

Words about Deeds

100 years of International
Voluntary Service for Peace



Editors: Chantal Doran, Heinz Gabathuler, Philipp Rodriguez

Layout: Marilou Ruijter, Amsterdam

Cover design: Esther Hernández, SCI IS

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Part 2 - SCI from 1945 to 1970

The emergence of a
worldwide movement

The emergence of a worldwide movement

The end of the Second World War and the defeat of European fascism gave SCI the chance to develop new activities. The first focus was on reconstruction work in war-devastated countries in central and western Europe. Besides Germany and France (201, 202), SCI also became active in the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Norway, Italy and Czechoslovakia (208). In Switzerland and Great Britain, services continued. The immediate post-war period also saw the emergence of SCI as a federation of branches (full members) and groups (not yet 'mature' enough to be full members) at the national, later also at the sub-national level. In 1949, when the first international constitution (204) had been decided by the International Delegates in Bièvres, France, SCI consisted of nine branches covering France, Switzerland, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Norway, West Germany, Belgium, Italy and Austria. The first attempt to expand beyond this original geographical and cultural area was in Greece - an experiment which after almost two decades proved unsustainable (203).

After the partition of former British India which brought along enormous challenges both for humanitarian work and for international reconciliation, SCI became active, for a second time, in South Asia which was the start of an uninterrupted SCI presence in Asia (205, 206). This included the gradual development of new branches and groups in India, Japan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, East Pakistan / Bangladesh, South Korea and Nepal and regional sub-structures in the course of the 1960s. In the 1950s and 1960s, SCI started to exchange volunteers beyond the 'iron curtain', co-operating with communist youth organisations in some eastern European countries, starting with Poland (208, 209). In western Europe, SCI in some cases continued to function as a disaster relief organisation, as it already did in its early period (207). In the course of decolonisation, SCI took steps to expand to the African continent, to former British and French colonies in West Africa, and in Mauritius (211, 212). A special case is SCI's presence in Algeria from the late 1940s until the mid-1960s, after the country had achieved its independence from France, partly interrupted by war (214, 215). Another special case of unsustainable SCI activity during the 1950s and early 1960s was the Middle East, in particular Israel, where there was a small and active SCI group for around five years, but also Lebanon and Jordan where joint workcamp activities with American Quakers had been organised.

Being an international movement of clearly European origins, SCI found it hard to root itself in North America, even though social, political and cultural circumstances in the United States and in Canada were definitely as favourable to a movement promoting peace and international understanding through voluntary work. In fact a small SCI group in the US developed workcamp and exchange activities from the mid-1950s. Section 2 ends with the spotlight on a workcamp in the US, which deals with some of the issues typical for Western society in the late 1960s (217). During the 1950s and 1960s, SCI became a worldwide movement, continuously expanding the geographical scope of its activities. Besides the traditional aim of organising volunteer work by international groups serving community needs, SCI had also become an actor in the growing field of development co-operation between the West and the 'developing countries' in the global South (213). Learning processes took place on both sides (210, 216). In 1970, SCI consisted of 12 branches and at least 10 more recognised groups on four continents and exchanged volunteers with many more partner organisations, in particular in Eastern Europe and Africa.

SCI and the Second World War

How the British branch boosted the post-war effort in Europe

by Jeremy Flauraud

As the different SCI branches were cut off from each other after the Second World war broke out, the British branch remained very active on its soil - by providing the possibility of an alternative service for conscientious objectors - and it then became very much involved in the post-war effort abroad after the war, sending a large number of volunteers throughout the shattered continent.

SCI in the fog of war

In the 1930s, SCI was developing in Western Europe as an international movement, with various local branches communicating actively between them and sending volunteers abroad. But the outbreak of the Second World war in September 1939, and then the invasion of Belgium and France by Nazi Germany, led to an abrupt cut in contact between the different parts of SCI. Each local branch had to pursue its work autonomously, without help or coordination from their international friends. SCI in France could not function any more due to the division of the country between the German-invaded north and the collaborationist south, as well as because

of the failure to recognise the possibility of an alternative to mandatory conscription - and then by refusing to provide any service helping the collaborationist regime of Vichy in the south. [1]

The most active group during wartime would therefore be International Voluntary Service for Peace (IVSP), as SCI was called in Great Britain. Members of IVSP were first discouraged by the difficulties of the absence of contact with the exterior. Hopelessness overcame some activists: 'What hope is there of an organization dedicated to practical international cooperation to help those in need having any role during a period of total war?' one of them wrote. [2]

The absence of communication with the rest of Europe prevented the members of IVSP from bringing international volunteers to Great Britain, or to send British volunteers abroad. Activists complained about the lack of this 'international' nature of SCI work, and how the projects were 'almost entirely staffed with people of a similar outlook on life'. The British branch started to lose a fair amount of members who, 'seeing war upon [them]



Croydon, 1941. English volunteers in war-time clearing blitzed houses. (Photo: SCIIA)

have become discouraged, and abandoned, for the time being at any rate, their interest in things international - even imperfectly so'. [3]

A new focus for IVSP: an alternative service for conscientious objectors

But despite anguish, IVSP members wished to remain highly active during wartime. Peace activists figured that SCI was not only about international contacts, but that its aim has always been to provide an alternative to military service for conscientious objectors. The organization started lobbying intensely to the British government, especially to the Ministry of Labour, for official recognition of civilian work as a possible choice for those refusing to enlist in the army. The IVSP, loyal to the principles of SCI, set three conditions for such an alternative to be institutionalized: that the volunteers will not contribute to the war effort (for instance, they were willing to plant trees, but not to fell them), that IVSP will continue to organize international camps inviting international people, and that those camps will not be limited to conscientious objectors, but open to anyone. Surprisingly, the demand was accepted by the govern-

ment, including all its conditions. Such a victory was saluted by a lot of peace activists, notably in Switzerland, where SCI was accustomed to vigorously negotiate with its own government on a regular basis. [4] Therefore, IVSP organized a great number of programmes throughout Great Britain, most of them dedicated to crop harvesting or afforestation. IVSP also maintained a full-time presence in the intensely bombed London, where volunteers organised food distribution in the air-raid shelters.

Reconstructing Europe: IVSP in the post-war effort abroad

During the whole duration of the conflict, IVSP activists were preparing the post-war effort in Europe. When the war would end, contact would be restored with the other branches, and intense work would be needed throughout Europe. IVSP became a member of the Council of British Societies for Relief Abroad (COBSRA), a federation of British associations volunteering for post-war reconstruction abroad, chaired by the British government. COBSRA, which possessed its own Secretariat, was part of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA). Working as a part of a 'big machine' implied new difficulties for

the volunteers, as everything relied on slow administrative processes, and no place was given to creativity, a working component dear to SCI. But being part of this federation allowed access to financial and material resources, and enabled the sending of volunteers abroad in such a difficult European political landscape. [5]

A first team of British volunteers (though led by a Swiss national, Willy Begert) was sent in February 1944 to Greece. Due to complications at the borders while the liberation of Greece from German occupation was under way, they spent ten months in

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

(1). All boys and girls between 15 and 18, fit and willing to work with others, can apply to attend one of the summer camps.

(2). Volunteers are expected to comply with the discipline and directions of the service leaders, who may send away anyone who does not conform with these or proves unable to do the work. IVSP relies on the goodwill and spirit of co-operation and self-sacrifice, and expects personalty, orderliness and care in the use of tools and other equipment.

(3). Volunteers will be encouraged to take responsibility in the running of the camp, and there will be weekly meetings to discuss improvements and activities.

(4). Living conditions are simple and volunteers must be prepared to meet occasional discomfort.

(5). IVSP work is done without thought of personal gain.

Applications for service should be for not less than a week and volunteers must arrive on Wednesdays and depart on Wednesdays.

WHAT TO BRING

BOYS	GIRLS
WORKING CLOTHES and complete change for evening wear.	Old skirt or dungarees.
Football shorts and gym shoes.	2 blouses and woolly jumper.
Sweater or windjammer.	Cotton dress and cardigan or Overall.
Mackintosh.	1 pair strong shoes or boots.
2 pairs of boots or shoes.	1 pair walking shoes or sandals.
3 or 4 pairs of stockings.	3 or 4 pairs woolen socks.
	Mackintosh and hood.

ALSO

RATION BOOK. (Please ask your parents to have available in your book the week's ration coupons, tea coupons and 6 "points").

Towel, toothbrush and paste, brush and comb.

Sponge bag, soap, nail brush, flannel or sponge.

Sheet sleeping bag, or old sheet with one side sewn up to within 18 ins. of the other end.

1 small cushion or pillow case, to be filled with straw.

Plate (enamel), mug, knife, fork and spoon.

Complete change of underclothing. Handkerchiefs.

Pyjamas or nightdress. Bathing costume.

Rubber boots or clogs. Head covering for hot sun.

Coat hangers. Old gloves. Torch. Penknife.


Pocket first aid outfit. Small haversack.

YOUR NEXT STEP

is to complete your application form and return immediately to:

THE NATIONAL YOUTH SECRETARY,
I. V. S. P.,
1, Lyddon Terrace, LEEDS 2

Coming?



**SUMMER
YOUTH CAMPS
1944**

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTARY SERVICE FOR PEACE
1, LYDDON TERRACE
LEEDS 2
Telephone 33450 Leeds

Leaflet 1944 (Document: SCIIA)

the Middle East, mainly working in the Yugoslav refugee camp of El Shatt, in the Sinai. They were finally allowed to enter Greece in December 1944, as the Greek civil war was just beginning. One of the first actions of the British volunteers on Greek soil was to negotiate with the allied armies in order to evacuate a hospital held by Greek partisans. Three days later the hospital was fully evacuated, just before being severely damaged by a raid by Western forces. No lives of patients or staff were lost. [6] The volunteers then went north, in the mountains near Volos, Thessaly, to supervise the distribution of clothes and food to the local population affected by the ongoing war. The British army, who was then present in Greece, provided materials for the reconstruction of schools in the nearby villages. The presence of the volunteers was widely welcomed by the local population and the project was considered a success by the volunteers and the local civilians who benefited from it. A second team departed for Crete in November 1944, and for similar reasons had to wait in the Middle East for nine months before entering Greek territory. Once on the island, the volunteers organized distribution of food and clothes in the recently liberated areas and monitored the needs of the population. Another team set off for Yugoslavia in November 1944, but was refused access to the country, so they remained in Italy to distribute clothes. A team of volunteers was quickly dispatched to Holland to help with the transport of evacuees.

Still part of the COBSRA federation, IVSP cooperated in the supervision of various camps in the British-occupied zone of Germany as early as 1945 (the first volunteer to cross the border, Bruce Harrison, arrived on the 27th of April, a few days before the German capitulation), mainly to help welcoming expellees entering the country. IVSP cooperated extensively with the British military authorities in the occupied areas - taking part in 'Operation Swallow' welcoming deportees from the newly re-established state of Poland - and with the British Red Cross. A great number of German people came to help from time to

time, notably local students, or to work full time during short-term workcamps. [7] In February and March 1946, IVSP organized a workcamp in the transit centre of Friedland, recognised today as being the first SCI workcamp in Germany. A succession of workcamps in the country paved the way to the creation of the German branch of SCI, in spite of the legal difficulties to work with German nationals (British army personnel were formally ordered 'not to fraternise' with German people [8]). As a German volunteer of the Friedland workcamp expressed in his diary, his now 'British friends' helped overcoming the separation between their countries, filling them all with the 'joyful consciousness of duty done', in the service of peace. [9]

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Raon-l'Étape (France) 1946

How a group of young Swiss came to help a tiny village in destroyed France

by Jeremy Flauraud

For nine months, SCI volunteers from Switzerland came to the little destroyed village in North-Eastern France to provide permanent help to the local population. From the distribution of shoes to the training in textile work, they were essential in the recovery of the town.

During the Second World War, France was divided in two parts: the nazi-occupied North, and the collaborationist regime of Vichy in the South. The village of Raon-l'Étape found itself in the occupied part, until it was liberated by the American troops in November 1944, after intense bombings of the region. A group of Swiss members of SCI volunteered to go help the local population as soon as possible, with the cooperation of the 'Don Suisse', a public relief organization for the victims of the war, which would provide the needed resources for the project. A team of ten volunteers - six men, four women - arrived in the village soon after the liberation and started to implement the relief programme.

When they arrived, the village was in very bad shape. Of the 1,250 buildings standing in 1939, only 100 were intact, and another 100 repairable. The rest of the village was entirely destroyed. Apart from the housing, a lot of goods were now lacking, especially tools for the local professionals, and also clothes and shoes, that a lot of families did not have enough of. [1] SCI in Switzerland planned to send a multi-skilled team of volunteers in order to quickly improve the living conditions of the inhabitants: to be sent were an electrician (electricity was totally cut off at the beginning of the project), some

carpenters, a locksmith, a teacher, a nurse and a maid. [2]

Volunteers set up a child-care centre, a textile workshop to train youngsters in clothes-making and repairing, organized various distributions of clothes, shoes, dishes, repaired furniture and houses. In the first two months, the volunteers alongside the apprentice inhabitants produced 250 different types of clothes and repaired a great number of damaged ones. In four months, the team distributed 1,760 pairs of shoes imported from Switzerland. [3] After having constructed new barracks for the child-care centre, SCI and the 'Don Suisse' handed them over to the municipality of Raon-l'Étape, who accepted to faithfully continue the work initiated by the volunteers. The volunteers, almost all from the German-speaking part of Switzerland, were widely accepted as good neighbours and the help of the team was praised in the village.

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2. SCIIA 20451.1, 'Projet d'action de secours dans les Vosges'
3. SCIIA 20451.1, Monthly reports from December 1944 to September 1945

Figures

Country:	France
Period:	December 1945 - September 1946
Number of volunteers:	Around 10 volunteers (changed over time)
Number of nationalities:	1 (only Swiss)
Type of work:	Distribution of goods, help in reconstructing the village

The History of SCI in Greece from 1944 to 1964

by Antonios Sifakis

Present-day SCI Hellas is the continuation of a volunteer association that ran SCI actions in the 1980s. However, SCI actions took place in Greece after World War II and developed over the 1950s and early 1960s, including workcamps, long-term projects and development work that ended suddenly and unheroically in 1964. Of that period we know little because the archives, photos, documents etc. were confiscated by the secret police, and eventually destroyed. In the present paper, the history of that attempt to advance SCI's vision in post-war, civil war torn and communist-phobic Greece is outlined, based on extensive research made in the early 2000s in SCI's International Archives, SCI Hellas's historical documentation files, records of personal narratives, interviews and in situ visits to some of the locations.

SCI in Greece from 1944-1964

In December 1944, 20 volunteers of IVSP (now IVS-GB, the British branch of SCI), working independently, not in teams, participated in relief work with and for the children within a general mobilization for the safe return home of ex-hostages of the German-Italian occupation forces. In Volos, they helped with the distribution of food, clothing and soap. Volunteers from IVSP took part in reconstruction work in the city and its suburbs independently from 1945 until March 1946.

In 1948, SCI started workcamps in Greece. They were organized and coordinated mainly by volunteers from Switzerland and Germany, although the groups usually consisted of volunteers from various countries. Even though the amount of activities increased, the group of Greek volunteers nonetheless remained small. The idea of unpaid voluntary work was new to Greeks, and hence took some time to become (if ever) commonplace. Furthermore, it can be said that the idea of working on peace issues was, and to some extent still is, not well understood by a vast majority of the Greek population.

Up till 1962, SCI in Greece was mainly run by volunteers from abroad. However, as was widely argued, it was absolutely necessary to build up a Greek group if the ideas of SCI were ever to be spread in Greece. It was assumed that the foreigners would never reach a deep

enough understanding of Greece to carry out the work, as effectively as the Greeks themselves would.

It soon became clear that it was necessary to give this group a constitution, because otherwise the group would have no right to assemble and act as a group, it would be impossible to contact any other Greek organizations, and to print and distribute leaflets would be considered an illegal action. Yet, it soon turned out that a new difficulty arose: in order to have the constitution legally recognized it had to be passed to a court. There, it was decided whether the organization presented any danger to the state. It was impossible to have the constitution passed because, first of all, the word 'Peace' in Greece was very much connected with communist rhetoric of the time, and hence, an organization speaking of peace would have been 'frowned upon' by the Greek authorities of those days. And secondly, because conscientious objectors were not at that time even remotely recognized in Greece and mentioning the issue of conscientious objection would have made it impossible to be accepted by the court.

As having an SCI-group proved impossible, a decision had to be made to either drop the whole affair and to carry on the work through foreigners, as was done before, or to attempt to set up an independent workcamp organization. Building an independent Greek organization would offer a lot of advantages.

There would be more possibilities to attract Greek volunteers, better workcamps through preparation and leading by people of the same country with the advantage of having more knowledge of the population and its needs. However, there would be also the disadvantages of the danger of an internal development of the Greek workcamp organization away from the general ideas of SCI, towards perhaps a more national organization; or, of the inability of the independent organization to finance itself. However, the disadvantages were hoped to be met by a close cooperation of SCI with the Greek workcamp-organization, inside and outside the camps, to exercise a certain influence on the ideas of the Greek workcamp-organization, and by financing the workcamp-activities in the beginning by SCI.

Finally, in 1962, a group of Greek people interested in SCI-work was built up. The newly independent organization was named 'Diethnis Ethelontiki Ypiresia' (International Voluntary Service). DEY was active in the region of Athens with the main focus on recruiting Greek volunteers and members, finding workcamp-projects and fund-raising. SCI was to stay active in Greece, but outside the region of Attica, focused on organizing and running workcamps. In DEY's constitution, the word 'Peace' was substituted by 'International understanding, Cooperation and Solidarity', and the issue of solidarity with conscientious objectors was dropped altogether.

Due to the fact that some of the volunteers left for studies abroad, while others were called for the army, and the recruitment of new volunteers turned out to be not as easy as was thought at the outset, DEY suspended operations just one year after its establishment. Besides the selection of the projects around Athens, and the preliminary agreements with the concerned authorities, DEY was not able to carry out more of the work of a workcamp organization, having neither finances nor volunteers. Therefore SCI had to execute, finance and administer the majority of those workcamps as well, and to bring in all the necessary volunteers from abroad.

Kalami - First SCI workcamp in Greece

In the year 1948, seven volunteers came over to Greece to dedicate eight months of their life to voluntary work in a village called Kalami, on the island of Crete. The volunteers were selected according to their previous experience of workcamps. As well as having found volunteers with a thorough experience, they managed to get hold of four volunteers with experience in organizing workcamps as well.

As soon as they arrived, they became confronted with the traditional Greek bureaucracy: the customs levied high taxes on the materials the volunteers brought along with them. The volunteers tried to explain that their case was exceptional, but the customs workers just wanted to get paid and didn't listen to their story. The materials (including a broken lorry) were for the time being stored in a warehouse until a solution was agreed.

The volunteers were going to live for one month in Athens, in a suburb under construction, in order to learn Greek construction techniques. The techniques were more or less the same as those the volunteers already knew, although the equipment was not as developed as in their countries. The volunteers had to be extremely careful with their money, as they still had no Greek bank account (it was supposed to be transferred from Great Britain and Switzerland to Greece.) When finally a solution was found, the volunteers had left for Crete.

When the volunteers arrived in Herakleion, they soon found out that they were the only foreigners. And for a second time, they encountered similar difficulties with the customs. The dockers wanted to be paid for carrying out the materials, but unfortunately, the volunteers didn't have enough money and, because they arrived during Easter, all the banks were closed. Luckily, one of the volunteers who had some diplomatic skills and a small knowledge of Greek, managed to explain the situation to the dockers, and

finally the materials again got stored in a warehouse.

With the materials the volunteers still had in possession, they took off in a bus for Ano Viannos, in the south coast of Crete. From there, they would proceed with donkeys to Kalami (the road to Kalami was impassable.) Each time they had to pick up materials, negotiation with the village supervisors was required in order to find transport. In general they needed five to six donkeys for each family.

The village of Kalami counted approximately seven hundred residents, and during the Second World War they had acted quite courageously. Because they didn't have access to weapons, alternative strategies of resistance were developed. The residents refused to give potatoes to the Nazis, for example. As a counter reaction the Nazis set the village on fire and some severe fights took place. A big number of houses got totally destroyed or severely damaged. The houses were mainly built of brick, and most had one or two rooms.

The volunteers encountered some problems getting accustomed to the Greek climate. Because they were working outside all day, the heat became a big annoyance and made it really hard to work. They soon adjusted themselves to the rhythm of the locals: working from sunrise till 10 or 11 am, and when the heat cooled down a little bit, they continued till sunset.

The volunteers were paid a monthly evaluation visit by an engineer, who was in charge of supervising the reconstruction in the region around Kalami. As the engineer spoke rather good French, the volunteers were able

Δ. Ε. Υ.
ΔΙΕΘΝΗΣ ΕΘΕΛΟΝΤΙΚΗ ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΑ
ΣΤΑΔΙΟΥ 41 4ος ΟΡΟΦΟΣ - ΓΡΑΦ. 66α
ΑΘΗΝΑΙ - 121
ΤΑΧ. Β. 124
—
Ιανουάριος 1963

ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΣ

I. Η ΔΙΕΘΝΗΣ ΕΘΕΛΟΝΤΙΚΗ ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΑ ΕΛΛΑΔΟΣ (SERVICE CIVIL INTERNATIONAL), κάνει έκκλησιν προς όλους τους Έλληνες νέους και νέας, που έχουν την διάθεσιν να βοηθήσουν το έργο της, να λάβουν μέρος σε μία από τις διεθνείς κατασκηνώσεις έθελοντικής εργασίας, που σχεδιάζει να διοργανώσει το ερχόμενο καλοκαίρι σε διάφορα μέρη της Ελλάδος.

Στις κατασκηνώσεις αυτές οι Έλληνες έθελονταί θα έχουν την ευκαιρίαν, εν συνεργασία με έθελοντάς από διάφορες χώρες του κόσμου, να εκτελέσουν ένα κοινωφελές έργο και να συμβάλουν συγχρόνως έμπράκτως στην εφαρμογή της ιδέας της διεθνούς αλληλεγγύης και κατανοήσεως.

II. ΤΙ ΕΙΝΑΙ Η ΔΙΕΘΝΗΣ ΕΘΕΛΟΝΤΙΚΗ ΥΠΗΡΕΣΙΑ ΚΑΙ ΤΙ ΕΠΙΔΙΩΚΕΙ ;

Η ΔΕΥ είναι μία διεθνής οργάνωσις, που έχει ως σκοπόν την συμφιλίωσιν, συνεννόησιν και αλληλοβοήθειαν μεταξύ των λαών.

Τό ιδεώδες αυτό ή ΔΕΥ δεν επιδιώκει με λόγια, αλλά με έργα. Τό σύνθημά της είναι: «ΕΡΓΑ ΟΧΙ ΛΟΓΙΑ».

Εφαρμόζοντας την αρχή αυτή ή Δ.Ε.Υ., οργάνωνει εις όλον τον κόσμον κατασκηνώσεις έθελοντικής εργασίας, στις όποιες μετέχουν νέοι και νέες από όλες τις χώρες και προσφέρουν έθελοντικώς την εργασίαν των διά την εκτέλεσιν κοινωφελών έργων.

Η αρχή έγινε τό 1920, μετά τον Α'. Παγκόσμιο Πόλεμο, από τον Έλβετό PIERRE CERESOLE, ό όποιος εκάλεσε Γάλλους και Γερμανούς έθελοντάς και τούς ώδήγησε στο Βερντέν, όπου οι χθεσinoί έχθροι συνεργάσθησαν γιά να επανορθώσουν τις καταστροφές του πολέμου.

Από τότε ή Δ.Ε.Υ. (S.C.I.) διεμορφώθη εις Διεθνή Όργάνωσιν με κλάδους σε πολλές χώρες του κόσμου και διά των κατασκηνώσεών της, άνοι-

Greece: 'Erga ochi logia' / 'Deeds not words': Declaration of DEY, January 1963
(Document: Archives of SCI Hellas)

to express their exact needs, and in the end, a good relation between the engineer and the volunteers got established.

A selection had to be made to decide which of the families were the poorest, and which most needed the help of the volunteers. They had to take in account the material and human situation, and finally, the family had to agree to cooperate with the volunteers. All in all, it turned out to be a very difficult task, even when the selection was made in cooperation with the engineer. The first houses that were reconstructed were the ones with the least damage.



IVSP volunteers in Volos, 1946 (Photo: SCIIA)

The Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction provided the wood and other construction materials, yet they had to take into account the fact that there was very limited access to the wood because of the general economic crisis in Greece in those days. But in time they were allowed more and more. In order to obtain the wood they had to go to Herakleion.

As time went by, the villagers started to respect the volunteers. At the onset, the volunteers were welcomed with a frown, but as they proved to be hard workers, more respect was paid and gradually a good relation got established, although the relations were pretty much male-to-male and female-to-female.

Every month, the volunteers had to write a report of their work: about their relationship with the village residents, the local authorities, the atmosphere within the team, and how in general the work progressed. This report was sent to the International Secretariat of SCI, and then distributed to other branches. The original report was sent to the Ministry in Athens addressed to the person in charge of reconstruction.

After a while, some tensions arose between the volunteers. It began when one of the volunteers refused to carry some beams because he believed he was a driver and nothing more. As some defended him, whereas others took the opposite position, a negative atmosphere was created. A few

volunteers nearly abandoned the project because they felt really uneasy with it.

As time was running out, they started discussing the future of the project. The project mainly had two aims: first to reconstruct as many houses as possible, and secondly to establish an SCI group in Greece. As they were far away on an island, it was very hard to realize the second aim. Although they were able to reconstruct a few houses but because of the local construction

techniques and the maddening heat they had to adapt to they did not reconstruct as many houses as they had wanted to. After various discussions, the decision was made that not only the project in Kalami should be continued, but to start projects on the mainland of Greece as well. In order to fully realize their plans, they needed permission from the International Executive Committee, and also some engagement from other branches to find funding. So, they were not sure whether they could continue their work. One of the volunteers, however, was working for the IEC, and could make the voice of the project heard and try to have some positive influence.

The entire village was left in a state of mourning when the volunteers finally had to leave.

This article has been written with the help of Maarten Stam and Unai de Ocariz Granja

Service Civil International - International Constitution (1949)

The first international statute was drawn up over three years and confirmed at the fourth International Delegate Meeting in Bièvres (France) in 1949. Before that there were already statutes of national SCI branches which were created from 1930 on.

It was not clear in 1945 whether an umbrella organization SCI was necessary. But after the Second World War, numerous work camp organizations with different objectives emerged. The pacifist ideal and the commitment to conscientious objection finally outweighed the purely technical issues of voluntary exchange and led to the foundation of the SCI at the international level.

1. Name.

The name of the international organisation shall be SERVICE CIVIL INTERNATIONAL.

National branches which choose another name must add '... (Swiss, French, Dutch, etc.) Branch of the SERVICE CIVIL INTERNATIONAL' to their own name.

2. Membership.

Membership is open to all who share the aims of the movement, without regard to race, religion, nationality or political views.

3. Aims.

The aims of the SERVICE CIVIL INTERNATIONAL are:

To give practical assistance without regard to national frontiers and through voluntary helpers from all countries on the occasion of natural catastrophes, in work of public usefulness and in other cases, of need. Work intended to compete with ordinary labour or to serve the purpose of strikebreaking is excluded.

- Through mutual and combined assistance to spread across the frontiers and across barriers which divide men a new spirit which will make it a moral impossibility for one country to make war on another.
- To work for the establishment of an international constructive service which will foster greater confidence between

the nations of the world and eventually replace military service.

- In the meantime, in countries in which compulsory military service exists without the possibility of an alternative service, to work for the introduction of such a service, for conscientious objectors.
- To provide men and women of good will, without regard to their nationality, race, religion, politics or class, with a sound system of training in mutual help and international understanding and in voluntary discipline and comradeship.

4. Function.

(a) The function of the SERVICE CIVIL INTERNATIONAL international organisation is to unite in one body the branches and groups which exist in various countries, and to co-ordinate the work done in these countries. So, in its internal organisation, by the application of the same basic aims and by the exchange of volunteers, and in its outward relations by publications and propaganda, the SERVICE CIVIL INTERNATIONAL will appear as one international movement comprising many nations.

(b) The international organisation shall encourage the formation of new national branches where there are none and keep in contact with organisations and individuals whose aims are similar to its own.

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SERVICE CIVIL INTERNATIONAL.

*IDM 1949 Bières
France*

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5. Organisation.

The international organisation of the SERVICE CIVIL INTERNATIONAL shall function through:

- (a) The Delegates' Meeting;
- (b) The International Committee;
- (c) The Secretaries' Meeting;
- (d) The Officers of the International Secretariat.

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First page of the International Constitution of 1949 (Document: SCIIA)

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(a) The Delegates' Meeting.

i) The Delegates' Meeting consists of the Secretary and two delegates from each recognised national SERVICE CIVIL INTERNATIONAL branch; one delegate from each group; and the President and the Vice-Presidents and the members of the International Committee as ex-officio members. The International Secretary has the right to invite observers to the Delegates' Meeting,

ii) Normally there shall be one Annual Delegates' Meeting; extraordinary meetings shall be summoned if and when required.

iii) The Delegates' Meeting decides on general principles for the carrying out of the aims of the movement. These decisions shall be binding for the Secretaries' Meeting and the national branches and groups.

iv) The Delegates' Meeting shall have the right to refer important questions to their national branches (National Committee, A.G.M.) before ratifying such decisions.

v) The Delegates' Meeting decides whether or not new national groups shall be accepted as national branches of the international organisation.

vi) The Delegates' Meeting receives a report of the work of the International Secretary, as well as a financial report. The latter cannot be accepted before it has been audited by an auditor approved by the Delegates' Meeting,

vii) The Delegates' Meeting shall draw up a budget for the coming year and decide the annual contributions of the national branches.

viii) Whenever possible, decisions at the Delegates' Meeting shall be reached by unanimous agreement rather than by a majority vote. On technical matters of procedure decisions shall also be taken by the same method of voting. Where no unanimous agreement

can be reached however decisions shall be taken by a simple majority vote. On technical matters of procedure decisions shall also be taken by the same method of voting.

ix) The Delegates' Meeting receives for discussion and consideration reports on work and future plans of the national branches and groups.

x) The Delegates' Meeting shall elect the President and Vice-Presidents of the SERVICE CIVIL INTERNATIONAL annually. It will also annually elect the International Secretary.

xi) The Delegates' Meeting has the power to appoint an International Committee.

xii) The Delegates' Meeting shall decide where the next Delegates' Meeting shall be held.

(b) The International Committee.

i) The International Committee is appointed by each Delegates' Meeting to function until the next meeting of that body.

ii) The International Committee shall consist of not more than eight members and the International Secretary as an ex-officio member.

iii) Secretaries of SCI shall not be eligible for election to the International Committee.

iv) The Int. Committee. shall meet twice yearly and at other times if circumstances demand it.

v) The Int. Committee. shall have the power to postpone meetings of the delegates in exceptional circumstances, but not for more than one year. Any two recognised SCI branches have, however, the right to override such a decision.

vi) The Int. Committee. shall act for the Delegates' Meeting in the intervals between such meetings by (a) interpreting the latter's decisions in relation to practical events and (b) by taking decisions on urgent matters on behalf of the Delegates' Meeting.

vii) The Int. Committee. would not take any major decision affecting national branches without inviting representatives of that branch.

viii) The Int. Committee. may invite ad hoc members to any of its meetings.

(c) The Secretaries' Meeting.

i) The Secretaries' Meeting shall be responsible, through correspondence or in urgent cases through special meetings, for the execution of the decisions taken by the Delegates' Meeting and the International Committee.

ii) The Secretaries' Meeting shall exercise a general supervision over the activities of the national branches. It shall be responsible for seeing that in all undertakings organised in the name of SCI the spirit of the movement is adhered to. It will in particular give advice to newly formed branches.

iii) The Secretaries' Meeting shall ensure close co-operation between existing branches and examine how best the ideals of the SCI can be spread to countries where there is no national branch.

(d) The International Secretariat.

i) The International Secretariat shall consist of the President, the Vice-President, the International Secretary, and such other officers as may be appointed by the Delegates' Meeting to serve on the secretariat.

ii) The International Secretary shall be the executive office of the international organisation. He shall have the legal right to sign on behalf of the international organisation.

iii) The President and Vice-Presidents shall assist the Int. Secr. with advice and on important occasions shall represent the organisation together with the secretary. The President, Vice-Presidents and Int. Secr. shall be appointed for one year by the Delegates'

Meeting but they shall be eligible for re-appointment.

iv) The main functions of the Int. Secr. shall be:

a) To maintain constant contact with the different national branches;

b) To submit to the Secretaries' Meeting proposals of his own and to bring forward proposals from national branches;

c) To assist in the organisation of services in countries where there is no national branch or group, and also in the formation of new national branches;

d) To maintain contact with other organisations with similar aims and to further co-operation with them;

e) To publish an international bulletin and such other printed matter as is required.

6. Dissolution.

The international organisation can only be dissolved by unanimous decision of the Delegates' Meeting or when all national branches are dissolved. In the first case the Delegates' Meeting decides which national branch or branches shall take over equipment and funds from the International Secretariat.

7. Amendment of Constitution.

This constitution comes into force as soon as it has been accepted by the Delegates' Meeting and by the National Committees or Annual General Meetings of all recognised branches. Any changes in this constitution must also have the approval of these bodies.

Accepted by the International Delegates Meeting at Bièvres in 1949.

Parts of paragraph 5 have been shortened

Words about Deeds

In November 1920, a group of volunteers from different European countries went to France in order to reconstruct a war-destroyed village. This was the starting point for *Service Civil International (SCI)* and one hundred years of international voluntary work for peace.

This richly illustrated volume offers insight into SCI's long journey, combining original research articles, workcamp spotlights, source texts and recollections from veterans and activists.

