

REPORT FROM IFDF LAGER "ZEMENTWERK" OBERHAUSEN

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Workplace :

Earlier barrack-camp with cementbarracks for Russian slave workers, now open camp for "Ostflüchtlinge" mainly children and women.

IFDF-work :

Under the direction of an architect from Oberhausen clearing land for playground for children, making a part, sandplace waterpond and a road through the camp.

Time :

from July 20 to September 30, 1947

Campleader :

A former German officer.

Assistent leader :

Head Sister an Canadian Quaker.

Volunteers :

On the average 25, and among them 4 - 5 foreigners, 50 % women and 50 % men.

Nationalities :

German, Canadian, American, English, Swiss, Dutch, Danish, Finnish, Swedish.

Time per volunteer :

New volunteers arrived every weekend and at the same time somebody left. Every member stayed as a rule 14 days and after that he went home or to another camp.

Represented professions :

Mainly students but also other groups.

The volunteers camp :

In one of the barracks in the refugee camp including quarters for men, quarters for women, kitchen, diningroom, sitting room and in the cellar room for toils. In the same barrack there was also an living quarter for some refugee families, WC, running water supply, facilities for showers.

Food :

Good and more than sufficient through parcels from the American Friends and through buying the German rations. Every day fresh fruit.

Plan for work :

The men working outdoors and the women in the kitchen. On account of the great number of women they also had to work outdoors.

Plan of the day :

	5.45 reveille	12.00 lunch
	6.00 commencement of work	13.15 - 15.00 work
Monday - Friday	7.00 breakfast	15.00 coffee, freetime
	7.45 - 10.00 work	18.00 supper
	10.00 coffee	20.00 evening programme or
	10.15 - 12.00 work	free time

Saturday or Thursday reserved for excursions. Sunday free with possibilities to take part in the Quaker meeting in Oberhausen.

Evening programme :

One evening per week was reserved for family meeting with discussion and planning of the camp and the work. Other evenings: entertainment, picnic or lectures.

### Discussions :

- Education and international Understanding
- Pacifism
- Europa Union
- International Youth village for homeless youth
- Reports from different international work camps.

### Lectures :

- Democracy in Switzerland
- Education in England
- Universities in America.

### Report :

A weekly report and a secret report about every member of the camp (made by the leaders and one of the volunteers chosen by the camp members) was sent to the IFDF secretary.

### Observations :

You must reckon with the fact that most young Germans under the Nazi regime have been members of Nazi youth organisation and that 13 consecutive years of Nazi education, in which the students have received a special training, must have left deep traces in their thinking and acting. That over one night they could have changed to peace friends, democrats and internationalists is impossible. Many come to IFDF because here is happily an organisation to which they can belong without having a clear position and a personal opinion about political and social problems of the time; or many come because they have heard that the food situation in the camp is very good, much better than they have had since the war and that there is rather comradeship with all the boys and girls living in the camp. With regard to this, the leader for an IFDF camp must be chosen much more carefully than in other countries. Not with "Führer-methods" but through his personality, his example an character he shall inspire the volunteers to work together as free independent men in the common work. It is quite a fact that the whole organisation can be discredited through a German officer being the leader of the camp. The organisation can also be discredited when of German volunteers want to sing and sing when they entered Holland or "Ja wir fahren gegen England" and equally so when alcohol is drunk on the camp premises.

In order to avoid its repetition in the future and so that the organisation will not be attacked in the newspapers, which will happen, if we cannot change through good arrangements, and organisation I suggest :

1. As leader of a camp only a person with fully international democratic views shall be accepted, still better he has shown it in the Nazi time already.
2. In choosing of German volunteers , fist those who belong to democratic organisations should be accepted, and only after control and recommendation. Not so many German students. Better representation of other professions and social groups.
3. Longer camp time per member. The camp ought to be a closed unit under a time of two months with so few changes as possible during this time.
4. More foreigners ought to take part in the camps.
5. Few but good IFDF camps.
6. Germans ought to be invited to take part in camps in other countries outside Germany.
7. Before any camp starts, all leaders ought to take part in a trainingcamp for two months for camp leaders led by an "old" volunteer.

Rolf Svanberg

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c/o I.A.L.

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S t o c k h o l m