

S E R V I C E   C I V I L   I N T E R N A T I O N A L  
European Secretariat

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References : 30th I.C.M. minutes, page 9  
31st I.C.M. minutes, page 8

Relations with the D.D.R.

1. Scope and limits of this paper

The 30th ICM ratified the agreement made between the Freie Deutsche Jugend and SCI for the organisation of the first East-West workcamp in the D.D.R. Michael Holman was delegated by the I.C. to represent SCI in the D.D.R. to supervise the preparations for the workcamp. Shortly afterwards the British branch agreed to undertake to recruit the volunteers and to maintain contact with the FDJ. The German branch, while not objecting to the camp as such, said that the participation of West German volunteers in the camp might prejudice the very existence of the German branch. The 31st ICM felt unable to accept this contention, and asked the German branch to reverse its decision not to send volunteers (see 31st ICM minutes). The present paper has the triple objective of outlining the various difficulties met by SCI in organising the camp, giving a brief description of the camp, and putting forward certain propositions for future collaboration between SCI and FDJ.

2. Difficulties met during the preparatory period

21 The position of the German branch

In accordance with the decision (b) of the 31st ICM, the International President and the ES took part in a special meeting of the German branch committee called to work out practical ways of implementing the decision of the IC. It was finally decided that as a compromise the ES should officially invite the German branch to send some volunteers to the Potsdam camp and that the letter of invitation should be forwarded to the Federal Government. Accordingly, the letter of invitation was sent to the German branch on 26. 5. 63 and forwarded to the Bundesministerium für Familien- und Jugendfragen on 11. 6. 63. The letter from the President of the German branch explained in detail the difficult situation of the branch. It should be mentioned that despite the clarification of the ES on this point, the letter in question gave the title of "observers" to the possible participants in the Potsdam camp. In a letter dated 3. 7. 63, the Ministry indicated that they had certain reservations about the participation of German volunteers in the Potsdam camp. In spite of this, the German Committee did attempt to send a volunteer to the camp for a limited period, but for technical reasons this offer of service could not be accepted by the British branch.

22 Practical preparation of the camp

Despite the importance of this first East-West camp in East Germany, the British branch was unable to recruit within the given time the number of experienced volunteers specified in the agreement with the FDJ. This indicated a disturbing weakness in the European recruiting system in that it cannot furnish experienced volunteers for priority camps.

### 3. Report on the camp

In spite of the difficulties mentioned above, the camp at Potsdam seems to have been very satisfactory. According to the reports from the leader ( J. Chamagne ) and from several SCI volunteers, the exchanges between all the participants were rewarding, and the result of the work (draining of marshes to raise milk and hay production) were satisfactory, although lower than the norms fixed by the FDJ. On the other hand, the contact with the local population was practically non-existent. Some volunteers regretted the lack of organised leisure activities, and the absence of East German volunteers on the sightseeing tour which followed the camp.

The FDJ camp leader and the FDJ counted the camp as a complete success.

### 4. Propositions for continued SCI - FDJ relations in 1964

In the course of the conference organised by BITEJ in Budapest on the 7th September, 1963, the ES met a delegation of FDJ which included the person responsible for the Potsdam camp. The following plans were proposed, subject to the approval of the IC / SCI and the Centralrat / FDJ :

- 41 Organisation of a second camp in the DDR
- 42 Organisation of an East-West camp in Austria under the responsibility of SCI, to which volunteers from the FDJ could come
- 43 Recruitment by FDJ of LTVs qualified to serve with SCI in Algeria during 1964

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