

- B E R L I N V I S I T -MARCH 12 - 17, 1949OBJECTS OF VISIT

To discuss arrangements for the pulling out of the IVSP team at the end of March and to study the situation and needs of the IZD Group and its plans for the summer.

THE DIARY

Saturday	March 12.	Leave Duisburg 07.42 Arrive Berlin Billet about 21.30
Sunday	March 13.	Morning : Recovering from journey. Afternoon : Motor trip to Russian Sector with Nan and Reg. Evening : Visit to Jugendhaus with Nan and Reg.
Monday	March 14.	Morning : Visits to CCG offices with Reg. Afternoon : Clerical work. Evening : Discussed equipment, etc., with Reg.
Tuesday	March 15.	Morning : Joint meeting of Berlin Relief Teams. Afternoon : Visits to CCG office with Reg. Evening : Visit with Pegeen to Franzkowiak's house for singing evening with some IZD members.
Wednesday	March 16.	Morning : Visit with Reg and Dieter Hartwich to assistant Youth Officer, British Zone, for advice on Registration of IZD in Berlin. Talk with Dieter. Afternoon : Visit to Nachbarschaftsheim with Reg. Evening : Visit with Reg to Cinema.
Thursday	March 17.	Leave Billet 10.00 Arrive Duisburg 21.00

It will be convenient to report, not chronologically, but under the following headings :

- General impressions of Berlin
- Team business
- Nachbarschaftsheim
- Jugendhof
- IZD business.

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS OF BERLIN

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If you continue your drive eastwards you find yourself in the Russian Sector. Recovering quickly from your surprise - and perhaps a little disappointed - you look around for a Russian. You do eventually see someone in unfamiliar uniform, but he might just as well be a German policeman for all you know. You are now in Unter den Linden, and many of the famous buildings are close by; but they are all in sad condition. A little farther east the industrial area begins; it has the same monotonous blocks of flats as the western portion, but is more dilapidated and dismal - not a dismal, however, as London's East End.

Travel between the east and west Sectors is free to all, but Germans are not allowed to bring goods out of the Russian Sector. Parcels of outgoing pedestrians or passengers are examined at the border. Many people live in the east and work in the west - and vice versa. At present both East- and Westmarks are accepted in the Western Sectors; but Eastmarks will probably soon be banned. Since the exchange rate, theoretically equal, is three or Eastmarks to one Westmark, the person who works in the east Sector and lives in the west will be badly hit : he cannot buy goods in the Russian Sector and bring them over; and if he exchange his money his wage drops to a third or a quarter of its value.

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### THE IZD GROUP

The Berlin IZD Group members about 60, of whom some 30 are active members. The average age is very low. There is a nucleus of sound, enthusiastic leaders, but these are mostly students with other demands on their time. For this and other reasons mentioned later the German Branch and, indeed, the whole of SCI has special obligations towards the Group.

The withdrawal of the IVSP team makes it essential that the group shall be registered with the authorities, Civil and Military, as an approved society: otherwise its activities will be completely illegal.

This was made clear at the interview with Miss Joan Bullinger, assistant to Mr. Berenson, Youth Officer of the British Sector. Application has already been made for registration in the British Zone (i.e. Western Germany) and the Berlin Group will apply very shortly for registration in whole of Western Berlin (i.e. the three Sectors simultaneously). I asked Miss Bullinger if there was any danger that the Russian authorities would be prejudiced against IZD if it were officially authorised by the western powers, and if any difficulties would result to the Group members who live in the Russian Sector. Her opinion was that the mere act of registration was not likely to have much effect on whatever opinion was already held. It was, she thought, not advisable, to send literature into the Russian Sector or the Russian Zone, and one should be careful what was mentioned in letters. Reg said that certain people who had received letters referring to IZD had been questioned by the police in the Russian Zone. As an illustration of the difficulties of working in the Russian Zone, Reg mentioned that the German Quakers must carry on their welfare work through an organisation which includes various religious and political groups but which is, naturally, strongly under communist influence. They are allowed to distribute food supplied by foreign Quakers and to announce its origin.

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From the SCI point of view, two complementary things struck me during the visit : firstly, that we outside know very little of the difficulties of the Berlin Group; secondly, that the Berlin Group does not know as much as it should about the events in the outside work-camp world. The same is true, I am sure, of every Group in every country; but, whereas other groups may be left to their own and the secretariats' devices, Berlin's problems cannot be completely solved even by the concerted action of all Branches, let alone by IZD alone. If it does happen that Berlin becomes part of the Russian Zone our little Group may be the light of SCI shining in the wilderness - and who can say that it might not, at some time of crisis, be the little extra weight that turns the scale in the right direction? Berlin is one of our outposts, and it is up to us to see that the garrison does not run short of ammunition.

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Bill Bowman

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