what has been needed for so long in Germany.” The authors suggested that local school officials should become actively involved in this interchange of ideas between Americans and Germans. MG observers noted approvingly that the majority of the participants in the latest discussion round in the halls of the IMT

both German and American, raised their hands in favor of one World Government. They felt that the only way out of the present dilemma is for the establishment of one World Government. The result of this forum speaks for itself.<sup>55</sup>

During the next years the Club continued to discuss topics of current interest ranging from the Nuremberg Trials in 1947, school reform in 1949, to West Germany’s social problems, or the role Germany would have to play in defending the West in 1951. Lamm succeeded in interesting prominent Americans such as Chief Justice Telford Taylor or Land Commissioner Murray van Wagoner in addressing the club. In February 1950 Helen McCloy, the High Commissioner’s wife, a presentation about “The Responsibilities of Young People in a Democracy” and attended an informal discussion with club members after the end of her official program. With these high caliber speakers on the US side it comes as no surprise that local German politicians did not want to lag behind and became frequent guests at these events.<sup>56</sup>

Not all local dignitaries were willing to help with the re-education effort, however. The director of Nuremberg’s art collections, Schulz, for example, initially displayed a lively interest in the Nuremberg GYA’s efforts to revive the city’s cultural life. He even offered to participate in these ventures. In March 1950 a member of the German-American Club approached Schulz and inquired if he would be willing to inform its members about the current

<sup>54</sup> Letter from Hans Lamm to Director, E&CRD, 1 Nov. 1948. NA RG 260 OMGUS, E&CRD, Community Education Br., Box 129, 5/294-1/17.

<sup>55</sup> Caption photos. NA RG 111 SC 1941-54, Box 160, 315814, 315815. Det. B-211, bi-weekly reorientation report, 16-31 December 1948. NA RG 260 OMGBY, FOD, Headquarters Records, Box 342, 10/54-2/20.

<sup>56</sup> “Schulreform im Bild,” [School Reform in Pictures] NN, 9 Feb. 1949: 3. “Mrs. McCloy Gast beim GYA Club,” [Mrs. McCloy Guest of GYA-Club] YW, vol. 4, no. 2, 1 Feb. 1950: 3. “Deutsche Schicksalsfragen: 5 Jahre Deutsch-Amerikanischer Jugendclub,” [Vital Questions For Germany: 5 Years of German-American Youth Club] NN, 24 Oct. 1951: 5. “Alle Parteien sind ‚sozial‘: Ein Diskussionsabend beim Jugendclub,” [All Parties are “Social Minded”: A Discussion Evening at the Youth Club] NN, 17 Nov. 1951: 5. The Chronicler for the Nuremberg City Archives dedicated considerable space to the German-American Youth Club. See, for example, Chronik der Stadt Nürnberg 1945-1949: 284, 22 July 1947; 387, 13 February 1948. NCA F2.

state of the city's reconstruction. Apparently thinking that the Club was part of Major Selsor's American staff, Schulz approached him in May about the possibility of giving a presentation for the education of the Americans. After a considerable amount of confusion which Selsor helped to clarify, Schulz became aware that the club was not connected with the American staff. Schulz's reply to the Major's request to support the club in spite of this fact came promptly. He wrote to Selsor that he would always support the American authorities, but that he had no intention of wasting his time with the German-American Youth Club. At the same time Schulz informed the club that preparations for the city's impending 900th anniversary were taking up all his time, making it impossible for him to accept the club's invitation. Apparently lecturing Americans about culture in Germany was one thing,<sup>57</sup> supporting young Germans' attempts to participate in the democratic process quite another.

At the end of 1947 Lamm, by then one of the chairpersons of the club, began to reach out to other organizations with similar interests and prepared a conference of German-American clubs in Bavaria. Since statewide organizations were not yet permitted, both Selsor and Raymond Spahn of the OMGBY Youth Section thought that the idea was premature. Instead of insisting on his original plan, Lamm settled for a community wide discussion meeting to which he invited the man in charge of Bavaria, Governor Murray van Wagoner. The first meeting was such a success that the club decided to stage regular discussion meetings in the city. Nuremberg's widely publicized youth forums were born. The organizers always were able to find topics of current interest and distinguished speakers for these events. Even when prominent people were not able to come to Nuremberg, they found the time to respond to Lamm's requests with enthusiasm and encouragement. Lamm received messages from Lucius D. Clay, John McCloy and even Eleanor Roosevelt.<sup>58</sup>

Under the headline "We Build Our World", one youth forum in 1949 featured representatives of Military Government, the Bavarian State, as well as local authorities. All of the panelists introduced the participants to the different functions of a democratic government and engaged in lively discussions on the role young people would have to play in this process. The local newspaper dedicated a full page to the forum but failed to mention that the Cold War had begun to encroach on reorientation. Major Selsor, who attended the forum as well, reported to headquarters that the Free German Youth had been the most vocal group during the event. According to him, they designed their questions "to embarrass the speakers" and "appeared to have a political import."<sup>59</sup>

Political agitation notwithstanding the club continued along the lines it had set. A second forum took place in the fall of the same year. Prominent men and women from France,

<sup>57</sup> Letter Demleitner, GYAC, to Schulz, 21 March 1950. Schulz to Selsor, 2 May 1950. Schulz to Demleitner, 4 May 1950. Selsor to Schulz, 11 May 1950. Demleitner to Schulz, 13 May 1950. Schulz to Selsor, 16 May 1950. Schulz to Demleitner, 16 May 1950. NCA C34 no. 17.

<sup>58</sup> See, for example, his exchange of letters with John McCloy throughout his tenure as High Commissioner. Although McCloy never was able to attend one of the forums, he made sure to comply with Lamm's request for a letter addressing the participants and also that another high caliber speaker from HICOG would be available. Lamm to McCloy, 23 April 1950. McCloy to Lamm, 26 September 1950, 11 October 1950. Lamm to McCloy, 23 January 1951. McCloy to Lamm, 12 February 1951. Lamm to McCloy, 7 November 1951. McCloy to Lamm, 15 November 1951, 6 December 1951. NA RG 466 HICOG, Security-Segregated General Records, 1949-1952. See also Maar 110-111 for a list of important personalities whom GYA members were able to meet.

<sup>59</sup> Memorandum Dr. Spahn re.: German-American Youth Club, 22 Dec. 1947. NA RG 260 OMGBY, E&CRD, Group Activities Br., Box 37, 10/43-2/2. "Fränkisches Jugendforum diskutierte: 'Wir bauen unsere Welt': 300 Jugendliche aus 40 Städten trafen sich in Nürnberg - Vertreter der Militärregierung, der bayerischen Regierung und der Stadt Nürnberg beantworteten Fragen zu Gegenwartsproblemen," [Franconian Youth Forum Discussed "We Build Our World:" 300 Young People from 40 communities met in Nuremberg - Representatives of MG, the Bavarian State Government, and the City of Nuremberg Answered Questions About Current Problems] NN, 27. Apr. 1949: 3. Nuremberg Military Post, GYA Office, to Commanding General, Headquarters EUCOM, ATTN. Director of GYA. Monthly Narrative Report for April 1949. NA RG 260 OMGBY, E&CRD, Group Activities Br., Box 45, 10/47-1/7.

the United States, India and Germany, among them MG officer Frank Klier who still resided in Nuremberg in 1949, and Franz Joseph Strauß, a young and aspiring Bavarian politician who at the time was in charge of youth for the State of Bavaria, analyzed the current East-West crisis. In 1951 a forum on Germany's role in Europe aroused much interest.<sup>60</sup>

Anti-communism did not seem to abate in Germany after World War II. Some Germans began a witch hunt against suspected communist agitators even before the infamous Senator Joseph McCarthy took center stage in Washington in 1950. Lutheran reverends in Nuremberg consistently warned the Americans from 1945 on that they should concentrate on the fight against "Bolshevism" instead of trying to de-Nazify, re-educate, and democratize the Germans. These efforts would invariably drive Germans into the arms of the Soviets, thought the Church leaders.<sup>61</sup>

During the years following the German capitulation the presence of Soviet troops and a Stalinist regime in the Soviet zone of occupation certainly had an impact on Nuremberg and the surrounding region. The Nuremberg Military Post bordered the Soviet zone in the north and Czechoslovakia in the east. Events like the Berlin blockade in 1948 made Americans and those Germans who had cast their lots with them apprehensive about the future. June Selsor recalled that a number of US Army dependents who were living with their husbands and fathers in Nuremberg decided to return to the United States in 1948. German rumors that communists had marked the houses the Americans occupied for "plunder and murder" in case the Russians were coming, certainly did nothing to ease the tension. Mrs. Selsor and her husband had to deal with worried GYA employees who inquired if the Selsors would be able to secure a place for them and their families on American planes in case of a sudden evacuation. Others related to their American friends or employers that their names were on secret lists which the communists allegedly had written. Selsor and German GYA workers also found that many boys and girls were reluctant to visit their centers or to become involved in GYA activities because they were speculating that the communists might come and did not want to face retribution in case of an American withdrawal. The obvious success of the Berlin airlift in 1949 boosted confidence in the Americans, however. Attendance numbers throughout the Post increased dramatically after the successful conclusion of the airlift from May of that year on.<sup>62</sup> Even young Germans now obviously were convinced that the Americans were in Germany to stay and protect them from the Stalinists.

But even some of those people who were much in favor of the American presence in Germany and the reorientation programs sometimes had a hard time to rid themselves of the authoritarian education they had received until 1945. The first president and co-founder of the German-American youth club, who had been secretary in Selsor's office in 1946, found himself at odds with Hans Lamm in 1949. A letter to Lamm under the headline "About Freedom of Speech in the Club" strongly objected to the Club's invitation of former Lord Mayor Hans

<sup>60</sup> "Die Zeitkrise und ihre Lösung": 2. Internationales Jugend-Forum des Deutsch-Amerikanischen Jugendklubs eröffnet," ["The Crisis of Our Times and Solutions:" Second International Youth Forum of the German-American Youth Club Opened] NN, 10 Sep. 1949: 14. "Jugend diskutierte die Krise der Zeit: 2. Internationales Jugend-Forum des Deutsch-Amerikanischen Jugendklubs beendet," [Youth Discussed the Crisis of Our Times: Second International Youth-Forum of the German-American Youth Club Ended] NN, 12 Sep. 1949: 6. "Professor Hale wird Jugendforum eröffnen," [Professor Hale will Open Youth Forum], YW vol. 4, no. 11, Nov. 1950: 3. "Third Nuremberg Youth Forum Saw Heated Discussions," YW, vol. 4, no. 12, Dec. 1950: 2. "Gespräch mit der Jugend: Das Vierte Nordbayerische Jugendforum," ["Discourse with Youth:" The Fourth North Bavarian Youth Forum] NN, 5 May 1951: 20. "Familiarize Youth With Self Government Early! First Youth Forum Brought Many Suggestions," YW vol. 5, no. 9, Sep. 1951: 1,2,7.

<sup>61</sup> See, for example, Dean Schieder's "Ansprache vor den amerikanischen Kriegspfarrern, 17.12.45 in Zirndorf." Schieder's answers to an ICD survey conducted by Hans Feiler in Nuremberg showed that he had not changed his mind in 1947. As far as the political future of the world was concerned, Schieder commented that it was clear to everyone that earlier or later there would be a confrontation between East and West and possibly war. LCA Kreisdekan Nürnberg 138.

<sup>62</sup> Selsor 10-11. "Participation Booming," YW vol. 4, no. 2: 2.

Ziegler - a Social Democrat who had been expelled by his own party for his leftist leanings - to talk about his recent journey to Moscow. According Selsor's secretary, Ziegler had previously accused the United States of trying to provoke a war and to "slander the American nation, the same nation, to which you have the good fortune to belong," without being punished for it. He demanded the immediate cancellation of Ziegler's appearance at the club because Ziegler would certainly use it as a forum for further anti-American and pro-Soviet agitation. Such an action certainly would disrupt the rather fragile beginning of the German-American friendship, he thought. The former president suspected, however, that Lamm's invitation was just part of a sinister plot by Lamm himself. He construed the fact that Lamm had publicly protested against Ziegler's decision to invite only Free German Youth members to a peace rally as a clear indicator of Lamm's left-leaning intentions. He also noted that Lamm had invited three prominent communists to the previous youth forum, which "was quite a lot for such a small and insignificant party." Unwittingly using vocabulary which clearly had its roots in the Third Reich's anti-Jewish propaganda and must have deeply disturbed Lamm who was Jewish, the former president concluded that he had not

*founded the German-American Youth Club so that you permit it now to be abused as a welcome propaganda stage for communist fellow travelers!*

The healthy and democratically thinking members of the club therefore should defend themselves with all its energy against attempts to carry the virus of disintegration in its youth organization.<sup>63</sup>

Lamm's answer revealed his commitment to fairness and his faith in the strength of truly democratic principles. He pointed out to his predecessor, who, according to Lamm, had not attended Club activities for years, that the Club's executive committee was convinced that

it can only serve the healthy and democratically thinking club members if they deal with representatives of all [political] directions. It appears to be a matter of course to us that we do not make an exception to the principle of free speech in the case of a man whom the SPD has expelled.

Lamm rejected any form of pre-selection or censorship of people scheduled to speak at the club. He stated that his opponent's anticommunist zeal often led him to misrepresent the facts or at least to misinterpret them. The current Club president pointed out to his predecessor, who was a member of the Social Democratic Party and was working for the Social Democratic newspaper, that none of his party's leading men had found it necessary to attend the youth forums to which they had been invited while the Communists apparently had regarded them to be sufficiently important to be present. Lamm further noted that three Germans had talked about their experiences in the United States during the previous months so that it would only be fair to give another German - who still considered himself a Social Democrat and not a Communist - the chance to talk about his experiences in the Soviet Union. He thought that the members of the club were sufficiently mature and critical to resist any pro-Soviet propaganda that might occur. Lamm also called his accuser's attention to the fact that the Communists made no bones about their dislike of the German-American Youth Club, because it resisted any attempts to be abused for party politics. He concluded that

we are and will remain above party politics and defend the freedom of speech for everybody, as long as he respects existing laws; as little as we permit the KPD to order us

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<sup>63</sup> Richard Sperber to Hans Lamm, 2 Nov. 1949. Underlined in the original. Apparently American officials had not forgotten the 1947 order of monitoring the Club's activities. The letter and Lamm's reply found their way into the intelligence reports which Hans Feiler, still in Nuremberg as intelligence officer for HICOG, sent to Munich. NA RG 466 OLCB, ID 1949-1950. Bi-weekly Reports from Nuremberg Field Office.

about, as little we can and want to become dependent on the party to which the esteemed founder of this club happens to belong at the time.<sup>64</sup>

Apparently the matter did not stop there. According to Lamm's former secretary, McCarthyism caught up with the IMT interpreter. CIC repeatedly interrogated him - a fact that must have dampened his enthusiasm for the reorientation work considerably. Nevertheless he organized one more forum in Nuremberg in 1951. In 1952 he left the city to return to the United States, but later returned to his native Germany. Without Lamm's leadership, his organizational skills, his charisma, his connections and his untiring efforts on behalf of the club, this promising initiative in Nuremberg came to an end.<sup>65</sup>

In spite of the setback GYA, tried to continue the tradition. In September of 1951 another forum for Northern Bavaria took place under direct GYA sponsorship at GYA center no. 1 in Nuremberg. This time, however, the target group was different. The emphasis shifted from political topics and intellectual reorientation towards practical suggestions, extensive workshops, and a good deal of entertainment. The American organizers, however, did not pass the opportunity to promote their own goals and included educational reform on the agenda. The young participants, among them Willy Gensmantel who represented the Nuremberg Kreis Youth Committee, suggested that their generation should have a greater voice in youth work. They found that the different youth organizations needed to achieve a much higher degree of cooperation and worked out a list of practical suggestions for reaching this goal. Apart from that, the forum participants adopted a resolution addressed to the Bavarian State Ministry of Education in which they suggested that the administration should include social studies in curricula of Bavarian schools. American exchange teachers and students from the local high school were at hand to explain their concept of student and teacher participation in school affairs. According to the *Young World*, this part of the forum evoked much interest and considerable enthusiasm among its participants.<sup>66</sup>

Organizing youth forums and discussions with prominent persons found much attention of the newspapers and made the German-American Youth Club well known, but they were not the only club activities. Its affiliation with GYA and American volunteers provided the members with ample opportunities for occupying their leisure time. To further their understanding of parliamentary procedures, club members traveled in American trucks to Munich to attend the sessions of the state legislature. Their "roving reporter" even found his way

<sup>64</sup> Lamm to Sperber, 7 Nov. 1949. NA RG 466 OLCB, ID 1949-1950. Bi-weekly Reports from Nuremberg Field Office.

<sup>65</sup> Maar 84-85, 139-140. Andrea Sinn, *Und ich lebe wieder an der Isar. Exil und Rückkehr des Münchner Juden Hans Lamm* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2008). For a short biography of Lamm see Joseph Volk, *Kurzbiographien zur Geschichte der Juden 1918-1945* (Munich: Leo Baeck Institute, 1988) 212. Lamm's Departure from Nuremberg did not go unnoticed. See Chronik der Stadt Nürnberg 1952: 503, 15 July 1952. NCA F2. Nuremberg Post Journal, 15 Sept. 1952. NA RG 338 Unit Records, Nuremberg Military Post, Box 122.

It is not quite clear to what an extent McCarthyism really was responsible for the CIC actions. At least some members of the intelligence community obviously disliked the Germans and at the same time harbored the most outrageous fantasies about German and Soviet designs. In regard to the German-American Club members of the local CIC seemed to be eager to follow even the most unlikely leads to uncover allegedly subversive action. See, for example Situational Report by Donald T. Shea, Director, OMGBY ID to Land Director, [1949], NA RG 260 OMGBY, Land Director, Box 284, 13/144-2/11. Shea sought to discredit GYA with a "fairly hot number" a fellow intelligence officer had organized. He decided to circulate a very negative report by a German boy, who obviously was disillusioned with the Munich GYA, within OMGBY headquarters. The result of this type of action should not be underestimated. Information which obviously came from the boy's report suddenly appeared in a number of MG's evaluations of the Army's program (Jim Clark to Mr. Don Shea, 23 August 1948. (Shea to Clark 23 August 1948. Clark to Shea 24 August 1948. NA RG 260 OMGBY, ID, Director, Box 17, 10/110-1/14). The fact that the exchange of letters between Lamm and Sperber ended up in MG's Intelligence Division, reveals the interest which intelligence in Bavaria had in the affair. The affair remained at the state level, however. McCloy's correspondence with Lamm in 1951 does not indicate any knowledge of the CIC interviews and allegations. Judging from the available evidence it seems that Sperber's letter actually triggered the CIC investigation.

<sup>66</sup> "Familiarize Youth With Self-Government Early! First Youth Forum Brought Many Suggestions," YW, vol. 5, no. 9, Sep. 1951: 1,2,7.

to the floor where - much to his surprise - he discovered that leading politicians such as Thomas Dehler, Wilhelm Högner, and even Alois Hundhammer proved to be accessible and listened to his questions. The reporter conveyed another lesson to his readers. Although Högner, Hundhammer, and Dehler belonged to different political parties and certainly had opposing opinions about issues such as school reform, they did not seem to harbor any personal animosities.<sup>67</sup>

Apart from politics, American literature and culture became popular topics for workshops. The club had its own theater group. Music, hiking, and “unforgettable excursions” on Army trucks or buses formed part of the agenda. Well attended and apparently rather wild parties, in which American music became a standard feature, remained one of the club’s most popular features.<sup>68</sup>

In view of the popularity and the activities of the club it is surprising that it did not maintain its momentum and failed to carry the torch of German-American understanding much beyond 1951. Too much depended on capable leadership which was hard to come by. It also seemed that the post war situation provided an environment for just such an organization, but it was impossible to continue its activities once life returned to normal. Since most of the club’s members were students, it was natural for them to move on to universities or careers in other locations. The increasing wealth and the pursuit of their careers did not leave them the time and energy they had been able to dedicate to the enterprise. Last, but not least, negative experiences with individual soldiers, for example the murder of a Nuremberg taxi driver, who was a popular member of the club, by a GI, as well as the CIC activities mentioned above did much to dampen enthusiasm for the enterprise. Although initially he was one of the occupiers, Hans Lamm’s further career is not typical of that of many German émigrés. He only returned briefly to the United States. In 1955 he went to Munich, where he pursued a successful career as educator, during which he held many distinguished positions. He finally became the head of the Jewish community. Many other club members became professors, doctors, managers, notaries and lawyers. A number of them, among others Lamm’s former adversary, managed to emigrate to the United States.<sup>69</sup>

## The Girl’s Club

While the German-American Youth Club took care of many intellectuals among young men and some women, June Selsor, Mark Selsor’s wife decided with a number of other American women to become active with GYA and to do something for the less progressive members of the opposite sex. She had been approached informally by many girls who were looking for somebody to help with their problems or to ask for advice. In April 1947 Mrs. Selsor issued official invitations to initiate a girls club within GYA. Over two hundred young ladies appeared for the first meeting. They came from a wide variety of social backgrounds. It took Mrs. Selsor and her co-volunteers some time to introduce democratic rules to the Club’s proceedings, and even more importantly, to instill a democratic spirit and a willingness to take up responsibilities in the group members, some of whom still were ardent and unabashed admirers of Hitler. Under the leadership of Mrs. Selsor and other American volunteers the girls

<sup>67</sup> “Nürnberger Jugendclub besuchte Landtag: Minister Dr. Dr. A. Hundhammer spricht mit Jugendreporter - ,Wie lange soll Schulreform in Bayern dauern?” Dr. Dehler und Dr. Högner begrüßen Mitglieder des Deutsch-Amerikanischen Jugendklubs Nürnberg,” [Nuremberg Youth Club Visited State Legislature: Minister Dr. Dr. A. Hundhammer Speaks with Youth Journalist - “How Long Will School Reform in Bavaria Take?” Dr. Dehler and Dr. Högner Welcome Members of the German-American Youth Club Nuremberg], YW vol. 3, no. 4, 1 Apr. 1949: 7.

<sup>68</sup> Gerhard Knöchlein, personal interview, 24 July 1995. Arno Hamburger, personal interview, 11 August 1994. Maar (70-135) provides an excellent picture of the club activities.

<sup>69</sup> Maar 110, 113, 116-123. Volk 212. Sinn.

wrote their own constitution and practiced democratic procedures. The girls club organized its own summer camps and skiing excursions. GYA provided transportation and equipment. The food, however, had to come from a different source. After the first camp had almost ended in nutritional disaster, Mrs. Selsor made sure that the girls club never left without a considerable stock of American supplies which the local military community as well as the Selsor family generously contributed. Other allied volunteers and workers operated in a similar fashion. While the GYA provided the logistical and organizational support, GIs and volunteers came up with all drinks, food, and candy available at the American youth activities out of their own pockets or collected the items within the military community.<sup>70</sup>



*Twelve members of the GYA prepare to write the constitution for GYA Center no. 1, Nurnberg, Germany. The constitution will be put to a vote before the members of the club as soon as it is prepared. The Nurnberg girls council has spent the last eight months studying "democratic practice" before undertaking this important step in the foundation of the club. Three of the officials of the club [GYA] help the girls put it in writing.*

(Source: NA RG 111 SC 1941-54, Box 141, 294874, 15 Dec. 1947)

On the lighter side, American women introduced German girls to the mysteries of being what was considered to be a modern woman at the time. A zone wide GYA publication, *The Idea Exchange* reported in December 1947 that

two former stateside models, American dependents, inaugurated the Nuremberg Charm School. In addition to lessons in graceful movement, the girls are taught the art of rising and sitting with ease, proper posture and balance. Useful hints are given the girls to enable them to dress to the best advantage on the limited clothing available to them.

The women's section of the local newspaper had much praise for the course. Even in this realm reorientation could be an issue. The article noted that the Third Reich had tried to transform the opposite sex into uniformed paramilitary "birth machines." The charm school provided the girls with the means to become more independent and to take care of their own interests with a "secure, self-evident grace." The paper lauded the attempt to show the girls one side of their personalities which they should not neglect.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Selsor 4-6, 20. "Nuremberg Girls' Club: The work of US Dependents in Army's Assistance to GYA," OMGUS Information Bulletin No. 151, 28 Dec. 1948: 15-18. Lore Falter, personal interview, 29 June 1995. Helga Stadtlander, personal interview, 15 August 1995. Arno Hamburger, personal interview, 11 August 1994.

<sup>71</sup> *German Youth Activities Idea Exchange*, 22 Dec. 1947. NA RG 260 OMGUS, E&CRD, Community Education Br., Box 140, 5/295-3/5. "Darf ich vorstellen: meine Charme-Klasse," [May I introduce my Charm-Class] NN, 17 Apr. 1948: 4.

“Reorientation” could acquire many different faces and reach very different people. Hans Lamm exercised spiritual and intellectual guidance in the German-American Youth Club. Approached by Lamm, Arno Hamburger also found his way into GYA as a volunteer. Born in Nuremberg, he had experienced Nazi discrimination, prosecution, and the burning of the synagogue first hand before he managed to leave Germany in 1938. During World War II he served in the British Army and returned to the city in 1946 and helped his parents - who had survived the Holocaust - rebuild their existence. Hamburger, who was an excellent athlete, decided to help out with a group of girls as well. The girls under his care did not attend discussions, but rather participated in one of the many sports groups which GYA sponsored. Nevertheless, Hamburger, saw a chance to help them understand what their fathers and grandfathers had refused to learn. He organized outings and week-end trips. Whenever his group did not have enough supplies, he made sure that they would not go hungry by obtaining food in the Army stores to which he had access as an employee of the IMT. Under his guidance the girls not only did physical exercise, but also were able to discuss the fate of the Jews in Nuremberg with a witness who spoke like them, who had grown up in the city, and who was able to relate to them firsthand what most of their parents and grandparents chose to repress. The girls learned in this way not only about the terrible consequences of their city’s recent past for Jewish people who –except their faith - were just like them. They also came to understand that practicing tolerance and understanding, as part of building a democracy would help them to lay the old demons to rest. According to Hamburger, the girls began to ask and he was able to provide some answers in a way which the group could understand and to which it could relate. The bond went so deep that the girls actually called him “Dad.” Some of them remained in occasional contact with him fifty years later.

Interestingly, not only the girls benefited from this relationship. Looking back, Hamburger did not think highly about the older generation in Nuremberg. After his return he found that most people had not changed and never would. Working with the girls, however, gave him hope that not all might be lost. He considered the time he spent with his GYA group to be the best he had had in Germany.<sup>72</sup>

## German Perceptions

Of course the widespread American support for young Germans did not go unnoticed and certainly was welcome in many quarters. When GYA celebrated its fifth anniversary in 1951, many local dignitaries, among them the President of Middle Franconia’s government, the Catholic dean in Nuremberg and even the Lutheran youth pastor in charge of the city, sent their congratulatory notes. All of those who wrote were grateful for the material help they or their groups had received from the Army without which their youth work would have been next to impossible. The Catholic dean spoke of “five years of good will, sincere concern, advice, and active support” which the GYA “idealists” had invested in German youth. The Lutheran pastor pointed out that young Germans “came to know far away countries and their peoples projected on the walls of our narrow rooms.”<sup>73</sup>

See also “Mrs. Charkoff kämpft gegen Mauerblümchen: Großer Erfolg der ersten Charme-Klasse - Wie komme ich mit Grazie und Würde durchs Leben?” [Mrs. Charkoff fights against wall-flowers: First Charm-Class Great Success - How do I Master Life with Grace and Dignity?] YW, vol. 2, no. 5, 10 May 1948: 2.

<sup>72</sup> Arno Hamburger, personal interview, 11 August 1994. See also Maar 63-70. Stern (*The Whitewashing of the Yellow Badge*) is an excellent study of the way in which West Germans dealt - or rather refused to deal - with the Holocaust and Jews after World War II.

<sup>73</sup> “Five Years of Army Assistance to German Youth,” YW vol. 5, no. 7, Jul. 1951: 1,3.

The following section deals exclusively with the Nuremberg GYA. A detailed study on GYA throughout Bavaria which the Intelligence Division of HICOG carried out in 1950 indicates that the situation in the city and in Northern Bavaria

Not everybody, however, was happy with the American activities. At the end of 1947 a Nuremberg journalist criticized the trend in Germany to concentrate American re-education efforts on the younger generation. According to him, young people had never known anything else but Nazi ideology. This brainwashing had made young people “stubborn, obstinate, and diabolical,” and therefore a hopeless target for re-education. According to him, people over thirty-five years still remembered the Weimar Republic and therefore would be more open to the American efforts.<sup>74</sup>

A conference of Bavarian youth leaders in November 1947, at which no Americans were present, also brought to light some interesting opinions about the American activities in Nuremberg. Church leaders in general seemed to be far more reserved about the GYA program than anybody else and made no bones about their dislike. Other leaders of Nuremberg youth groups did not have much positive to say about GYA either, although everybody present seemed to appreciate the helping hand of Major Selsor. “Materialism” was the catchword of the day. Many conference participants thought that the Americans were far too generous with their material support which they thought was spoiling the young people and raising too many expectations on the side of the young people which German clubs and authorities would never be able to fulfill. Others complained that GYA youth centers attracted and protected young criminals. Apparently the youth leaders did not see eye to eye with Americans in Nuremberg about educational values. Opinions on what exactly GYA was doing wrong, however, differed widely. While some complained that American soldiers simply transferred the military tone and behavior to the centers, others detected exactly the opposite: a lack of discipline and order which would ultimately lead to the deterioration of moral standards.

As far as GYA successes were concerned, a number of Nuremberg youth leaders and city officials were skeptical. In general the new and freer education methods did not meet much approval. One Nuremberg school principal was clearly aware of the American goals, but remained completely entrenched in his authoritarian thinking. According to him, “German children want to be told what to do and not to be educated according to American free methods.” Re-education apparently had not impressed this educator. More progressive youth leaders and teachers, however, welcomed the changes which they detected in the children who attended the American programs. Another school principal thought that the contact with Americans had led to an increased interest of students and awakened the desire to become more active in their school affairs.<sup>75</sup>

A zone-wide GYA study conducted in 1950 confirmed the latter director’s observation. Young Germans in general revealed that they were still not as convinced about democracy as teenagers in the United States. While 65% of young Americans indicated that they regarded a free government under the control of their constituents as the most desirable form of government and 35% did not have an opinion on the issue, 15% of young Germans were dead set against such a government, 47% had no opinion and only 37% supported the democratic form of government. GYA members, however, showed a stronger support of democracy than those who did not attend the program. 51% of GYA members supported democracy, 40% had no opinion and only 9% were against it. While the results were certainly not ideal,

was very similar to that in other areas. Office of Intelligence, HICOG, Essential Elements of Information on GYA, 25 May 1950. NA RG 466 OLCBY, ID, Elements of Essential Information 1950-51.

<sup>74</sup> “Deutsche Gegenwart: Ein Informationsbrief,” edited by Karl O. Paetel, 8-43 Burns Street, Long Island, N.Y., 1 Dec. 1947. NA RG 260 OMGUS, E&CRD, Community Education Br., Box 142, 5/296-1/15.

<sup>75</sup> “Appendix to Report on Attitudes Towards the Army Assistance Program to GYA,” 26 Nov. 1947. NA RG 260 OMGUS, E&CRD, Community Education Br., Box 140, 5/245-3/4. The appendix actually is a report of a youth leader meeting of the Bavarian Youth Committee. The author emphasized that no Americans were present and the Germans took the opportunity to voice their opinions freely.

Weldon Shofstall, the GYA's civilian adviser who had conducted the survey, noted that these results were encouraging.<sup>76</sup>

Nevertheless GYA was facing a constant uphill battle. The program did not reach a considerable number of young people in Nuremberg.<sup>77</sup> Many young people did not find their way to a youth center because they and their families avoided contact with Americans.<sup>78</sup> Although incidents between soldiers and German civilians were rare, they tended to undermine what Selsor and his colleagues were trying to build.<sup>79</sup> The Major repeatedly had to defend the program against attacks from members of the Bavarian Youth Committee or other organizations.<sup>80</sup>

Other Germans, however, supported GYA. In May 1947 the Army's program in Nuremberg was just beginning to embark on a more sophisticated approach to youth work. Even after just one year of operations Nuremberg's school superintendent Raab, defended GYA against criticism from local MG officials. MG had demonstrated solidarity with some German critics by publicly declaring that it was time to give German youth something for their minds instead of sports equipment and Coca Cola. Raab thought that the GYA approach actually was serving the American reorientation mission quite well. According to him, young Germans were suspicious of any kind of ideological instruction and needed above all food and something to do. He argued that sports activities helped raise morale, occupied the youths' free time, and provided hope for the future. Participating in sports activities with Americans and sharing their Coca Colas would ultimately result in an increased confidence in American ideas and intentions. More on the practical side, a trade unionist noted in 1950 that his youth work would not have been possible without GYA support and that he simply could not understand how anybody who was active in youth activities still managed to criticize a program that was doing so much for young people.<sup>81</sup>

The discrepancy between the actual operations of the Nuremberg GYA and the opinions which a number of youth leaders and even some city youth officials voiced is striking. A closer look at German complaints reveals some of the underlying issues the Germans were having with the American program. In one of its monthly reports to the Bavarian Military Government the Bavarian Youth Committee, for example, severely criticized the lack of co-operation between GYA and youth groups in 1947. More to the point, the authors of the report complained that support of young people went mainly to GYA and not to German youth groups, an opinion which Martin Faltermeyer, President of the Bavarian Youth Committee,

<sup>76</sup> "Attitude of Youth Towards Control of Government by the people," "GYA Hits the Target," YW, vol 4, no. 5, 4 May 1950: 5. Füssl (162-63) suspects that this survey should be used with caution since, it was conducted with the intention to justify the GYA program against attacks from MG and Germans. The rather extensive sources on GYA and MG conferences, however, indicate that the Army and its civilian adviser, Weldon Shofstall, made an honest attempt to evaluate the program.

<sup>77</sup> Some of the young people in Nuremberg were not aware of GYA's existence. See, for example, Peter Fries, personal interview, 8 August 1995. Gerhard Springer, personal interview, 1 August 1995.

<sup>78</sup> Marga Guthmann, personal interview, 8 August 1995. Helga Köhler, personal interview, 13 July 1994. Helmut Stühler, a youth worker for the city of Nuremberg recalled that some parents instructed their children to go to the German homes of the open door instead of GYA when they opened in 1950. Helmut Stühler, personal interview, 12 August 1994.

<sup>79</sup> Helmut Stühler, personal interview, 12 August 1994. See also Maar 84, 124.

<sup>80</sup> See, for example, Nuremberg Military Post, GYA officer to Commanding General, Headquarters EUCOM, Attn.: Director of GYA. Subject: Monthly Narrative Report for July 1949. Intelligence reported in 1949 that Martin Faltermeyer, the President of the Bavarian Youth Committee, added much to the dissatisfaction about GYA when he claimed that his organization had to pay thirteen million marks for maintaining GYA, a figure that turned out to be ten times the real amount. Letter from Donald Shea, Director OMGBY Intelligence to Mr. Arndt, Director, OMGUS Intelligence, 24 March 1949, in which he also sent the "guinea pig report" of the German boy to headquarters. NA RG 260 OMGBY, Director ID, Box 17, 10/116-1/1.

<sup>81</sup> Det. B-211, W.B. Morell, Deputy Director, Weekly Intelligence Report, 15-22 May 1947. NA RG 260 OMGBY, FOD, Det. B-211, Box 1426, 9/124-1/2. "GYA hat Pionierarbeit geleistet," [GYA Has Done Pioneer Work] YW, vol. 4, no. 1, 1 Jun. 1950: 4.

reiterated in 1949. A look at the Nuremberg GYA reveals the real problem. While GYA did support the established German youth groups, Selsor stressed the need to concentrate the program's focus on those who did not want to join youth organizations. The Major considered himself to be the spokesperson for the young people who did not want to belong to a structured youth organization again.<sup>82</sup> His emphasis ran counter to the Germans' intentions who wanted support for their traditional, highly structured youth organizations. A HICOG commission which investigated GYA activities in Bavaria in September 1949, proved Selsor right. According to the youth specialists from Munich, Germans in general were not aware or did not care about the problems unorganized youth were facing. The commission commended Selsor for his cooperative attitude, but found that both Staudt and Theodor Marx, the most important city administrators in the field, displayed a rather negative attitude towards the program.<sup>83</sup>

The fact that GYA provided opportunities for young people without forcing them into a firm structure was a novelty in youth work which completely undermined the very essence of German youth organizations. The program threatened their reason for existing by offering attractive programs which otherwise were only available by joining a club. GYA would go away, but the open youth work it had introduced might not disappear that easily. In this context the constant demands by the Germans that American help should be channeled through German youth organizations and the complaints that the Americans did not adapt their activities to the traditional German structure of youth work reveal the anxiety of the old school youth leaders in Nuremberg. They were very much afraid to lose control of a large segment of young people in Nuremberg and with that, the basis of their organizations' power.

Occasionally the conflict erupted openly. In Zirndorf, the GYA officer reported in July 1949 that he was making some progress towards "building up better cooperation in that town." According to him, the local sports club was the main obstacle to reaching good relations, however. The club leadership did not want to make the town's only gymnasium available to non-members because it would undermine its power. The officer concluded that "some manipulation is still in order in Zirndorf, but should succeed in the near future in bringing about the desired results."<sup>84</sup>

Fears of German youth organizations were not unfounded. Young people found different, more informal ways to organize which overcame the traditional ideological or religious group identities that existed in Germany. Hans Werner, who became director of a GYA center in Fürth in 1948, recalled that a number of young people decided to open a photo group at his facility. Werner and the photo group had to deal with many changes. First, the center was relocated, then it consolidated with Nuremberg center no. 1 which also moved to a new location. Werner remained director of the center when GYA ceased to exist and the center became part of the Nuremberg city administration. According to him, the members of his photo group as well as others decided to relocate with Werner and remain under his guidance because they found the traditional German club life with its membership requirements rather restrictive. The group continued to meet long after it had outgrown the youth centers. Werner still received invitations to its get-togethers in 1995.<sup>85</sup>

Of course youth leaders who criticized the Americans for being materialistic knew that they could not compete with candy, cookies, and even cigarettes one could obtain at GYA

<sup>82</sup> OMGBY, Field Research Section, Bi-weekly Intelligence Report, 8 September 1949. NA RG 260 OMGBY, ID Director, Box 3, 10/107-1/49.

<sup>83</sup> Monthly Report of Public Education, OLCB, September 1949. NA RG 466 OLCB, Central Files 1948-52, Box 1, 120.5/1.

<sup>84</sup> GYA, 16th Infantry Report of 8 July 1949. NA RG 260 OMGBY, E&CRD, Group Activities Br., Box 39, 10/43-2/5.

<sup>85</sup> Hans Werner, personal interview, 21 August 1995.

centers. These incentives, as well as the fact that the centers had so much more equipment to offer than any German youth group at the time, undoubtedly made many of the youth leaders apprehensive or even jealous about the strong competition which had emerged for their own organizations.<sup>86</sup>

The less democratically inclined the German youth leadership was, the more problems it had with the American approach. An American survey revealed that Lutheran church youth leaders were among those who did not practice a democratic regime in their youth groups. Bavarian youth pastor Helbich, who had his offices in Nuremberg, from the start opposed any movement that threatened to infringe on his domain and on the control he exercised over his youth groups. Not surprisingly, Nuremberg's Lutheran youth leaders proved to be the group most opposed to the American youth program. The older generation in general also remained strongly opposed to American influences. Quite a few youth leaders expressed their resentment or at least their discomfort with the impact which American culture had on young people.<sup>87</sup>

Older youth leaders and the churches had reason to fear the new currents. The youth leader meeting of 1947 revealed that especially children who were not organized appreciated the opportunities the centers offered to them. Many found a warm room and company in the GYA facilities. Even outspoken critics conceded that in general parents did not object to their children becoming involved in the local GYA activities. GYA also gave young elites an opportunity to become acquainted with the outside world by means of magazines and books. One German observer thought that especially those between fourteen and fifteen years were attracted to GYA activities because this youth program represented the complete opposite of the Hitler Youth which many had come to dislike.<sup>88</sup>

The last observer revealed a sound judgment. Young people found more in the Nuremberg GYA center than meets the eye. After years of strict discipline at home and in the Hitler Youth, GYA offered them new ways of getting to know themselves and the world. Fifty years after their stay in Nuremberg, Major Selsor and his wife evoked respect, fondness and even strong emotions because of their humanity and their genuine concern for the needs of the young people under their care. June Selsor had decided to initiate her girls club because German girls had taken the initiative and approached her on a personal basis with their concerns and problems. The fact that two hundred girls from all walks of life showed up for the first meeting of the club documented their search for something new and humane in a harsh environment.<sup>89</sup>

During the immediate post war years GYA maintained a strong presence in Germany and Nuremberg. By 1949, however the program began to decline. When it was no longer possible to maintain the youth centers open because their funding was running out, the Army

<sup>86</sup> See, for example, Willy Prölß, personal interview, 4 August 1994 and 4 August 1995, Hans Eckstein, personal interview, 6 July 1995.

<sup>87</sup> "Appendix to Report on Attitudes Towards the Army Assistance Program to GYA," 26 Nov. 1947. NA RG 260 OM-GUS, E&CRD, Community Education Br., Box 140, 5/245-3/4. An OMGUS survey on youth found that 70% of all religious groups in the American zone appointed their leaders while 70% of all other groups followed democratic procedures. Members of the church groups also tended to have more pronounced anti-democratic attitudes than those of other youth groups. OMGUS, ICD Opinion Surveys, *A Report on German Youth*, Report no. 99, 5 March 1948: 8-9. NA RG 260 OMGBY, ID Director, Box 17, 10/116-1/13. The surveys were conducted at about the same time as the meeting.

<sup>88</sup> "Appendix to Report on Attitudes Towards the Army Assistance Program to GYA," 26 Nov. 1947. NA RG 260 OM-GUS, E&CRD, Community Education Br., Box 140, 5/245-3/4. For young people's reactions to the Nazis' attempts to completely absorb them into their state see Detlev J.K. Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition and Racism in Everyday Life* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982) 145-174.

<sup>89</sup> Selsor 4. A portrait of Selsor in the *Nürnberger Nachrichten* clearly reveals the sympathy and respect Selsor generated among the Germans. "Ein Porträt: Nürnberg's Jugendoffizier," [A Portrait: Nuremberg's Youth Officer] NN, 11 Jan. 1947: 6. See also Maar 106.

tried to transfer the centers to German communities. For the most part the Germans did not demonstrate much interest in them. City governments allocated their budgets to more pressing social needs for refugees, returning prisoners of war, or rebuilding schools. Nuremberg, however, decided to adopt the new idea of youth work open to all children and teenagers that the GYA had introduced. Several of the German GYA employees found new positions within the city's social services and the Nuremberg youth administration took over the GYA youth center number one, albeit with much reduced operations and after several moves. The center ended up as Nuremberg's first "home of the open door" at the newly reconstructed old fortress, where it still resides with the same mission today.

The transition of GYA activities and centers from American into German hands was not easy. Apparently Major Selsor had misgivings when Andreas Staudt approached him to discuss the possibility of a German takeover in November 1949. Staudt reported to the city's welfare committee that Selsor was willing to discuss possibilities to make GYA homes available to more people and to accommodate the needs of the younger generation, but, according to Staudt, he "emphatically declined" to turn over control to the city administration. The major argued that his experience had taught him that German authorities were not interested in the kind of youth work GYA promoted and usually closed the centers as soon as they could lay their hands on them.<sup>90</sup> His successors did not have much choice in the matter. Following instructions from headquarters they began to explore the possibilities of a German takeover of the 33 Army youth centers in the region. Their future was by no means secured.<sup>91</sup>

Nuremberg's Youth Center no. 1 faced several obstacles before it was clear that it would remain open. While negotiations were underway to transfer the centers to German authorities throughout the region, the GYA officer was not yet ready to concede defeat in the city. In 1952 the center moved to a smaller and more affordable location, but had to share the building with a hotel for American women who worked for the Army. There GYA continued operations with reduced staff and a new director for another year. In June 1953, however, the Army had to close its last youth center as well, but help was just around the corner. The city had continued to negotiate with the Army about a possible takeover of the facility. In August Karl Maly, who had replaced Staudt as director of the Nuremberg Youth Office, signed a favorable contract with the Americans. The Army would continue to provide the space free of charge as long as it was not needed otherwise. GYA donated the entire inventory, including an expensive and very popular photo laboratory, to the Germans. The city had no obligation to continue the Army employees but maintained Hans Werner, long time GYA employee and director of the center, in his capacity. The Army promised to continue providing logistic support.<sup>92</sup>

Two years later, however, the Germans had to look for a new location when the Army announced that it needed the space for other purposes. The youth center with Hans Werner and most of its visitors moved to the recently established city youth house at the old castle where it has continued to serve people to this day.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Report on conversation between Mark T. Selsor and Andreas Staudt to city welfare committee, 17 Nov. 1949. NCA C7/IX no. 1235.

<sup>91</sup> Nurnberg Military Post Journal 5 Dec. 1951, 31 Jan. 1952, 15 Feb. 1952, 4 Jun. 1952. NA RG 338 Unit Records, Nuremberg Military Post, Box 122, Folder 2, 3.

<sup>92</sup> Hans Werner, personal interview, 21 August 1995. Minutes of the Welfare Committee meetings of the city of Nuremberg, 8 June, 18 June, 16 July 1953. NCA C7/IX no. 1324, 1325. "GYA Heim wird übergeben: 'Haus der Jugend' unter städtischer Leitung," [GYA Center Will be Transferred: "Youth Home" under City Control] NN, 3 Aug. 1953: 5.

<sup>93</sup> Hans Werner, personal interview, 21 August 1995. Minutes of the Welfare Committee Meeting of 30 June 1955. NCA C7/IX no. 1354. "Möbel zwischen Himmel und Erde: Seltsamer Umzug des 'Heims der Offenen Tür' in den Turm ;Luginsland' auf der Burg," [Furniture Between Heaven and Earth: Strange Move of the 'Home of the Open Door' into the Tower 'Luginsland' at the Castle] NN, 13 Oct. 1955: 9.

The Army's GYA program undoubtedly was one of the most extensive and quite successful relief programs of the United States in its zone of occupation. A look at the Nuremberg Post revealed that the Army did far more than simply provide candy and sports. Many of GYA's programs offered new approaches to young people and youth work in general. Today the German Youth Activities Program remains largely forgotten. One reason may be that even the Army itself did not consider it a success. A closer look at the Nuremberg military district, one of the largest in the US Zone reveals, however, that soldiers indeed were successful in starting and implementing a very important peace time reorientation mission. GYA relied on a natural bond that many GIs and young Germans quickly forged immediately after the end of the war. The Army was able to use its personnel and facilities for introducing a completely unknown way of conducting youth work in Germany. While young people from middle class households often did not wish to have contact with the occupiers, GYA was able to reach out to those who needed it most: Refugee children who often lived in camps and those of the lower classes who had nowhere else to go. The city of Nuremberg picked up on this new and progressive approach when it got the chance. In the 1950s the administration created "homes of the open door" with American aid which for the first time were not dedicated to specific social or religious groups, but open to anyone who wanted to come. They were modeled after the GYA centers and the first of them, the direct descendant of GYA center number 1, remains open to young people from all walks of life today at the old imperial fortress. It remains a widely visible, albeit unrecognized memorial to the US Army's efforts in the reorientation of young Germans after World War II. Major Mark T. Selsor would not have wished it to be any different.

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