

Etienne Reclus,
S.C.V.I. Paris.

Dear Etienne,

Many thanks for your letter about the East-West project and for your reaffirmation of our common determination to ensure its eventual success. There have been many inherent difficulties but the sudden death of Yves Farge was not to have been expected and must, coming at this moment, have made it doubly difficult to achieve results for this summer. Nevertheless, the news of your contacts with the French secretary of the Mouvement de la Paix and with the Polish Embassy is good.

The proposal to send a small group to Poland to consider any project on the spot with the people concerned is excellent. I do not quite understand why you should think that this would be valuable only if we knew people to contact in advance. I do realise that it would be well to know who we want to see, and what kind of project precisely we might approve, but I imagine that you have already discussed or will discuss this with the attaché of the Polish Embassy. In any case, we should study, with their help, the present situation in the country with particular reference to work camps and work amongst young people, in order to be quite clear about the function of this project in helping to build goodwill.

Concerning contacts, about which you ask - I have written directly to the East German Peace Committee in East Berlin, and to Jacques Denis of WFDY in Budapest, but had have no reply from either. I have had an informal contact with the Cultural attaché of the Soviet Embassy in London, and also met Jacques Denis during a UNESCO Conference in Paris.

There have been wide contacts through other members of SCI.

In Switzerland, Alice Brügger has been particular concerned. She writes of a communist SCI member who doubted the acceptability of SCI services to the Eastern authorities, but says that the other members of the East-West Committee set up four years ago have done nothing to help her. You know already of Marcus Jucker's approach to the World Mouvement de la Paix last summer and of the friendly reply which was unfortunately ignored on the ground that we should do nothing before the IDM. The Swiss branch was also invited to send a small delegation to East Germany but declined the offer.

In Austria, Maria van Everdingen was very concerned. She had several contacts with the eastern occupation zone and was reported to have a project of work on a children's home in view, in Hungary.

In Germany, both IZD and the AFSC have been interested in making contacts with the eastern zone; IZD's committee approved the proposal of work in East Berlin, but, in common with many other friends, felt that the extreme tension, heightened by the Bonn proposals, made it unlikely that such a project could succeed at present.

You know of course that Dorothy Abbott worked with AFSC in Poland after the war. She helped in the organisation of camps there, but would prefer not to be involved in any SCI proposals, though I am sure her experience and advice would be of great value. Alun Davis, of the English Quakers, was also in Poland for several years after the war, and is concerned with the proposals for an Anglo-Russian work camp made by Friends here (though unlikely to be accepted by the Russians, I believe).

I think you are right in doubting whether the proposed services can take place this summer, though I do not think we should exclude the possibility. The Castor service will, I presume, take place in any case and it would no doubt be possible, even if not most desirable, to accept one or two Polish or other East European volunteers on a normal SCI service, sending in return one or two of our volunteers to take part in a work camp project in East Europe. This would at least enable friendly contact to be made.

Just this morning, I have had a visit from a WFDY representative from Bucharest, who has promised to look into the failure to answer my letter last year. They are not themselves holding work camps this year but are interested in the possibility of a small-scale project. He said that he thought WFDY would be willing to invite an observer (in an unofficial capacity) to their congress at Budapest (taking place just before the Youth Festival this summer) if we felt that it would be of interest. At this meeting, the secretaries of all the East European, Russian, Chinese, young peoples organisations would be present and it would be possible to have discussions with the people who would be directly responsible for an international work camp in any of these countries. I believe that friendly and unofficial contact of this kind would do more than anything else to help us to achieve a real work camp contact and to assess the willingness and sincerity of the other side. Visits either to Poland or Bucharest would be well worthwhile for this reason alone.

Of course, you will be in contact with Heni Roser, and his opinion about these proposals will be very valuable, particularly as he may have reasons to think that the initiative taken by Yves Farge at the W.P.C. may yet lead to a project from that side. If not before, it will be good to see Henri at the International Committee meeting in London.

Anyway, many thanks for keeping us informed. I hope the information I have given helps you to see the whole picture of past contacts, and can provide copies of any correspondence if you would like me to. I look forward to hearing again from you shortly.

Yours sincerely,

LANDON TEMPLE
General Secretary

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