

62 07 12 - 2 01

Roswitha Svensgård, Königshyttan, Hedemora 3409, Sweden

To Roger Briottet
with copy to Ralph Hegnauer and the German branch

July 12th, 1962

Dear Roger,

I was asked to give you some information about the last experience that the German branch of SCI had when we tried to come into contact with East Germany (DDR).

It was in spring 1959 when I met several teachers from the DDR at a conference in Eisenach with whom I talked about SCI inquiring about possibilities of a camp in the DDR. The representatives of the Teachers Union in the district of Rostock (DDR) became interested and we exchanged information-material in a private basis. Only in the beginning of 1960 Klaus Buchheister and I were invited to come to Rostock and meet some of the functioneers there. Our meeting lasted about 4 hours and we agreed on a work camp project on the Isle of Rügen, doing agricultural work for the benefit of a collective farm. This was before all private farms became collective farms. We decided that IZD / SCI and Rostock should collect applications and meet again to decide who should be accepted. This second meeting took place in May 1960 in Hamburg (with two representatives from Rostock), where we selected the group from the West but there were no applications from the East available. We were promised to see them later. The camp was planned to start in July, and the first volunteers arrived in Hamburg (where they were supposed to gather because of a collective visa), when we received a letter from Rostock cancelling the whole camp. There was no precise reason given for the cancellation but two sentences talking about disagreement within SCI membership in this combined project in the DDR which made it impossible for them to invite us.

As at the same time (summer 1960) all farmers had to join the collective village farms which created a lot of resistance within the population of the DDR the traffic between both parts of Germany was cut short as a whole; this might have been the real reason for the sudden cancellation. We did not try to continue cooperation with them, but left future initiative to the Teachers Union in Rostock.

For new contacts made by yourself I and some friends here would like to propose that we ask town authorities and social boards for projects in their town and only after they have found the working project one should decide who was responsible for the organisation of the camp. This will not be possible for you if you only intend to meet people at the workcamp seminar at Helsinki, but as it is not a project for the near future it should be tried.

Ralph was asking me in his letter dated 13/5/62 whether I was interested in an international service for translations. I am quite willing to help in this way especially during the long winter here. Did you have any concrete proposals how to organise it, or did you mean to send material just as you get it ? I am waiting for further instructions.

With best wishes
amities

Roswitha