

INTERNATIONAL SERVAS CONFERENCE 1970

7 to 9 of August 1970

Place: Vienna, Austria

Present: Coordinators

International Coordinator:	Kurt Schmid
Asst. Intl. Coordinator:	Reva King
Working volunteer	David Morse

Participants

Austria:	Kurt Schmid, Ulla Schmid
Benelux:	Arthur Sietsma
Denmark:	Brigitte Damsgaard
France:	Joseph Girard
Germany:	Gerd Kallweit, Leo de Jong, Mrs. Elfriede Jeanes (Berlin)
Great Britain:	Barbara Aqua
Hungary:	Magda Budai
India:	Harivallabh Parikh
Italy:	Maria Soresina, Pie ro Stoppani
New Zealand:	Mrs. Cullen, Mrs. Groves
Sweden:	Ulf Löwhagen, Stig Erikson, Eva Erikson
Switzerland:	Denise Vollenweider, Richard Heinzer
USA:	Reva King, Charlotte Lynn, Jim West, Sheila Schwadel

- I. STANDING ORDERS. The chairman was Kurt Schmid, International Coordinator. Minutes were taken by Jim West and Sheila Schwadel.
- II. DECISION MAKING. If the number of Secretaries attending an Intl. Conference is less than four, decisions at the conference shall be distributed by mail to those not present for their vote. If reply by any Secretary is not received by the date indicated on the mailing, his response shall be assumed an abstention.
- III. INTERNATIONAL COORDINATOR'S REPORT.

1150 letters have been received and answered since the last Intl. Conference in 1967.

Donations of 10% for International coordination were received last year from the following countries:

USA	180.70 dollars
Switzerland	120 francs
Austria	400. schillings

Dr. Martin Niemöller and Prof. Johan Galtung were obtained as international sponsors.

Barbara Trischuk is serving as Asst. International Coordinator in Training and corresponds with contacts in Fiji, Tanzania, Thailand, and Singapore. New host lists are being developed in

New Zealand and Jamaica and a few hosts are being recruited in Thailand. Ceylon has also begun to be developed.

Czechoslovakian host lists should no longer be used because of the danger involved for the hosts.

IV. NATIONAL REPORTS

(See attached table for statistics on each country)

PROBLEMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Italy has had a lot of trouble in getting more hosts, especially in cities such as Rome and Florence where there is a big demand for hosts. Some hosts have resigned because the travelers they received were interested only in free lodging and were not really peace minded. The two additional hosts reported in a recent circular letter (Mario Mannanti & Dott. Seb. Mangano) are not hosts and should not be added to the list.

Japan. It was suggested that the Japanese committee provide the name of a coordinator and the number of hosts in each area, so that travelers have some idea as to the extent of SERVAS in Japan.

USA. There have recently been a few problems with persons showing up at hosts' homes who are not approved travelers. It is important to try to always get the host lists back after the trip is over. A proposal to ask for a deposit which would be returned after host lists were returned was defeated because it might discourage travelers and because it would lead to too much paper work. All hosts must be told that it is important to ask for the Letter of Introduction when a traveler arrives, and travelers must be told that they should offer it to the host.

Other problems in the USA have been: hosts are getting many travelers who do not write in advance; more travelers are coming who do not understand what SERVAS is about; some travelers ask to be met at the airport or bus station; and some travelers do not pay for long distance phone calls when they use the host's phone. Another problem is that there are not enough hosts in Europe for the amount of travelers that the USA would like to send. It was suggested that more could be sent if they would visit small towns.

CSSR. Because of the political situation, no travelers should attempt to contact old SERVAS hosts there.

Austria. Kurt Schmid asks that travelers do not ask him for personal assistance such as obtaining theater tickets, opera tickets, visas to Eastern countries, etc.

Berlin. There are 16 hosts in West Berlin, and although there are no official hosts in East Berlin, there are some friends who are anxious to meet foreign visitors. Some travelers in Berlin have not been sensitive enough to their hosts and to the International situation.

Finland. Stig Erikson is trying to get some more hosts before issuing a list--hopefully this can be done next year.

Switzerland. The administration of SERVAS is to be integrated into the Swiss student travel office. (Note: this is for outgoing travelers. Host recruitment and incoming travelers will be handled by Denise Vollenweider.)

Hungary. Travelers should write only to the national secretary and will not be given the list of individual hosts.

Denmark has put some articles in some small weekly papers, but there has not been much response. Only a few outgoing travelers have been recruited.

New Zealand. Travelers are urgently wanted.

Sweden wants more travelers, especially outside the large cities. The host lists indicate "WMV" for those hosts who have especially asked for more visitors.

Benelux. Arthur Sietsma will help travelers plan their trip through Benelux, but it is important that they write in advance, giving their exact arrival dates, their interests, why they are traveling, the countries they will visit before and after Benelux, a return address, and assurance that they will follow through with the arrangements that are made. Other suggestions: names and addresses should be spelled correctly and clearly, reports should be issued from Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, old host lists should be destroyed, new lists should be issued in January, and Letters of Introduction should be on official stationery so that hosts will know they are genuine.

France. Joseph Girard has received a letter from the Soviet Peace Committee. It was suggested that he reply with a copy of the US peace resolution or some modification of it. This was defeated. Instead, it was agreed that Joseph Girard would reply with a statement of SERVAS aims with invitation that the Soviet Peace Committee consider establishing a SERVAS branch.

V. EXPANSION INTO NEW COUNTRIES

The USA proposes that SERVAS place emphasis on developing in those countries which are least open for communication, and if necessary, to use personal contacts and opportunities for dialogue rather than home-stays.

It was suggested that we write to the peace councils in the Eastern European countries to try to develop hosts.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:

Denmark will try to contact "People to People."

Sweden will try to put an article in "Our World," the American Field Service publication.

Switzerland will contact Helvetas to see about working together.

The Universal Fellowship in Hong Kong has contacted SERVAS about working together, but as they seem to be mainly interested in making travel arrangements, it was decided that no closer cooperation is necessary. Harivallabh Parikh thinks that he can get 10 or 12 hosts in Hong Kong.

VI. Pending or ongoing business from prior conferences

1. UNESCO status. NGO status at the UN or with UNESCO will gain international recognition for SERVAS' work and will help with scholarships, fund raising, etc. It was decided that the UNESCO status was preferable. Jim West will write to their headquarters in Paris about this.

2. Progress in securing intl. sponsors
Prof. Johan Galtung from Norway and Dr. Martin Niemöller from Germany have been secured as intl. sponsors. More information on our international sponsors will be in the next circular letters.

3. Visa requirements

For India, the requirement is a letter of invitation from SERVAS that lodging, without cost will be provided during all periods of SERVAS home-stays. For Eastern European countries, a personal invitation would be better than a "SERVAS invitation".

4. Traveller's reports

Many travellers do not send reports when their trip is over. The following suggestions were given for dealing with this problem.

a. On the Letter of Introduction, there be a statement which the traveler must sign saying, "I will write a short report and return the host lists when the trip is over".

b. That there be space on the back of the L.I. for a report.

c. That a traveler be required to report only when he knows of changes, problems, or unusual conditions that the secretary should be informed of.

Secretaries should also stress that travelers write a note of thanks to all of their hosts.

5. Finances

All secretaries are reminded of commitments toward expenses for International Coordination. The required 10% of host list fees has been received only from Switzerland, US, Austria, France, and once from Holland and Britain. Other countries please send the 10% to Vienna.

Because of additional expenses for having a full time volunteer help with the International Coordination, Kurt Schmid asked that each country's contribution to the International coordination be

Latest news from Connie Thorpe: Mr. Syed Muhammad HUSAIN c/o Orr, Dignam & Co. 195 Motijheel, Dacca 2, East Pakistan wants to become an Open door and invites SERVAS-travelers to stay 1 week or more. Mr. Husain is the chairman of East Pakistan branch from: Amnesty International, International League for Rights of Man, International Commission of Jurists, World Peace through Law Center, World Association of World Federalists, World Constitution & Parliament Association and International Peace Bureau.

raised from 10% to 30%. The volunteer must be paid \$20. per month and SERVAS must pay the costs of room and board.

USA proposed that the percentage to Intl. Coordination be increased to 30%, but that because of the expenses of the Asst. International Coordinator, half of the USA's 30% be returned for this work. Passed with the amendment that if countries cannot afford to pay 30%, they will pay only what they can afford. 7 for, 2 against (Italy and France).

One country which has sent many travelers has never paid anything for Intl. Coordination, and the conference reminds all countries who have not paid to do so.

Following is a list of the fees charged by each country for the host lists:

Switzerland: \$7 for 1st list, \$1.25 for each additional list
Austria: \$10 for the US list
India: no charge; the ashram covers SERVAS expenses
Germany: \$4.25 per traveler
Italy: \$3 for each list
France: \$6 for 1st list, \$4 for each additional list, \$20 for more than five lists (each US list considered separately)
Sweden: \$2 to \$8 depending on the number of persons & lists
Benelux: \$1.50
USA: \$20 for one person; \$25 for a family, with many scholarships (for host list fee) to foreign travelers

Hosts who are traveling do not pay for the lists.

6. Follow up contacts with returning travelers

USA, Benelux, Austria, and France reported some results in getting returning travelers to become hosts.

Problems involving some travelers:

Sweden and a few other countries suggest that hosts should be tolerant in accepting traveling couples who do not believe in marriage, since marriage is largely a Christian institution and SERVAS is supposed to be neutral on religious matters. Several countries objected because of legal problems and difficulties in losing numerous hosts.

Travelers must understand that they cannot use SERVAS for fund raising activities.

All secretaries are asked to notify a traveler's home country if they meet a traveler who is a potential leader for SERVAS.

7. Traveler criteria, policy, and procedures

Non home-stay travelers. Travelers may be approved to meet SERVAS hosts just for an evening or day for dialogue rather than for home-stay. The procedure for arranging such visits is the same as for SERVAS home-stays.

8. Policies relating to hosts and host lists

a. In distributing host lists with areas lacking sufficient hosts, secretaries are requested to attach information about other suggested resources for personal learning contacts, e.g., organizations listed in the Peace Diary.

b. Use of local coordinators. Local coordinators should be contacted only after a traveler has tried to obtain a host in the area by writing one or two hosts in advance.

c. Responsibilities of hosts, re: meals. Hosts are expected to provide breakfast and the evening meal unless they indicate otherwise on the host list.

d. It was suggested that if a host receives a letter from a traveler that he cannot accept, he try to find another host who can accept the traveler. For this purpose, host lists should be distributed to the hosts in areas where there is no host coordinator.

e. Length of stay with each host. It was proposed that the normal length of stay be changed from two days to three days. However, it was decided to keep it a two days, but to indicate on the host lists which hosts will invite their travelers to stay longer, by using the symbol "+L".

TERMS OF OFFICE AND ELECTIONS

It was decided that the term of office will be two years for the Intl. Coordinator & Asst. International Coordinator. If either should have to resign during the term, secretaries will be asked for nominations and then the new election will take place by mail ballot.

The following persons were elected:

International Coordinator: Kurt Schmid

Asst. Intl. Coordinator: Reva King

Asst. Intl. Coordinator in Training: Barbara Trischuk

Regional coordinators. The following persons will handle the development of SERVAS in these countries:

Harivallabh Parikh--Afghanistan, Ceylon, Australia,
Kenya, and Ethiopia

Benelux--Indonesia

Sweden--Finland and Iceland

Barbara Trischuk--Tanzania and Fiji

Joseph Girard--Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia

International Coordinator--Eastern Europe

VII. GROUP TRAVEL

There was much discussion regarding group travel. Those in favor said that it gave SERVAS much publicity and recruited more hosts. Those against argued that the group tends to concentrate too much on group activities while individual SERVAS travelers are much more in the SERVAS spirit.

Financial obligation of traveling group to receiving country: Host list fees should be divided 50%-50% between the two countries.

It is not necessary to send 30% of the group travel fees to Vienna for Intl. Coordination. This arrangement is applicable only where home-stays are involved. If more than one country receives the guests, the "receiving" 50% portion will be divided proportionally. The countries involved will decide the amount of the fee. The receiving country is not responsible for transportation within that country unless this is offered.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Dues paying members. U.S. SERVAS has begun a dues-paying membership to allow persons who can't be hosts, travelers, or volunteers to support SERVAS and to be involved in some special events and to receive publications. Japan has had a similar plan for several years.

*B. Working volunteer. The Church of the Brethren has agreed to assign to SERVAS one of its conscientious objectors for a period of one year to help with international coordination work. SERVAS will be responsible for paying his living expenses plus \$20 per month, although the Church of the Brethren might be able to help with these expenses.

Italy objected to the use of conscientious objectors from the USA because they felt that this would lead to control of SERVAS by the U.S. government, and added their belief that the CO's are under the judicial control of the U.S. government. Italy asked that a report be made at the next conference of the activities of the volunteer. The use of the volunteer was approved: 8 for, 2 against (Italy and France). The volunteer, David Morse, will begin work approximately September 1.

IX. MISCELLANEOUS

Host cancellation from Great Britain:

George & Marjorie Hather
Milford Lodge Private Hotel
Beach Road
Weston Super Mare

X. 1971 CONFERENCE

India invited SERVAS to have the conference there and then to travel around India for three weeks at their expense. Because of the climate, a conference in India would probably have to be held in the winter. Berlin, Milan, and the USA also offered invitations. A final decision will be made at a later date.

Minutes submitted by Kurt Schmid & Reva King
Recorders: Jim West and Sheila Schwadel
10 August 1970

Post script: The next circular letter will contain the important points of the Japanese report which arrived in Vienna on 10 August, and an open letter to the conference from the San Francisco hosts.