

# Schornsteinfeger Club

(Chimney Sweep Club)

**T**HE Schornsteinfeger Club, a good-will organization of more than 16,000 members from countries throughout the world, was born one year ago in Berlin because of homesickness.

Because of his anticipation of the prospects of a fifth Christmas away from his family and friends, Mr. Merle Potter, adviser on American-German relations to the OMGUS chief of staff, sent a letter to 150 of his newspaper, radio and theatrical acquaintances back in the United States.

Telling of the need he saw around him of the Germans for clothes, food and help, and of the happiness he would feel to be able to help them, he wrote:

"Please send to me within the next two or three days at least one article of unneeded clothing that still has some service in it. Anything at all—for a man or woman, for a baby, for a young child. I'm certain you can lay your hands on something that's doing you no present good and isn't likely to in the immediate future. An old pair of trousers, an out of style dress, old shoes, a baby dress, antique sweater, underwear, unused cloth—I will settle for anything.

**T**HE IDEA caught on. Friends told others, the appeal was printed in newspapers, announcements were made on the radio and by the score bundles began pouring into Mr. Potter's Berlin office. So many, in fact, that it would have been almost impossible to thank each individual personally.

Forming a club, therefore, seemed the best solution. Each person who contributed money or an article of clothing became a member for life. The symbol of the Schornsteinfeger was chosen simply because in Europe it is considered good luck to see a chimney sweep. The picture of a little black grinning man in traditional chimney sweep garb became a mark of all the club's activities.

Shortly after the club's foundation it seemed appropriate for Germans,

to the extent of their means, also to take part in the work. It was recognized that the average German is in no position to make a contribution comparable with that of the average American, but goodwill would be the important element—a determination to share what small surpluses of clothing or money he possesses with his less fortunate countryman.

Erik Reger, editor of the *Tagespiegel*, along with others on the newspaper's staff, applauded the idea and as a result Germans were admitted to membership in the club by paying a membership fee of at least one item of usable clothing or five marks or more. Not only did many Germans pay for their memberships in marks ranging from five to the 10,000 marks contributed by the *Tagesspiegel*, but also in clothes in a remarkable demonstration of self-sacrifice.



**G**ERMAN members have made contributions in other ways. They have come through with promotion ideas that have netted many marks for the club's charitable work. For example, the management and players of the Hebbel-Theater in Berlin gave a benefit performance of "So war Mama," presented on Broadway

(Continued next page)



*Gift packages are loaded at OMGUS headquarters on a Tagesspiegel truck for distribution to the neediest persons of Berlin. Helping are (left to right) Mr. Potter, Capt. K. T. Salls, head of Berlin's Office for Special Projects; Mr. Kurt Konietzko, head of the Tagesspiegel's social*

(US Army photo)



under the title of "I Remember Mama," with Kaethe Dorsch and Carl Kuhlmann, both well known German players, in the leading roles. The Schlosspark Theater presented "Drei Mann auf einem Pferd" (Three Men on a Horse) with Walter Blum and Gudrun Genest in the starring roles. A special Schornsteinfeger revue, entitled "We Bring Good Luck", with original lyrics, music and dances was presented last June at Titania Palast before an audience of more than 5,000. A book lottery in a Berlin-Friedenau bookstore added more marks to the club treasury.

Marks are used to purchase German items which can aid the poor. Dollars are used by the club to buy food, clothing and other articles of necessity from the United States. Distribution of used clothing, however, is one of the main activities of

the club. Well over 35,000 items of usable clothing have been distributed through American and German accredited welfare agencies. The clothing is given to needy persons after careful investigation by responsible investigators. Many items of this clothing have gone to German PW's returning home in a destitute condition from Soviet camps.

The Schornsteinfeger Club which calls itself an "International Organization of Persons of Goodwill" lives up to its name. With a membership of more than 16,000, it represents persons all over the world including Peru, Australia, China, India, Sweden, Brazil, Switzerland, England and Finland.

**T**HEIR FIRST year of organization and growth past, the Schornsteinfeger Club is now busy with 1948 Christmas work. More than 40 large boxes

of German items including handmade dolls, cigarette lighters and handmade wooden articles have been sent to the United States and sold to Americans whose money is being converted into CARE packages and clothing. New appeals for December contributions were sent to members in July and at Thanksgiving time and generous gifts of money and clothing are arriving.

For their part, German club members in Berlin have indicated that good will is not exclusive to American members. By posters and money collection points they are carrying out their own plan: At Christmastime, 750 British and American pilots and ground crew personnel on the Berlin airlift are to be presented engraved cigarette lighters as a token of appreciation. +END

## Seven Basic Points Listed for West Germany Constitution

**M**EMBERS of the constituent assembly at Bonn have been given by the three western powers a seven-point resume of basic qualities which should be incorporated into the new constitution now being written for West Germany.

Limitation of executive powers, safeguarding finance and other powers of individual states, and the importance of an independent judiciary are all emphasized. Specifically, the new constitution will be reviewed for:

1. A bicameral legislative system in which one of the houses must represent the individual states and have sufficient power to safeguard the interests of the states.

2. A limitation of powers of the executive to those functions which are definitely prescribed by the constitution—with emergency powers, if any, so limited as to require prompt legislative or judicial review.

3. Limitation of powers of the federal government to those expressly enumerated in the constitution; exclusion of federal jurisdiction in the field of education, cultural and religious affairs, local government and public health (except in this last case to secure such coordination as is essential to safeguard the health of the

people in the several states). Assurance that powers of the federal government in the field of public welfare are limited to those necessary for coordination of social security measures; and in the police field, to those agreed upon by the Military Governors during the occupation.

4. Regarding the field of public finance, limitation of powers of the federal government to the disposal of monies including the raising of revenues for purposes for which it is responsible. The federal government may set rates and legislate on general principles of assessment with regard to other taxes for which uniformity is essential, the collection and utilization of such taxes being left to the individual states; and the federal government may appropriate funds only for purposes for which it is responsible under the constitution.

5. An independent judiciary to review federal legislation, to review the exercise of federal executive power, to adjudicate conflict between federal and state authorities as well as between state authorities and to protect the civil rights and freedom of the individual.

6. Clear definition of the powers of the federal government to establish

federal agencies for the execution and administration of its responsibilities — and limitation of these powers to those fields in which it is clear that state implementation is impractical.

7. Provision for a civil service on principles of equal opportunity for all qualified job-seekers without prejudice because of political background. Members of the legislature should not be allowed to retain civil service positions.

**S**OME of the principles conveyed to the constituent assembly already had been incorporated into the draft of the provisional constitution. Others—notably the composition of the upper house and the allocation of finance powers—are still under discussion by the German delegates, who represent nine political parties.

Their draft already carries detailed provision for limiting the "emergency powers" of the executive. To avoid a repetition of Hitler's "dictatorship by decree," the federal chancellor according to the present draft could issue emergency decrees only for four weeks at a time, and even within that period they could be blocked by either house of the legislature.