

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE FOR PEACE

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British Red Cross Commission,
(Civilian Relief)

To :
Major Andrews,
Youth Department,
IA & C Branch,
CCG

SUBJECT : INTERNATIONAL WORK SCHEMES TO INCLUDE GERMAN YOUTH

1. On 17/2/46 in a conversation with Col. Horwood of Education Branch I put forward, as I mentioned to you at HQ 5 BRC on 13/3/46, suggestions which follow, and was asked by him to put them up writing to Education Branch for consideration.
2. The suggestions concern voluntary work schemes for young people of various nationalities working together on reconstruction. The period which has - purposely - been allowed to elapse since the subject was brought up with Col. Horwood has made possible the incorporation of a report on an experimental scheme in which German students took part (See Appendix).

3. Nature and Object of Society

(See also copy "Conditions of Service" attached). The organisation I represent (I.V.S.P.) is one of the voluntary societies constituting CBSRA, and is the British branch of the Service Civil Volontaire

International, of which the headquarters is in Switzerland. This body has had experience over the last

25 years of organising in various countries after natural catastrophes or where special need otherwise

arises, temporary groups of people of all classes and nationalities to take part in manual work for the benefit of the distressed people. ('Pick and Shovel' work is the traditional IVSP type of service).

Work has been done by IVSP in England for the Ministry of Agriculture, the National Trust, the Forestry Commission and the Ministry of Health, and in other countries it has also co-operated with and been asked for assistance by Government - e.g. in Switzerland and at the present moment in France.

The aim of the movement is not only to perform useful work of this kind, but thereby to provide

opportunities for young people (especially) of different nationalities and points of view to get to know each other, find out "how the other half lives", and by living and working together, learn the conditions of good citizenship, and come to a mutual understanding which will provide a sound foundation for peaceful relations.

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4. Organisation and Scope of Work Schemes.

The work is organised under a service leader appointed by the Executive Committee of the national branch concerned. The leader is in every case known to the Committee and has a record of work on similar schemes; the corporate life of the group for which he is responsible to the HQ of the Society is run on democratic lines.

The services undertaken vary in length according to the need and the availability of the volunteers. Where young people are particularly concerned, from 17 to 25 is thought to be optimum size of a particular service, where each member remains with the scheme for a fortnight or more.

5. Permission and Backing of the CCG requested:

A request is now put forward for permission

- (a) for IVSP to organise schemes in Germany on the basis explained.
- (b) for civilian volunteers of other nationalities to enter Germany for service in reconstruction schemes along with Germans under control of IVSP or SCVI.
- (c) for IVSP or SCVI to bring into Germany the supplies necessary for the carrying out of such schemes.

6. Participation of Germans in services outside Germany

We believe that in due course there will be advantage in having carefully selected Germans in services in other countries, but recognise that perhaps the time is not yet ripe for this.

7. Recent experience of German participation in IVSP Services :

- (a) Permission has been obtained in France to have as members of a reconstruction service, along with British, French, and Swiss personnel, three German POW, who have been granted civilian status for the purpose of working with IVSP and who are contributing substantially to the success of the work attempted.
- (b) An "IVSP Service" was carried on in Friedland Camp between 25/2/46 and 25/3/46. A report of this is appended.

Various faculties have been represented, various stations of live and various political and religious opinions. There is substantial reason to believe that good results have been achieved, not only in the work performed, but in the understanding by the German young people of democratic ways, and even in the cracking of the crust of Nazi sympathy where that still exists.

It is likely that in communities comprising people of nationalities other than (but including) British, the value of the contacts made would be even greater (cf. the French scheme referred to).

8. For further detailed information as to the work of IVSP a printed statement is enclosed.

9. Permission as above is requested as soon as possible, in order that arrangements can be made for services during the summer inside and outside the British Zone of Germany.