



Origin of SCI's East-West Activities with organisations in European Socialist Countries

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Short historical review

In 1946 - 1947 SCI had the opportunity to work in Czechoslovakia. At that time there was a socialist-left liberal plural party government. However, some time before the communist party assumed sole leadership, the Czechoslovakian SCI group was informed that their activities were no more tolerated and that foreign volunteers (Swiss and Britain) were to leave the country.

In 1952, after preliminary internal discussions, the SCI French branch contacted various political personalities and the Polish Embassy in Paris in view of exchanging volunteers with Eastern European countries. On advice of friends, SCI approached the French section and eventually the headquarters of the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY). However, only when SCI began to take interest in the World Youth Festivals WFDY was organizing every second year in a capital of Eastern Europe or Helsinki, a modest kind of "bridge-building" seemed to have a chance to become possible. Members of SCI France met delegates of WFDY in Paris, Budapest and Warsaw; a senior member of SCI Belgium was delegated in January 1954 to a meeting of the WFDY's executive committee in Stockholm to explain SCI's offer of cooperation.

SCI aimed at negotiations to receive volunteers from Socialist countries in its camps in Western Europe. On the other hand, it offered to send volunteers to camps in Eastern Europe and - in SCI's view an ideal pattern for constructive exchange - to organize joint partnership camps with 40-60 volunteers in the East and West.

In the atmosphere of "cold war" in the fifties, SCI understood that contacts and cooperation with Socialist countries were a challenge and a unique task, but that it would take time to achieve practical results. Patient and perhaps hard and stubborn negotiations were probably necessary. In March 1953 Stalin died.

In 1954 and 1955 increased reciprocal visits and meetings took place. In summer 1955 the first WFDY-SCI joint camp in the framework of the 5th World Youth Festival in Warsaw and 1958 the first CYO-SCI camp (Committee of Youth Organizations of USSR) in the Ukraine were held. From now on joint camps were regularly organized in Poland and the USSR. Other European Socialist countries became interested in exchanging volunteers with SCI, especially with the French, British, Belgium, Italian, Scandinavian and Dutch branches.

Special East-West working groups in the SCI branches took charge of the organization on behalf of SCI. In summer 1956 a special commission of the International committee

was formed. 1972 an international East-West commission with authority to negotiate in the name of SCI was set up. Since 1976 the Commission for Cooperation with Youth Movements in Socialist Countries (CCYMSC) has its own office linked with the central office of the SCI FRG branch in Bonn. It is managed by John Myers. Especially good relationship developed with a coordinating office of WFDY, called International Voluntary Service for Solidarity and Friendship of Youth (SIVSAJ).

Motives, Strategies and Methods

Essentially the motive to look for cooperation with movements in Socialist countries were the same as for organizing the first camp near Verdun, France, in 1920: it was RECONCILIATION.

From the begin of East-West relations on, it was evident that a solid cooperation could only be built if SCI "played with an open hand". This meant, and still means: clearly communicating SCI's motives, ideals and goals; speaking openly; not to gloss over or suppress ideological differences. This means: SCI sees itself as a progressive, independent, peace loving, politically unaffiliated, pacifist force that goes beyond the national level to practice a new social order for the future. Today this means showing true and open empathy and sympathy for human socialism, not necessarily with the manner in which socialism today is practiced.

At the same time this means keeping a proper distance from any form of governmental power, regardless of the type. This also means clearly recognizing contradictions. Included is also partial adaptation to the hierarchical manner of thinking of our socialist partners; accepting compromises in leadership roles during camps in order to achieve true cooperation and develop satisfactory relations, stressing the idea of cooperation.

Most western volunteers presumably do not see either of the super powers or of their allies having an acceptable form of society. They notice how both powers blocs continually threaten peace, since the governing elite in both societies appear to be prepared to fight with all means and at all costs on the political, military, economic and even cultural and athletic fronts. Not to speak of insane arms race, the stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction which has entirely run amuck.

Most of SCI volunteers have their own opinions and interpretations regarding these conditions. Their views will vary from Eastern European volunteers. However, all SCI volunteers are interested in cooperating mutually in practical work, in a dialogue, in an open exchange of opinions and experiences. Most are also prepared to learn within the context of cooperation from others with a different point of view.

CSSR

1946 - 1947

In July 1946 a team of six volunteers from Switzerland and Britain left Zurich with a lorry and three tons of tools, camp equipment and clothes for distribution. This action had been organized on request of friends in Prague (among them Premisl Pitter and Jrii Hayek, later Foreign Minister) who had taken part in SCI camps in Switzerland and France in the twenties and thirties. The team consisted of four artisans and two women teachers.

In Prague twelve CSSR volunteers joined them to travel to Stitina near Opava, Silesia, where Soviet and German army sections had been fighting each other. The team

reconstructed, from 8th July to 20th October 1946, several war-damaged houses. In November and December they repaired the house installation in two castles which had been transformed to homes for war orphans of Jewish and German origins; worked a couple of weeks in another war



damaged village called Stetnik and then sorted out and transported medicines, dry food, linen, woolen clothes and shoes on behalf of the Government to distribution centres.

Suddenly a rather ironic, perhaps typical for that time, apparent discovery was made (by the Secret Service?): After having suspected the SCI volunteers in Stitina 1946 to be communists and ordering them to "stay at home" when president Benesh visited the region, in May 1947 an order of arrestation was issued for the leader of the SCI team because "he may be a capitalist spy"! He had already left the country to resume his job in Switzerland after the six months leave he had received were over.

1956 - March 1975

In the framework of World Federation of Democratic Youth ("WFDY") contacts were officially established with functionaries of the Council of the Czechoslovakian Youth (CSM) in Prague, with no practical result. Such contacts were renewed in 1963. In 1964 exchange of volunteers became possible. A real opening happened in 1966: CSM was offering SCI to send fifty volunteers to France, Britain, Switzerland,

Italy and Austria. On the other hand, SCI proposed to send volunteers to CSM's camps. In the meantime the CSM Town Council, International Department, had engaged some students to organized more camps. Within a few weeks they prepared seven camps in Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia.

In January 1967 the SCI European Secretary, Janet Goodricke, visited Prague and met Joseph Skacek, International secretary of the Student Council of CSM. On his suggestion the number of CSSR volunteers being sent to Western European Countries was drastically increased.

However, there were considerable handicaps: difficulties to get passports in time, or exit-permits; volunteers received only a tiny sum in foreign currency. On the other hand some Western European Embassies in Prague were hesitant to issue visas.

Other difficulties had to do with the "rebirth" of the SCI group in Prague. Some contacts with individual friends had been maintained after 1947 in a loose way and long intervals. Some cooperated with SCM to find volunteers and helped to organize small camp

activities. Now the group began to increase in number and offered volunteers directly to SCI branches abroad in agreement with some of the SCM secretaries. It was suggested that the group should apply for official status. They hesitated.

Contrary to the older leaders of the SCI group, most of the temporarily engaged functionaries of the SCM Central Council and its various branch officers were enthusiastic, active and efficient students. On the other hand they tended to overrate their competence and possibilities. Some ran into difficulties.

The rather hectic activities rising on all sides and levels, announcing the so-called "spring of Prague" with the hope for more independence and freedom for activities, created at times - particularly in summer 1967 - some confusion and misunderstandings among the various groups in the CSSR with which SCI in Western Europe was cooperating. Several visits by SCI secretaries and a member of the international committee could not help to

settle difficulties and clear existing confusion, especially those concerning relationship between CSM and the small SCI Prague group.

On suggestion of the director of SCM Student Council, the then SCI European secretary agreed in January 1968 to receive more than 300 volunteers in Western European camps and to send 25 volunteers to SCI camps in CSSR in summer of that year.

In August 1968 the Soviet army and units from other socialist countries occupied Czechoslovakia.

The military occupation did not completely stop contacts and volunteers' exchange. Some relationship continued with the Travel Bureau of the Czechoslovak Youth and Students, section work camps (CKM), and the Coordination Committee for Voluntary Service in CSSR (KOVDS), which had taken the place of CSM. The directors were the same as of those organizations with which SCI had cooperated before. In spite of the deteriorating political situation, everybody in the movements of voluntary work that it was constructive to give young people the opportunity to travel abroad and take part in international voluntary work camps. Cooperation in good comradeship continued.

The SCI group in Prague unofficially also continued to exist and some of the members met from time to time. In January 1969 they set up a constitution called "International Peace Service, Club of Friends of SCI". They issued a circular letter, giving a short historical review and some recent news, of what are quoted: "... So far, we can say that the Soviet intervention did not cause any remarkable troubles considering our situation with the other groups organizing work camps in CSSR. We cooperate with them in the coordinating of voluntary services in Czechoslovakia, and try to encourage other groups interested in the methods and ways of SCI ... Our future depends very much not only on the development of the political situation in "Middle Europe", but also on our Internal conditions...".

The opinion could be heard that workcamps-exchange had contributed to spread ideas of the "Prague spring".

In June 1970 CKM "at the occasion of its 15th anniversary", awarded to SCI the diplom and medal for outstanding services in facilitating the exchange of young people and students throughout the world."

Franco Perna, the then SCI European secretary, wrote in an analysis of East-West activities in 1971: "... particularly in 1967 - 1968 Eastern European Youth bodies started utilising the work camp method as a useful channel to satisfy the growing desire of young people in their countries to travel to the West... SCI friends in CSSR managed to get, if only temporary, some official recognition as a group in 1968 and were able to

hold a few projects independently from official youth bodies. The end of the "Spring of Prague" did not openly interfere with East-West exchanges, but it surely brought a cold shower on those who promoted them..."

In March 1975 Eugen Schart, secretary of SCI in Prague, wrote: "The number of volunteers sent to SCI camps in Western European countries will be reduced. Too many young people did not return in 1974. Improvement of relationship cannot be expected. A hard line is officially followed." - Is this still so in 1989?

People's Republic of Yugoslavia

After World War II Peoples' Youth of Yugoslavia (PYY) was organizing brigades of young people, mostly students, to help to build new railway lines much needed for economical development. In summer 1947 the Swiss branch of SCI decided to send three experienced volunteers to take part in such work. The experience was positive and the volunteers recommended to negotiate through World Federation of Democratic Youth a regular exchange of volunteers.

In 1947 or 1948 (no exact dates available) IAL Sweden sent volunteers to the brigades working at the hydro plant Vinodol. They tried to convince PYY that regular exchange of volunteers would favour East-West understanding. It seems that there was no response "because of Ignorance or prejudices of the responsible administrative services". Eventually IAL managed to break through red-tape: dated 1952 there is a report written by Klaus

Hilkenbach, a SCI volunteer in an IAL/PYY working group,"... There are two points to be considered when continuing collaboration: Is it right that we peacemaking associations collaborate on such work as the big dam knowing that the electricity will mainly serve rearmament? And should we take part in camps which for the local volunteers serve also as premilitary training camps?"

Dorothy Guiborat, International secretary, wrote 1952 in a report to the SCI International Delegates Meeting: "IAL is perfectly aware of these problems. But in spite of them, they think it worthwhile to continue collaboration. This mainly because it is strongly felt by all participants that any problem can be discussed very frankly and openly and the Yugoslavs take an enormous interest in foreign matters, being extremely keen to have contacts with the outside world, repeating constantly that they are a relatively new country which needs to learn a great deal still. Our friends have found great Interest and good understanding for our aims and methods... The leaders of IAL try to get permission for camps on our lines, so far without result, mainly because the authorities find that "voluntary work camps" do not pay for themselves... Would there not be room to prove that services can pay for themselves materially, and that they also can pay in terms of better general understanding between people and peoples?"

The first venture carried out by IAL ' Sweden (now a branch of SCI) with PYY was followed by many contacts of SCI branches with official and semi-official organizations in Belgrad, Zagreb, Sarajewo, Ljubljana, such as Yugoslav Students Union (YSU), Union of Yugoslav Youth (UYU), Rural Youth of Yugoslavia (RYU), People's Youth of Yugoslavia later called Yugoslav Youth Alliance (YYA), Foreign sections of Universities, Union of Slovenian Youth, Esperanto Group of Zagreb Observatory.

Up to 1962 more or less regular exchange of volunteers was carried out. However, in 1963 YYA agreed to organize also a joint camp in Yugoslavia, together with AFSC (American Friends Service Committee) and SCI. It took place in Bohinj/ Slovenia.

In August 1963 happened the earthquake at Skopje/Macedonia. This was the opportunity for the SCI Emergency Relief Team. They went immediately into action and were followed by groups of volunteers who worked for two months.

The following years some more joint camps were realized. In view of administrative difficulties on national level, increased contacts with local authorities and groups were sought and established; sometimes together with AFSC and United Nations Association of Great Britain. SCI adapted easily to the Yugoslav federal ways of doing things. Thus, the International Committee asked in turn the Swiss, French, Norwegian and Italian branches to accept responsibility on behalf of, and the support by, the European and International secretariats, to continue contacts with the various associations and groups in Yugoslavia. For each action, be it exchange of volunteers or a joint camps, however, practically every year contacts had to be renewed with different partners. This asked for particular, constantly repeated and little rewarding efforts from SCI.

Finally, when there was nobody in SCI showing real interest in cooperation with Yugoslav organizations and/or groups any more under such circumstances, activities stopped.

Nevertheless, in 1966 SCI was invited to take part at the "International Conference on Prevention and Elimination of Effects of Disasters" in Belgrad, where the secretary of SCI France, Etienne Reclus, explained the principles and the working of Emergency Teams in case of catastrophes.

In 1972 SCI contacts in Yugoslavia seemed to have stopped completely. Only in recent years a limited exchange of volunteers was resumed.

Polish People's Republic

Preface

The long term social work teams of American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) working in Poland at the end of World war II succeeded in summer 1947 to organize an international voluntary workcamp at Lucimia near Goran Pulavska (Railway Station Puhawy). The work projects were: Transforming of prefabricated German Army huts into school-buildings and providing furniture; help to reconstruct war damaged houses and setting up of a village dispensary. The team was composed of sixteen Polish students and fifteen volunteers from USA, Britain, Denmark, Finland and Switzerland.

Quakers had cooperated since 1920 with what later became SCI. AFSC's offer to send volunteers to the workcamp in Poland was welcomed by SCI. It so happened that among the five SCI volunteers (three Swiss, including the author of this report, and two British) there was the medical student Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, who since then has become the world famous expert on research work of human condition in the few moments between life and death.

Activities

SCI made first contacts with official Polish representatives in 1952. SCI French and Belgian members, who were also members of WFDY, had taken part in a World Youth Festival. Following such contacts, official representatives of SCI visited Warsaw and Moscow. Further negotiations took place In Paris with Russian delegates of Committee of Youth Organizations of the Soviet union.

These intensive dialogues and exchanges of views between representatives of both sides taking place in long intervals and lasting nearly three years, carried fruits. In June

1955 SCI's office in Paris (French branch and International secretariat) received an invitation to send 15 volunteers to a camp near Warsaw during the time of the 5th World Youth Festival; project: Helping to fit a public park. It was clear that the main object of WFDY was a symbolic contribution of SCI to international solidarity and indirect presence at the World Youth Festival. SCI accepted after some hesitation.

However, SCI insisted on some points which it considered essential: serious efforts to do useful and efficient work; sharing common responsibility; no interference by the managers of the Youth Festival; the 15 SCI and 12 WFDY volunteers, as well as possible Festival participants part-time, to decide how to organize and spend their leisure time. (The first and last points were only partly fulfilled.)

On the whole of the camp was a success as a first experience. The best points consisted of a number of spontaneous discussions and confrontations which, however, took place in a friendly atmosphere, in mutual respect and reciprocal efforts of understanding.

The first camp was followed by another one in 1957 in Czempin pow Koscian and in 1958 by three more in Krakow (work on railway tracks), Cisna I and II (remaking roads in depopulated area).

From then on there were common camps in Poland nearly every year in a long serie. Exchange of volunteers expanded rapidly. SCI cooperated with various organizations: Union of the Polish Rural Youth (ZMW), Polish Students Association (ZSP) and their travel office (ALMATUR), Polish Socialist Youth (ZLS), Youth Travel Office (BZTM), Polish Committee for Cooperation of Youth Organizations (OKWOM), Voluntary Work Camps of the Federation of Socialist Unions of Polish Youth (OHP).

Since 1955 hundreds, if not thousands of Polish volunteers took part in SCI and other organizations in Western European Countries and some worked in Asia and Africa. A most satisfactory development.

Union of Socialist Soviet Republic

Already in 1952 SCI made efforts to contact the Committee of Youth Organizations of the USSR (CYO). However, first tangible results were achieved only after Stalin's death (March 1956).

Some SCI French activists were at the same time members of the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY). In August 1954 they visited Moscow with a WFDY group. SCI's following up attempts did not get any reply.

Towards the end of 1955 David Ritchie (American Quaker, the organizer and leader of the AFSC camp in Poland 1947, happened to take lunch at a UNESCO conference with Valentine P.Vdovon from USSR Youth Federation Committee for



International Relations. The Soviet delegate listened to David's reports on Quaker work

camps in Poland and Finland. He also referred to SCI's earlier experience in the CSSR and 1955 in Poland. Valentine P.Vdovon expressed the opinion that the CYO might welcome an invitation for volunteers to camps in Western Europe. David informed the SCI international secretariat, at that time in Paris. Places in France or any other European country were immediately offered. An Antifascist Committee of Soviet Youth replied and asked for more information. That was the begin of an exchange of letters and some visits of delegates in Paris and Moscow between the CYO (who indicated that they were the authorised partners) and the SCI French branch and/or international secretariat from January 1956 to May 1958. In the forthcoming exchange of letters and various meetings, projects of a common workcamp in the USSR and sending Soviet volunteers to SCI camps were discussed and elaborated in details.

It was in June 1958 that SCI Paris received a telegramme from CYO: "... we are ready to welcome SCI team composed of 20 persons..." This was now the so much looked for practical result of the patient efforts! At last!

The camp took place in July-August 1958 at Chebikino-Belgorod/Kupino in the Ukraine. It turned out to be a limited but reasonable success. At SCI's surprise about a third of the Soviet volunteers did not take part in the practical work. They considered themselves, as they said, to be responsible for leadership (SCI volunteers thought that they were state functionaries not willing and not used to do manual work!), for the ideological direction of the camp, and for the leisure time programme, for which, indeed, they presented detailed propositions prepared obviously beforehand. SCI volunteers strongly criticised such an attitude. (The point was eventually taken up on a higher level and was gradually changed in course of CYO/SCI partnership). On the other hand the leaders of the CYO volunteers complained that SCI volunteers "did not have enough sympathy for the USSR and their ways of doing things and possible problems".

This mutual criticism led to heated ideological discussions and exchange of opinions. This was, in SCI's views, the very purpose of the camp: to try to provide better mutual understanding by open, frank and critical dialogues in an atmosphere of reciprocal respect.

East-West activities in the form of exchange of volunteers and work camps under common responsibilities with Youth organizations in the USSR and other socialist countries were from now on firmly established.

At the 8th World Youth Festival in Helsinki organized by the WFDY in 1962 SCI-delegates were asked to introduce the topic of the voluntary service at a meeting of the Commission of External Cooperation. The SCI speaker wrote afterwards: "The idea of voluntary work-camps found particular interest among the members of the Commission. It seems to me that the idea is now accepted in the East. They have realized the value of the formula of work camps as SCI tries to carry out."

Other CYO/WFDY/SCI work camps took place in 1960 at Vinnitsa/Ukraine, in 1962 at Kishinev/Moldavia and in 1963 at Cacaouian and one more at Piatigorsk with 32 volunteers from Socialist, 27 (of whom 19 from SCI) from Western and 13 from Asian and African countries. A new venture in 1969 was especially rewarding: on the suggestion of the SCI Asian secretary a mutual CYO/SCI-Asia camp took place at Farghana-Alty-Aryk district near Tashkent/Usbekistan with the study theme: "India-Pakistan reconciliation". Another joint camp in 1969 was organized at Skobelevskaya/Krasnodar.

It would need a special analysis to find out why in the following years there were no more joint work camps in the USSR. However, the continuation of regular exchange of volunteers since 1961 could be interpreted in the way that relationship between Soviet

organizations and SCI had become an admitted custom and that there was no more any need felt for particularly spectacular activities.

In a letter dated 3.11.1970 CYO complained about a SCI camp in Italy: the work project did not seem adequate to the Soviet volunteers; they also wanted to be better informed concerning local village quarrels; and they found ideological discussions entirely missing. But a little later CYO wrote a friendly letter inquiring about the prospects of exchange programme of the following year in Italy! Also for CYO the programme had become a regular feature of their activities.

Additional note to USSR

A particular point in the relationship of the early fifties draws attention: Correspondence with the organizations in Moscow was mostly done by the secretaries of the SCI French branch in close cooperation with the international secretaries which at that time had its office in the same building (in an old assembly workshop in Clichy, a suburb of Paris).

The first letters spoke of "Russie" and "volontaires russes", whereas in the replies from Moscow there was always mention of "Union sovietique" and "volontaires sovietiques". It was the time of the "cold war". Although the author of this report was directly involved he cannot remember whether this undiplomatic behaviour of SCI was a deliberate matter of policy or just diplomatic ignorance. There were discussions on the issue and some of the committee and staff members thought it necessary to underline SCI's basic policy also in the use of words: namely that SCI was not a communist organization (a "follow-traveller" as they were named at that time), although it had convinced members of communist parties in its own ranks, its basic desire to cooperate with Soviet organizations and mix with Youth of the Socialist countries was to build bridges between the two aliened blocks and was the result of a deep concern of SCI members who did not necessarily consider existing socialism in Eastern European countries as the solution for present day social and economical problems.

Once SCI had been accepted as full partner with same rights and had acquired, as it seemed, a certain respect, "Russia" and "Russian volunteers" were dropped. Did "Moscow" understand the message or did they think SCI spokesmen or women were harmless greenhorns? Or did they just not care? Or most probably: their general policy was to look for contacts among Youth in Western European countries to break out of a certain isolation at that time!?

In retrospective it so looks that small nongovernmental SCI was pretty proud, if not to say insolent at times! Was it because SCI was still prepared to take risks and was not yet so much striking for government subsidies on nearly all levels in some of its national branches?

German Democratic Republic

First official contacts with Freie Deutsche Jugend (FDJ "Free German Youth") were looked for by the secretariat of the SCI French branch in May 1954. There was no reply. However, some students from Leipzig took part in an SCI camp in Austria (rubble clearing after landslide).

In October 1955 the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) invited SCI, together with Freie Deutsche Jugend, to the "Spartakiade" in Leipzig to organize "separate activities". At that time the German Democratic Republic was in need of international attention. The invitation was carefully studied by SCI. However, the conditions placed on volunteers by FDY (no common responsibility and no leisure time

activities organized by volunteers themselves) were considered insufficient. Besides, Austrian and Federal Republic of Germany SCI members expected difficulties with their government, if the offer was accepted unconditionally. Further negotiations did not bring any substantial changes.

In summer 1956 by way of private contacts and the help of WFDY a limited exchange of volunteers became possible: SCI sent a few volunteers to a WFDY/FDJ camp at Leipzig and welcomed some FDJ volunteers at a specially organized SCI/WFDY camp at Bonnat/France. There was a small incident connected with this exchange showing how difficult relationship was at that time: A "Festival Group" at Stuttgart/FRG, had mixed in one of their publications news about the camps in Leipzig and Bonnat concerning common responsibilities. The secretary of the SCI German branch immediately protested and asked ultimately for revocation in the next publication of the "Festival Group"; he insisted that SCI had "nothing to do" with the WFDY/FDJ camp in Leipzig. This was not quite true because other branches than SCI FRG had in fact sent some volunteers to that camp.

More than a year later, in December 1957, the "Zentralrat" of the FDJ wrote to SCI at Zurich/Switzerland asking for information about sending volunteers to a camp in Tunisia "they had heard SCI wanted to organize!" An immediate invitation did not receive any reply.

New contacts between SCI and FDJ were made at the World Youth Festival in July-August 1961 at Moscow. After considerable internal discussions SCI FRG agreed to the participation of FDJ volunteers in SCI camps (but that SCI should not use FDJ as channel to receive SCI volunteers ?!) and to a tripartite FDJ/WFDY/SCI camp in the GDR (DDR). At its 29th meeting the SCI international committee asked the European secretary to establish contacts officially with FDJ.

The agreement worked out and agreed settled in details a camp project in the GDR for the following year: 45 volunteers should take part; 1/3 from GDR, 1/3 from Eastern and 1/3 from Western countries. The camp took place at Tuchheim, Paaren-Glien near Potsdam, from 7th to 27th July 1963. It was a fairly satisfactory experiment. Nevertheless, when SCI FRG informed diplomatically their Government, the relevant Ministry (Bundesministerium für Familien- und Jugendfragen) expressed reserves concerning cooperation with FDJ. On the other hand: "... FDJ will accept West German volunteers without hesitation, whereas it is unable to accept West Berlin volunteers until a general agreement is reached with West Berlin authorities..." (extract from a report on a visit in March 1964 by the then SCI European secretary Janet Goodricke at Berlin).

Tripartite camps continued in the following years. Gradually the SCI FRG and FDJ GDR got more and more involved in exchange of volunteers and did not find restrictions anymore.

However, relationship with FDJ stayed for a long time rather formal (for so-called security reasons?), in spite of friendly personal contacts on both sides. A special agreement by writing had to be signed every year, again approved by the East-Berlin administration, to continue cooperation. How touchy feelings remained, showed a small incident in 1967: a Western German volunteer in a FDJ camp spoke inadvertently of "Mitteldeutschland" instead of DDR. It led to an official complaint.

Until 1969 the SCI European secretary travelled every year to Berlin to sign the usual contract for FDJ/SCI camps. From 1970 on documents concerning cooperation with FDJ GDR are missing in the SCI international archives, except an information paper dated 4th January 1977 out of which the following may be quoted: "... A courtesy visit to FDJ at Berlin has been made. In spite of satisfactory past experience of cooperation

with SCI, for various reasons it is not possible at present for FDJ to have common camps and to exchange volunteers officially. But FDJ is interested to maintain friendly contacts and envisages to send a few volunteers to SCI camps. FDJ would also welcome some in their national brigades. But applications would have to be made to the National Communist Youth which has contacts with FDJ."

Who can provide complementary information on the follow-up of relationship with FDJ or any other group in the GDR/ DDR since 1978? Thanks to anybody who will help to complete the documents in the SCI international archives.

Hungary

In January 1954, Philippe Vernier, senior member of the Belgian SCI branch, took part as observer in a meeting of the Executive Committee of World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) in Budapest. He met Hungarian WFDY delegates who seemed interested in voluntary service. In fact, in June 1954 a letter from the Union of the Hungarian Labour Youth reached SCI Paris, showing interest in contacts with SCI, hinting at cooperation in 1955.

However, in spite of follow-up letters written by SCI, practical cooperation did not come off. In 1956 there was the upheaval of the workers in Budapest, objecting to the very rigid rules of the governmental administration. War-like repression by the Soviet army was the result.

Some SCI branches made efforts to organize relief work; other branches opposed it on account "of not wanting to line up with the anti-communist organizations in Western Europe", which tried to help the Hungarian opposition wanting to reform "real existent socialism", i.e. the communist one-party government which ruled all sectors of society; political, economical and cultural life.

The small SCI group in Austria joined national and foreign relief organizations to take care of the many Hungarian refugees floating into Austria. SCI's international secretariat offered teams of volunteers for relief activities to the United Nations, the High Commission for Refugees, the international and Swiss Red Cross which had begun to transport food, medicines and other goods for subsistence of the civilian population.

It became clear that no voluntary activities were admitted. The more so that in the meantime the British and French troops had begun to invade Egypt and that there was the threat of another world war. Thus, even if SCI could have agreed on a common action with a Hungarian organization for a suitable project in Hungary, practical activities became more and more impossible in a worsening political situation throughout the world. A similar practical situation - as well as SCI internal disagreements - occurred in much bigger size and passion in the time of warfare between North and South Vietnam and their allies!

However, in 1964 practical cooperation in form of volunteers' exchange became possible with the National Committee of Hungarian Youth (MIOT). Since then it continued in a relatively satisfactory way and with a regular number of volunteers from both sides.

Rumania

Although some attempts were made in the fifties and sixties by SCI to establish contacts with officials in Rumania, it seems that it was of no avail. (On international level SCI did not manage to establish official contacts in Rumania.) There are no traces of any

practical results in international archives, in case a national branch had been more successful.

Occasionally SCI participants in camps of Youth organizations in other socialist countries, as well as at World Youth Festivals, met people from Rumania. Furthermore, some Rumania volunteers seemed to have turned up in SCI camps in West-European countries.

Peoples Republic of Bulgaria

Contacts with the Bulgarian Legation at London/GB began in 1954: no follow-up. New contacts by SCI in 1963 with the "Office for International Excursions" at Sofia: again of no avail.

In 1967 some letters written by the SCI European secretariat (after having met Bulgarian delegates at a World Youth Festival of the World Federation of Democratic Youth/WFDY) to P. Volkow of the National Committee of Volunteer Brigades, led to the first official agreement for an exchange of volunteers which, however, was not carried out in practice.

Another attempt was made in 1968: "We are sorry if last years' exchange procedure did not go as smoothly as we had hoped... We hope however, that this years' cooperation between your organization and SCI will be mutually satisfactory." (Letter written by Franco Perna, European secretary of SCI, to P. Volkow, 17.1.1968). It is not known whether SCI volunteers took officially part in a camp which was linked with the 9th World Youth Festival at Sofia/Bulgaria. Renewed contacts in 1973 had no practical results.

However, in 1980 an agreement between the National Committee for Volunteer Brigades and SCI was drafted "relating to volunteers exchange and cooperation in the field of international voluntary service". In the same year a joint National Committee of Bulgarian Youth (NCBY) and SCI work and study camp was organized in the Federal Republic of Germany. As a follow-up some exchange of volunteers took place in 1981: "Bulgarian work camps

were criticised by SCI volunteers for their military-style organization" (7.11.1981).

(1982) "This year the Brigades' movement made some notable changes in order to meet repeated SCI requests for modification of some aspects in the traditional Georgi Dimitrov brigade, which would encourage more SCI volunteers to participate. For example the traditional flag raising, morning and evening assemblies, wearing uniforms, etc. were no longer compulsory. At the same time efforts were made to conduct some study sections in smaller groups. However, only a small number of SCI volunteers joined the brigades' camps. While SCI volunteers were mainly satisfied; but some had complaints about the size of the camps (200 participants), the heavy programme, lack of variety at work. Hope was expressed that improvements, however, would continue to be carried out, since a step in the right direction had been taken". (From the 1982 report by SCI's Commission for Cooperation with Youth Movements in Socialist Countries (CCYMSC).

(1983) "Please find enclosed the list of Bulgarians who hope to come to SCI camps. I say hope, because they are again having enormous difficulties getting visas in time. As you can see several volunteers request a later placement for camps in August/September. Please try to accommodate them if at all possible, since they are trying to do their best at the DKZM to make a decent exchange." (CCYMSC Newsletter 8/1983.

SCI's CCYMSC secretariat in Bonn/FRG published in 1984 an interesting short study on the situation in Bulgaria, and a second one in 1987.

It is difficult to assess whether relationship was satisfactory for either or both sides at any time.