

Internationaler Zivildienst
Hamburg 1
Beim Strohhaus 14

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This is to send to :

Mitglieder des deutschen Arbeitsausschusses des SCI
International Committee
Secretaries, national and international

Comments should reach this office by Febr, 1st !

Internationaler Zivildienst
Berlin - Spandau
Johannisstift

Berlin, den 13. 2.

I.

SCI — BERLIN — 1962

One could say that SCI was founded to demonstrate the possibility of individuals participating in the removal of the causes of war on an international scale. At the time workcamps seemed a hopeful method. Indeed over the years camps run by SCI and others have contributed immeasurably to the improvement of individual situations and the arousing of socio-political concern in countless individuals, but in a larger sense we have failed. A second major war followed the first and already the third is here in spirit if not yet actually. Most people would say that our noble peacemaking purpose has been demonstrated to be beyond the scope of anybody outside governments, if indeed there is hope at all. We would prefer to say that our task as well as the task of anyone engaged in such pioneering work is to reassess both immediate goals and methods instead of blindly going on to do more of the same approach in ever increasing doses. Perhaps we, as well as the governments seeking peace, have suffered from too small a conception of the causes and nature of conflict (which is war ultimately). Allowing SCI to be straight-jacketed by a vested membership is as much a betrayal of our founding ideals as a more obvious departure from customary activities. Without entering on an endless debate, it ought to be possible to make procedural experiments looking toward generally acceptable new channels of activities which could be developed by SCI alongside the more traditional ones.

Coming to Berlin was looked on as an experiment from the beginning. Without claiming that everyone concerned had the same attitude it should be safe to say that Berlin presented a unique opportunity for reconciliation and for international/intercultural contact without any possibility of focusing our participation on emergency manual labour. Berlin, East and West, is a wealthy city by most world standards without its political needs being grounded in the kind of physical want which we have usually set out to attack. To see how SCI could adapt itself to this situation a group was established in Johannisstift in November 1961 where we could contribute to a recognized but marginal social need in the ongoing life of this hospital complex, and at the same time observe the city. At the end of two months dissatisfaction was mounting within the group over the involvement in the essentially irrelevant problems of Johannisstift which left inadequate time for learning German, meeting people or even getting

Acquainted with the political situation. It seems too ridiculous for people at home with better access to native language news media to know more about the daily Berlin developments than we here in the situation. Basically we seem to lack time and, partly thereby, language. From these considerations has grown the idea of a work-study camp which would allow half-time for study and half-time to be self-supporting through earnings from work as constructive, involved and satisfying as possible. To maintain some political purity involvement in the heavily subsidized West-Berlin industrial economy seems undesirable. On the other hand, to be at all socially possible and responsible we would need to be economically self-supporting at least on a subsistence basis.

Into such a situation we would bring, at the very least, the basis SCI confidence that democracy does work; that individuals can make a significant contribution to their collective destiny. If the results of our actual study were not even communicated to the Berlin people we would have already by our mere presence demonstrated our faith in rational study of deeper issues in the same way that our manual labour camps demonstrate the faith of the participants in the dignity to work and the value of personal/international participation on that level. This does not seem to us to be a great leap from what we have always done. To impose the results of any of such amateur analysis on the others would be unforgivable just as is forced labour on however worthy cause, but to demonstrate the possibility of individual involvement by our own example is the essence of SCI tradition. We have only to recognize the need for a deeper level than ever before.

Kendrick Putnam, USA

II.

Need and possibilities of SCI in Berlin

Primary need it could be answer :

For mutual understanding — not only within the group but to the whole EAST / WEST problem and the people involved. A project therefore would need to be a work / study one in order to provide time and opportunity to :

- learn the German language
- study the situation in theory from historical records
- keep constantly informed of present events
- meet the people involved in East and West to hear their experiences and opinions.

The work SCI could do :

Constructive work is not the first need here in Berlin. Needed useful social work could be found but I would say as well as what SCI would give to that work, it would also give as much to SCI by providing the team with a means of living and the possibility to become integrated with the situation by personal experience and study (as above).

SCI to extend beyond meeting and listening and coming to a mutual understanding ?

No, I don't believe it would be right for SCI as an organisation to go further into ideologically constructive work, I. e. specific teaching non-violence because this would take away the complete openness of SCI to people of all thought, nation, custom and religion.

I've come to the conclusion that in Berlin there is this need for a work / study camp as described — this could cover a definite period, then if members of SCI felt compelled to go out from this into specifically ideological work within a group they could leave the auspices fo SCI and join up with an organisation such as the Peace Brigade (if it were in operation), but also Peace Brigade volunteers could take part in an SCI work / study project.

62 01 18 - 1 03

I also believe from my personal experiences that during this time with an SCI project one should take care to put SCI aims first and any personal specific belief one should express

only where there is no danger of them being understood as specifically SCI beliefs, and even perhaps during this proposed Berlin work / study project it would be good to become a listener most of the time.

Judith Evans, England

III. Needs, Suggestions and Possibilities for Berlin II

Accommodations needed and wanted :

- a place to live in the centre of Berlin
- providing rooms for boys and girls, common room in the same house.

As Berlin II is going to be an experiment again it seems to be the easiest to start off the group living in a already existing home, but all community-constructive factors in choosing the accommodation should be observed as there are living, eating together, privacy for the group, not mixing too much with the other persons living in the home, specially when we would not have the chance of working together (experienced in Johannisstift).

Pastor Weckerling (students' chaplain at the Technische Universität Berlin) makes these suggestions for our work :

- some of the group-members earn money to run the camp (in industry, in hospitals, as sick-mother's helps, . . .)
- some could teach and talk over SCI-methods and non-violence in youth groups, schools, . . .
- some get specialized in making contact in East-Berlin : visiting families, groups, etc. perhaps take part in the programme carried out by Bob Starbeck, American minister working under the auspices of the Gossner-Mission in East- and West-Berlin
- some could even work officially or unofficially in East-Berlin in hospitals, homes.

The two latter proposals could be realized with the help and the channels of the church and the Innere Mission

living :

in a home built for students from East-Berlin and East-Germany which has now spare room (Probably some group-members could even work there and so contribute to the living-costs and the SCI-group at a whole could have an educational influence on the students as their characters — are badly effected by the large allowance they are given by the West German government). — We are going to hear next Tuesday whether there is an actual possibility to live in such a home.

Pastor Hammerstein, leader of the Aktion Sühnezeichen, offered to look for jobs to earn the living, when the lodging would be settled. He has got a list of our names, skills, possibilities and interests (not including Hans-Peter Rederlechner, Michel Lebel, Eleonore Holmes). He also brought us in touch with Sister Edith Akler and Pastor Broelsch, both working in the headquarters of Innere Mission, department Bahnhofsmision.

Sister Edith Akler is in charge of two Unterkunftsheime, one at Franklinstrasse, Berlin-Charlottenburg, near Zoo, one at Altensteinstrasse, Berlin-Dahlem, near the Freie Universität. I visited both :

- Fraklinstrasse is an industrial area — easy access by train and U-Bahn — one room for girls, one room for boys (small 2-storey-beds), a small common room could be provided immediately, breakfast is served, preferably no dinner or supper, because the home does not do its own cooking but get hot meals from a town-kitchen. Prize for bed and breakfast as a group arrangement : 2,- DM daily per person. The fluctuation of guests is great. The whole building is narrow. My personal impression : The home provides just a very cheap sleeping facility for travellers. It looks cold and bare and lacks an atmosphere of cosiness and warmth — less than an ordinary youth-hostel provides (not even measured by German standard).

62 01 18 - 1 04

- Altensteinstrasse : an adapted villa in a garden in a district of single houses belonging to the better off families. Access by bus from Zoo in 35 min., S- and U-Bahn nearby.

The house has a special part for visitors and groups. We would get two large rooms (2-store-beds), looking friendly, providing a certain living-space, a very nice looking, comfortable common-room just for the group. Three meals a day or less on arrangement could be provided. Prize for the bed and full board 6,50 DM a day per person, 4,50 DM for bed and breakfast only. No possibility to do even a small amount of own cooking, but a kitchen is in the house.

My personal impression : in this home we would be guests. The atmosphere seems to be inviting for study. Perhaps the whole is a little too luxurious for SCI-standard. Very welcome would be the nearby university.

Pastor Broelsch sees a possibility for doing voluntary work as individuals or as a group with a district-centre of the Innere Mission (Bezirksstelle), I. e. as individuals : sick-mothers' help, in homes for old or children. As a group in the building programme or repairing scheme, wallpaper-hanging, etc.

No details could be given yet, but half day work or twenty hours a week is not excluded.

As we will not get money for our work, the Innere Mission would have to pay for the cost of board and lodging. Pastor Broelsch thinks it would not be impossible to get the money for the experiment. He calculated that we would need 1.500 DM a month, being seven volunteers living at Altensteinstrasse.

Group members would not like the work in their professions and none of the group likes the thought of wage-earning in industry. If Pastor Broelsch's proposal could be realised, I think it would suit the ideals best.

I personally think that the German committee, perhaps international as well, has to consider about the present and any future project in Berlin, especially the following :

1. Work-study camp as the only justified SCI activity in Berlin (Reason given by Ken and Judith)
2. Johannisstift camp should come to an end. Reasonable time seems to be the end of January (the house meeting today proved again that all three new volunteers aren't satisfied with the working conditions and the kind of work itself as a contribution to what Berlin needs).
3. How far can SCI get involved with the Innere Mission for working (for housing there arises no question).
4. Not to depend too much on the present camp-membership in the decision concerning the new project (although nearly all of us would like to go into the new project, and even volunteers already gone would like to come back).
5. To get more backing and reasonable support and communication with the office in Hamburg.
6. To be really effective, a study-work camp would need a leader with great personal authority and deep understanding, but I know that such a person is rarely available at this time of the year. In view of this, I feel that a team of three leaders, one of whom knew German, would meet the situation adequately.

Verena Ritter, Schweiz

62 01 18 - 1 05

IV. Some answers and suggestions from the point of view of the Hamburg-Office (Roswitha Villinger) :

It is obvious that we should think of closing down the camp Johannisstift for this team, as they are not doing voluntary service any longer but feel obliged to go on working. I suggest

to finish at the 10th of February 1962. By that time all volunteers have been working for at least one month which was the arrangement with the Johannisstift.

In order to organise something new, which is called Berlin II, we need :

1. the general decision that we want to go on in Berlin but with a new type of camp, the work and study camp, which usually means 6 hours' work daily.
Are there any proposals for the study-programme in the group ? (How and where to learn German, who will be teaching ? Who will be leading history-studies ? Which are the principles and aims of meeting people as part of the studies ?)
2. a project including accommodation and finances : To me the offer of the Innere Mission is acceptable, even welcome, and I hope they will agree to a six hours' working day, although in many cases of individual help in families it will not be possible to finish work just because six hours are gone. Arrangements should be made definitely by February 1st.
3. volunteers : The new experiment is only possible with those who are in Berlin now and who have had all these discussions and experiences. There will be no new volunteers until the situation is settled and it proves to be successful. Who is staying definitely and how long ???
4. Responsibles in the camp where and are Judith, Verena, Ken. They will go on, I hope. Hans-Ulrich Smolczyk offered to keep regular contact between Hamburg and the group, as he knows Berlin and most of the people involved in this project at this moment.

In case the general decision in SCI / IZD is negative and against continuation of a camp in Berlin, there is a good chance that the World Peace Brigade is interested in taking over volunteers and contacts, as they decided to start in Berlin !