

MAKING BUREAUCRACY WORK TOO

An ex-RAF mess in Flensburg had lain unused for some months. It had been requisitioned by an RAF Officer of a certain rank. We discovered it and although it had been neglected (the pipes had burst and the heating system was kaput) realised its potential for the benefit of refugees; but an approach to the RAF was frustrating - no officer could be found with sufficient interest or seniority. So, after months of this, Stan (*Slee*) got to work at the top: He explained the situation to Admiral Bevan and asked him how his rank compared with the requisitioning Officer's. "Oh", said the Admiral, "I outrank him" and he signed a de-requisitioning Order and arranged for the buildings to be made available to us.

Its first use was as a base for an international work camp with German volunteers included - a traditional SCI "pick and shovel" type scheme fuel cutting for an old people's home. Because food for Germans was so scarce we begged all the volunteers from abroad, Switzerland, Sweden, Holland, Denmark, to bring as much food as they could carry; but the army helpfully classified us as "Forces Families", so in the end the work camp had good rations.

After the work camp, the building was to be used for a refugee children's home.

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Basil Eastland / Dereck Edwards / David Sainty :
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