
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 I N A L R E P O R T

S E P T E M B E R

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Our facilities in Germany with CBSRA came to an end during September, and I left Germany on 30th. My own activities during the month consisted chiefly in preparations for departure, including a final visit to CBSRA HQ where nothing of importance transpired. On Saturday 17th. I visited the final day of the AFSC camp at Letmathe, which was also the occasion of the opening of the first brick building in the youth settlement at the site of the camp. This was a matter of personal interest of both IZD and AFSC. I attended the IZD Executive meeting at Bückeberg on the week-end of 24/25th. - of which more later - taking two members by car from Mülheim. Thinking at the time that I should be going to Paris to take over the Liaison Office, I also squeezed in dental and eyesight appointments at the military hospital, and was glad to be assured (after a thorough test) that my eyes had not suffered from my motor accident.

The work-camp movement in Germany is set against a very fluid background of political, economic and administrative change. Passport facilities and methods of getting visas and so on are now much easier from the office point of view, but not from the volunteers'. Whereas, before the currency reform German volunteers were easy to find (the camps offering congenial living conditions), labour conditions have recently made it more difficult. Very many students, for instance, must spend the whole of their vacations earning enough to carry them through the next term; and the terms have been reduced in length to allow this. In the political field, the black cloud still hovers in the East, and the future of Germany seems to lie in the hands of USSR and USA. Internally, large stores are being built in all the towns, but very few houses indeed, and there is no great hope that the new government will improve matters. In short, there is every reason why the German man-in-the-street should have no faith in the future or in the value of his own efforts. But in spite of this there is a good deal of local and personal initiative, both within and without the work-camp movement. There is thus great opportunity for the idea of voluntary effort and personal initiative to spread through the camps and to help to mould the German character and ideology which will crystallise out of the present chaos.

This has been a successful year. There were two good New Year camps, four Easter camps which were worth-while but not entirely successful, four summer camps - generally good, and one long-term emergency camp - still running - in the explosion-wrecked town of Prüm. The chief features were : (a) all the work done was valuable, often very valuable (b) much of the planning of the camps was done by the local groups (c) the planning of the camps and the discipline in and out of them was inadequate and showed no marked improvement on last year (d) the percentage of young and inexperienced German volunteers is still too high.

Co-operation with AFSC has been good, although no joint AFSC/ IZD camps were held. AFSC, whose German work-camp chief is Earl Fowler, held four summer camps, and intends to continue with the work next year. These camps are hardly distinguishable from IZD camps. The pre-service conference of camp leaders, organised by Earl, was a great success and an idea which is worth developing.

The difficulties of IZD are somewhat as follows :

1. Both Alice Brügger, Swiss professor who has been with IZD for a year, and myself left the Office at the end of September, leaving Herbert with one inexperienced girl to help in the planning of the autumn conferences and the drastic reorganisation of the whole of the administration. From January onwards the whole of the work will be divided between local groups and individuals as far as possible and one person only, living at home, will take over the secretariat. This will certainly bring many difficulties and there will be one inexperienced secretary against three or even four office workers during the last year. Under the terms of Herbert's employment with CCG he will be paid until the end of the year, and is willing to work for IZD until then, but a great effort from the whole movement will be needed to effect a satisfactory reorganisation.
2. The financial situation is poor. Perhaps one fifth of the members paid their subscriptions for the year. A publicity scheme launched during the Spring resulted in a loss of money. Travel fares for Executive meetings will perhaps be out of the question next year.
3. The general standard of discipline and organisation is poor. Subscriptions are not paid; letters are not answered. Camps are not thoroughly prepared. Volunteers come and go -or stay away - from the camps far too freely; often without sending a word to the Office. Although many German volunteers had to be refused entry to the Easter camps because so many had volunteered, the camps opened with about eight members. On the other hand, Prüm became crammed with unannounced volunteers and some had to be sent away. There is a great shortage of leaders. Also, there is a strong feeling against central control. The total result is a danger that the movement will drift and that the older, steadier volunteers will be frightened away by the numerous youngsters.
4. Until now, IVSP has been a crutch and has been well-leaned-upon. The facilities etc. have included : supply of transport; free stationary, postage, telegrams, telephone; employment of Herbert as secretary; liaison with Mil.Gov; a part-time and, lately, full-time English worker; and, very important, IVSP has on many occasions stepped in at the last minute and saved the situation. The advantage of the free telephone has been enormous. On one occasion an Executive meeting was held by phone between members in Hamburg and Duisburg.

Against this, the most favourable credit item is undoubtedly the strength and enthusiasm of the local groups. There are now groups at Berlin, Schleswig, Hamburg, Göttingen, the Ruhr, Köln, Bonn and Freiburg. All have organised week-end and short-time schemes and nearly all summer schemes. The small Bonn group initiated and organised the emergency scheme at Prüm. The Köln group held a successful reception attended by a number of high town officials. The Berlin group has carried on under great difficulties and a representative has been working in camps in USA this year. There is, of course, a great deal of suitable work in the country - from that angle it is almost a work-camper's paradise. This obvious need is a great spur to enthusiasm. Another advantage is that the work previously done by the IVSP Senior Representative has eased very considerably during the last few months and can quite easily be done by a German.

At the last Executive meeting it was decided to divide Germany into areas, in each of which a member should be appointed who would be responsible for as much as possible of the administration work affecting the members and camps of his area. He would, for instance, collect subscriptions from the group members and distribute the newsletter (Willy Begert has put one page of the 'Service Civil' at the disposal of IZD). Also, the various departments of the internal IZD work would be given to groups and individuals throughout the country - but particularly to that group nearest to the future secretary. All this must be planned during the next three months. Herbert's work, therefore will not be easy during the remainder of his terms. In addition to the above, he must attend and help with the planning for the conference of Askov organisations at Vlotho, plan accommodations etc. for the SCI secretaries conference in Mülheim in November, and arrange the IZD AGM in Mülheim in December.

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Before leaving Germany I wrote the necessary letters of introduction etc., for the continuance of the liaison with certain officials. I wrote also a farewell letter to Col. Andrews, thanking him for his help and suggesting that he might drop in at the Vlotho conference. His reply ran :

Thank you very much for your kind letter dated the 22nd, September 1949. I am most grateful to you for all the excellent work which you and IVSP have done to help the work of this department. The IVSP schemes for work-camps etc. are ones which will long be remembered and which I hope, will continue. I hope to be at Vlotho during your conference.

With best wishes,

Yours very sincerely,

Alan Andrews.

Earlier Senior Representatives will be pleased to hear this. They will also be pleased to hear that, according to a Salvation Army major whom I met in the train on the return journey, the people in Friedland still speak with affection of one 'Jesus' (with a prefix which I forget). This is understood to refer to Old Noah Sainty who once operated in those parts.

I do not wish to close this final report without another reference to the subject of discipline. It is a subject on which I feel strongly and which has caused a certain amount of friction between IZD and myself. I spoke out strongly on this score at the last Executive meeting and was asked to incorporate my statements and suggestions in an article for the next Newsletter. This I did, but am doubtful of acceptance - chiefly on the grounds of the length of the article. SCI sets out to be an organisation which offers the world a proof that disinterested and friendly action can replace the profit and fear motives in human life. We want to shine as an example to the whole world. Such aims do not allow of sloppiness, inefficiency and irresponsibility, and we should not allow ourselves to be less efficient than a business organisation or an army, except insofar as efficiency invokes heartlessness. IZD has energy and undisciplined enthusiasm, but not a sufficiently clear idea of where it is going, and may drift in the direction of holiday-camps rather more quickly than other branches. I suggested to the IZD Executive that a person should be appointed who would be responsible for ideological liaison between the IZD groups and members on the one hand and the outer SCI movement and development on the other and to keep the spirit of SCI alive in Germany and at the same time contribute towards the democracy of ideas and feeling of the whole movement. My suggestion was rejected because it was considered that this was the job of the secretary. So it is, of course, but I fancy he will be so bemused by typing that he will have few creative ideas left in his head.

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18 October 49

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