

49 03 09 - 1 01

RS 150/IVSP,  
CBSRA Commission,  
(Civilian Relief)  
Duisburg  
BAOR 4  
9 March 49

To :  
International Secretariat,  
9 rue Guy-de-la-Brosse,  
Paris, 5e

Copies to :     Hans Temme  
                  Herbert Böttger  
                  Derek Edwards

Dear Willy,

FOREIGN WORKERS IN GERMAN CAMPS

The enclosed is self-explanatory and in duplicate. I suggest that it be circulated to all branches of SCI and all Askov members, subject to the approval of yourself and the Liaison Office. If you like, I have no objection to doing the typing and circularising myself; but first I should like your comments. On the one hand I feel that the tone of the thing may be a little dictatorial – on the other I can see a great deal of worry for a number of people and a growing laxity in the camps if a clear statement is not made. I have already, so early in the year, two cases of volunteers who have got themselves into a somewhat ambiguous position – not at all serious, only a bad omen for the future – because

- (a) these things were not made clear enough to them in the first place
- (b) they followed (perhaps innocently) their own desires rather than meticulous attention to formalities
- (c) they were not pulled up immediately (by no, for example).

The particular case is not worth making a fuss about, but I fear for the future. Last year, as you will gather from the enclosed, a good deal of worry and work was caused through unofficial wanderings of volunteers and by lax methods between secretariats. The cost can be reckoned in man-power in secretariats and laxity in the camps. Col. Andrews' letter makes it clear that Education Branch demands a business-like adherence to the letter and spirit of our side of the agreement. But if campers take extra time to stay in camps what will they be like when they are allowed holidays in Germany at the end of their service? Last year one sometimes did not know whether a volunteer had actually come to Germany or not; or, if he had left a camp, whether he had actually left Germany. Basil sent each foreign volunteer two postcards, one to be sent to Basil when the volunteer arrived at the camp; the other to be sent when he left for home. The cards were not always sent, so that the system broke down. This year I shall try to get the same information from the camp leaders in fortnightly reports. The booking of travel tickets, getting and extending of Entry Permits and unravelling of personal difficulties took up a good deal of time of the Duisburg Relief Team, who travelled many times to Düsseldorf upon such quests. With myself alone here, and later, when I am not here, this will be less possible, and no less undesirable, insofar as it is unnecessary.

That is the pessimistic side of what was really a remarkably successful year. The wonder is that camps took place at all, considering the difficulties of the currency reform. But there is no reason why we should not try to make this year's miracle even brighter!

Best wishes,

Bill Bowman.