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SERVICE CIVIL INTERNATIONAL

To : IC / SCI
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Branch Secretaries
Co-ordination Committee
AFSC / Chaville

REPORT ON NEGOTIATIONS REGARDING EAST / WEST RELATIONS
27th July - 20th August 1962

Introduction

In view of the importance for SCI of work with organisations in Socialist countries, I originally intended to spend these three weeks taking part in the Seminar for Voluntary Work Camps organised during the Festival of Youth in Helsinki, and in visiting the USSR, Poland and the GDR in order to initiate, renew or strengthen relations with organisations of Eastern Europe. Having learnt, however, that the CYO officials would all be at Helsinki, I changed my programme and visited the Norwegian and German branch of SCI and IAL in Stockholm. While taking into account the precious contacts made in Oslo, Hamburg and Stockholm, this report is intentionally limited to East-West problems. The other questions raised by SCI and IAL secretaries will appear in my general report to the 30th ICM. On the other hand I shall try to situate the result of these East-West contacts within the framework of the past relations with the organisations of the East.

I. The Seminar on International Voluntary Work Camps. Helsinki 31st July - 3rd August 1962

The idea of such a seminar was put forward at a meeting of representatives of the Co-ordination Committee, Western Work Camp organisations (including SCI) and Eastern Organisations, held in Moscow on 28th July 1961.

It was decided that a seminar would take place within the framework of the 8th World Youth and Student Festival at Helsinki, 1962. An organising Committee was set up, under the responsibility of the Co-ordination Committee with representatives of the BITEJ, CYO, ZMW, CKMOJ (Yugoslavia), SCI and FSC (see Co-Co document No. 68). This organising committee met in Paris on 25th November 1961, and agreed upon the outline of a four day programme of study. It was agreed that 60 places would be reserved for participants in the Festival and 40 for experienced work campers recruited by the Western organisations.

While the 40 work campers names were known to the Co-Co in good time, it was impossible on the other hand to obtain individual application forms from the 60 Festival participants.

After careful consideration of the facts the Co-Co decided to go on with the preparation of the Seminar as it appeared that this apparent breach of the agreement was due more to technical difficulties on the part of the Festival Preparatory Committee than to any kind of voluntary obstruction. The detailed programme of the Seminar was circulated to you in April (Co-Co 107). You will find enclosed a copy of the final report *). I shall therefore make only a few general observations :

1. The seminar has been a success in so far as it has given an opportunity to many participants of East-West work camps held this year to express their views and criticisms.
2. It offered a unique opportunity to inform many participants in the Festival on the nature and merits of workcamps. Representatives of newer developing countries, in particular (Algeria, Cuba, Guinea etc.) showed great interest.
3. It must be admitted, however, that from the more limited viewpoint of East-West relations, a more permanent attendance and a greater interest in the work of the commission was expected on the part of official representatives of Soviet and Polish organisations, in spite of the efforts made by Mr. Klos of the BITEJ.

4. Last but not least, it was very encouraging to note that Mr. Francois, of UNESCO, felt that the Seminar was important enough to spend a full session with us. He publicly emphasized once again that UNESCO followed with great attention the development of Workcamp programmes.

II. Meetings, contacts and negotiations with organisations of Socialist Countries.

I met officially :

- a) Mrs. Titowa and Mr. Silin of the Committee of Soviet Youth Organisations (C.Y.O.) on the occasion of the Helsinki Seminar on 4th August.
 - b) Mr. Klos, Director of the Bureau International pour le Tourisme et les Echanges de la Jeunesse (BITEJ) on August 15th in Warsaw.
 - c) Mr. Rumpel, Chief of the Department of International Relations of the Freie Deutsche Jugend (FDJ) of the GDR on the occasion of the BITEJ Conference at Warsaw on 15th August.
- Valli Chari, Asian Co-secretary of SCI was present at meetings (a), Bill Beittel, AFSC, President of the Co-ordination Committee was present at meetings (b) and (c), Glyn Roberts, Executive Secretary of the Co-Co attended all three meetings.

1. Negotiations with CYO and BITEJ

The East-West workcamp in the Soviet Union had just ended when I met Mrs. Titowa in Helsinki.

We all felt that the Soviet reception was rather cold. When I stated how important the participation of Soviet volunteers to camps in Western Europe was to SCI and the Co-Co, Mrs. Titowa flatly declared that Soviet volunteers were on their way to France. I learned later that they never arrived because they applied too late for their visas. This is only one example of the difficulties met when discussing matters with the CYO. On the other hand I am convinced that the CYO wishes to continue their relations with SCI, and even that they would like SCI to act as a channelling organisation for all Western volunteers. Some progress was, however, made at Helsinki.

- a) An East-West workcamp will be organised in India next year (under the responsibility of the SCI Asian Secretariat).
- b) An East-West workcamp will be organised in the USSR next year (Usually camps in the Soviet Union are held only every two years).
- c) The CYO promised to send more volunteers to Western Europe next year if they informed early in the year of the workcamp programmes.

The BITEJ meeting (see Minute enclosed) also decided to hold, for the first time, a Seminar on work camps this year in Budapest, with the collaboration of SCI and the Co-Co. Mr. Klos intends to invite to this Seminar those who will be responsible for the organisation of workcamps in Eastern countries next year.

2. Prospects of work in the G.D.R.

For many years the German branch of SCI has tried to establish contacts with the FDJ. So far these attempts have failed through no fault of the German branch. In its 29th Meeting the IC requested the ES to investigate ways and means of renewing these contacts. Before embarking on negotiations with FDJ and other East-German organisations, I consulted the Committee of the German branch. I also had the opportunity to discuss this problem with Carlotta von Pavel, the President of the German branch, and received from Roswitha Svensgård a detailed account of the attempted SCI / FDJ camp. After all these contacts I concluded that, according to the German branch, SCI should not work in the GDR unless :

- a) some other non-committed East-German organisation(s) would agree to collaborate with us and
- b) the project would serve a community in need and not merely be a direct aid to the regime.

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On this basis, which I understood would be acceptable to the IC, I discussed the future possibilities of work in the GDR with Mr. Rumpel. He declared with great enthusiasm that FDJ would welcome a

closer collaboration with SCI for a project in the GDR and invited me to study (in Berlin) the details of such a project. He added that his organisation did its best to welcome more Western volunteers each year, and that more East-German volunteers would go abroad if they were granted visas by the Western governments.

In Berlin I talked with various people belonging to several non-politically committed organisations. From these discussions, it seems that the following conclusions can be drawn :

1. Work camps have been and still are organised by non-politically committed organisations in the GDR.
2. It is possible to find worthwhile projects through the National Aufbauwerk (NAB) a State board in charge of construction planning.

It seems, therefore, that positive prospects of work exist in the GDR, although any plan for future activities in that country will mainly depend upon the evolution of the political situation.

3. Yugoslavia

I discussed with Enid Skardalsmo, the Secretary of the SCI Norwegian branch, now in charge for relations with Yugoslavia, the prospects of work in that country next year. A small team of SCI volunteers led by V. Galassi went to a P.P.Y. (Peoples' Youth of Yugoslavia) this year. This team was asked to investigate ways of organising an small scale East-West workcamps in Yugoslavia in 1963, but the report of V. Galassi has not yet reached the ES. As the Norwegian branch has already begun negotiations with the P.Y.Y. I felt it better not to take up this question with the Yugoslav delegates in Helsinki and Warsaw, but I understood from them that it might be possible to organise a camp within the framework of local Yugoslav planning.

A complete report will be given by the Norwegian delegate at the next ICM.

Conclusion :

I have intentionally omitted to report on this year's East-West workcamps in France, Poland and the USSR, because only a limited number of reports have reached me so far. I shall include this point in my general report to the 30th ICM. I wish to record my sincere thanks to the members of the German branch and to the secretaries of the Norwegian branch and of IAL for the help they gave me during this journey, and above all to Glyn Roberts and Bill Beittel whose sound knowledge of East-West problems has made this trip easier for me and more profitable for SCI.

Roger Briottet
European Secretary / SCI
London 3rd September 1962

*) To branch secretaries :

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