

*SERVICE CIVIL INTERNATIONAL
International Secretariat*

*Minutes of the 26th Meeting of the International Committee together with the 21st Meeting of the
Branch Secretaries held at Montry, France, on October 29th - 31st, 1960*

=====

.....
.....
.....

5. EUROPE

.....
.....

Germany

The planned camp in Eastern Germany was unfortunately cancelled one week before it was supposed to start by our partners. All planned international work camps by any organisations were cancelled. This seems to indicate that the Government was not favourable to the idea. But there is hope that such camps can be organised in 1961

.....

FWCC / Great Britain

.....

FWCC is very interested in East-West exchange and had two Russian volunteers in their camps this year.

.....
.....

6. EAST-WEST RELATIONSHIP

Delegates from cooperating organisations in the USSR, Poland, Yugoslavia were invited as from World Federation of Democratic Youth and the International Students Union. Only the Polish Rural Youth was able to send a delegate, who, however, spoke also for the other two Polish associations.

USSR

The camp run jointly by Soviet Youth / WFDY / SCI was successful. There was a good comradeship and will for mutual understanding. Many lively discussions took place and personal contacts were found most useful. Where groups could not come to fully understanding each other, it was at least recognised that cooperation in the practical field was quite possible in spite of some basic differences of ideological views, mentality, and ways and methods of doing things, provided the principle of mutual tolerance was maintained. Living conditions in the camp were too luxurious for SCI standards. After affair of telegram's was reported again, but it was found that not to much importance should be given to such matters, which by the way also serve to promote thorough discussions on principles and exchange of views on fundamental differences among the campers without breaking up the camp if carried out in a spirit of mutual understanding and foregoing missionary zeal.

Some discussion took place in the IC and it was found that though each volunteer should feel free to sign telegram's as an individual, it was not desirable to sign any telegram taking a stand in political matters (except in matters regarding CO's) as a group, or fraction of group or individual in the name of SCI. This might be done only by responsible committees in so far as the constitution allows for it.

Poland

Two camps took place, one in cooperation with the Polish Rural Youth (ZMW) and one in cooperation with the Polish Socialist Youth (ZMS). Visas for one French and one German volunteer were unfortunately not coming forth in time, also Polish volunteers arrived later and in a lesser number than expected. There were some language difficulties arising from inadequate translating. Good work was done in general and excellent relationship established with the local population. At the beginning discipline was lacking somehow, probably due to the very low age of a number of Polish volunteers. In the second camp work was not always satisfactorily organised and not adequately prepared for all participants. But as this camp was the first one run by ZMS and SCI together it is considered as a good beginning for an eventually very fruitful cooperation.

In the following discussion it was said that efforts should be made to include in each team going to serve in East-West camps an SCI volunteer speaking the language of the country as well as an economist who is able to explain the working of the Western economical set-up. If possible volunteers having served should be invited to join an East-West team for a second time. This will particularly be valuable for a camp in Eastern Germany (DDR) which the German branch hopes will place next year. The IC finally encouraged the European secretariat and the French branch to go on with the valuable experience of East-West camps.

Our friend Waclaw Wygledowski, representing the three Polish organisations ZMW, ZMS (see above) and ZSP (Polish Student Union) then gave a brief outline of his Government's political views and announced the formation of a Polish inter-associational work camp committee in Varsovie, which would in future be responsible to run joint camps with SCI in Poland.

Waclaw suggested in the name of that committee to have three joint camps in Poland in 1961 for which he expects not less than 15 volunteers from SCI for each camp. On the other hand every effort will be made to send a large number of Poles to camps in Western Europe. The newly created coordinating committee in Varsovie is very keen to deepen contacts with SCI.

The IC congratulated our Polish friends for their move and assured Waclaw of the full cooperation of SCI. The German Delegate, Klaus Buchheister, asked whether some Polish volunteers would be prepared to serve in German camps. Etienne Reclus stressed the point that the camps in Poland have to be prepared from now on, and that it would perhaps be wiser to limit the number of camps to two in order to make sure that there will be enough volunteers from all sides (Poland / WFDY / SCI). Finally it was decided to plan three camps of which two will be prepared from now on and the third one after mutual agreement at the end of February 1961 in view of the volunteer situation as it will present in spring 1961.

Yugoslavia

Walter Schenkel and others expressed their disappointment about the cancellation of the planned service in autumn 1960. We now want to aim at participation in the Yugoslav People's Youth big work camps in view of a later joint camp on a smaller scale and the branches are asked to make sure to have some volunteers available. The French branch and the European secretariat are asked to prepare a team to be sent to Yugoslavia in 1961. The European secretary will renew contact with the Yugoslav People's Youth and the authorities, and will examine with particularly interested friends like Walter Schenkel to what extent help should be asked for from Boža Smagura.

Bulgaria and Hungary

Henri Majewski thinks that there are chances to have a camp in Bulgaria (together with the Esperanto Association) and even in Hungary. But we have to be careful not to overdo and we must particularly be sure to find enough volunteers with experience. They might be found if the camps are announced in time.

After some discussion it was decided to aim at having the following number of camps in the priority as stated : USSR 1, Poland 3, Yugoslavia 1; Bulgaria 1, Hungary 1 with at least 15 SCI volunteers for each camp. This camps would all take place in July and August 1961. Henri Majewski suggested that SCI volunteers should also be encouraged to join camps in Eastern European countries organised by other organisations and will send the branches a list of names and addresses of these organisations. The IC agreed to this proposals.

Forum 1961 and Festival 1962

If a special seminar for work camps is included in the programme of the Forum, SCI will send representatives and take full part in this seminar. The same applies for the planned Festival in 1962. For this latter, however, it was suggested, according to the decisions of Doorn, that SCI should contact other interested associations such as AFSC, FWCC and IAL in view of common responsibility possibly under the umbrella of the Coordination Committee for International Voluntary Work Camps.

.....
.....
.....