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Y u g o s l a v i a

Report on the Three-Way-Workcamp at Bohinj, 15. 7. - 17. 8. 1963

1. Preparation of the camp

Following the decision of the 30th IC to organise a joint workcamp with the AFSC and the Yugoslav Youth Alliance, the Norwegian Branch took responsibility for the SCI administrative preparation. Walter Schenkel agreed to help with preparations for the camp, keeping closely in touch with the Norwegian Branch and AFSC; he also agreed to lead the SCI team. The ES, and the AFSC leader, Jim Johnson, were both at the site a few days before the camp began. Most of the following information, and the conclusions, are based on a comprehensive report submitted by Walter Schenkel.

2. Project

- 21 General The project was selected by the regional authorities of the YYA. The work was digging foundations for an annexe to the Mladinski Dm, which is a tourist centre, and the construction of a small road to the Dom. The team was well equipped with picks and shovels, but short of wheelbarrows. Food (cooked and provided by the tourist centre) and accommodation were very good, although no building was available where all volunteers could gather in bad weather for communal activities. The team was not able to complete the foundation work, but did do more than the Yugoslavs expected. The camp was judged to be a success by the SCI leader (and by the Yugoslavs) despite various problems outlined below.
- 22 The work Many volunteers felt that a project to benefit a community, and therefore involving the local population, rather than a tourist centre, would have provided more suitable work. The project chosen might have been carried out more efficiently by a contractor with heavy earth-moving equipment or by a local youth brigade.
- 23 Leadership and co-responsibility The division of leadership responsibility on the camp was rather complex. Technical supervision was in the hands of a Yugoslav advanced engineering student with (apparently) no previous practical experience. The Yugoslav work-leader left the camp for a few days at a critical point without providing instructions for work in his absence; this did not cause any great difficulties. The YYA leader for the first few days was excellent; he had plenty of experience with the Youth Brigades and adapted quickly to the requirements of the comparatively small size of the camp. His successor was not such a suitable person. Jim Johnson (AFSC) acted as co-leader for the camp, and did the job very well. Bob Thompson took over leadership of the SCI group when Walter Schenkel left at the end of the third week of the camp.
- 24 Volunteers The full team consisted of almost thirty volunteers. The average of the SCI group (4 M. 5 F) was higher than of the AFSC / YYA volunteers. Most of the Yugoslavs were high school pupils aged 17 - 18, and with a very limited knowledge of foreign languages. Many of the AFSC volunteers had no previous experience - nonetheless, some of them were very good. The volunteers were not told enough about the work (Overall plans, Purpose, etc.) at the beginning of the camp. As a result of the above factors and the other circumstances mentioned elsewhere, no real community spirit developed; the three groups kept their separate identities, although there were good individual contacts between volunteers in the three groups.

3. Conclusions The problems encountered on this year's camp can be avoided in future, provided that certain steps are taken (See below). Based on the experience of this year, the YYA is prepared to take part in future small joint camps, and we should consider organising another one with them next year. Suggestions from Walter Schenkel concerning future camps are listed below :
- 31 Sponsorship A two-way SCI / YYA sponsorship (to which Bora Mirković of the General Committee of the YYA has already agreed) would facilitate the preliminary arrangements and management of the camp, while not excluding AFSC volunteers' participation (channelled through SCI).
 - 32 Number of volunteers The number of volunteers should not exceed 20, so that the group mix over more thoroughly.
 - 33 Yugoslav volunteers We should ask the YYA to select slightly older volunteers. If their administrative facilities enable them to select volunteers from all over Yugoslavia (not one region only) their team would be more representative.
 - 34 Choice of project The project should serve a village in a less-developed region of Yugoslavia where needs are obvious and where the local population can take part in the work.
 - 35 Leadership and organisation The Yugoslavs do not have leaders with experience of small camps, especially in the less developed areas. It would be therefore be better for SCI to provide a leader, who should, of course, be able to take an active part in the selection and practical preparation of the project.
 - 36 Finance If we plan to have a camp in Yugoslavia next year we should earmark a sum of at least SFr. 500 for this purpose, and be prepared to spend even more if necessary.

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