

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE FOR PEACE

Ramsay Bramham
c/o 102 (K) Det, Mil. Gov.
B.A.O.R.
3rd March 1946

Dear Derek,

Here is the first Report from The Friedland I.V.S.P. Service - it is from Monday to Monday and I am forwarding copies to David and Donald. There are enclosed one or two addenda which may help to give a more complete picture and at the end the scheme we should have a daily log and who's who.

ACCOMODATION

We have three Nissen huts: one, slightly larger than the others, has a cement floor, sinks, an army range, and is used for cooking, washing, eating and living in, while the other two are used for sleeping and stores. With the cooking equipment mustered by Marian and the many additions made in the workshop - tables, benches, shelves, frames for ambulance cushions, towel nails, coal and wood containers, etc. - everything has been made reasonably and comfortable. As the cause lavatories are exposed we have had special facilities built.

WORK

Our first job has been the erection of Nissen huts and a wooden barrack to serve as an isolations centre for the Camp. This week five barracks have been completed in spite of the work being re-erecting and the consequent indifferent shapes of various parts. On Saturday, as the work had outstripped the supply source - the materials are from the old Friedland camp - we started clearing the roadsides in the camp and constructing adequate drains. Such work has to be done while there is a thaw and, granted the right weather conditions we could do a lot of useful road maintenance. Another urgent job is the creation of Nissen shelters for the several queues for food, registration, etc. The work has been very quickly done and with a real good will and humour.

SOCIAL EFFORTS

Monday: We had impromptu singing of English and German songs and getting - together - talk.

Tuesday: Arthur Brown gave us a very interesting account of life in Berlin and was well plied with questions and contributions of the various experiences of the volunteers.

Wednesday: German production of Shakespeare's Twelfth Night at the Göttingen Stadttheatre.

Thursday: An enjoyable joint social evening with the 4th Unit from Bremke.

Friday: A long Friday night meeting ranging from whether to invite the Dr's from Friedland to a dance on Sunday evening to Pierre's work in India.

Saturday: Played chess, table tennis, and sat and smoked a pipe of peace together.

Sunday: Held a joint dance with the German Red Cross in the camp.

Tonight we are rounding a good week off with a chess and table tennis tournament and singing and talking; there is a happy atmosphere about the service which augurs well for future IVSP work in Germany.

THE VOLUNTEERS

The students came expecting to receive a battery of propaganda on pacifism and democracy and we agreeably surprised when they realised the broad basis of IVSP and that in essence it is a technique rather than a philosophy of life. They have all worked, eaten and played enthusiastically and I am sure you will find a ready response to any appeal for help from Göttingen University.

We have discussed together the next steps to take in developing co-operation between us and they suggest that through them we form a regular liaison with the faculties and the student's organisations. One of the latter is the Gleichen Club - the Gleichen is an outstanding hill in the district complete with ruined castle and traditions - and I will be sending names and addresses later. Whenever we have bulletins or news of possible schemes in which they can take part they would be pleased to receive them. It will be easy to find the personnel for a summer scheme in Germany if other details can be arranged and with our present position here we have every facility required. They too, have been encouraged to look around for work as a University and will value any help IVSP can give them in experience or materials.

We have kept a daily log and Who's who which should help for any future information you may need.

THE SISTERS

We owe a tremendous amount to our sisters, Marian and Anneliese - and to the quantity of food we have been fortunate enough to have. The German civilian ration is small and is to be halved in respect to bread and fats in the next week. We have had extra rations as workers, our three army rations, a Red Cross parcel each day, and extra supplies from the German Welfare sources.

It was quite a sentimental parting this morning and we shall miss the dry humour of Hans and the leg-pulling of Joachim by the others for his serious championing of the Social Democratic Cause. We have, fortunately, three staying on another week and these will help to give continuity to the scheme. The new comers are from the Religious faculty and have arrived with a useful brass band - we may have a joint social evening with the Salvation Army Relief team which has replaced the IVSP team at Bremke.

I must away now to a bit of dirty draining -

Best wishes,

Ramsay