

**Report of Unit Meeting
held at West Bevern 13th July 1946**

Members present :

Mary Jessett, Peggy Milne, Frances Lancashire, Margaret Hickson, David Sainty, Douglas Childs, Stanley Slee, Norman Smith, Tom Josephs, Alan Page. Douglas in the chair.

Summer Schemes

Douglas introduced the subject, explaining that during the last few weeks' people had been talking a lot about the schemes and complaining that

- (1) we don't know enough about them,
- (2) there are too many of them to be run properly, and
- (3) there has not been enough Liaison between David and the unit on this and other matters.

He made it clear that there was no question of putting Dave in the Dock, but suggested that it would be helpful if gave us a full statement on the position of the schemes at the moment, and explained how things had been arranged to date. He added that he had already mentioned this to David, so that he was not having it sprung on him at the meeting.

David agreed to do this, but asked for peoples comments on them first.

Alan said that in his opinion it was not a good thing to take the cream of the people at present in the units for the schemes at the risk of normal relief work suffering. Stan pointed out the importance of these Summer Schemes from the point of view of IVSP and said that he could quite see that they were of at least equal importance to the Relief work we are doing to IVSP Foreign Service Committee, as they will, we hope, form a basis to an IVSP group in Germany at some future date. He stressed, however, that it was most important that the units should know at once how many people they were expected to free for the schemes, in order that arrangements could be made to carry on the units work without them.

Mary did not altogether agree with this, saying that she felt that we were on a very important job with refugees here and that our personal should be left intact to enable us to carry out our commitments. Tom agreed with her. Dave then made a statement on the position of the arrangements of schemes at the moment, and gave a resume of the way in which plans had developed since it was first decided that they would take place, at the beginning of the year.

He explained that at the beginning of the year, when it was first decided to go ahead with the idea, it was the general opinion of people that relief work would more or less have come to an end by the middle of the year, and it was assumed that there would be a number of people from the units free to take part in the schemes. As IVSP is very anxious to get Pick and Shovel work going in Germany, application for permission to run them was applied for, and arrangements were begun. At this time it was intended to have six schemes, but at the conference in Münster on the 18th of June that was amended to five. It has since been decided to limit them to four.

When it became apparent that Relief work was not coming to an end, and that there would not be a lot of spare people available out here, it was still hoped that it would be possible to draw leaders for the schemes from the units.

He stressed that it had never been the intention to cut the units down too low, and said if there was any danger of this happening one or more of the schemes would have to be cancelled. This would, however, be done very reluctantly, as they are considered to be of the first importance, being long term schemes, in comparison to the short term work that the units are doing here.

(Mary interrupted at this point to express the opinion that the work we are doing with refugees here is also long term work. There was some discussion, and it was generally agreed that although we are all very much in favour of the schemes taking place, and realise their importance, we are not altogether satisfied with the way they have been arranged, and would have liked to have been kept more fully informed about the progress of arrangements.)

David continued, and gave us the latest position in regard to all the schemes. He said that Leslie Gore will lead the Geldern scheme, and Alan Page the Meschede one. It has not yet been decided who will lead the Hamburg and Rendsburg schemes, but Walter Thielemann, (an old IVSP member who served at Santa Maria and Litz Ruiti) is making the arrangements for the Hamburg scheme. Owing to pressure of work, Dave explained that he had had to leave the actual arrangements of the schemes to some of these people, but reported that arrangements were well in hand.

Two other members of the Kevelaer section, Charles Balchin and Eric Rodham are also available for schemes, as are Jim Budge and Harry Alcock from the Berlin unit.

One of the Berlin people will probably lead the Hamburg scheme, and the other the Rendsburg one, and the two Kevelaer people will probably be reserves.

In reply to questions Dave said that the opening date for all schemes was the 5th August, but added that it was not definitely fixed yet. So far he has received some two dozen applications from volunteers for the schemes, and he thought it probable that Annelise Ehrhardt had also received some. He added that his visit to Switzerland had considerably interrupted arrangements, although he felt on the whole that it has been worth while.

Several people expressed the opinion that things had been left very late, and that with the schemes only three weeks ahead arrangements should have been much further advanced. Douglas thought that too much had been attempted for the first year in Germany, and recalled a year when a similar thing had happened in England. He mentioned that two FRS teams, one at Goslar and the other at Cologne had contacted him, saying that they had heard of the schemes and had been asked to help recruit volunteers, but knew very little about the arrangements, and wanted further particulars. In each case he had reluctantly had to tell them that he could not help much, as he was pretty well as much in the dark as they were.

David said, that full particulars had been given to the Goslar team by phone, and that he had since written to them, and added that a letter written to the Cologne team apparently not arrived.

Stan asked if Alan could give a report on the arrangements that had been made for the scheme at Meschede.

Alan said that he had not realised that David expected him to lead the Meschede scheme, and added that he thought himself not altogether suitable for what would undoubtedly be a very honouree's job, particularly owing to his age and the fact that he speaks very little German. He said that so far no detailed arrangements had been made about the job, and that nothing had been done yet about getting heavy workers rations for the members. A house had been found that would be suitable for living quarters, but it had been very badly damaged, and at the moment has no roof, windows or doors, and there is no stove or washing arrangements. However repairs are being carried out, and it should be fit for occupation by the time the scheme is due to start.

Dave said that for all the other schemes arrangements are much further advanced. Douglas stressed again that too many schemes had been attempted in the limited time available, and Mary agreed.

The question of general liaison by David then arose, and the subject of replacements discussed at some length. Mary expressed the opinion that although Dave was our Liaison officer, he really knew very little about the work that we are doing, and the difficulties that had arisen owing to the shortage of personnel. Several people thought that he should have stressed our position more strongly to the Foreign Service Committee, and made greater efforts to get replacements sent out earlier.

Douglas called the meeting back to order, and the question of using part of the food issued to our unit from HQ 5 for German Welfare to supplement the rations of people on the schemes was introduced. Dave said that he had been promised a special allocation from HQ 5, but there was a danger that it might not arrive in time. He would like us to set aside some of our allocation as an emergency store in case of this happening, and explained that this allocation could then be used on our job when it arrived. After considerable discussion it was agreed that this should be done.

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