

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE FOR PEACE

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28 Nov 46

Göte Svenson
Secretary I.A.L.
Herkulengatan 22
STOCKHOLM

Dear Göte,

Thank you for your letter of 22 Nov 46; it is very encouraging to know that you are spending such a lot of energy to help us in our winter schemes in Germany. It is of course not easy to find suitable people who are prepared to go, but there is still time, and I sincerely hope that you can give a definite answer very soon. If you do choose someone in Sweden, the letter of invitation which I sent you at the end of October should be sufficient to enable him to get a Military Entry Permit into Germany from the Military Entry Permit office in Stockholm. If it is not sufficient, and I suggest that you should try immediately in view of the extreme shortage of time between now and December 31st, I can send you a specific invitation immediately I hear from you the name and address of your volunteer. But it does take such a long time to get permits, that if at all possible, the invitation I sent originally to you should, I think, be used.

In the meantime I was in Berlin last week-end and visited the Swedish shoe-repairing workshop in Tiergarten. I was very much impressed by the good work that the leader, Mr. Olssen and his 25 workers are doing. Unfortunately Mr. Olssen himself will be too busy in the New Year to take part in our winter camps, as his assistant, Mr. Roland Berg, whom you mentioned in your letter has just left Berlin. I did not discover that he was going to Hamburg, until you told me that in your letter. I hope that I shall be able to contact him there through Gunnar Sundberg.

Gunnar was in Vlotho (our HQ) last week and I had an opportunity to speak to him about his plan for getting the hut from Sweden erected in Hamburg and a shoe-repairing centre and youth forum set up. I think that he will be very busy if he is going to get the centre erected by Christmas, and he may need all the help that Roland Berg can give him. I see from your letter, that you have written to Roland suggesting that he goes to the Schleswig scheme, and that you intend to write to Gunnar as well on this point, since Gunnar is the leader of the Hamburg project. I myself have written to Gunnar, and a copy of my letter is enclosed with this letter so that you may know how things are going. Also, I have sent a short note to Roland. I should be very glad to have some details (age, report on service, occupation, &c &c) about Roland when next you write, just in case we are fortunate enough to have him with us in Schleswig.

A great deal of care and thought has been given by the German branch of the Service Civil in choosing 18 of the best volunteers for these two winter schemes and I feel that we, in the other countries have a very great responsibility to see that the right international element is successfully introduced. This is, I feel, so vitally important at this moment, when the possibility of contact with the outside world is causing such an astounding wave of hope and enthusiasm. This is an opportunity which will never be repeated, and if we fail to bring the volunteers to these two schemes owing to some small neglect of, for instance, getting Permits in good time, it will be a great tragedy. That is why I have written to our friends in the other countries emphasising the need to go ahead now with the application for permission for their volunteers to come to Germany.

As for the plans for the camp, they are now well in hand for both schemes in Schleswig and in Duisburg. Both schemes will last ten days, from 1 Jan 47 to 12 Jan 47; both will have 18 volunteers - 9 German and 9 from other lands. The Duisburg scheme will be clearing up the garden of a children's hospital to make a vegetable garden. Food is very important in the Ruhr, and although it does not sound a very big job, it is one that can be completed by such a small number of people in such a short time as ten days. In wet weather the volunteers will be repairing tents for next year's youth camps for the youth of Duisburg. In Schleswig the scheme will be cutting wood-fuel for the many refugees (women and children and old folk) on the tree-less island of Amrum, just south of Sylt.

If any of your volunteers come from Sweden, or if Roland comes from Hamburg they must report to the IVSP Relief Section 109 in Schleswig, Moltkestraße 7.

Finally, Göte, owing to the acute food shortage and the lack of clothes, it would be so helpful if the volunteers could bring their food for the ten days with them. They should also bring working clothes and boots, and if they can bring some spare clothes and boots, which are perhaps useless to anyone else, they may make just all the difference between a German lad being able to come and not being able.

I wish very much that you had sufficient time to spare to come to Germany; but perhaps we shall meet again some time . . .
I hope so.

Yours very sincerely,

Basil Eastland