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UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION

HEADQUARTERS, DISPLACED PERSONS OPERATIONS

HOTEL MAJESTIC - AVENUE KLEBER - PARIS-16*

TELEPHONE : KLE 36-00

27th March 1947.

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Henry
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Major General Lowell Rooks,
Director General,
UNRRA Headquarters,
1344, Connecticut Avenue, N.W.,
WASHINGTON D.C.

For the Attention of Bureau of Services.

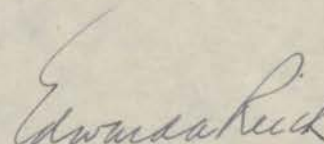
Dear General Rooks,

SUBJECT: CHILD WELFARE FIELD WORKERS REPORTS.

In reply to your cable No 2257, dated 14th March 1947, and in accordance with our cable No 1725, dated 20th March 1947, please find enclosed a few Field Workers Reports from the British Zone of Germany.

These are the only reports which we have which are immediately available. We have requested, however, additional reports from Germany and from Austria.

Sincerely yours,



EDWARD A. REICH,
Chief, Division of D.P. Care,
for Myer Cohen,
Acting Chief
Displaced Persons Operations.

encls:

ER/mmg

British Zone
22 October, 1946.

UNRA CHILDREN'S HOME → FISSAU.

This report is based on a six weeks period- from 16 September to 22 October. During this period an opportunity was had to study conditions in the Children's Home and observe and study each of the children individually. This report gives my general impressions and observations of the children as a group.

There are 129 children registered in the home. During the period that the children were studied about an average of 40 children were in the hospital at any one time. Of the 129 children only 15 are girls. The children speak Latvian exclusively, and therefore direct observation of the children was the main technique used in studying the individual and the group. Teachers and nursemaids at times acted as interpreters. The age of the children ranges from 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ to 10 years.

At the time that the children first came to the home at Malente they were divided into eight groups. The division seems to have been made by the Latvian directress serving the home at the time. The basis of the division is not clear, but one might conclude that only chronological age and physical development were considered. These eight groups still remain the basis for the children's school classes, play groups, and living groups. A nursemaid and a teacher were assigned to each group, and these two persons were responsible for sharing between them the supervision of the child's complete day. The mental levels and the response of the children to learning varied greatly within each group. Thus in all of the eight groups were children who were very much behind the rest of the group in school classes, general ability and interests. This mixture tended to retard the progress of all groups both in the school class and elsewhere. However, with the hiring of a Latvian teacher who is reputed to have experience in teaching backward children, a beginning was made to redivide the children on a basis that would facilitate the education. This plan was stopped before it could be put into operation because of plans to move the children to other homes.

The daily program of the Child is carefully scheduled. Up in the morning; washing and dressing; breakfast; school; cocoa; school dinner; rest period; free play; tea free play; supper bathing and getting ready for bed; bed. This schedule operates smoothly and orderly. The main objection to the daily program is that the child has no element of choice in any of this daily activities. He constantly follows the group to which he has always belonged since the first came to the home. He is always, with very few exceptions, under the direct supervision of his nursemaids or teachers. Thus the child's existence becomes highly routinized without the counterbalance or allowing the child to make a choice in some of his activities. Always the child is tied to his particular group from which he gets no escape. It would seem advisable to have the free time activities divided into various types of play and pleasurable past times and to have one teacher or nursemaid in charge of each activity. The child should then be allowed to participate in any one of the activities as he chooses.

The institution has been slowly relaxing some of the restraining routine. This change began apparently long before the children were moved from the Malente to the Fissau building. At one time the instruction had been given to have all the groups of children marched into the dining room in pairs and hand in hand. Some of the groups still do this. At least one group maintains almost complete silence in the dining room; the other groups are more free and natural in talking.

There has been some discord and disharmony within the staff of the home. This has resulted, of course, in frequent misunderstandings in many ways the progress that might have been made.

In general the buildings at Fissau that have been used as a children's home are good. One of the main objections is that it is too large and does not permit a homelike atmosphere. The dining room, although light and airy, has long rows of tables giving a distinct institutional appearance. The bedrooms are good because they each accommodate only a few children thus allowing for semi-privacy and do away with a dormitory arrangement. A very serious lack is that no room has been set aside as a playroom for the children. On a wet or cold day when the children must play indoors they are obliged to use their school class-rooms. This situation could have been remedied by a rearrangement in the

use of space. The outdoor playground is a large yard adjacent to the main building. This yard is also used for the motor transport. The playground equipment had consisted of only a Maypole, but recently a swing was suspended from a tree. The area surrounding the home offered many opportunities for interesting walks by the lake or through small wooded groves. The various groups of children were taken on such walks by their teachers or nurse-aids. The older boys groups were occasionally conducted on hikes by a man who was to plan some special activities for the children. Within the past week a workshop has been opened (for the children,) where the older boys could construct simple things.

Accident hazards are the lake directly opposite the home and the four-floor open stairwell within the main building. Thus far neither of these has resulted in any mishap.

School classes have only been conducted in the morning since the children's home was placed on a convalescent basis two months ago. Some of the teachers are said to have teachers training and experience in Latvia. The teaching methods of all the teachers are extremely backward. Most of the time in classes is spent in learning the phonetic sounds of each letter of the alphabet and on simple arithmetic with the child using his fingers or a set of blocks to work out even the most simple calculations. As a result the most advanced pupil is capable of only writing his name, laboriously reading simple words, and doing only the most elementary calculations. The Latvian teachers try to explain the condition by declaring that northern children have a slower developmental rate. Discipline in the class room is frequently difficult to maintain. The child's ability to do work of a certain level was not considered in dividing the total group into classes, the teacher is the same person who is in charge of the children during much of their free time and the class rooms are also used as playrooms during other parts of the day.

The lack of testing material and the fact that the children speak only Latvian has made the study of comparative intelligence of the children difficult. It has been necessary to rely upon careful observation of the child during the whole day and in as many different circumstances as possible. The observations were then compared with the judgements of the teachers. It is hoped that a few simple tests might be devised and used as further bases of learning the child's mental level. From the evidence now at hand it would seem that in general the entire group is slightly below average mentally. This may be due largely to the retarded physical development and undernourishment that the children suffered during their early years. There is no case of extreme low intelligence. Of the children at present in the home (this excludes those who have been in the hospital and therefore not studied) the lowest in intelligence could only be classified as borderline feeble-minded. The highest could only be considered as slightly above the usual norm. Thus the range of mental abilities is not very great.

The play behaviour of the children is extremely retarded. They are able to get along with one another without much open conflict, but their play activities are comparable to those of three year old children. The children play beside each other but not with each other. They do not respond to organized play which involves taking turns or team cooperation. On the playground the children run or wander around the yard alone. Occasionally two and seldom three children are seen participating in the same play. Spontaneous play on a group basis is entirely unknown. Very little effort has been made to teach the children to play. The teachers report that the children have not the interest to continue to play the games that have been demonstrated to them. Since this group of children have been together through most of their lives they have not any variety of experiences by which they can learn from each other, nor do they have an opportunity to meet children from outside of their group. These children, while they remain together, need not only leadership in play in which the participation of the child is voluntary, but also play equipment which will suggest play to the children and stimulate his interest and imagination. Best would be an opportunity for them to have contact with other children whose training and experience are different.

The children seem better adapted to indoor play of an individual nature such as modelling with plasticine and drawing. They seldom can remain at any one activity for any length of time.

The children's response to adults is, at times, almost violent. These children seem to have a deep and unmet need for acceptance and affection that they literally hang on

to an adult who pays them the least attention. It is not all rare to have the extreme of one adult completely surrounded and overpowered by as many as eight or nine children who cling tenaciously and refuse to release their grasps. Another child may be crying because he can not work his way in to get his own grasp upon the clothing or the person of the adult. Such behaviour is directed mostly toward those adults who are not with the children during much of the day.

The general behaviour of the children is not of happy and contented children. This is indicated by their behaviour and possibly also by their failure to make appreciable gains in weight even with a hospital ration and good physical care.

Generally the children are not given to much misbehaviour. This seems to be due mainly to submission of the children to the routinized existence. A release of controls and routine has been followed not so much by misdeeds as by excited and emotional behaviour.

Discipline of the children has to be handled through the nursemaids and teachers. The forms of disciplinary action which has been accepted in the Home included "standing in corner", "with holding treats", and a third vaguely called "psychological". The entire approach to misbehaviour has been punitive forms of discipline. No forms of corporeal punishment are known to exist; it was rumored but not verified that some children were slapped for misbehaving. Scolding and shaming is evident but not common with all those that have a part in disciplining the children. Withholding of treats is usually so removed in time and character from the offense committed that the use of this method has been particularly ineffective and frequently does more harm than good. So far it has been difficult for the staff to grasp the idea that discipline when used should be constructive teaching and that the child should learn the consequences of the particular misdeed. Temper tantrums have been treated in the same way as misbehaviour and with an equal lack in success.

Rewards have been used for the best behaved table during the week, prizes for a drawing contest, and a few other special competitions. The children react very badly towards rewards; those who do not win break into tears. The purpose of the reward is lost as through it the children only emphasize winning. It has been recommended that rewards be used only to the extent that the group will be stimulated to better performance or interest, that those unable to win do not suffer and that the winning of the prize does not become the goal that overshadows the game.

Some of the children who are subject to temper tantrums and crying also exhibit a rhythmic body swaying during their spells of emotional outbursts. This swaying is of the whole body, is regular, and lasts as long as one half hour. During the same time the child may be screaming or sobbing loudly. This appears to be symptomatic of a greatly disturbed child. Enuresis is prevalent in the same children that give other symptoms of emotional disturbance and unhappiness. Night tossing and nightmares are found in only a few cases. It is reported that all these forms of symptomatic behaviour are much less common at present than they were a few months ago. The incidence is probably decreasing slowly.

The children are well trained in daily living habits. They are able to dress satisfactorily. It would seem that routine habit training has been well accomplished. The children are also well mannered and clean in their eating habits.

There has always been, apparently, a lack of cooperation of the staff with the health section of the home. After the children were all found to be in very poor physical condition and the home put on a convalescent basis, the health program should have been of primary importance. There still continued to exist an attitude of distrust and suspicion to the entire health program. This attitude extended not only to the nursing staff within the home, but also to the visiting physicians who periodically examined the children.

At times this was carried to the extreme of questioning and criticizing the diagnosis and treatment of cases.

The children still now marked signs of their early history during the war and their flight from Latvia. They still show manifestations of early and extreme undernourishment, such as Knock-knees, Pot-bellies, and flat chests.

The children have been on hospital rations since the home was placed on a convalescent basis almost two months ago. The food at present is very good both from the standpoints of quality and quantity. In addition the children receive a sizable amount of sweets and chocolate.

Although the children are recorded of being of various religious denominations, they are all grouped together for religious instructions. The reason given is that such arrangements is "easier". It may not be possible to arrange for the religious needs of the various denominations represented, but until now no effort has been made, to do so. Beneath this seems to be a proselytizing intention in operation at the present time.

The clothing of the children appears to be good and reasonably adequate. The only real lack is a supply of shoes. If shoes are not forthcoming some of the children will not have shoes for winter wear. A sewing staff makes clothing for the children as well as doing alterations and major repairs. Minor clothing repairs are done by the nursemaids of each group who also have responsibility to see that the children are properly dressed. The nursemaids seem to take pride in the appearance of the children in the group.

Recently each child was issued a bag to tie to the foot of his bed and in which he could keep his personal belongings. This is the first experience the children have with private property. Until now he has lived a completely regulated and communal existence. The available cupboard space has necessitated that the child's clothing for the day must be handed to him by his nursemaid. The idea of personal property is still very strange to the children, but some of them are slowly comprehending the concept. Stealing between children has not been considered by the children to be a problem since no child felt that he really owned anything. Few cases have been reported of children stealing from adults, but here is no difficulty to determine how much of this due to a lack of understanding of property.

There has been a resistance on the part of the staff toward supervision or advice from persons outside the home regardless of agency represented. Suggestions and recommendations have usually been regarded as interference and criticism thus causing the staff to become defensive. This is unfortunate as this home, as any institution, could profit greatly from the help available to them from qualified consultants (from) and those who could bring a fresh point of view and a new perspective.

The children are greatly in need of a program or type of care in which they can get recognition as an individual rather than being constantly a part of a group. Some of the children present personality and behaviour problems which will require the services of a trained and qualified case worker. These cases show a hopeful prognosis because in most of the cases the symptoms seem to be manifestation of the child's need for recognition and self-expression. If methods are employed to allow the child to satisfy these needs many of the present problems would no longer exist.

The plan for the immediate future is to divide the children among three other children's homes. The basis for the division of the group is the placeability in a foster home. Thus the first group is composed of 32 children who could likely go into a foster home immediately or in the near future. The third group are those who are not to be placeable for some time to come due to low intelligence, difficult behaviour, or special health needs. The second group of children will include all those who do not belong in either of the other two groups at present. It is hoped that an opportunity will be had to continue to study the individual children especially if permanent foster home care will be considered as the long time plan for the children. It is anticipated that the division of the children into three homes will result in progress through a more individualized program for the children.

22 October 1946

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go into a foster home immediately or in the near future. The third group are those who are not to be placeable for some time to come due to low intelligence, difficult behavior, or special health needs. The second group of children will include all those who do not belong in either of the other two groups at present. It is hoped that an opportunity will be had to continue to study the individual children especially if permanent foster home care will be considered as the long time plan for the children. It is anticipated that the division of the children into three homes will result in progress through a more individualized program for the children.

PREPARED BY

EDWARD W. FRANCEL, UNRRA WELF. OFFR.

12/7/45

UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION
European Regional Office

PROBLEM OF DISPLACED CHILDREN IN GERMANY

- prepared by *Heinz Zimmermann*
12 July 1945

Since the liberation of the displaced persons in Germany, the concern of the military has been to repatriate as expeditiously as possible all persons who could be returned to their countries. For the past few months the activity of the military and of the UNRRA staff in assembly centres has, to a large extent been centred around the establishment of camps, their operation, the problem of meeting the needs of an ever constantly changing population, and most important of all, the repatriation of displaced persons in their country of nationality. The magnitude of this work is indicated in the SHAEF report of the 18th June which shows that of 5,684,135 displaced persons in Germany, by 18th June, 3,085,726 were repatriated leaving a total of 2,598,409 persons for whom assistance is being provided.

Due to the constant change of population in the camps and the resultant pressure of work there was of necessity limited registration of the persons within the camps. In those camps where there are UNRRA teams some registration was accomplished in the face of great difficulties. In preparation of this programme for displaced persons SHAEF drew up a statistical report which was to be completed during this period submitted by each camp to SHAEF Headquarters, such report to give information regarding the composition of the persons in the camps. These reports were not completed during this period, nor were they required in view of the unusual pressures. We therefore have had no specific information as to the overall numbers of children in camps and the degree to which these are unidentified or accompanied by their parents. For any information we have had to rely on sporadic reports received from UNRRA personnel in camps and reports on visits to the camps of representatives from ERO, our Central Headquarters at SHAEF, and staff in Area levels. The difficulty of securing reports has been further increased by the lack of communication and transport facilities. However, from the information which we have received there may be considerable numbers of children in family groups in assembly centres, but the number of unidentified children appear to be extremely small. SHAEF Headquarters are at present securing figures of the numbers, age groups, and status of children in the camps, which information will be completed shortly and is to be made available to the ERO.

Reports which our Welfare Officers have been forwarding to us from the assembly centres have shown that they are cognisant of child welfare problems and in those centres where there is some degree of stability, the Welfare Officers have concerned themselves with such services as living arrangements for children, special foods, schools, nurseries and playgrounds. The "Digest of Information contained in personal reports and private letters received from officers in the field - Prepared by Welfare Division ERO", which has been forwarded to you by the Welfare Division, gives some indication of the activities of welfare workers in this area.

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We will forward to you the report of SHAEF's survey of displaced children in Germany when it has been completed and will submit a further report of our planned programme of child welfare services.

*Draft by Miss
Zimmerman
12/7/45*

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UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION ADMINISTRATION

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Prepared by Miss Zimmerman - 12 July 1944

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Due to the constant change of population in the camps and the resultant pressure of work there was of necessity limited registration of the persons within the camps. In those camps where there are UNRRA teams some registration was accomplished in the face of great difficulties. In preparation of this programme for displaced persons SHAEF drew up a statistical report which was to be submitted by each camp to SHAEF Headquarters, such report to give information regarding the composition of the persons in the camps. These reports were not completed during this period, nor were they required in view of the unusual pressures. We therefore have had no specific information as to the overall numbers of children in camps and the degree to which these are unidentified or accompanied by their parents. For any information we have had to rely on sporadic reports received from UNRRA personnel in camps and reports on visits to the camps of representatives from ERO, our Central Headquarters at SHAEF, and staff in Area levels. The difficulty of securing reports has been further increased by the lack of communication and transport facilities. However, from the information which we have received there may be considerable numbers of children in family groups in assembly centres, but the number of unidentified children appear to be extremely small. SHAEF Headquarters are at present securing figures of the numbers, age groups, and status of children in the camps, which information will be completed shortly and is to be made available to the ERO.

Reports which our Welfare Officers have been forwarding to us from the assembly centres have shown that they are cognisant of child welfare problems and in those centres where there is some degree of stability, the Welfare Officers have concerned themselves with such services as living arrangements for children, special foods, schools, nurseries and playgrounds. The "Digest of Information contained in personal reports and private letters received from officers in the field - Prepared by Welfare Division ERO", which has been forwarded to you by the Welfare Division, gives some indication of the activities of welfare workers in this area.

In the ERO and in our Central Headquarters at SHAEF, we have given consideration to the most effective use of our Child Welfare Specialists. Until we could determine here the need for their services was necessary, they were sent forward in teams to assembly centres to gain first-hand information and experience in relation to the problems of displaced persons. As we became aware of the need of their skill in certain areas, an attempt was made to call forward and assign them to those sections. When it was known that children were found in concentration camps, efforts were made to have SHAEF call forward Child Welfare Specialists for these camps, either as individuals or as members of teams, but the proposal was not acceptable at that time. Later, however, we were able to have assigned a Child Welfare Specialist to the Belzen and Buchenwald concentration camps. To date, of the ten Welfare Officers selected to function in a supervisory capacity on an area level, three have had outstanding experience in the field of child welfare. Another child Welfare Specialist has been operating in the British Zone, 21st Army Group. A detailed analysis of the experience and qualifications of UNRRA Welfare Officers, in relation to child welfare experience, has been made with a view to placement of these individuals in assignments where their special skill is needed. A child Welfare Expert of Great Britain has been recalled from the Middle East and is proceeding to Germany. In the recruitment of Welfare Officers, special consideration has been given to experience in child care.

The reorganisation of the structure of our German Operations for Displaced Persons, in preparation for our assumption of total responsibility is going forward rapidly. Mr. Edward E. Rhatigan (D.D.G., Operations), and Mr. Fletcher C. Kettle (Head of German/Austrian Operations, D.P. Division) have proceeded, as of this date, to Frankfurt where they will take charge of the UNRRA displaced persons activities. They are cognisant of the problem of child welfare which is to receive careful attention. The plan is to have Child Welfare Specialists in all levels of operations. There will be one attached to our Central Headquarters in Germany, one in each of the three Zones and several, depending on the need, in each of the five Districts. The degree to which Welfare Workers experienced in such child care will be assigned to the assembly centres will depend upon the extent of the problem in each centre. The Child Welfare Specialist of the British Ministry of Health is, at the present time, a staff member of the ERO, Welfare Section, D.P. Division, and is in the process of developing a programme of child welfare services for those children who will be receiving assistance from UNRRA on a more permanent basis.

In relation to the registration of unidentified children, a supplementary record card was prepared by the Welfare Division and reviewed by the representatives of the International Red Cross. This card was forwarded to our Welfare representative at SHAEF and it is our understanding that the card is in use at the present time. A simplified version of this card was prepared for the use of UNRRA staff who were assigned to register unidentified children being sent to Sweden as will be described below. Although the numbers of unidentified children in Germany seem relatively small, it has been the policy of SHAEF and UNRRA to find temporary haven in other countries for them as well as for accompanied children. The following is a description of the type of projects of this nature which have been undertaken:-

France The French Government made an offer to SHAEF to give temporary asylum to 1,000 unaccompanied children from concentration camps, and according to our present information less than 500 children have been moved from Buchenwald concentration camp to France under this scheme. These children are said to be mainly 15, 16 and 17 years old Jewish boys and are all said to have been identified. Under the original terms of the agreement with SHAEF, direct UNRRA participation in the scheme was excluded, but the proposal was later amended to the effect that the responsibility of the children so moved would continue to be the responsibility of SHAEF and/or its successor. The

Joint Distribution Committee, through its subsidiary the Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants (O.S.E.) in France, has taken responsibility for the temporary care of these children, and it is understood is making plans for their permanent care. We now await further details.

Switzerland Other children from Buchenwald have been moved to Switzerland under the terms of the Agreement with the Don Suisse whereby Switzerland undertook to provide temporary care for 2,000 children under 12 years of age for a period of six months, on the understanding that UNRRA would co-operate in Germany in selecting the children and in Switzerland in a supervisory capacity. The arrangements for the move were supervised by two UNRRA Welfare Officers attached to SHAEF in co-operation with a Welfare Representative of the Don Suisse. Considerable difficulty was experienced in the selection of the children owing to the fact that the Swiss invitation was specifically designed for the reception of children under 12 years. Except for ten children, all those at Buchenwald were over 14 years. The Don Suisse was therefore authorised by the Swiss Government to receive up to 350 children under 17. Even so there were complications, because numbers of boys had just passed their seventeenth birthday and others who were eligible had older brothers from whom they did not wish to be separated, whilst most of the children under 12 were accompanied by a father. In addition, the original Buchenwald group had been augmented by groups of young persons who had come to Buchenwald from other centres on hearing of the proposed move to Switzerland or in order to look for relatives. The Don Suisse also decided to take a group of 36 hospital cases consisting of young persons under 17, all of whom originally came from Buchenwald. These cases were transferred by ambulance to Basel. The total number from Buchenwald eventually taken to Switzerland (it is not clear where the hospital cases are included in the number) comprised a group of 348 persons. Of these eleven were parents (two mothers with babies of three months), fifty-eight girls aged 15 and 16 and the rest boys. All the children are stated to be Jewish, including 47 Hungarians, 16 Rumanians, 9 Czechs, 10 of German birth described as "stateless" and the remainder Poles.