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 MINDERMANWEG 13  
 TEL. 82 62 41  
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Service Civil International  
 The European Secretary

Dear Janet,

since Alfred is taking his leave at present and Lutz as well, it seems to be my turn to answer to your letter to Alfred of July 5th - I got it from Lutz.

To begin with I would have welcomed to get questions personally and directly because you have given the whole letter affair a rather personal drive.

Well, what happened, actually ? Our committee invited some foreign people to our last annual meeting : the SCI European Secretary, some CSSR-friends and, last not least, a man from BITEJ whose name I have forgotten. Each of them got a complete set of conference papers. There was no special letter from me to BITEJ. The conference papers contained, among other items, an experience report about Tuchheim camp 1966, an extract of German volunteer reports which was compiled by myself, sent to the committee and to the cited volunteers, approved by everybody, and then duplicated. This is, as Ralph correctly stated in his letter of July 4th to Lutz, an internal (although not confidential!) paper. As we had not received any more reports by other non-German volunteers (we had asked you for them several times), the paper could only come to these conclusions. The conclusions were, by the way, very fair and I remember vividly my intension to make it a kind and encouraging report to all parties concerned : SCI - FDJ - German Ministry of Youth and Family - German membership.

So, I do not see any reason for FDJ, to be offended. We have repeatedly, asked them for their own comments on the camps which might have filled in any possible gap of information : no answer. I wonder what type their comments in their internal papers are of, which certainly exist about SCI (I guess "useful fools" - but that - by the way - would be a reason for me to feel offended or to ask for excuses). We should swing over to the agenda and leave it as it is : any exaggeration is lost time. They obviously want to continue and we want it. So we meet in useful partnership.

What stroke me most is is the fact, that our people obviously went to that meeting in Berlin without being thoroughly prepared. All I write to you must have been known to them and even to you - or nobody had read the papers.

Now, I continue to consider our operation with FDJ in a very positive way. We have found their officials always very willing to cooperate and helpful in organising things. We are interested to hear their arguments and we regret to have not sent our report to them in due time and directly. What has been said in Berlin about this item from both sides cannot be considered from the official point of view as a discussion of conclusions. If they don't like to discuss with me, I cannot change that - but we can only offer our readiness to discuss the next camp. It will be up to our national committee to ask a suitable person to visit the Tuchheim camp. As there will be no meeting before the end of July I realise that there will not be much chance for anybody to travel. But, as I said, we keep to our offer to send somebody and to cooperate in all relevant aspects.

Now, a last comment on some details. I have always admired your ability in using our language, and I, therefore, cannot but take it for granted that you quit well understood the whole report. You may have realised, that I as, well used the terminus DDR as the other Terminus "Mitteldeutschland" and especially the adjective "mitteldeutsch". Actually, I do not know an adjective derived from the root "DDR" : nota bene - they do not like us to say "German" in connection with their state.

"Verhandlungsschwierigkeiten nicht ideologisch bedingt, sondern sich aus der eingefahrenen Struktur einer Massenorganisation wie der FDJ soziologisch zwangsläufig ergeben". This is, actually, a very positive conclusion : if there have been difficulties (and we had them as you know), they have not been of a political nature, but must be seen related to any type of mass organisation (contrary to the more intimate nature of SCI) - we might have the same difficulties in any Western country (e. g. with Peace Corps officials).

"Kommunistische Jugendorganisation" : What else is FDJ to be called ? You may be astonished but not everybody knows what "FDJ" means. To suppose any backmind accent in this, sounds really phantastic.

"Geistige Beweglichkeit der FDJ-Funktionäre" : oh yes, we have being lad to meet people, like the Tuchheim camp leader and some of the officials because we do not want to waste our time with people who strain our nerves by non essential proverbs and declamations. We only can gain peace step by step if we are ready to think about matters in a frank and mobile way. I suppose this is the view of Mr. Steinbach also, if you ask him for his personal one.

This has not be a "rude" or "undiplomatic" style - it was a report on facts to the members ending with the recommendation to say "yes" to everything we did up to now and want to do from now. The very positive decisions taken by our annual meeting are the result. I felt free to take the responsibility of asking the annual meeting for these decisions which have been formulated by myself. Shall I regret to have done so ?

Please do realise, that this is not a personal mood of an-absent-minded chairman. It was the branch's official report, and it can be explained word by word in any language wanted. It was not "prepared in a way likely to give offence" to anybody. There is a proverb in Germany : "If a man wants to hang a dog, he always finds a tie."

Sincerely ( as always ) yours

IS  
Lutz Caspers

*Handschriftlich Notizen von Lutz Caspers, wohl für Antwort an HUS gedacht :*

Comment Brief HUS → Janet 11. 7.  
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1. J engagiert, wollte nicht verletzen. Persönl. Note erst jetzt.
2. entweder - oder. Wenn verschickt, dann offiziell = Hauptproblem !
3. im Moment nicht möglich - es sei denn, man ist diplomatisch und versucht wirklich auch FDJ gerecht zu werden.
4. geht nicht nach Stand der Dinge
5. Davon war nicht die Rede - würde Dich aber zu Äußerungen zwingen, zu denen Du vielleicht nicht bereit wärst, da pol. Charakter.
6. dann "ostdeutsch" (vergl. westd.)
7. "Massenorg" hat neg. Beigeschmack ) Ob Du's einsiehst oder nicht
8. Kom. " " " ) " " "
9. Verhandlungen = Zeitverschwendung, selbst wenn pol. Unterton. FDJ = SCI, kann weniger leicht persönliche Meinung vertreten.
10. dann hätte Gebrauch v. Mitteld. + DDR unterbleiben können