

Levi Pennington

People

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Pennington to the American Friends Service Committee, January 13, 1948

Levi T. Pennington

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January 13, 1948.

American Friends Service Committee,
20 South Twelfth Street,
Philadelphia 7, Penn.

Dear Friends:--

I want some advice.

Enclosed is a letter from Gunther Zumpfe, and a copy of my reply. I always feel like a selfish brute, almost a criminal, when a shivering man asks me for a quarter for a bit of food, and I refuse him because I know or suspect that he will spend the quarter for booze instead of bread, unless he is a professional beggar, with a bigger income than mine by a long ways. And when I know something of the desperate situation of the people across the seas, the natural impulse would be for me to send this man a food package, if it took the last cent I had.

And yet I have heard that there are those in Europe who have friends over here and who are faring much better than their neighbors who do not have any friends to whom they can write. A woman who used to cook for the college here and who is a native of Germany visited that country just before the war and was not able to get back to America. She wrote to us for help while we were back east last fall, but we could do nothing about it then if we had wanted to, for we were to reach her through her sister who lives in Newberg. I talked with this sister some days ago, and she tells me that a good many folks are now helping this sister with food and clothing packages, and that she is "getting along all right." Well, there are a lot of folks over there who are not "getting along all right", and it seems to me that the fairest thing is to send help through the AFSC, who make distribution to those who need it worst.

Well, tell me what seems to you the advisable thing to do when I get letters of this sort, for this is not the first nor the second that I have received, nor the third -- they get my name somehow.

Please return this letter from Germany when you have read it, and send it back with the advice I need.

Sincerely your friend,

Levi T. Pennington.