

ES / EO / DDR

Hans-Ulrich Smolczyk,
Mindermannweg 13,
2000 Hamburg-Nienstedten.
Germany.

14th July 1967

Dear Hans-Ulrich,

Thank you for your letter of the 11th. I'm afraid I don't agree with you, or Ralph, about treatment of FDJ's objection to the SCI report. FDJ is our partner in organising workcamps and we know their sensitivity to the use of certain terms. If these terms were absolutely accurate according to our way of seeing things, legally or morally, we could say so and they would have to accept it. But for them "Mitteldeutschland" has for a long time been associated with what they call 'revanchist' policies, and although it may not have the same connotation for other people, I think we should respect the nature and beliefs of FDJ and avoid using the term. As regards 'Kommunistische Jugendorganisation' FDJ takes this as meaning what it has, indeed, meant in many other contexts where "communist" is used as an adjective, even today frequently in American newspapers, which is in a provocative sense, meant to warn the reader of aspects of communism considered unpleasant or dangerous. Having reacted strongly to these phrases, it is not surprising that FDJ was ready to read remarks about its officials in a negative sense.

You say that we do not want to waste our time with people who strain our nerves by non-essential proverbs and declamations. Well, nothing could be more calculated to produce a steady flow of strained discussion than the use of the particular words and phrases which we know they react to by taking offence. They said, without being asked, that they appreciated the many positive remarks in the report. I expect you are right in thinking Mr. Steinbach considers frankness and mobility useful in thinking what we can do constructively together.

I know too, that the report was an 'internal' document. But it was sent to BITEJ and that created a situation in which FDJ was bound, by the official nature, to protest ! And the only thing that will allow them to forget it is an apology, which can be very mild and qualified one, in general terms as I said in my last letter. It might be valuable to ask them, too, for an exchange of reports in future (one of the things that added to their annoyance was the fact that BITEJ got the report and not FDJ. They seemed to be sure that you had send it with a letter to Tyrluk : from the SCI side we said we know nothing of such a letter).

Another point on which I disagree with you is that we should let the matter rest. For one thing, I told FDJ that I would ask the German branch for an explanation on the letter / report business. This could be done by explaining why the report went to BITEJ and how it was prepared, but that, from my point of view, would not be enough. I agree with FDJ that the terms are inaccurate, and I told them so. They obviously want it in writing.

It is certainly true that FDJ wants to continue cooperation with SCI, and it knows that SCI wants to continue cooperation with FDJ. To my mind, as I have said before, the best partners in SCI for detailed discussion with FDJ are people in the German branch. But, whoever else may, FDJ will not agree to this unless some precise acknowledgement is given to them on the points they have made. Of course, you and I can think that we like about FDJ, and they can think what they like about us : opinions may be modified by experience, but there will always be a gap. However, it remains essential to me that if one is undiplomatic enough to send an offensive document into the other camp, one must stand by the terms used or apologise, and in this case I have apologised and think it was right to do so. This has nothing to do with what we think personally about them, or they of us. I think it unrealistic to suppose FDJ will agree to receive a representative of the West German branch at the camp, or as representative of SCI internationally in future discussions, unless the German branch apologises.

Well, there are lots of things we could argue about, some about what each of us considers as facts and others just opinion. So now, some other points raised in your letter. I did not read your report : I very rarely read documents in German unless either there is someone in the secretariat who can read them quickly and point out what is essential or if there is no German-speaker around, if the title indicates it is very important. Regarding East-West camps, I read the reports - dozens of them - sent to the ES direct by volunteers. Such a situation is regrettable, but can hardly be changed while the staff remains small (If I had read it, and known what you were going to do with it, I would have objected at the time. But not to send you the reports of non-German volunteers from last year was certainly inefficient, and for that I apologize wholeheartedly, especially as I know you and other people have had a very positive influence on the German branch regarding cooperation with FDJ.

Now I shall have to wait for your reply, and perhaps comments from Ralph, before writing to FDJ on any matter touching the German branch, which makes it unlikely anyone from the branch can go to the camp this year. It was quite clear from FDJ that agreement would depend on who was proposed, so it is not enough to repeat that you are ready to send 'someone'.

With best wishes,

Amitiés,

Janet Goodricke

cc IS, ICE,
Lutz
Ger.br.

Handschriftliche Notizen von Lutz Caspers :

solte eigentlich schon nach 5.7. an HUS geschick
werden. Briefwechsel hätte vorwieder werden können.
Diskutieren am 29.7.

Tel.Hus:

28.7. → // Zusammenfassung der Stellungnahmen

HUS
x JS
x JB
AK
CC

JZO → ES → FDJ

nach Ende des Lagers : Austausch der Lagerleiter
FDJ-JZO, JZO-FDJ als Öffnung
einer offiziellen Briefkontakte