

Internationaler Zivildienst
Donaueschingen
24th September, 1950

Dear Willy,

Gudrun is on holiday until next Wednesday and asked me to reply to you about the possibility of continuing through the winter. We have spoken with the Landrat and I have seen the foreman, Toni, and the Bauingéneur of the Neue Heimat. The Landrat was very enthusiastic about the continuation of the service. But in the short time that we spoke to him the problems which are important to us and Neue Heimat were not raised. Today I went to see the other two to get more information.

Following your questions:

1. It is certainly wished that we should go on right through the winter. The need is obvious and the work encouraging to volunteers many of whom have specially mentioned that they haven't met such a good project before. Having got to many houses nearly completed outside it would be a pity if we left soon. There is enough work for 15 – 20 volunteers through the winter.

Everything naturally depends on the weather. If it is a mild winter we will even be able to work outside. Frost however will put a stop to wall-building and the masons will then have to work inside plastering etc. If the winter is very hard all work will cease. The possibility and continuation of the camp will depend absolutely on the weather, which nobody can forecast. We cannot stay in the camp if work suddenly stops because of too much frost or snow. That would be impossible for the Neue Heimat. It would also be very difficult suddenly to find another service for the volunteers. On this point, the weather has detonated and we had a great deal of rain in the last week. Today there was frost at Furtwangen and snow at Villingen.

With accommodation here - we could get heating in the bedrooms.

2. It is certain that there will be increased unemployment during the winter though the position in the district is becoming better at present. Naturally, if we leave, Neue Heimat cannot afford to pay a large number of workers through the winter. One might say that we would not affect the position whatever we do. They wish to keep all the masons they have at the moment and our presence would help them to do this. On the other hand there is the impression we make in the district - there will be people who believe that we are preventing men from working.
3. Of the possibility you mention: If they keep all the masons on, there will be no opportunity for any volunteers to learn masonry. Neither is there any opportunity for joiners. The only possibility is painting.

Meta + Willy:

Have you any advise on this question. We have two men volunteers who have come because they are interested. One was already here as a guest and suddenly returned after writing to Meta. The other met a volunteer on the road and was interested enough to come to work. From the point of view of expediency, we need them at present. The first will stay till the end, the other at least two weeks. In principle they shouldn't perhaps be here. On the other hand it would be very unfortunate to turn them away when that might mean they would not come back later to another service. At the moment we cannot see whether we will need them during the last month as we have no list of the volunteers supposed to come.

Meta :

The first is : Alfons Weik, Journalist, Stuttgart-W, Paulusstraße 12

The other : Hermann Pierstorff, Student, Hamburg 24, Elisenstraße 12

Best wishes to everybody,

Stuart Gilbert