

**REPORT ON VISIT TO GERMANY**  
**January 7th - 21st, 1947**

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This report does not include the detailed comments of the teams on various points of internal IVSP policy, as these will be reported on separately.

**TUESDAY, Jan. 7th.**

Arrived Dover 2 pm to find that sailing's for the day had been cancelled, due to fog in the Channel. Spent night at Dover Transit Camp.

**WEDNESDAY, Jan. 8th.**

Rose at 4 am for reputed boat leaving at 6 am. The boat, however, did not leave until 1.30 pm and arrived Calais at 3.15 pm. After a two hour wait at Calais Transit Camp, left for Oberhausen by train.

**THURSDAY, Jan. 9th.**

Arrived Oberhausen 6.15 am and was met by Charles Balchim. We proceeded at once to Duisburg to visit the kitchen where the food is prepared for the feeding scheme, which is under the supervision of the IVSP team. The food is supplied by the Don Suisse, and prepared by German workers. The kitchen was situated in a Sweet Factory and was very well equipped. Soup was being prepared for 8.000 children and it is delivered to schools and feeding points by trucks. We then proceeded to the billet which was in a comparatively undamaged block of flats and the living and office accommodation consisted of 4 floors. Although the team considered this tended to be too large, it had enabled them to start a successful International Club, in one of the big rooms and to accommodate other meetings.

After Breakfast, Anneliese, the German Branch IVSP Secretary, and Fin, a Norwegian, came round from the work-camp to discuss arrangements for the party that evening. Fin had unfortunately broken his hand on the work-camp the day before.

I then went out with Elsie Gainham and we first visited a Catholic school, where I saw the soup that I had previously in the kitchen, being distributed to the children. One of the difficulties about the school-feeding scheme was the fact that the soup had to be distributed to the child at the school and a certain number of children have not shoes and consequently not able to go to school.

We visited a further school that had sometime previously broken the rules and allowed the mothers to collect the soup and it is the responsibility of the team to ensure that this sort of thing is not allowed. Distribution, however, was going well on this occasion.

One of the major problems that the team have to deal with are the 'Bunker families'. These Bunkers are not like English Air-raid shelters, as they are large massive buildings, 4 or 5 stories high, made of reinforced concrete. Homeless and bombed-out families are living in these since the war and there are, of course, no windows and conditions are extremely over-crowded. Members of the team regularly visit these Bunkers and try to ensure that Local Authorities do everything possible to better the conditions of the many hundreds of people living in them. The team has been pressing for windows to be inserted in these buildings and, although, it was a major operation, they were hopeful that permission would be forth-coming. We visited two Bunkers and found that they are divided inside into tiny rooms, with a family living in each room. They seem to be fairly well-equipped with electric light and electric cookers, but all electricity is cut off in the town for a number of hours each day and there is no alternative lighting or cooking power. Electric light bulbs too were extremely short and very often when a bulb broke, it was irreplaceable and the room was deprived of light. In most of the Bunkers there are 'air conditioning plants, but the Bunkers have the inevitable foetid odour due to the lack of fresh air and presumably to the presence of so many people living in them with inadequate washing facilities or soap with which to wash. One of the points which Elsie Gainham was discussing on this visit was the possibility of making some sort of children's play-room at the very top of the building. While a number of rooms had been made extremely home-like by means of painting on the walls and other finishing devices and while the places were warm there was an obvious air of resignation noticeable in most of the inhabitants.

We then went to the work-camp which had been given the use of a large house near the centre of the town and when we arrived, lunch was in progress. One did not have to be there for more than a few minutes to absorb the friendly atmosphere that pervaded the service.

Six nationalities were represented round the Dinner table and while German was the prevailing language there were also evidences of English, Dutch, Swedish and Danish. The scheme had been such a success that they were discussing the possibility of it continuing for another week, but it was finally agreed to finish on the date originally decided as a number of the volunteers had to return to their respective countries.

The work had originally been clearing and digging a plot of ground that would then be used as a vegetable garden of a hospital, but after the first three days, the ground became too frozen to work and they arranged to fell trees in a neighbouring park, the timber of which would be used for producing furniture. I worked for two hours on the scheme with Piet Kruithof, the Dutch Foreign Secretary. He was anxious that the English Branch should send an experienced Youth Camp leader to Holland next summer, preferably a man and that we should let him know as soon as possible the total number of volunteers we would have available for work in Holland next summer.

I was then picked up by Charles Balchim, who stayed long enough to be photographed sawing a tree. After it we returned to the Unit billet, where we had a talk on the Unit, and arranged the agenda for the Unit meeting that took place that evening.

After the Unit meeting, we returned to the work-camp, where the farewell party was in progress and when we arrived, they were entertaining the local branch of the FOR. It was highly successful and hilarious affair and it was obvious that the volunteers who have taken part in the service realised the significance of the service.

#### **FRIDAY Jan. 10th.**

Charles had arranged to take me and Keith Bywaters to the station, to enable me to catch the Rhine Army Special train at 6.10 am and to enable Keith to start his 'hitch-hike' to Berlin. Owing to the alarm clock taking too mild a line, we overslept but arrived the station simultaneously with the train. On arrival at Bad Oeynhausen, I was met by Basil Eastland and as soon as we arrived at HQ5, we were asked to see Admiral Bevan. The Admiral explained the circumstances surrounding his meeting with the Control Commission in Berlin, and this is reported in the other section of my report.

He went on to say that he had recently seen the Berlin team, and while he was there, he had seen the Berlin IVSP group on the 'stump-grubbing' service and he said that he had been greatly impressed with the work of Unit 4 on, what he considered was one of the toughest jobs in the British zone. He asked me to express to Stan Slee and the team, his appreciation and admiration of their work.

The roads were extremely icy and it was doubtful whether we could proceed to Schleswig that day, but we decided to make an attempt. We stopped at Hamburg in order to pick up Dr. Michaltscheff and we arrived at the Schleswig billet at 10.30 pm. The roads were extremely bad, we learned that three members of the team had still not returned that day, due to breakdowns or bad roads; the last one arrived home well after midnight. We decided not to proceed to the Flensburg scheme, which is some twenty miles from Schleswig.

#### **SATURDAY, Jan 11th**

Owing a engine trouble, we did not arrive at the scheme until 11.30 am, when we found the volunteers, they were engaged in a final burst that was hoped would bring them up to their target of 150 cubic metres of timber. We were only too eager to join them, in view of the intense cold, and it had been learned that the first load of wood which had been taken across to the island of Amrum had reached there safely, but the island was now cut off from the mainland by icing, and food was having to be dropped to the inhabitants by plane. The work finished at 1 pm, the forester calculated that the total wood cut, was 154 cubic metres, which was 54 more than he had estimated the service would produce and 4 more than Basil had estimated. We returned to the billet for lunch.

The billet was the main building of a large aerodrome, originally used by the German Airforce and which was later taken over by the RAF and which had been empty until IVSP had requested it for the purpose of the camp. It was in fairly good condition, apart from the deterioration due to the water, which had been left in the Central Heating apparatus and ice on many of the floors which had to be cleared away before doors could be shut. Cooking facilities were primitive, but it seemed as if the natural obstacles, encountered by the scheme, had almost helped in drawing the camp to gather, and the spirit and enthusiasm was immediately obvious and catching.

After lunch, Ralph Hegnauer suggested a short meeting, where volunteers could make criticisms and comments at the service. There was a fairly full discussion and one or two criticisms were made. None of them were major ones and they mostly dealt with such things as unpunctuality and luxuriousness of the food and it was quite obvious from the general comments that the Germans and other nationalities had gained from this opportunity of co-operation. One of the Danes, who before the camp had wondered if he would be able to work with Germans, after his experiences in the occupation, said that he had now seen another side of the Germans, which he had not previously seen and he felt optimistic about the possibilities of working together.

The afternoon was spent in making preparations for the party, to be held that evening, and I worked with Fritz Jütte, whose name had been a familiar one, since the early Unit 4 days, at Bremke.

A number of local residents and officials had been invited to the party, as well as members of Unit 4 and other relief teams. Just before the guests arrived all the electricity was cut off, and remained off the whole evening. This did not prevent the party being a great success and Ralph Hegnauer made an excellent speech in German which was also translated into English, explaining why the service had taken place and what the aims of IVSP were. The local Bürgermeister asked to be allowed to reply to it, and he said that he came to the party, thinking that IVSP was a branch of the Red Cross. He had been very impressed by what he had heard and by the fact that seven nationalities had been working in Germany to provide fuel for the Germans. He was on his way to speak to a German Youth group, and he would certainly make IVSP the subject of his talk that night.

During the course of the party, I was able to have a talk with Rosemary Deane, the liaison officer of Schleswig Holstein. She had known the team well for some time, when Douglas Childs was the leader, and she was very satisfied with its work. She said that it had undoubtedly had to work under difficult conditions and at great pressure, but that the new Guide team should shortly take over part of the area which would help to relieve the strain.

After the guests had departed, the volunteers gathered together for last brief informal meeting, at which arrangements were made for the closing down of the service next day and about midnight "L'amitié" was sung and volunteers went to bed, but in most of the rooms, discussions, that had begun during the day, continued until the small hours.

### **SUNDAY, Jan. 12th**

Rose at 6 am. It was discovered, however, that a snow blizzard was in operation and fairly deep snow drifts were on the roads. It was decided to delay the departure until 8.30 and some fairly intensive pushing was put in, on Basils car, whose battery was flat. Volunteers and equipment were packed into the ambulance and Basil's car. The latter set out. It was discovered half a mile down the road and a pushing party was again in operation. After this had happened 3 more times, in the course of about a mile and after we entered the mainroad it was put on tow by the ambulance and after a long and cold journey, the billet at Schleswig was reached. The German volunteers from both camps (Schleswig and Duisburg) had planned to meet at Hanover at Lunch-time and to have a conference on the experiences of the two services and a meeting of the German IVSP committee. In spite of the roads, it was therefore, decided to attempt the journey to Hanover and those of us remaining at Schleswig said 'Good-bye' to them at 1 pm. Such is the enthusiasm of the German IVSP members that we heard later that they arrived at Hanover at 10.30 pm, where the Duisburg volunteers had been waiting for them since mid-day and in spite of their long, cold trip without a proper meal, they immediately started their meeting, which went on until 3 am and were continuing it at 9 am the next morning.

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It was little wonder, I think, that the success of these two camps had raised in some peoples minds the question of the number of camps to be run next summer. The experience of those who had served on the

camp had been such an inspiring one that they wanted more and more people to share it. Nevertheless, it is true to say, that these camps succeeded because of the successful planning which had been put into them, which had enabled seven nationalities to take part and this point was, I believe, recognised by the German Committee.

After lunch we had a Unit meeting, the decisions of which are recorded elsewhere, and in the evening, Stan Slee, Margaret Hickson and I went to the opera at Flensburg, to see 'Orpheus in the Underworld'.

#### **MONDAY, Jan. 13th**

After breakfast, I went out with Tom Joseph visiting refugee camps. He had some stores to deliver and we went to the Seaplane base camp Tönning. This was one of the camps which will be taken over shortly by the Guide Team, and we were shown round by the Camp leader and the Secretary of the Women's Committee on the camp. This camp was one of the better ones, I was told, as it was waterproof and reasonably warm. The refugees get a small amount of money each month from the Local Authorities, but this is not enough for them to get meals from the communal centre and they have to do their own cooking in their rooms. Their fuel allowance is small and uncertain, but they can get a bath at the camp, once a week, and usually can wash their clothes once a month. The woman representative was obviously overworked and tired and told us that she continually has to deal with complaints in the camp and has no chance of removing them. She said that she thought that a man could stand the strain of her job better than a woman could do. As we were going, she mentioned almost casually that many of the refugees in this camp had V.D. and T.B. and because of lack of accommodation in hospitals and sanatoriums, they were living in the same rooms as the other refugees. Tom Joseph immediately asked her if this had been reported to the Local Health Authorities, and she said that this was outside 'her term of reference'. We suggested that by rearrangements, some of the rooms of the camp could be used as Sick Bay. On leaving the camp we immediately went to the Local Authority and reported what the woman had said. As this camp was about to be handed over to the Guides, little immediate action could be taken, but the matter was left so that the guides would be able to investigate the possibilities of getting something done. It seemed to me an instance which demonstrated the value of having these camps visited by relief workers. It was obvious the Germans themselves, either did not know how to remedy the situation nor had not the energy to do so, whereas the relief worker had both the information and energy, and what is even more, the status to approach the authorities concerned. This had also demonstrated the vast amount of travelling which the Schleswig team has to do each day, before it comes to grips with actual jobs. The area which it covers is so vast that the transport is strained to its utmost limits and the vast amount of travelling done by each member of the team, does undoubtedly make the job a very arduous one.

#### **TUESDAY, Jan. 14th.**

Set out after breakfast with Douglas Treadwell and we visited, first a doctor in charge of the Health services of all refugee camps in this particular Kreis. A woman in one of the refugee camps, who was expecting to go to hospital shortly for an operation, had explained to Douglas that when she had gone to hospital previously, her six children had not been looked after properly, in her absence. Douglas wanted to find out, what facilities were available in such cases, but it was very obvious from the beginning that the doctor interpreted any requests for information as a criticism of his work. He was as well as being in charge of the administration, the TB specialist and we learned afterwards that his son had TB. He was, I should imagine, a fairly typical example of a conscientious man, being driven to the very limit of his power by overwork and overstrain. After a somewhat inconclusive interview, we left to visit some of the camps, and Douglas planned to invite the doctor to dinner with the team in order to secure more co-operative attitude from him. We visited one camp to see if they had constructed a proper lavatory. This camp was a group of rather dilapidated huts, and when it had been visited previously, the lavatory had been neglected and was potentially a danger to health. We found that the suggestions made at the previous visit had been carried out, and then went inside to see the mother previously mentioned, who expected to be going to hospital.

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This camp was a bad one. The room was dirty; she lived in it with her six children, four of whom were in bed, presumably because of the cold and the lack of warm clothing. They had few blankets, what they had were very dirty. They complained of lice and bugs. There were signs that confirmed the presence of

bugs and Douglas noted that the room should be disinfected. As we were leaving this camp, a woman called us into her room, which was much cleaner than the first we visited, and showed us a window which was broken and extremely draughty. She also complained that her children caught lice in the camp and her daughter had Scabies. She had few blankets, but had been unsuccessful in her application for more of the. This camp had no leader, but a man who lived outside, a builder, acted as their representative. We went over to see him and he knew nothing about any of the children at the camp having scabies, he said and he obviously was not the type of person who could take up such matters, with the Local Authorities. I gathered that his job was to help in the repair and reconstruction of the camp. While we were in his room, a girl knocked at the door, and asked us if we would see her. She was in her early twenties and spoke good English. She said that she wanted fuel for stove, which was a large one, and because she had gone with a British soldier, the people in the village, did not give her any. We discovered that she had had her ration and that she was really asking for more. She said that she needed this, because she was too young to go to bed every night at 6 pm, but we were unable to do anything, beyond advising her to see if she could get her stove altered.

We then located at the Local office, the whereabouts of camps which had not yet been visited by any of the relief workers. The first job on getting to a camp was to fill in a questionnaire getting information about the total number of families living in the camp, type of buildings and the condition of the camp generally and a note of the more obvious needs of the people. The numbers of the camps vary from a few families to some hundreds of people and the type of accommodation is also considerably varied. At one of these new camps that we visited we found a mother and her son who had lost an arm in the war; they had been there for nine months and the son had not had work for that time and there was extremely little hope of him finding work that he could do. There are supposed to be some rehabilitation centres for disabled soldiers but they are few in number and there did not seem much hope of helping this family. While some of the refugees naturally make the most of their needs and troubles, this family was quite the reverse, and the only request they made was for one cooking pot and the mother said she could manage if she did not get it.

#### **WEDNESDAY, Jan.15th**

Travelled to Vlotho with Stan Slee, Margaret Hickson and Martin Barnes of the G.I.S. Arrived at Vlotho at 6.15 p.m. Retired to bed at 9.15 after six games of ping pong.

#### **THURSDAY, Jan 16th**

All day was spent at the conference of Unit Leaders engaged on German welfare work. Reports of outstanding activities were given which enabled one to get an over-all picture of the work. During the meeting I noted the following points:

##### Danish Red Cross :

Admiral Bevan announced the good news that the Danish Red Cross had just offered to provide one meal a day for 50.000 children for six months. It is likely that Unit 4 will be involved in part of this scheme, as one of the conditions attached to the offer was that at least 25.000 of the children should come from the North.

##### Operation Swallow :

This concerns the movement of refugees from Poland, and it was reported that two trains arriving on December 16th and December 26th had arrived with respectively 109 cases of frostbite and carrying four dead and 57 cases of frostbite and carrying 16 dead, and three babies were born during this journey. Strong protests have been made to the Polish Government that these trains had been allowed to start during the bad weather, and certain assurances had been given for the future. The trains in question had apparently started before the protests had been made.

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##### Berlin :

It was reported that the feeding scheme with which Beryl Verling-Brown is particularly concerned was ready to be put into operation, and was likely to start very soon. It was reported that 600 people a week were clothed from the clothing store, and that the Unit had obtained some old motor tyres and the Swedish Red Cross shoe-mending scheme had made them up into soles.

#### North Rhine :

Ted Batty, whom I had not seen since Tunmarsh Lane days, gave this report; he said that one of the activities in his area which had been restarted was the Prisoners' Aid Society.

#### Schleswig :

Stan Slee reported that one of the activities of

Unit 4 had been to initiate workshops in the refugee camps. First, the team member endeavoured to find a man in the camp interested, and then tried as far as possible to supply him with tools and materials.

This was extremely difficult and Stan reported that every source, official and unofficial, was being tapped. They had had some success in getting old tools from the Army, but there was a large amount of useful equipment that had belonged to the German Army that still awaited release.

#### IVSP Camps :

It was very pleasant to find that a special report was asked for on the two IVSP international work camps. These have undoubtedly aroused a great deal of interest and support among the other relief Societies. Stan reported on the Schleswig camp, emphasising that although the job had been an urgent one and a substantial amount of fuel had been supplied to the Island of Amrum, where people had been dying of cold, the other purpose of the camp was to promote international understanding and co-operation, and seven nationalities had worked together, including German from three zones.

#### Work for the Blind:

A Salvation Army member reported on the efforts being made to secure books in Braille in German. A fair supply was not available and relief teams would be able to draw from a central library.

#### Vagrant Youth :

An F.R.S. member in Hanover made a report on this problem. It appeared that in Hanover there were estimates that the number of vagrant youths ran into some thousands. Efforts had been made to deal with these through youth organisations, and a German organisation whose title, literally translated was "Youth Helps Youth" had been formed and plans for a permanent forestry scheme for boys had been completed, but a suitable German who would act as Leader had not yet been found.

#### Berlin - Educational project:

A member of the Salvation Army team outlined the scheme which is familiar to those who have been following the progress of Unit 5. She recounted how the three teams in Berlin had built up a number of groups of young Germans who met in the respective billets of the teams. They felt it most important to consolidate these groups and to leave behind them when the time came for withdrawal, some sort of centre where this work could carry on. They had therefore put forward a plan to the authorities to be allowed to obtain two houses, which would be divided into small rooms for discussions, and with some larger rooms for film shows etc., and which would have a library and a quiet room. They felt that with such a centre they could concentrate on the contacts that they had already made and discuss in a quiet atmosphere the problems which are concerning German youth in Berlin. They felt that eventually this centre would be a training ground and from it would go Germans equipped to start similar ventures elsewhere. They were waiting to hear the result of their application and had some hopes that it would be favourably received.

#### Welfare Committee:

Betty Dinwiddy gave a short report on the Welfare Committee set up by the three teams and described their plans for issuing clothing to returning prisoners of War from the Russian Zone.

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They had called a meeting in their billets of all German voluntary Societies concerned with this problem and had found that this informal method of contacting the Societies had proved more effective than the method of the Military Government, where the Germans concerned had to leave the room after they had stated their case or answered questions.

#### Brigadier Robinson :

who was the Chairman of the Commerce Committee of the Control Commission in Germany, was the guest speaker, and gave a most lucid and brilliant survey of the financial position of Germany. His remarks were 'off the record', but both Charles Balchim and Stan Slee used question time to full advantage on problems connected with their work.

#### D.P. Work :

Admiral Bevan has recently been concerned with linking up German welfare and D.P. work and to this end invited a member of F.R.S. engaged on D.P. work to speak to the German welfare leaders. She said that in the three zones there were now 800.000 D.P.'s, and of these 200.000 would be eventually repatriated. There were roughly four classes of D.P.'s

- (1) Forced Labourers (usually Poles);
- (2) Prisoners of War (usually Yugo-Slavs);
- (3) Balts;
- (4) Other groups, such as ex-enemy nationals, e.g. Hungarians.

She gave a very vivid account of the problems and life which D.P.'s were living, and particularly dwelt on the need for understanding the mental attitude of D.P.'s, and to remember the extenuating circumstances. One heard of various acts of violence and misbehaviour on their part.

#### Juvenile Delinquency :

Hugh Moore of the F.R.S. team in Berlin, who had been conducting a survey of juvenile delinquency there, then gave a most interesting talk on the results of his survey. He said that in pre-war days there had been an average of 3.000 cases of juvenile delinquency a year. During the War this had risen to 9.000 cases, and since the War the figure had been estimated at 36.000 cases. 80% of the delinquents worked in gangs, and the offences ranged from poverty thefts (60%), adventure Thefts - stealing cars etc. - sexual offences - mostly girls -, and the habitual offenders. 15 murders had been committed by boys between the ages of 14 to 18 in two months.

Hugh Moore stressed the causes of the increase in delinquency, which were deep-rooted and, he thought, many sided. The breakdown, first of capitalism and then socialism, followed by the Nazi system of control which tended to take a lot of power away from the parents, and all of this followed by the break-up of family life during the War. The most immediate cause, he felt however, was the break-up of family life. Of 200 delinquents whose cases had been gone into while they were serving prison sentences, only 12 were living with both parents.

One of the results of over-crowding was the spread in V.D., and it was estimated that 80% of all youth suffered from some form of V.D. and 4.000 new cases were reported per month, 45% of whom were young people. The mental attitude of youth was reflected in the fact that there are 90 youth suicides per month in Berlin.

This remedies for this state of affairs lie in the return of national stability, which would bring with it regular work and security to the individuals; a united policy for all zones and sectors; more relief and better housing. In the meantime it was necessary to make the fact known to responsible Germans, to provide as many occupational facilities for youth as possible, and to try to get a central representative German Committee interested in fighting the problem.

Hugh Moore was followed by Miss Dodds of the Control Commission who was carrying out a survey of approved Schools in the British zone. She gave a most interesting account of the methods in the German schools which she had visited, and said that the conditions varied tremendously from district to district; some were comparatively progressive and others very much the reverse. It was hoped that conditions would be improved and a uniform policy adopted.

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#### Future Policy :

Finally, Admiral Bevan told the meeting of his discussions with the Control Commission, which I have reported elsewhere. Basil Eastland, Betty Dinwiddy and I left Vlotho at 9.30 pm to catch the night train to Berlin, together with members of the F.R.S. and the Salvation Army teams.

#### **FRIDAY, January 17th.**

7.30 arrived in Berlin and reached the Unit billet in time for breakfast, after which I went with Basil and Betty Dinwiddy to the clothing store where Reg Thickins is in command. The cases which come

to them for clothes are passed on by the German Voluntary Societies, and this clothing store is run in conjunction with the Salvation Army store, and a double check is kept to ensure that the stores do not clothe the same person twice. Reg emphasised the help which the clothing store had received from the parcels sent out from England, the particular need seemed to be for shoes. After leaving the clothing store, we motored around Berlin for a short while, visiting the Chancellery, and after lunch, I went with Alan Robertson to visit the shoe repairing service organised by the Swedish Red Cross. The Berlin team is working with Swedish Red Cross, both on the students feeding scheme and on this shoe repairing service. The service was in the charge of a Swede, but about 30 Germans, most of them young boys, are engaged on repairing and soling shoes and boots, the leather being sent from Sweden. The Unit had recently secured some old motor tyres, from the Army and these have been made up into soles and we collected the boots and shoes and took them round to Reg Thickins at the clothing store.

The evening there was a meeting of the Berlin IVSP group and here again the enthusiasm of the German IVSP Branch was shown in so far as about 50 Germans turned up, most of them under 20, but the meeting did include some older friends including Erich Mohr. Basil spoke on the work camps and Bruno, one of their representatives of the German Committee, who had been at Schleswig, also gave us his impressions. I spoke on some of the developments which we had seen on Foreign Service and letters of greetings were sent from the Berlin Group to the Italian Branch, to Switzerland and to the London Group. It was quite obvious from the number of individuals who enquired, and from the expressions of the whole meeting, when I mentioned Douglas Sowerby's name, what a tremendous impression he has made on the Germans in Berlin.

#### **SATURDAY, January 18th.**

After breakfast, we had a Unit meeting, a report of which is given elsewhere, and after that I visited the head of the Swedish Red X, Captain De Geer with Betty Dinwiddy. In the afternoon Basil and I interviewed Herrn Bächer, who was associated with an organisation called Technische Nothilfe. He and a friend had previously called on the Unit saying that their organisation which existed to bring together technicians who would help on the scene of any catastrophe and emergency, had been refused permission to restart, as it had been taken over by the Nazis; having heard of the IVSP, they wondered if there was an opportunity for their members to join IVSP 'enbloc'. Basil and I had a long talk with him, with Ernst Hoffman as interpreter and Basil came to the conclusion that he was sincerely interested in service and when the differences between the two organisations were explained to him, he appreciated them. When he heard that there was a German IVSP group in Berlin, he asked if he could recommend it to any young people that he knew might be interested and as he was master-builder himself, he offered his service as technical adviser if he could ever be of service to the Units or German IVSP in that direction.

In the evening we and the whole Unit went to see 'Night Must Fall' at the forces theatre.

#### **SUNDAY, January 19th.**

I delayed returning for an extra day, in order to take part in the fortnightly 'stump-grubbing' service organised by the Unit and Berlin Group. I was exceedingly glad that I did, for this experience and the enthusiasm and hard work put in by the group, provided a very inspiring experience, with which to end the tour, which inevitably brings one face to face with so much misery and frustration. At 9 am, about 30 young people gathered together, at the Unit Billet and we were transported to the scene of operation in the 3 tonner. Some individuals brought their own tools, others were provided by the 3 relief Units. We arrived at some open country, not far from the billet, where a number of trees had been previously cut down.

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The job was to dig out the stumps and transport them to some old peoples homes, where they would be used for fuel. To uproot a tree, meant digging down for a depth of three or four feet and pulling out from the whole the stump, which often needed three or four people to shift. This work went on with a short break for a sandwich lunch, until 4 pm, when well over 20 stumps had been lifted and loaded on to the transport. This day's work must have provided some days of fuel, much needed by old people. We returned to the billet, where everybody had hot soup and the evening ended with some songs.

At 9.15, Basil and I were taken to the station for our return to Vlotho.



**MONDAY, 20th January.**

We arrived at Vlotho at 8 am, in time for breakfast and had a final discussion about all points which had arisen. I was unable to see Admiral Bevan, before I left as he was out, but I saw Miss Cormack, who told me that the Control Commission enquiry about cutting down personnel, now appeared to be more unofficial and informal than it was at first thought. She asked me if I thought there was a need for some sort of Advise Bureau for returning volunteers who wanted to go into Social work. I told her that I thought this would meet a great need and I gathered that COBSRA would be taking this point up. I left Vlotho at 4 pm to catch the Rhine Army Special train.

**TUESDAY, January 21st.**

Arrived Victoria 3 pm

Derek Edwards, 29.1.47