

European Secretariat

London, 29th Sept. 1962

I have just returned from Berlin, and I feel that you will be interested to know the result of the conversation I had there with various people regarding a possible East-West camp in East Germany.

First of all, I must say that I had met Mr. Gutsch of the Gossner Mission and Mr. Schmit of the Christian Peace Movement, during my last visit. I did not mention their names in my report because I thought that it might be dangerous for them. I met these people again and Mr. Romberg, who knows you very well, on the 25th and 26th of September. Mr. Gutsch confirmed that he would be ready to collaborate with both SCI and FDJ for the preparation of a work camp in East Germany next summer. They all said that even if the FDJ would not accept their co-operation, it would be worth organising a camp under the joint responsibility of SCI and FDJ, since such a project would bring some fresh air into East Germany and would, as a result, render the work of the Christian organisations much easier.

On the basis of this conversation, I had a long and rather official talk with Mr. Rumpel of the FDJ on the subject of a project run together with one of the Christian organisations. On this point his tactic was to deny the existence of such organisations, and I felt it better not to press this point, in order to avoid any further complication for Mr. Gutsch and his friends. On the other hand, Rumpel accepted all the SCI conditions for the organisation of an East-West work camp in East Germany, including the sending of an SCI delegate who would help choosing, preparing and organising the project.

I shall send a working paper on this question very soon, and I hope that the International Committee will agree to this proposition. In the meantime I should be very glad to have your comments. I know that such projects have failed in the past, but I am also convinced that the political situation has changed and the FDJ is anxious to collaborate with international organisations such as SCI. For this reason they are prepared to accept conditions which they would not have accepted one or two years ago. I should be glad if you would inform the German Committee on the developments of the situation, so that we can have a general and frank discussion on this subject at the International Committee.

Roger Briottet