

SERVICE CIVIL INTERNATIONAL  
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CONFIDENTIAL

Report on the Annual General Meeting of the German Branch at Düsseldorf, March 20th and 21st, and on a visit to the Leaders Training Course at Bückeberg  
by Fay Nowacki, to : I.S. and A.S. Copy to Exec. Committee.

I Annual General Meeting of the German Branch  
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About 60 to 70 members of the German Branch and friends took part; also representatives of the Dutch Branch ( including the President of the Dutch Branch ), the I.C. ( Marius Boelsma ) and the E.S. ( Fay Nowacki ) were present.

The main talks and discussions were concerned with "SCI work for peace". Three particular aspects of SCI service were looked at in detail under this headings : 1) alternative service for conscientious objectors, 2) international workcamps in Eastern Europe and 3) international workcamps in the developing countries.

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2) International workcamps in Eastern Europe

a) from an international point of view and b) from the point of view of the German branch.

Fay Nowacky gave a short talk on a), outlining the present situation and developments and pointing out our objective in the long run in these countries which is to work very slowly towards the organisation of normal SCI-type workcamps. It was proposed that in order to achieve this our present policy should be to maintain present contacts, to stress the importance of an exchange of volunteers and to establish a great number of personal contacts with individuals as well as private organisations as with ( and with the approval of ) governmental organisations.

Aram Spaniel talked on b) and in particular on the DDR. He summarised events and developments which had led to SCI services in the DDR and the attitudes which the German branch had taken during the last few years as regards these services, as well as its present position. During his talk and during the discussion which followed, it became obvious that the German branch as a whole is no longer opposed to co-operate with FDJ, there were even people who said that this cooperation was to be wished for and all agreed that German volunteers should not be excluded from taking part in camps in the DDR, although west-German participants should be selected very carefully. There was great open-mindedness when the question was discussed, and objectivity and understanding for the attitudes of other branches and the IC who, in the past, differed from the German branch as regard policy concerning East Germany. Of course, there were a few people who did not quite agree and who think that SCI should go to FDJ and declare openly "we do not agree with you on principle but we co-operate because it serves our purpose and yours" to maintain the west-German integrity, but on the whole it was agreed that the present form of cooperation with FDJ was necessary. However, it was also said, that we should not neglect looking for other contacts, and possibilities of cooperation with non-governmental organisations in the DDR. Finally it was agreed that the AGM welcomes the participation of west-German volunteers in workcamps in the DDR and that the importance of a true exchange of volunteers with Eastern Europe and the DDR in particular should be stressed more strongly.

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