

ES / 1418. CoCo

CONFIDENTIAL
-----Arthur Gillette
P a r i s

Dear Arthur,

Thank you for your very interesting letter of the 13th instant. I was over in Paris during the week end and since then, urgent questions seem to pile up ! I must give a double answer to this letter of yours : (1) as ES / SCI responsible for East-West contacts and (2) as CoCo Chairman p. i.

1. I agree with you that the new proposal of the FDJ and the CYO to send LTVs to long term projects organised by work camp organisations is, as you put it, a "brèche dans le mure". I have no doubt that SCI will consider this proposition carefully and in the long run give a favourable answer. But you must see that if we want this new venture to be a success, we must be very careful in the way we handle it at the beginning. First of all, it is not merely a question to be solved between FDJ / CYO and SCI, but above all the question as to whether the received country, e. i. Algeria would welcome these Eastern volunteers. I have little doubt that the Algerian authorities would be more open to true internationalism than say the Cameroonesse Government who have been making difficulties to Boris Andreieff because he happens to have a Russian sounding name, but all the same the question is delicate and must be answered prior to any formal arrangement between the interested organisations. Secondly, as far as SCI is concerned, it is important to insure that the Eastern volunteers will in fact accept to be placed under the authority of SCI during their stay in Algeria or elsewhere. This is indispensable, not only for the smooth running of the work, but also (and maybe even more !) to give certain guarantees to those people within SCI who already feel uneasy about the recent developments of East-West contacts. You probably know that I met with many real difficulties when negotiating the camp in the DDR and that at least one branch is still very much opposed to the whole idea. It is my firm belief that SCI will go forward in this direction but, I am afraid, it will go slowly ! Please understand that it would be worthless to promote internationalism in one way, i. e. by accepting East European LTVs on our projects if this leads in SCI, as an international organisation to a breaking point.

Practically, I should like to propose the following plan of action :

- (a) I shall discuss this question with Ralph Hegnauer and the Bureau of the International Committee as soon as possible. Personally, I am strongly in favour of the scheme and I shall do my best to push it.
- (b) When / if agreement is reached on the principle, it is more than probable that the question will have to be explained and discussed at the next meeting of the SCI International Committee at the beginning of November. Which means I am afraid that no official stand can be taken at the Budapest meeting in September. On the other hand if I can explain that the Eastern volunteers will serve in Algeria when I am personally responsible for the project, it will offer a certain guarantee which may be sufficient.
- (c) From the technical point of view there should not be much difficulty regarding the fares of the volunteers. This could be examined later. But when you say that the volunteers would work in Algeria "sous les conditions habituelle", do you mean to say that they would accept to serve on a short term camp to get some work camp experience as most of our volunteers do ? This, off course is an important point which would have to be settled in advance.

I shall very probably go to Berlin myself after Budapest to assess the results of the E/W camp at Potsdam. This will give a opportunity to discuss with the FDJ the conditions of the collaboration.

2. From the CoCo viewpoint, there no doubt that you have done a very good job and it is good that it was you and not the representative of a member organisation who discuss the matter. That gave an opportunity to see how far the Russians and the East German organisations were prepared to go without committing either the CoCo or any of the Western organisations. I think that it would be excellent if the question could studied and seriously discusses at the next CoCo meeting at Budapest. It would give us an opportunity to see whether certain organisations are willing to collaborate, especially if SCI shows that is opened to the idea. Also, it would be a way of making it known outside CoCo circles, not only in the East European countries but also in the UN Agencies circles.

This is about all (and enough !) I have to say on this subject for the moment. Please keep me informed of further developments. I am returning your letter but I would appreciate if you could possibly send me a copy, since it gives quite a lot of interesting details. Thanks.

All the best,

Roger Briottet

cc. IS / SCI
IC Bureau / SCI
French br. / SCI