

S E N I O R R E P R E S E N T A T I V E I N G E R M A N Y
F O R T N I G H T L Y R E P O R T
N U M B E R 1

A P R I L 1 t o 1 6

1949

Friday, April 1

Yesterday the three Relief Teams finished business, and today the members are scattered - either on their way back home or taking their final leave in Germany or some other country. I am now awaiting from Schleswig and Berlin (a) the balance of their unit funds (b) the various clearance certificates, etc. which they may have been able to wring from CCG officials (c) a final monthly report, which I don't expect to get - and don't propose to ask for unless someone specially wants them, because it would probably involve writing to various parts of England for reports from all the team-members.

Special comments on team members are :

Reg Thickins will work with FSC Relief Team in Berlin until August, and is taking his leave in the Harz.

Eileen Taylor is the only person from all the teams who is interested in taking the liaison job at Holm-Seppensen, about which I wrote to London and Paris. At this late date I must decide whether or not to go on with the arrangements. I wrote to London on the 23rd March about her, but have not had a reply yet (still rather early). In view of other correspondence about her I don't expect permission to put her into the job. But she asked me to arrange it for her as a private person if IVSP did not wish to send her - and this I must do, via Education Branch sponsorship.

Elsie and Monica went off today on the start of their trip towards Switzerland and Italy. Eileen stayed behind for one more day to see that the house is cleaned up. Anneliese is also staying until tomorrow.

I moved early into the CCG billet in Mulheim where I shall live from now on. I asked for a billet as close as possible to the Secretariat, and find myself in a rather large and gloomy building with five other CCG chaps who all belong to the Car Unit and apparently have no interest beyond cars and football pools. Better billets with more congenial company are available - in much nicer surroundings, too, but until some arrangement about transport is reached I must be within easy reach of the Secretariat. It would be possible for me to live at the Secretariat and have my rations delivered there - but the change of atmosphere and the walk backwards to meals will be valuable to me, besides the question of having a little privacy.

Moved into the Secretariat in the afternoon, creating a very untidy mess. I appear to have more files, correspondence, etc. than exists here already. Am apprehensive about how my methods of working and filing will fit into those of the Secretariat. The staff consists at the moment of Herbert, Alice Brugger (here until October) and continually changing and harassed helpers who are busy with the IZD publicity scheme.

In about ten days I shall be off to Bievres, and am wondering how on earth I shall get through the work I have to do before that. The German volunteers who are to go abroad in summer should have been chosen before the end of March and the lists sent to the foreign secretariats and the Education officers and Consuls in various parts of Germany. But they are not yet chosen. Then the volunteers will be arriving from abroad for the Easter camps, and those from England will have to be provided with travel papers of various kinds. Then there are the reports on the departure of the teams and the clearing up of their papers, the settling into the Secretariat, and so on.

Saturday, April 2

A queer lot of blokes in the billet. Decent chaps, but army types, and most difficult to contact. None of them has shown the slightest interest in who or what I am. As I walked through Mulheim this morning I was called from across the road, and two young German lads in working clothes ran across. Two lads from a previous Mulheim camp. We chatted for a while, and I have the feeling of being much closer to them than to my own countrymen in the billet. I realise that life with SCI tends to some extent to cut one off from those who do not think in terms of work-camps or Peace movements.

Spent the whole day at the Secretariat. The weather is warm, and this blue uniform is very sticky, but must wear it (a) to save my own clothes and (b) to look reasonable respectable.

Sunday, April 3

Had the Secretariat to myself and did a good day's work. Feeling lonely after the departure of the team, and glad to have plenty to do. One of the chaps of the billet is in charge of the transport, and is turning out very obliging. At the moment I can get a car each day by filling in a form the day before. But I may later get a car to myself. This is rather unusual among local CCG circles, but Relief Workers and work-campers are unusually situated in Germany. Am not quite happy about having a car (and driver all to myself). Would want, for instance, to walk to the Secretariat for the sake of exercise. It is not possible, apparently, for me to let someone else use the car if I do not need it, since the driver would be employed by me. Red tape!

Monday, April 4

In the morning the German volunteers going abroad in summer were picked out of the lists by Herbert and Alice. I shall get their names away as soon as possible. Unfortunately we don't know yet how long they can offer, but the lists must be sent away.

In the afternoon I went down to the Finanzamt, a block of offices in the town occupied by CCG. I had arranged with the Local Administrative Unit (LAU) that an office should be ready for me this morning. I need the office in order to get a military telephone, and it is not yet certain whether I shall be allowed one in the Secretariat, which is in unrequisioned premises. Found the office not yet ready, but was finally installed, and spent several hours telephoning all over Germany about the camps, which have just started, the outgoing volunteers, Eileen's Holm-Seppensen arrangements, arranging a trip to the Settlement at Letmathe on Wednesday with Earl Fowler, and so on. The office is 20 minutes walk from the Secretariat. Calls take usually about an hour, and as my papers and work are up at the Secretariat it is all a frightful waste of time - although one can do some work while waiting for calls.

Tomorrow I must book my ticket on the military trains as far as Saarbrücken on the way to the conference. I wonder if I should go at all, in view of the things to be done. I must decide today. It would be a great rush to get the lists of German volunteers away, but that would perhaps be possible (not allowing for emergency jobs), but what problems connected with the English vols. already in Germany would crop up in my absence? The incoming of the Easter vols. was arranged by Anneliese, and I don't know what problems might occur. I know, for instance, that the camps were not decided until very late, and it is possible that England was told too late to make arrangements for the outward journey. And the return booking must be done. It might be possible, by careful planning, to leave it to Alice - but will there be time to do the planning?

I finally decided not to go to Bievres. For one thing, I do not feel fit enough to work until the small hours, which would probably be necessary to get everything done. A disappointment, but, once made, the decision was a relief.

Tuesday, April 5

By car to Düsseldorf in the morning

(a) to get signatures by Magda Kelber on my travel form

(b) enquire about travel of English volunteers in the US Zone (had have conflicting stories from the Travel Bureau, and Bob Pearl had to hitchhike to Munchen) and

(c) enquire about installation of military telephone in the Secretariat.

Found that free travel in the US and French Zones is definitely not allowed to Capitation C personnel, although it is allowed to ordinary CCG personnel. My own trip to Munchen last November had been a mistake on someone's part! Could not locate telephone official.

A letter from Betty arrived at lunch-time - readdressed from Duisburg - to say that four volunteers are arriving at Oberhausen this afternoon! Lucky that I have a car ordered for the whole day. They should have been booked straight through to the camps, but the instructions about the camps came too late, and Betty also was under the impression that they were to draw ration cards here. So she did the best thing in sending them here. Met them at 17.20, and finished their documentation at 22.30. Mary Bright went strait to Koln, Ulla, Richard and Ossie here to spend the night and go on tomorrow. It was fine to meet them, and very good to be dealing with people instead of names on a paper, but in the rush, and not being prepared for them, I forgot to cancel their Entry Permits as instructed by Vlotho, so must make other arrangements to do this later. Rations are not practicable - the arrangements are too complicated in most cases to justify the extra food for a few English people.

Will try to make more definite advance arrangements for summer.

Except for Sunday, I have been a good deal away from the Secretariat, telephoning, interviewing CCG people, etc., and have not been able to get down to the office work. Very glad now that I decided not to go to Bievres.

Wednesday, April 6

Today visited Letmathe, as arranged some time ago, with Earl Fowler and Alfred Burs, a German youth leader from Duisburg. Letmathe is a settlement between Hagen and Iserlohn, run by the Gemeinschaftsdienst Deutscher Jugend, under Adolf Redeke. In a very pleasant stretch of country a number of lads who previously were wandering about the roads of Germany are living and building themselves progressively better accommodation. In addition, the whole of the estate belonging to the scheme is being divided into small holdings. On each will be built a house, where a family from Letmathe will live. When the father of the family has spent a specific number of hours working with the Gemeinschaftsdienst the house becomes his own. The lads have thus the hope, eventually, of making a permanent home for themselves. At the moment they are living in Nissen Huts, nicely bricked up inside. Some of them work at other projects for the local rural authorities, earning money which enables the others to work at the settlement. I should like a work-scheme here, and Earl was much interested.

Thursday, April 7

The weather, which has been lovely, is suddenly frightful. Spent the morning in the Finanzamt telephoning - and consequently wasting time - over the arrangements for the travellers to Bievres and to Koln for the reception which will be held there on Sunday. Made little progress, had long time to wait for each call, and Herbert took over in the afternoon. Leaving the Finanzamt in the afternoon, about 2 p.m., I was stopped by a bedraggled-looking individual who told me a hard-luck story and wanted help. He turned out to be - to say the least - queer. Although feeling very sorry for him, was not able to make much sense out of it all, and finally said I could do nothing for him. But he wasn't to be dismissed. I did an errand in the post office and came out to find him waiting for me, saying that Germans were round the corner waiting to kill him (he said he was a Lithuanian). I thought I could shake him off on the way to the Secretariat, but he could walk as quickly as I, I daren't show him where I worked for fear of having him on my hands indefinitely. Finally had to turn back and go to the Finanzamt, dodge in one door and out of the other, and so lose him. Not at all happy about the whole thing, but what could one do? Lost an hour with him

There is bad news from all the camps. Many German volunteers have not turned up. Only five at Koln. We had a heated discussion about the cause of it all - the relation between efficiency in the office and ditto among the volunteers, etc. Heated but friendly.

Worked late, but still have not yet started on the lists of the German summer volunteers.

Friday, April 8

Tried today to clear up outstanding letters etc., previous to starting on the summer vols. Had to spend some time telephoning, however, about Hans Temme's French visa. Got the Court of Enquiry report from Col. Stubbs, and was considerably depressed by it. In the evening the Secretariat was full. Harry Alcock arrived, and I documented him for Kassel for tomorrow

Saturday, April 9

Had to go to Neuss in car, to pick up some papers for the publicity scheme. After lunch made a start on the summer volunteers at last, but had to go to meet Hazel at Oberhausen and send her off to Koln. Then back to Secretariat, after telephoning Heinrich, and got on with the lists.

Sunday, April 10

Everybody off to Koln for the reception, but I stayed to get on with the lists. Glad to have the place to myself. Composed letter to Col. Stubbs, which took a long time. Made good progress with the lists, but they are not yet ready. They take a long time.

Monday, April 11

Spent morning and afternoon on the lists, and finally got the most important part away - the lists to the Education Authorities and to the foreign secretariats. Still a good deal more to do, but this the most urgent.

The camps, which started with about 6 vols. each, are now filling up. But it is disappointing that 150 vols. gave their names originally and many had to be refused.

The publicity scheme suddenly wants 60.000 duplicated copies of a receipt, so I spent the evening in Duisburg finding out where this could be done.

Tuesday, April 12

Spent the morning telephoning and interviewing CCG people. In the afternoon Heinrich came, on his way to Paris. Hans is also here, and we talked over various matters in the evening.

Complications about the arrangements for the English volunteers are turning up. Where to send those who have time to spare after the camps. Cancelling of Entry Permits. Booking of travel on military trains.

Have not made any progress with the arrangements of Eileen at Holm-Seppensen, because I haven't had time to sit over the phone, but wrote earlier to Dr. Rothe at Hamburg, asking him to arrange the sponsorship himself. Since he works with the SA Relief Team, this should not be difficult.

Wednesday, April 13

Telephone call this morning. Monica is in Duisburg, on here way back to England after leave. Is staying with Winnie, our Secretary of Duisburg. She leaves on Friday, and I will take some time off and enjoy myself. Winnie gave us a farewell party in the evening.

Thursday, April 14

Car ordered for whole day. Spent the morning doing odd run-about jobs in Mulheim and Duisburg, then to Dusseldorf with Monica, where both had jobs to do. Dismissed the driver. After getting business done took the rest of the day off and came back by tram.

Friday, April 15

Good Friday. Frightful rush in the Secretariat getting letters off for the publicity scheme - Alice and Ruth Dittmann. I take no part in this business. Went to Duisburg, helped Monica with final packing and saw her off in the afternoon, then back to Secretariat for the evening. Had a letter from Col. Stubbs in which he appears to be trying to do everything he can to avoid my having to pay for the car.

Saturday, April 16

Uneventful. Worked all day.

GENERAL

Between now and October I am to try to hand over to the Secretariat all my work. As I said at the National Committee meeting, I shall try to do this, but I do not think it possible. I told Heinrich a short while ago that in my opinion a SR would be necessary as long as the British are in Germany. I will amend this to 'highly advisable'. The position may clarify itself during the summer.

The chief difficulties are that Herbert and Alice have already quite enough to do and that neither of them may be here by the end of the year; and the intrinsic difficulties which a foreigner would find working with the British.

Alice is due to leave in October, and I have the impression that Herbert will not continue after this year as secretary - and no-one has a replacement in mind.

I shall try, during the summer, to 'shed the load' of my part of the work by getting as much as possible done by the foreign secretariats - either actually during this summer or by planning for the future. It is too late even now to hand over what might eventually be done abroad for the summer camps - I shall do it myself. I am thinking of such items as introductory letters to Consuls and Education Officers, which are best written either in English or the appropriate language of the country, arrangements for the return bookings of English volunteers, looking up of their trains, etc., and probably other things I have not yet thought of. The fact of my being here as part of CBSRA/CCG carries with it duties, complications and advantages, all of which would vanish if I were not here. If it were known definitely that when the SR leaves Germany the English vols. will not longer be CBSRA members with CCG facilities the handing-over would be correspondingly easier. Although the teams are gone, there is still a good deal of contact to be kept with CBSRA. Basil shared a secretary at Vlotho and I had Anneliese. What used to be done by them, with the help of the English people they were working with, must now be done by me - plus the booking (often complicated) and Entry Permit searching's that were previously done by the Duisburg team. I'm hoping, however, that, if the Offer of Service form is correctly used, Entry Permits will not expire with the rapidity they showed last year.

Bill Bowman

To : London
Int.Sec.