

REPORT ON THE DONAUESCHINGEN SERVICE

By Jim Rigby, Gr.Britain

The work here is of a distinct nature from the majority of S.C.I. projects in that volunteers are working alongside, and under skilled German worker, working almost the same hours, and accepting in principle the same conditions. This poses several problems for most volunteers in that it imposes a stricter discipline than is necessary in most S.C.I. camps, for volunteers will be judged (by the German workers) by the way, and the quality of the work, they perform, and by their punctuality and consciousness. I feel that I myself, and sometimes the camp as a whole, has not always lived up to this high ideal. Perhaps it is rather a lot to expect that volunteers who are unpaid shall respond in the same way to the discipline of paid labour, which in most cases is merely fear of the foreman; i.e., fear of the sack.

For these unfortunates who can not speak the language fluently, and discuss various problems with German workers, I think the work is often unsatisfying because of the frequent isolation from other volunteers and the lack of group spirit and endeavour, which is more evident in most normal S.C.I. projects. Also in my own mind there is a nagging suspicion that the S.C.I. declaration of not competing with paid labour does not apply to Donaueschingen in that unemployment is very great in Germany and we are doing work which in other countries would be done by paid labour. Also, though this may be a mistaken conception, conditions here in South Germany do not appear as bad as I imagined, and I often wonder if more urgent needs exist in Germany and could be partly met by S.C.I. groups.

One the more positive side of our work here, we are fortunate in having for greater contact with the local inhabitants than is possible with many S.C.I. projects, both by working alongside ordinary workers and by living in a town, where interested individuals reside. In this, I think the camp is very successful, and is admirably fulfilling the purpose of S.C.I. The seeds already sown here can be come a very effective force if they are tended with continuing enthusiasm.

I would like to praise the leader and headsister for the way they show an example, and work for the easy-running of the camp, and help to make life here a memorable experience.

Jim Rigby / 24.3.51