

Translation of Copy to Bill Bowman of Herbert Böttger's letter to Hans Temme :  
Report on the journey to Bavaria

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17. Dezember 1948

Lieber Hans,

----- Tuesday morning Denise, Bill and I arrived in Munich and were met by Dr. Mau, the special representative for foreign matters of the Bayerische Jugendring. Owing to the fact that one of the participants of the meeting, Dr. Lenhartz, was still at Vlotho we were offered a few days holiday in the mountains. We accepted and arrived at Bayerisch Zell Tuesday afternoon and went to a Youth Hostel, 1200 m high up in the mountains, belonging to the Bayerische Jugendring. We had some very nice days of rest and admired the wonderful scenery. One could go for walks in sun-suits because the sun was hot like in summer, and there was a very clear view of the surrounding Alp mountains, which made the stay a real joy and quite unforgettable.

Saturday morning we then went to Bad Wiessee near Tegernsee, to meet Dr. Rieppe and Dr. Caspari (a relative of Eli Quarles van Ufford), according to our arrangement. At 4 p.m. we had our first conference, which – to put it very brief – went on in a very friendly way. Besides the two previously mentioned gentlemen, Frau Dr. Rieppe also took part in the conference, a lady, very open-minded.

I talked to them all about the origin of SCI, its work, the organised camps and their purpose and aims. They said that after the talk and the letters received from Eli, plus the literature sent by me, they had got the exact picture of SCI. The fundamental thought of our hosts was that they were all very keen to help SCI and to show the ways and means how SCI could put this into practice.

I would like to point out in the following report and especially in the enclosed letter of Dr. Rieppe that they have been extremely anxious to help SCI and I would therefore like that to be considered in the report when it seems to be a little far fetched. I would also like to state that they are old people of a high mature and spiritual standard.

I am told by Alice Brügger, that these thoughts are similar to those of Jean Innebnit and the Dutch General Consul in Düsseldorf, flowing as it were towards the idea of having one big project for a longer period. I believe, Hans, that you, too, do not reject work of this kind. It was pointed out by all three of them that

1. To show the world that there is a way of understanding on this basis.
2. That there are people, who are willing, to practice the understanding in this way.
3. That it is necessary, that the understanding is borne by the spirit of SCI.

I, of course, have pointed out at once, that we do not feel strong enough to carry out such a big project. (If in this report there will appear numbers of 100 - 200 volunteers, the scheme could also be carried out by 20 - 25).

I was immediately told that we ought not to be "afraid of our own courage" and that the present time requires a full and active effort to serve even more willingly and not avoid the big tasks of our time through timidity.

I know that at our meeting at Bad Wiessee, in the circle of these older friends we came across problems of SCI, which to us are still problems that have not been solved yet. But I think it necessary, to raise these suggestions again, because of the acquaintance with these older people : Should we – even on a smaller scale – approach a project which perhaps will take all our strength ? Is it perhaps worthwhile in these present times when everybody is talking about a new conflict, to show a practical way which talks not of conflict but works for co-operation ?

I do not want to become an "apostle" of big actions, but I feel compelled by the discussions to repeat the thoughts as follows :

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We have the possibility, to run, say, 5, 6, 8 or 10 camps a year, which, with regard to the work do not give much help. Is it then very out of the way and impossible and wrong, to put these energies into one task in order to give the work a wider frame ?

It is clear to me that a bigger action would mean something revolutionary; but I also ask myself whether we ought to avoid the necessity of the present time. And I would always like to point out that with all these thoughts the spirit and the attitude of SCI are assumed. I perhaps cannot think the ideas of SCI clear enough through to the end and therefore ask all to whom this letter goes to help SCI and the friends in the south with their opinion and comment.

That conference on Saturday was followed by another one on Sunday and our three hosts had been talking a lot about SCI again in the meantime. The Sunday therefore only expressed the same opinion and the wish of a willing and cheerful activity for IZD from their part, to give it the value, which it deserves in the present time. Therefore these days were very valuable, not only because of the suggestions and thoughts but also because of the acquaintance we made with those people.

We said farewell to them and all wished that this meeting was the start of a good co-operation and that the result might be for the benefit of SCI. On Monday we also said farewell to the lovely surroundings of the mountains and went to Munich, to have a further conference with Dr. Mau and other friends.

At the main conference on Tuesday, several people were taking part : Dr. Faltenmayer, President of Bayerischer Jugendring, Dr. Mau and Dr. Lades. Dr. Mau started with asking questions, mostly of technical character, which were of interest, though, to the people present. I answered them accordingly.

The Bayerischer Jugendring includes 600.000 youths. I pointed out that we are not a Youth Organisation and minimum age was 18. But within this number of 600.000 there are many older youths between 20 and 25. The people present represented mostly two organisations :

Bayerischer Jugendring  
Bayerische Jugendsiedlung.

Both have a very close co-operation and are represented in the Bayerische Kultusministerium by Dr. Lades.

We were then asked how far there was any possibility of co-operation and how many camps we could run. From their side there are five projects for which financial support is granted. I told them that we could run at least one service definitely, and that our committee would decide about further projects. In addition to that I suggested that they should contact AFSC, and see whether they are willing to run the other camps.

I was asked how far a participation of the Bayerischer Jugendring was possible in the work and under what names the camp would be organised. I explained that they will be IZD camps with 1/3 foreign friends, 1/3 experienced people and 1/3 new friends. It would be left to them whether they want to make up the 1/3 new friends from among their members. It was then finally agreed that we should get the five projects before the next committee meeting of IZD, so that the committee will be able to pick out the most suitable projects, one definitely, and more according to our own strength, and to forward the question to Paris.

I then made a new suggestion : would they be interested in having their own scheme organised by the Jugendring, if the International Secretariat of SCI was going to let them have foreign volunteers for the services. There has been made a small step towards this in asking the foreign volunteers of the New Year Services to go to Friedensdorf Nuremberg, where last summer they had the AFSC camp.

We then said farewell again and went with the impression that this is going to be the start for a close co-operation. The Bayerischer Jugendring has paid my journey. The same evening we went back to Mulheim to take up the old nice work in the office again.

Herbert Böttger