

Report of Conference of three German relief teams held
on Sunday, 22nd August, 1948, at H.Q.5., Vlotho

Present : John Harvey, Chairman, I.V.S.P.
Heinrich Carstens, Chairman, I.Z.D.
Bill Bowman, Senior Representative

Unit 4 (*Schleswig*)
Edith Thompson, Section Leader
Bill Forse,
Peggy Milne,
Douglas Treadwell,
Jim Tapp,
Fred Deutsch.

Unit 5 (*Berlin*)
Pegeen Morris,
Norman Stanley-Grace.

Unit 7 (*Duisburg*)
Elsie Gainham, Section Leader,
Eileen Tailor,
Keith Bywaters,
Monica Clipstone.

Bill welcomed John Harvey and Heinrich Carstens and said that he had received a telegram of greetings from Derek who sent us best wishes for a successful conference.

John said that he brought greetings from I.V.S.P. to all team members and to Heinrich and the I.Z.D. He himself welcomed the opportunity of meeting the teams together and of seeing something of their work.

1.

Future of the Teams

Bill drew attention to the fact that by the end of September all the teams would be reduced in strength and there was only one possible replacement (male). In order to get a clear picture of the situation, he asked each team leader to state how many members of the team were willing to stay on until the end of March and what was considered to be the minimum number of personnel required for each team.

Edith said that six members of the Schleswig team - three men and three women - were prepared to stay until the end of March. In view of the large area to be covered, it was felt that the team should not be reduced to less than six members.

In reply to a suggestion from Bill that there might be some reduction in the area covered by the team, Edith said that the team would not wish to do that as there was need for our work in every part of the area. Also it was unlikely that C.B.S.R.A. would put in another team if 109 withdrew or would transfer any part of the area to either of the other two C.B.S.R.A. teams since they were both covering fairly large areas already.

Pegeen said that the present strength of the Berlin team was four - two men and two women - and these four were prepared to stay on until next March. This was felt to be the minimum number of personnel to carry on the work at its present level. The team were strongly of the opinion that, in the prevailing circumstances, every effort should be made to retain a team in Berlin. A number of British people had already left Berlin and it would have a bad psychological effect if the team withdraw altogether. The Salvation Army and Quaker teams with whom Unit 5 were working had been reduced to four and two members respectively.

With regard to Unit 7, Elsie said that three members - herself, Eileen and Monica - were prepared to stay on until next March. They felt that, to carry out their present work as a team, they required a minimum of four members (the forth to be, preferably, a man), but that it would be better to carry on with even a reduced personnel than that the work should cease altogether in Duisburg.

Bill suggested that perhaps a man could be spared from the Schleswig team to go to Duisburg in case the new replacement did not materialise.

Edith said that this would make the position in Schleswig very difficult and Jim said that he had only agreed to stay on in Schleswig until next March because he felt that it was hardly worth while getting a new replacement to take over the work in his Kreis for six months only.

Elsie said that she did not wish to take a man from another team, as she fully realised the difficulties; rather than do that, Unit 7 would manage without a man. Both Eileen and Monica agreed to this.

After some general discussion on the point, it was finally agreed that the teams should remain as they are until next March, i.e. Berlin - 4, Schleswig - 6, Duisburg - 3. If the male replacement mentioned by Bill decided to switch over to I.V.S.P. (he was already in Germany) he would be sent to Duisburg. If any fresh replacement were forthcoming in England, Derek should be asked to send only such volunteers who were very adaptable and likely to be of some use in the teams within the next six months.

Bill said that he would make some enquiries as to the likelihood of other C.B.S.R.A. teams taking over the work from us at the end of March. If this was unlikely, it would mean that the teams would have to make arrangements to hand over the whole of their work to Germans.

Elsie asked if Bill would obtain some guidance from Derek as to which items of the teams' equipment could be left in Germany e.g. whether camp beds, etc. could be handed over to I.Z.D.

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6.
I.Z.D.

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With regard to the situation in Berlin, John said that every attempt made to further I.Z.D. activities in the Eastern sector of the city had failed and he felt that there could be no possible hope of future success in this direction if the organisation refused to have its members de-Nazified.

Heinrich asked Pegeen whether the registration of the Berlin group as an officially recognised body would help them in contacting the Russians.

Pegeen said that the group wanted to get a licence in the Western sector; if they did not get a licence, they would be working illegally and there had recently been a considerable tightening up on all illegal organisations.

Heinrich pointed out that everything done in Berlin had been done with the full consent of the Education Branch of C.C.G. with whom good relations had been established.

Edith suggested that the whole matter might be discussed by John with Education Branch officials during his forthcoming visit to Berlin, and John readily undertook to do this.

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