

SERVICE CIVIL INTERNATIONAL  
International Secretariat  
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Paris, June 30th, 1947  
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To : Heinrich Carstens, Basil Eastland, Derek Edwards.  
Re : Work camp in Berlin, May 10 - June 22

Dear Heinrich, dear Basil,

Alfred Olivier just returned from Germany and what he had to say about the camp at Berlin needs checking and very careful consideration. No doubt the problems involved are nothing new to you and you are probably aware of them, but I think that this should be put on record and discussed by the IFDF Arbeitsausschuß.

I have received one official report from the Berlin camp, covering the period of May 10 to June 15 which deals exclusively with the work aspect of the camp and doesn't even mention the spiritual side; Alfred simply says that this is because that just didn't exist. A letter from Alfred and a remark in one of Basil's letters gave me the idea that all was not well at Berlin, but no details were given. Alfred has now raised certain points and I think that they ought to be commented on from your side that we here can have the full picture.

#### Leader

Alfred points out that the leader did not have actual camp experience. I am very sorry if I didn't realise that when I was in Berlin; I would certainly have commented on it. Alfred certainly thinks that the leader was lacking experience in organisation and method of SCI camps.

#### Volunteers

It seems that there were some (too many, especially girls) very young volunteers on the camp. How come? Wasn't the age-limit of 18 adhered to? I think this is important; either we make these rulings and stick to them or we let the whole thing go.

#### Spiritual life, talks, discussions

Alfred says that this was practically inexistent and that there was too much individualism on the camp and too many "two's by two's" who went their own sweet way without regard to the life of the camp. The spiritual aspect of our camps is so important that this is very serious. Our camps have only a value, apart from the work value, if the people did contribute something to the camp and themselves got some encouragement for their normal life. We must really give all our attention to this problem. To some extent, I think, it hangs together with the small number of foreign volunteers; I have already commented on that in other letters, but should like to stress it again. Too many camps, not enough experienced volunteers: Not enough experienced volunteers, a danger of the camp not bringing that constructive spirit as it should. I do hope that we learn from this camp what we knew last year already.

#### Food

This seems to have been totally inadequate after the first two weeks. Did this camp not receive an allocation of IFDF food? What exactly was the position?

#### Discipline

Alfred talked about vols coming home at 2 p.m. and other instances of lack of discipline. Also, at a discussion Betty took responsibility for the camp and said that the leader was acting in her place only. Was this camp an IFDF camp or only just a branch-off of the Berlin team. If the latter, it will have to be carefully studied what possible implication to IFDF of this could mean.

There were other points, but I have already filled one sheet ... Alfred did say that he thought the choice of work excellent and that he did make many very good friends, but on the whole he regards it as a failure. I hope that you can comment on the whole camp and see just what could have been done to improve it as long as it wasn't too late.

Amitiés,  
Willy Begert