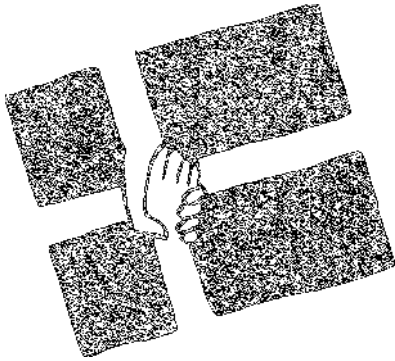


# SERVAS INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Spring 1988

Number 27



Once more SIN has changed editor. The editor appointed in Rome, Frede Asgaard, withdrew in October, after realizing, that his many other commitments didn't leave him time for SIN (the effect of which was the ensuing delay and unedited appearance of SIN 26).

Merete Sorensen, one of the two co-editors, has taken over the job as chief editor, and Ulla Warrer continues doing the layout.

Accordingly, we want to introduce ourselves: I, Merete, born 1952 and grownup at the Northwestern coast of Denmark, am a research student at Aalborg University, engaging in the ethical questions raised by the new technologies. My Servas-experiences go back to 1971, and since then I have had many excellent treats, both as a traveller (in Europe and Israel), and as a host. Ulla, born 1944, is a newspaper editor and mother of two teen-age children. She has been a host for a couple of years, and participated in the conference in Rome.

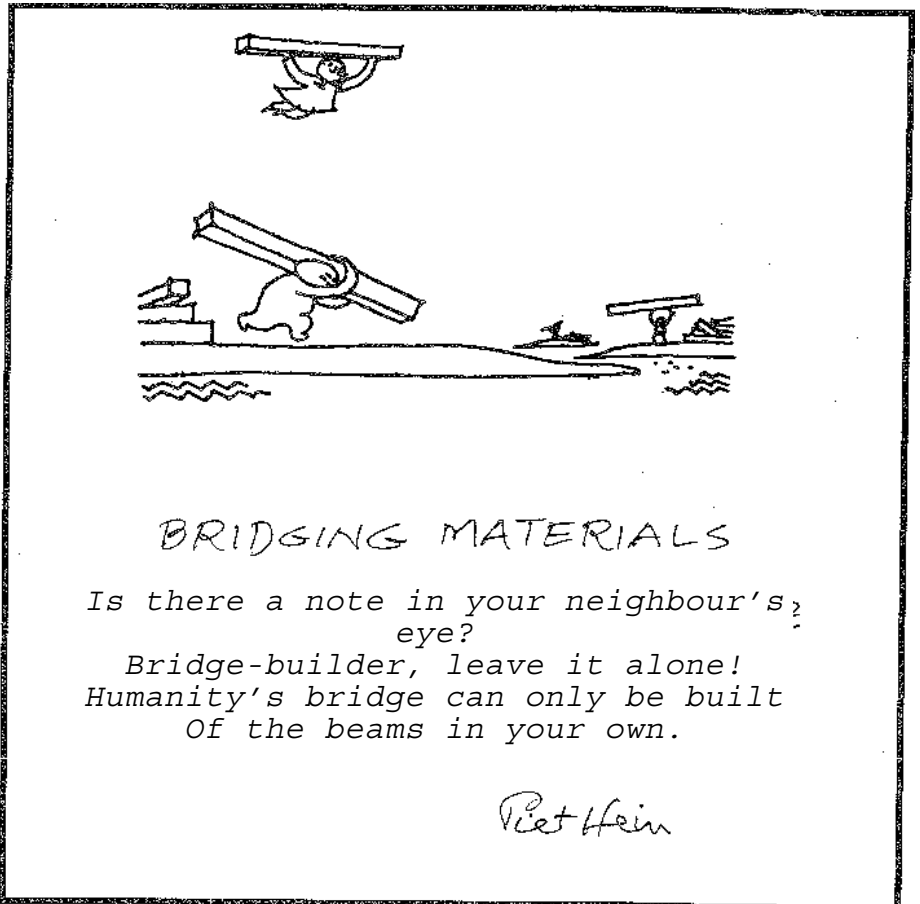
We want to express our deep regret of what has happened - including the big apology", which none of us would have undersigned, if we had seen it - We sincerely hope, that the present and coming issues will restore, what Servas Denmark might have lost of reputation, due to this affair.

I would be grateful to get any response - comments, criticism, ideas - to this issue. Deadline for SIN 28 will be Aug. 15th, but I'd appreciate receiving as much material as possible before July. Because of strictly limited space, you're kindly requested not to make the reports too lengthy. And please forgive if I in certain busy periods do not find time to answer your letters.

My holiday will be 28.7.-10.8.

Please send the material to Merete Sorensen  
Hongardsvej 2, Lonstrup  
DK-9800 Hjørring

PS. We want to thank Bent Paradis and not least Birgitte Damsgaard for their great, invaluable typing help.



## Servas Conference '89 Montreal July 23rd

The next international Servas conference will be held in Montreal, Canada, at the end of July. The exact time and other details will be published in the next issue of SIN, or you can ask your national secretary. All Servas members are welcome to attend as observers.

In the past the international conferences were held bi-annually. In Rome it was decided to extend the interval to three years.

# To the World Servas Meeting

ROME 1986

Greetings from Bob Luitweiler, the founder of Servas.

I want to extend my appreciation for the great work you are all doing to build Servas in many corners of the world. When I started the first committees just after the Second World War I never dreamed that we would some day develop the far flung movement we have.

Even more heartening is the fact that many of the ideals on which Servas was founded have not been lost. The name "Servas" - serve - is not very accurate now and those who travel are not always encouraged to seek ways of serving in their local community. But the ideal of world peace has not been lost and I hope, with many of you, that it never will. After all, there are many international youth exchanges and home hospitality programs everywhere. There would be little point in working so hard to have just another one.

One reason I am writing this to you is because I am convinced that we could greatly enrich our travel program without much more effort, without being more exclusive, and without being less free spirited than we now are. We could do this by helping travelers and hosts have deeper, more enlightening experiences together.

It took me many years to discover how to travel as a nontourist. Learning to understand a new country, its people, ways of life, inspirations and discouragements did not come at once or easily. But the rewards resulting from this ability are so great that I would like to see them more effectively passed on through our travel system. With better orientation we could help many first-time travellers gain a much deeper understanding and more rewarding adventure from the trip. They would return home more socially conscious and more likely to become responsible citizens of the world.

From the beginning Servas has never wanted to impose any ideology on travelers or hosts and I do not propose to hear. To encourage a person to think for her or himself, to inspire someone to become more socially service minded is not to indoctrinate them but merely to help them become more mature.

The desperate need to turn the side away from a nuclear holocaust is felt by ever one regardless of their beliefs. Too many see peace efforts as simply trying to change the attitudes of political leaders. These efforts should not be lessened but unless we also deal with the root causes of war our success will be

limited and short lived. Mahatma Gandhi emphasized by his whole life and teachings that peace does not result simply by hating war and making friends in other countries. It requires getting at the roots, dealing with the unjust exploitation of people, unjust economic and social systems, and selfish attitudes.

Every country has groups working to eliminate the root causes of war although many might not call it that. There are little educational programs that are changing people's lives, communities experimenting with different social structures, cooperatives that are developing new economic relationships, interracial and intercultural activities that are breaking down prejudices, and ecological, and scientific, and spiritual programs that are exciting and inspiring to know and give one courage to work for a better future. Servas travelers who go out of their way to find and understand these groups will begin to think on a deeper plane and be more likely to return home and do something to further the social transformation that can bring about a more harmonious, peaceful world.

Some of my specific suggestions are:

1. Tell every traveler and host more explicitly the purposes for which Servas was started. This does not mean to expect them to agree with all these purposes. It is simply to alert them to the reason Servas exists and the motives of the early pioneers.

2. Encourage every traveler to consider one question he or she will seek an answer to from the people met on the trip. It could be anything from the place of women in the society, to attitudes towards animals, to finding the most interesting social improvement projects. Having a specific question to answer, which is included in the letter of introduction, causes one to ask questions which lead to other questions and draws the traveler into deeper insight into the society being visited.

3. Encourage all hosts to help travelers to see much more than the tourist sights by arranging meetings with other people who can give special insights, introducing the traveler to some of the problem areas and people working to solve them, and taking travelers to special meetings.

4. All committees should go out of our way to find hosts who are doing special things to overcome prejudice,

exploitations, nationalism, ecological destruction, and militarism; and find ways to keep them on the host list, despite their busy lives, by making them day hosts, for example.

5. Too many travelers choose hosts by their location rather than by what they can learn from them. Hosts lists should have more details about the hosts' interests, concerns and past and present activities so travelers can be encouraged to plan a more thoughtful itinerary.

6. Photo copies of travelers' letters of introduction should be sent to a host when applying to visit. Hosts should be encouraged to say "no" to those who don't include it.

Suggestions 1, 2, 3, and 6 should be incorporated in written briefings to hosts or travelers. I am writing suggested ones which I would be happy to share with any Servas secretary or other key person who would like to use them for ideas.

Two final suggestions are for Servas International News

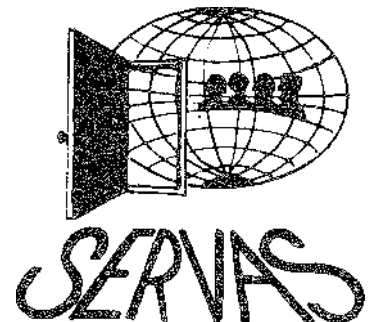
1. There should be a forum page which encouraged discussion and different opinions to stimulate thinking on purposes of Servas and methods of dealing with problems.

2. There should be a page that serialized Servas history. These pages could later be edited into a booklet.

There has been a fair amount of misinformation about the early years for which I am partly to blame because of my silence.

I'm sorry I can not be with you and hope you all have a wonderful) inspiring conference. Any reactions anyone would care to send me concerning these suggestions I would appreciate having.

Peace be with you all, Bob Luitweiler  
P. O. Box 1407  
Ferndale, WA 98248, USA



# Tactics of a Third World Imperialism

- 1) Declare an unconsenting nation to be part of the state;
- 2) To get international political support, claim that the natural resistance to the takeover is due to white excolonialists, communists (or the CIA) or separatists;
- 3) To get military hardware from some developed country, raise an alarm about a "rebel threat";
- 4) To get money from the World Bank or another international organization for moving state people onto national people's lands, announce agricultural development plans;
- 5) Promise transnational corporations

profitable resource rights so that they will take care, behind the scenes, of any potentially embarrassing revelations. And -- Bingo! -- an all-expense-paid invasion is ready to go, Third World-style, with guns, credit, loans and lies.

Nietschmann and Eley, University of California, in Cultural Survival Quarterly submitted by Don Fawcett, president of Servas International.

## Minutes of the 18<sup>th</sup> Servas International Conference- Domus Pacis, Rome, Italy

Following a pre-conference meeting of the Executive Committee, the conference opened with a dinner attended by more than 120 participants (28 delegates), members of Servas Italia, and other hosts and observers.

After dinner, Luigi Uslenghi welcomed all those attending. Danilo Dolci was introduced as speaker, Danilo challenged Servas to be a positive force for peace by making a positive attack on key problems of the world - problems whose solution or elimination could lead to the elimination of any perceived need for armaments, and thus to disarmament.

The president welcomed all those present and announced the theme of the conference: Servas and the International Year of Peace.

He addressed the group on what inspires Servas volunteer work in more than 80 countries. We were reminded of the value of the experience of hosting and traveling. We should only have more hosts or travelers where the individual understands the responsibilities and opportunities Servas provides. Growth should be through a self-selection process of finding those in concert with our aims and purposes - all designed to build peace.

We need to operate through consensus, but this should not be the consensus of unanimous agreement which can be a tyranny of anarchy, nor the consensus of the majority rule, but through the consensus of group solidarity.

In its own way, Servas can help to build a new citizenship of the world.

Ulla Offer, Berlin, extended a special welcome to our guests from Eastern Europe.

Kay Lazarus presented the Report of the General Secretary. She reminded us of the extent of work that has been going forward during the three years since the last conference in Nahariya and how we have grown to some 6,000 hosts who experience a total of about 25,000 annual visits.

Minutes of the 17th Servas International Conference held in Nahariya, Israel, April 5-10, 1983 were approved as amended: Page 1, Mexico delegate - Felix Zurita Ochoa; Page 10, Regional Coordinator Rodrigue Aristide represents Central America and Caribbean.

Peter Brock presented the Treasurer's Report. He commented on the effect of introduction of the traveler stamp and the resulting improvement in uniformity of financial support for Servas International. (The report was adopted unanimously.)

There was a proposal that Servas International letterhead show that we have been given consultative status as an NGO (nongovernmental organization) at the United Nations through ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council).

There was extensive discussion about how to handle the expense for Host List production and mailing. Proposal - that Servas International reimburse for all costs of production, printing and distribution of Host Lists was rejected. (1 for, 29 against, 4 abstentions.)

It was recognized that the existing system of international reimbursing for the cost of reproducing Host Lists of another country is to continue with requests for such to be represented to the treasure for approval by the Executive Committee.

The distribution of SIN was considered. It was recognized that Servas statistics are not distributed on such a current basis that they can be used to determine the number of copies needed. The editor(s) will seek such information from the national contacts.

There was a reported need for articles for SIN in non-English languages and all were encouraged to contribute such material.

The proposal to produce a Servas International Information Sheet in each

national language was discussed. These are available through the International General Secretary.

The Servas International Stamp system and the charge for the stamp in the future was discussed. Various bud-get projections were considered and discussed. These projections indicated continuing the present charge of Swiss F 10 might prduce a substantial surplus in the future. and the charge was reduced to Swiss F 5.

Sunday:

There was extensive discussion of our activities at the United Nations and the proper breadth of these activities. It was suggested that the Executive Committee give careful consideration to this area of activity. it was proposed that Servas International continue the present level of activity at the U.N.. This proposal was adopted: 21 for, 0 against.

The Danish proposal concerning voting by mail was introduced and laid over for action the following day.

It was proposed that the Servas Handbook be divided in three sections:

- (1) International Conference Procedures
- (2) Interviewing
- (3) National Groups

Proposed changes in Host Lists were discussed. It was agreed that these suggestions should be incorporated in every Host List:

- (1) The cover should show the name of the country in English and optionally, in the language(s) of the country;
- (2) The cover should show the date the Host List was issued and the expected date of the next list or supplement;
- (3) The listing for the individual host should indicate the sex of each host.

The proposal for a central distribution point in Europe was examined. There was indicated need for this but no national organization presently has the ability to handle this.

Monday:

Takashi Aoki, Secretary Japan, was recognized as present and eligible to vote, resulting in 25 delegates eligible, 14 Executive Committee members, less 4 duplicates, so 35 eligible votes were present at the conference.

After considerable discussion of the method of handling subsidy for expenses of attending international conference, it was proposed:

The present system for handling subsidy for the expense of attending a Servas International Conference by Executive Committee members and Delegates be retained. Adopted: 30 for; 1 against; 0 abstention.

The proposed amendment of S.I. Statutes to have international conference every three years was adopted. 27 for; 0 no; 1 abstention.

"Delegates of the member group, and members of the Executive Committee, shall meet in general assembly every three years to draw up the programme of activities, to adopt the reports of the association's officers, and to elect the Executive Committee. An individual attending in more than one capacity shall have only one vote."

There was extensive discussion of the role of the Regional Coordinator and it was recognized that they carry three essential roles:

- (1) Available to provide advice and support to National Secretaries;
- (2) Develop new national organizations;

- (3) Secure hosts and publish host lists for sparsely developed areas.

There was further consideration of the number of geographic areas and geographic boundaries of these areas for Regional Coordinator assignment.

The proposal - That the Central America and the Caribbean Region be divided into two regions: (1) Caribbean, and (2) Mexico and Central America - was defeated.

10 for; 11 against; 0 abstentions - after the President cast the deciding negative vote.

The discussion of the Peace Secretary Report and possible actions were laid over to the Tuesday session.

Denmark presented a proposal that all questions to be decided at an international conference be presented at such an advance date that the proposal could be discussed in advance by each national organization.

Accepted was the following substitute proposals:

"There is consensus that national organizations be encouraged to present agenda issues for consideration by all other national organizations well in advance of the International Conference so that the issues can be considered by each national

organization. These issue papers should be sent to the General Secretary for forwarding to all national organizations. The General Secretary is instructed to ask for such possible agenda papers on a regular basis".

A question was raised as to the proper basis for voting. The President reminded the Conference that the majority of those voting on a question determine the issue.

The proposal that a 40th Anniversary History be published was discussed.

A committee composed of Barbara Whitehead, chair, Duncan Meikle, Canada, Patricia Knowles, England, and a fourth member to be identified be Netherlands was asked to prepare a plan and a budget for this project and to submit these to the Executive Committee for approval.

A period of intensive exploration of ways to improve the host-traveler experience discussion as to how each national organization could better support this effort continued for some time.

There was particular concern that travelers are approved who can not understand and appreciate the goals of Servas. This concern focused on the belief by several delegates that the only way to accomplish this would be through personal interview with each potential traveler. Particular attitudes possessed by delegates included:

Australia - a traveler not interviewed will not be received;

Netherlands - recruiting through 'mass media' only promotes a "cheap tourist" attitude and we must stick to person-to person recruiting with a thorough interview as the final step;

U.S. - an interview cannot be a guaranteed process but it should be a learning process for the prospective traveler;

Japan - bad experiences with a traveler cause loss of good host members.

Discussion considered many ideas about how to improve this situation and several proposals were presented, each putting stress on the need for the personal interview with some recognition that there could be exceptions. After several versions were considered, the meeting reached agreement on this proposal:

"A personal interview of every prospective Servas traveler who has no previous Servas experience should be the accepted general practice off all national Servas organizations. Those not presently following this practice are to start to change within the next year." Adopted: 21 for; 0 against; 9 abstentions. The meeting recessed for the day at 18.15.

Tuesday:

The meeting opened at 09.30 with several announcements.

The problem of vacancies on the Executive Committee between international conferences was discussed. It was considered necessary to have a process to fill vacant positions where that position has

no assistant who would automatically succeed to the vacant position. This proposal was adopted:

"If the position of Area Coordinator, Peace Secretary or Treasurer (when there is no elected Assistant Secretary) becomes vacant more than six months before a General Assembly, the vacancy may be filled by appointment by the President in consultation with the General Secretary."

Netherlands delegate suggested the adoption of a prohibition of any use of "mass media" to promote Servas. This promoted some intense discussion with various points of view expressed from concern that we must find ways to reach more people and examples of selected uses that proved positive for Servas to the disturbing results of having Servas mentioned in totally unacceptable publications with no prompting by Servas and no way Servas could control this. This proposal resulted:

"It is recommended that all national Servas organizations are to avoid using 'mass media' to promote Servas."

Adopted: 19 for; 3 against; 6 abstentions.

Election of officers:

- General Secretary: Antonie Fried
- President: Don Fawcett
- Assistant General Secretary: Yvonne Brown
- Treasurer: Peter Brock
- Co-Editors SIN – Denmark: Frede Asgaard, Ulla Warrer, Merete Sorensen
- Peace Secretary: Reva King

Rodrigue Aristide proposed the admission of Guadeloupe as a national group. Since application showed more than 30 hosts and otherwise appeared in order, the admission approved unanimously.

Reva King presented a proposal that Servas sponsor an international study group to Russia with primary purposes of making Servas known in Russia and promoting contact with peace groups in Russia. After some discussion as to whether such a project could work and whether it was a proper way in which to employ the effort and enthusiasm of members, this proposal was considered:

"Servas should authorize and encourage formation of a multinational study group to go to USSR as a Servas activity"

Proposal was rejected: 5 for; 12 against; 8 abstentions.

Reva King announced that consideration would be given to possible use of the Zomick Memorial Fund as financial support for the Servas History Project.

Questions were raised as to the exact definition of a 'Servas member', especially concerning travellers. President Fawcett reminded the meeting that a previous conference recommended that a traveler be considered a member for one year.

Distribution of SIN was discussed. It was suggested that the editors provide that number of copies requested by national secretaries.

Kay Lazarus, International Secretary, announced the first Servas host in China.

The encouragement of the study and use of Esperanto was discussed. One particular advantage of being involved in Esperanto study is that this is an accepted reason to be motivated to travel outside one's own country (i.e. to attend Esperanto conference in another country) by many governments that would not otherwise allow such travel.

Invitations to host the next international conference in 1989 were sought. Denmark extended a conditional invitation to host at the Askov Folk School in July.

This is the place of the original Servas organizational meeting almost 40 years ago and would provide a unique way to celebrate the 40th anniversary. Canada also extended a conditional invitation for May or June at a site in eastern Canada.

Parikh proposed admission of Nepal as a national group. Discussion indicated that Nepal met requirements so

the application was approved unanimously.

Servas Italia received the thanks and appreciation of the entire group of conference attenders for their fine work in making possible such an excellent conference. Records available indicate there were at least 161 who participated in the conference (39 from Executive Committee or Delegates and 122 observers). Italy provided 50 participants and there were 28 from U.S.A. The conference adjourned at 16.45 .

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, effective 20.May 1986.

General Secretary: Antonie Fried, West Germany.

Asst. General Secretary: Yvonne Brown, New Zealand.

President: Don Fawcett, U.S.A..

Vice President: Duncan Meikle, Canada.

Treasurer: Peter Brock, Germany.

Editor SIN: Frede Asgaard, Denmark.

Coordinator:  
Europe ..... Ulla Offer, Germany.  
Africa E.K. Narter-Olaga, Ghana.

East Asia..... Takashi Aoki, Japan.

South Asia Harivallabh Parikh, India.

South Pacific ... Tom & Annie Young, New Zealand.

Central America & Felix Zurita Achoa, Caribbean ..... Mexico.  
South America Jorge Zoppolo, Uruguay.

Co-opted members: Reva King, U.S.A.  
Maria Soresina, Italy.  
Barbara Whitehead; England.

# Debut of a Peace Secretary

Ina Dallas, Australia

When I took over the job of Peace Secretary, I had no idea what it entailed or what I had to do. I even wrote to Reva King, asking her for information. Her reply was not very specific - she referred me to the hand-book, which I had already consulted.

But Eve Masterman, who has now re-tired as Tasmanian Co-ordinator, asked me to work as a volunteer at the Hobart Centre for Peace and Justice. I discovered that Tasmania is very active in the cause of peace.

I also joined the Dodges Ferry Peace Group, which I represented at a Peace Seminar in March.

The topics discussed were: a. Understanding Security, b. Australian Defence without ANZUS, c. Armed Neutrality for Australia, d. A Nuclear-free Pacific, e. Building valued relations with our neighbours.

The watchword that came out of this Conference was:

"Think globally - act locally"

At the Peace Centre I wrote a petition to the Federal Government asking them to intervene with France about their intention to use the Kerguelen Islands as their new nuclear testing ground, now that the Murarua Atoll is exhausted. The petition collected 2000 signatures in the first month and is still going.

I also wrote to the French Ambassador in Canberra and asked Reva King to speak to the French Ambassador at the United Nations. She informed me that she'd had a reassuring reply. My reply was also reassuring. (But it's just as well to have our Gov't keep an eye on it).

I had a working-bee at my place to paint Peace-Banners for the Palm-Sunday Peace March and I also attended that.

I have just received instructions from Amnesty International on how to write letters to punitive governments on behalf of political prisoners, and I also intend to do that.

I also work one half-day a week for Freedom from Hunger, raising money for a specific project at a time.

Here is an idea for people with interest in Peace: A street in Hobart recently declared itself the first Hobart street to be United for Peace and Anti-Nuclear. - Other streets are following suit and New Norfolk Town Council recently proclaimed the town an Anti-Nuclear Town for Peace. All this seems positive.

On the negative, I've had NO RESPONSE to my request for any ideas of how to make Servas visits more meaningful. Maybe it is not negative, but merely a sign that Australians are happy with their visitors, and the interchange that takes place between them.

## A letter from Brazil

Patrick Petiot in Rio de Janeiro sent us a letter in January, 1988:

"I have only once read SIN, which I found very interesting. I think it is absolutely necessary for us, members of Servas, to have an international news-letter that informs how the movement is doing worldwide. As many of us are isolated, and some don't even know there is a National Secretary, it is joyful for everybody to know there are other hosts and travellers in the world seeking friendship, in a united family, a family of peace. I think everybody in Servas should try to get the Newsletter regularly.

We are 1987/88 83 officially enlisted hosts in Brazil, and there are other people, not on the list, who are known by us and available if a traveller has difficulties in finding a home.

Brazil, though, is a big country. Servas hosts may feel differently about the Movement; conditions are different, and therefore having a guest must be different in the North and in the South; Rio is not the same as Sao Paulo. Hosts in Rio can probably spend more time with their guests than those in Sao Paulo etc.."

Patrick suggests sending SIN "tips absolutely necessary for travelling in the country and meeting the Brazilians". It might be a better idea to print this information in the otherwise excellent hostlist - and, presuming that Patrick knows who is he is national secretary, ask her to include it. Until that is possible, we are sure secretaries and interviewers would appreciate very much to receive such tips.

# How to create friendship-schools

During the Easterweek in April 1985 I and my family participated in a peace- and study travel to Moscow. We were 17 in the group from all Sweden.

Among others I had in my luggage two big envelopes containing letters from girls and boys in a neighbour community to a girl and a boy in Moscow. Marina and Sergej. They had taken part in a peacecamp for youth in Sweden in the Summer of 1984.

When we arrived in Moscow I said to our Swedish talking guide Tanja: I want to see Marina and Sergej and to bring them the letters personally. Can't I go to Marina's school?

No, she said, it must be arranged a long time beforehand. They have no time to admit you, they have other classes visiting their school, and they are preparing a concert. It's entirely impossible for you to disturb them there.

After a couple of days Tanja said that Marina and Sergej should come at our hotel Metropol and fetch their letters. For more reasons, however, they couldn't come there, so we met at the Consomolfafter the school had ended.

The meeting with the students and two secretaries was cordial and next day I took the underground to school no. 64, where Marina was one of the pupils. I met Nadezhda Romanova, the Principal's assistant for the English-reading classes, and after we had talked for an hour, it was decided that I should come again the following day and meet the International Club of Friendship. In every school in the Soviet-Union they have such a club. - The Weekly Meeting with the club was as cordial as with their "boss". The 30 girls assured me: We will be friends with you and will correspond with your pupils in Kvarnby-skolan in Moelndal. - So we exchanged agreements; I got many girl-hugs and overwhelmed by joy we parted from the pretty girls.

In the library of my school, where I was principal the last year before my retirement, I assembled the pupils who wanted to correspond with Russian teenagers. I passed greetings from no. 64-

## Alternative lodgings in New York

Michel from Denmark, who, as also other travellers to New York, got the address of Amandla House in Harlem, stayed there for 10 days, at 6\$ per night! He liked it: "It was easy to follow the directions (given in a leaflet) from J.F.K. The trip is about two hours. The hostel is situated right across the street from the subway station. It

offers the possibility to see a part of Manhattan that one is otherwise warned against. However, using some common sense, it's more relaxed and less congested than the rest of the "island" there are also some very good museums.

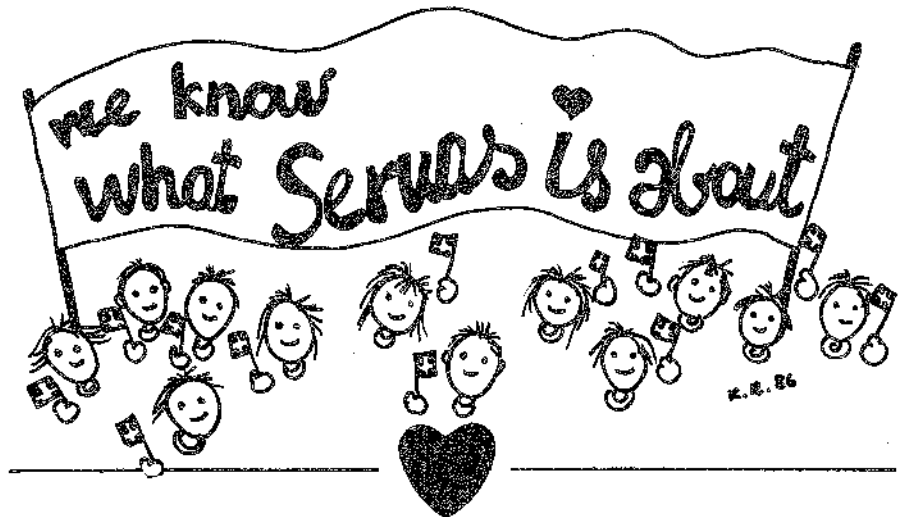
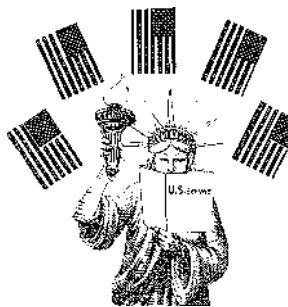
Amandla House is far from spick and span, but offers the chance to meet travellers from other countries (Americans are not accepted) and New-York-explorers. And a little closer to many people's reality than Midtown".

We have been giving the address to travellers for a long time, since the host situation in New York is rather hopeless at times. No wonder.

Michel travelled 6 weeks visiting also St. Paul and L.A. "I probably spent my time in a way different from many others, e.g. I only watched TV one evening, also cleaning dishes at the same time!"

- US Servas: why not list the address in your hostbook?

722 Saint Nicolas Ave, N.Y. 1U031



school and said that soon we get lots of letters from our new friends. - But nothing happened, and every week my pupils asked me: Anders, haven't you received any letters from Moscow? - No, no, I don't know why.

The year 1985 was running out. I wrote about 12 letters and sent them nice photos. No answers.

Then, suddenly, at the end of January 1986 Nadezda called me by phone and told me that she and her pupils certainly had written to us many times. She was very sorry that it didn't work.

But the Spring of 1986 we decided to make a travel to Moscow, and I also received a written invitation.

So we flew to Moscow a Saturday in April 1987, 12 boys and girls and 10 adults, half of them teachers. Intourist Travel Agency had made up our programme for the week, but the most important thing was of course the visit at School

no. 64 and its International Club.

What a cordial welcome we got from all students and teachers. What hospitality and entertainment. We were taken around the class-rooms to see how they work in Russian schools nowadays. Most interesting, also for a retired head-master.

During a party Thursday afternoon we decided to continue our correspondence, although so many letters had disappeared. Ten pupils had sent three or four letters to-us in Sweden.

When sitting there, looking at the Soviet and Swedish girls and boys dancing together, I was deeply moved. How natural and warm-hearted, how free from hate and prejudice, how clean in their brains and their hearts. We must do more to extend the contacts between teenagers in East and West. Our Soviet friends are longing for such contacts, and we adults, school-leaders, teachers and others have a great responsibility to support them and to create opportunities for them to meet and become real friends. As you can imagine: the successful party ended with many hugs and kisses and presents,

One of my tasks in Moscow was to get names and addresses of more active International Clubs in the capital. And therefore, one morning, I visited the Gagarin-Club in the Pioneer Palace and met Tatyana Itakarova, one of the secretaries. And so I got what I wanted. In the Autumn of 1987 I have visited many schools in West-Sweden and established correspondence clubs and allotted them a Moscow school. And I have high expectations that my idea with friendship schools will grow and extend all over the world.

My correspondence Club is just starting contacts with teenagers in Warszawa in Poland. OUR YOUTH IS OUR FUTURE!

If you want to join our efforts, write to

Anders Wi kehul t  
Orregatan 5A  
S-431 33 Moelndal  
Sweden

Keep for future us :

# Hints to travellers

by Birgitte Damsgaard, Denmark

The following advice that I find important is included in our printed info to new travellers, together with, among other information, the aims, the philosophy and history of Servas. It is based on numerous traveller reports, and my experience during 17 years as a secretary.

Notice: Writing to hosts months in advance may not be a good idea. It's difficult to impossible for any host to know how she feels about having visitors so far ahead. There have also been examples where a traveller has stood at a closed door, because the host had forgotten - or expected the traveller to call and confirm. This must always be done, as late before arrival as possible. There are too many examples where a traveller has confirmed, even just a day before, and never turned up, nor excused herself. That is of course unforgivable. How often have I stayed at home a whole day waiting in vain for someone to arrive. Several hosts in Denmark and elsewhere prefer a short notice by phone only.

Apart from that, sending letters ahead of you is always recommendable, including a copy of your L.I. Just don't expect that everybody will answer (particularly if you don't enclose international reply coupons). If 25%, you're lucky. Hosts also travel, often at the same time as they are particularly wanted (holidays) or have other guests. In some places they get 10-20 phonecalls daily! A visit may be inconvenient for many reasons. Nevertheless hosts tell about callers who get impertinent when they are turned off.

Write to the host that you will phone when you get closer; that you don't insist on a written reply. Don't forget that if you do receive one, to confirm that you are coming. And, for God's sake excuse, by phone or letter, in time, if you're delayed, or don't come at all. It's unbelievable how often this isn't done.

Mail delivery is unfortunately much slower than we think. Phone halls aren't answered. Don't think it is always easy. But don't give up.

Travellers who are "on the road" for many months in several continents, or hitchhiking, those who want a flexible itinerary can not expect much from Servas, unless there are a good number of short-notice hosts, and in many countries they are virtually unknown. A great pity. (We have lots in Denmark!)

However, travellers who spend two or three weeks in one country (as many do in Europe) have good chances when they can fix an itinerary and contact hosts in good time.

If you write to a host, give a forwarding address of a friend or relative in her country. She may want to answer, but has been delayed. Often poste restante is the only possibility for letters to reach you from hosts and home.

It is however not always reliable. In some places letters must arrive within a week or two of the period you can pick it up. US SERVAs refuse to send hostlists poste restante, and several of us have bad experience sending hostlists that were returned because they were not picked up.

Travellers must be careful not to put pressure on hosts when they phone, whining about having nowhere to go. Often, if they are reinvited, they won't feel welcome - which is to be expected. - If they have written to hosts who have not answered, or said no, they might be excused. But they could ask for possible alternative accommodation.

Length of stay: Some travellers

stay a third night or even longer without being invited. One night more or less, they think, what does that matter? It may well matter a good deal to the host, and it's against the rules. On the other hand, travellers tell about hosts who said "you can stay as long as you like", or "stay a week", and after a few days there is a strained atmosphere. Of course most hosts, hopefully, like their guest and don't regret their invitation. Many hosts actually think two days is not enough to establish a meaningful relationship with their visitors. Some hosts are not as busy as others. Quite often I hear from travellers that a host is kind enough, but too busy to share time with them. They are disappointed. I tell them: value the hospitality and free accommodation in those odd cases. - Of course you must never forget that apart from those busy people, your Servas hosts expect you to spend so much time with them as they can spare, at least evenings and weekends. Several hosts in Copenhagen told about three young boys, who spent the night in discoteques and most of the day sleeping. They weren't the least interested in learning anything about Denmark. Otherwise they were "nice kids", but quite uninteresting. I wonder what their interviewer gave for orientation.

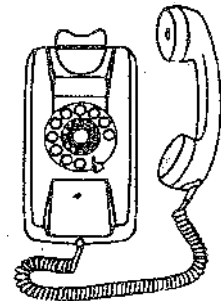
If you intend to stay with a host only one night, you must tell her when you call, and ask if it is OK, if you can spend a day, maybe only an evening with her. It can be rewarding, particularly if the host is in the "Want-more-visitors" category.

Phoning: The notice in the hostlist must be respected. If you don't, you must be prepared for some quite blunt answers. Some travellers who disregarded the notice have, however, been received warmly (probably by rarely visited hosts). They felt sorry that they hadn't tried it before!

Travellers who were invited, though at an inconvenient time, should ask the host permission to use her phone the next morning to try to find another host. And of course offer to pay at once. Several applicants who were



asked about this situation in a questionnaire I use when interviews are not feasible, have said they would not use a host's phone at all, but go to the next public one. I am sure Servas hosts will object. Public phones are much more expensive or at least uncomfortable.



When phoning in a country where you don't master the language, look for someone who does for help. The person who answers may well be unilingual. Even if she speaks English, you may have trouble with strange accents.

Phoning in developing countries can be most difficult and include waiting at a postoffice for hours. Unfortunately you often depend on phoning because of unreliable post service.

And don't phone a host very early in the morning or late at night. Travellers who phone from the railwaystation

at midnight are a nuisance to even the most hospitable hosts.

Letter of introduction: Even if several hosts, who probably liked you at first sight, weren't interested in your L.I., you must offer other hosts to see it. They are not supposed to ask for it and usually don't like to exhibit lack of trust, when they observe that you don't seem to know the rules.

Servas is not a hotel chain: I warn travellers that they cannot expect to move from one Servas hosts to the next (except on travels of a week or three. I have done it myself!). They will soon realise that even with a hostlist of 100 pages or more, there is no end to the frustrations looking for a host where and when you need one, (certainly in the popular cities). Moreover, you will soon realise that continuous Servas visits are strenuous

## Keep for future us :

If you want to, and you should, be able to entertain and be entertained for even two days. The impressions are so multiple that travellers need some time alone and go to a hostel, or camp.

(I think hosts should extend their hospitality, if they have a guestroom, (meals excluded) to those relaxing travellers. A private room is always much more pleasant, and much less ex-pensive than a hotelroom, a youth hostel or a tent. A traveller cannot ask, but she could air the suggestion with hosts she visits of having such an entry in the host-list).

Emptying the fridge: I have heard several hosts telling of Servas visitors who ravaged the fridge during their absence leaving nothing eatable for the host. It sounds incredible, but it is nevertheless true. I assume that these travellers, usually young males, are used to do this at home and think nothing of it.

A host may well invite her visitor to serve himself a meal in the kitchen and fortunately travellers usually do not misuse the offer.

Smokers and paperless couples are not particularly popular with hosts in some countries, but if they don't smoke in the house, respectively agree to sleep in separate rooms, they are received. In Denmark, where paperless couples are extremely common, the latter feels awkward, but smokers are, as in many other countries surprisingly rare among Servas members.

Backpackers who are becoming more and more numerous are not very popular in the third world ("gringos" etc.), and hosts in e.g. Asia and Southamerica are embarrassed when they turn up somewhat dirty after rough travelling. Try to look as neat as possible, even if you haven't got a clean shirt in your rucksack, and badly want to wash. Let us hope that the host understands, when you tell him that. If he doesn't

offer laundry facilities at home, ask where you can find some.

**KEEP THE RULES!** Read the introduction in each hostlist including the rules, though you may think they are all the same. There are variations, and rereading never hurts. And it's a fact that they are ignored or forgotten too often.

**THE LISTS ARE CONFIDENTIAL.** - You are not allowed to give a single address to anybody who hasn't been approved & has acquired a Servas L.I. first. Individual hosts may accept an unapproved travel companion, but they have to be warned in advance.

### RETURN THE HOSTLISTS.

A large proportion of travellers never return the hostlists with report to their Servas secretary. They are Servas property and we need them for reuse.

We haven't finished yet!

A traveller will be asked a lot of questions about his homecountry, and ought to know something about the countries he is visiting. There are numerous sources. However the most in-

teresting things he may well learn from his Servas hosts.

Since the large majority of Servas travellers are young, much younger than many hosts, older travellers are usually popular. We have seen them up to 80 years! Children are welcome too with host families with own children or just fond of children. Their number is limited. They are mostly people with own house and garden, where a tent can provide extra space if needed. A Danish host family have made very successful Servas visits during weeklong journeys to our neighbour countries (by car) with 4 kids.

Try to learn at least a little of the language in countries where English is hardly spoken. Many travellers have felt pretty helpless e.g. in Latin America, even with "a little "Spanish".

It is a great stress on hosts in overrun cities to have to say no to a great number of Servas travellers every day. There have been mass-withdrawal of hosts e.g. in Hawaii because of this. Avoid them or find other accommodation. Use dayhosts. Visit hosts in the less popular places. They are just as interesting, or rather more, than busy city-people, and much happier to see you. Remember, you are a Servas-traveller, not just a tourist.

In countries with (too) few host the problem is the same, e.g. South East Asia, but also Portugal. And Spain in the summer. (Fortunately they got many new hosts in 1987)

Don't think you know a country and its people because you have stayed with a few hosts in the capital.

Meet the odd Servas host whose home is a mess, even unsanitary! She just has other values and may well be among the most interesting hosts. If you are not prepared for this, or sleeping on the floor, you may find an excuse for leaving. But maybe you think you better forget about Servas?

You have been encouraged to help in and around the house". After a number of hosts said "no thanks, you are our guest" (though a Servas traveller often feels like a member of the family), don't stop offering your help next time.

Many hosts are delighted when you bring some pictures, of your family, the house you live in, tourist brochures from your town, your country, etc. Leave the brochures or other small souvenirs from your home country. And cook one of your homeland-dishes. Don't buy gifts before you know your host's taste, or at all, if you are on a starvation budget. But never forget to send your hosts a letter or at least a postcard after you left them. It's simple courtesy, and always welcome. Some hosts worry whether you got home safely. And it's to be hoped that many a longlasting penfriendship will result.

### SOME PROBLEMS REPORTED BY TRAVELLERS AND HOSTS

Danish travellers, who with Americans and Germans "dominate the market" (in 1985 they together made out 60% of all travellers! - can you believe it?) have



occasionally been turned off by hosts who were fed up with Danes (and said so). Though discrimination is what we are trying to abolish in Servas, it may be understandable that a host who has received one phone call after the other the same day by a Dane (or German, or American) gets irritated. Some try to hide it, give excuses that are usually felt to be invented. It is not the fault of Servas DK, USA or Germany that the number of travellers from other countries is much too small to meet the hosts' wishes for more variety. - Tolerance and under-standing is needed.

A few girls have told about male hosts being "too amorous", sometimes to a rather annoying degree. But the girls have been capable of fending them off. Even boys have had to "fend off" male attacks, I have been told. Servas travellers must be prepared to cope with such incidents, even though they are rare. I have never heard of travellers who were actually molested.

The threshold of feeling molested or annoyed (for hosts as well as travellers) is of course of very varying levels depending on temperament, and cultural background, which is a problem in Servas. We have made a brochure of 4 pages for travellers going to India (unfortunately in Danish; I haven't found time to translate it until now) in an attempt to bridge the cultural gap. Moreover we encourage travellers, when going to other faraway countries to find out for themselves through literature. If possible, I give them the address of a returned traveller, preferably an interviewer. The Australian Servas Newsletter of Dec. 1987 had an excellent introduction to travelling in Japan. (If other readers had such advice concerning other countries, I would appreciate very much to receive a copy in English or any other major language for translation and distribution to other sec's).

In the same issue, an Australian hostwarned the travellers from Scandinavia to be careful to avoid severe sunburns. (It was, however, a Swiss traveller who later in the same issue told about her hospitalization because of sunburn!)

The Australian Newsletter is, in my opinion, a goldmine and a model for our international newsletter, which I take the liberty of quoting again.

I advise travellers to ask, at an early stage of each visit, their hosts if previous Servas visitors had offended or annoyed them, and how.

## Keep for future

The Bennetts from Melbourne, in a long report of their globe trot write:

"We always asked our hosts what they wanted from Servas and whether their needs were met. A great conversation opener! Many had a story or two of times they felt 'used' by travellers. Some mentioned friends who'd withdrawn because of thoughtless traveller behaviour. Of the many ways hosts are burned off by thoughtless/ignorant/selfish travellers, the most frequent were... Taking and not replacing food. This is a tricky one. Customs of 'politeness' can be very strong. One host who said this had happened had said to us 'The fridge is at your disposal.' Other examples have all been mentioned above. Later: 'It's amazing how many travellers fail (to send a postcard) - even after a request and a promise to do so. It can be yet another hassle with all the stresses of travel. But little compared with what the host has given. Without it, many hosts feel 'used' by 'out of sight - out of mind' travellers."

I would like to mention that not only young travellers, as we usually hear, are thoughtless, ignorant and selfish. We have had our share of older travellers who are demanding and inconsiderate, and need 'education'.

An Australian host has this to say: 'Initially we had no 'house rules', but found from experience that some had to be formulated'. The first example is also mentioned above: He was a very nice young fellow, but his one fault was that, no matter how many cartons of milk we placed in the frig, and the 6 mile round trip to buy more each time, there was never any there when we wanted it, as he had drunk it.' Is he doing that at home without being corrected? Who knows. Another traveller would walk all over the house with bare feet leaving 'very virulent tinea in the bathroom and in carpets which had to be treated'. The only translation of "tinea" found in my unabridged Webster was moth, which doesn't make sense. However, this necessitated the second house rule. The third American traveller, after swimming on the lovely beach to their horror, threw his wet salty towel on his room's good bedspread, and his wet bathers on the carpet".

We realize these were thoughtless actions (I, Birgitte, like you, Rex, for your tolerant attitude), but did show the need for some basic house rules." - It should be obvious that no interviewer can foresee and prevent violation of worldwide house rules - there is only one way: to speak about it.

## Don't's

Joseph London, New York, writes, from experience that includes being host to over 100 Servas travellers a year: The list of "Don't's" that Servas travellers are asked to learn is too long. But there is one habit that many travellers have which I think is discourteous, and which seems not to be on the list: taking candid photographs of hosts and of the inside of hosts' homes.

I am sure many of those travellers belong to families or societies where no one objects to being photographed. I try to accept such behaviour as one of those cultural differences that test our peacefulness and flexibility. Still, it seems to me that one should always ask consent before snapping a camera in someone's face".

There may well be many hosts who think some of the other don't's are more important to them, but Mr. London's words of understanding are beautiful and should speak to us all.

He, by the way, strongly objects to the "do": offer to help in and around the house. His guests are not supposed to "do" anything at all - whereas he, as I know, will do anything for them. I have said to him that Servas travellers normally badly want to do something in return for their hosts kindness, and like it.

An American lady, whose letter was sent to me by Don Fawcett, would call for the utmost tolerance of Mr. London, I suppose. Is she the ideal Servas traveller or not? Notice the introduction.

"Everywhere I attempted to do some-thing for my hosts in return for their generosity. This is not always easy, inasmuch as assistance in regular households work may be interpreted as an attempt to improve the housekeeping!

If my guests showed an interest in certain topics of discussion, I would leave with them, or send them, brochures on the subject. - I hung a screen door, repaired a sewing machine, set up a stereo system, removed decals from a bathtub, hung up tons of laundry, babysat, translated documents, polished silver, gave lectures in a school, cleaned out cabinets and an entire pantry. - Sometimes I was just a good listener. -

I carried with me a box with small gifts which had accumulated in my household and would usually find some-thing suitable for each host. I also made it a point to take a picture of each one, concentrating on closeups that will make wonderful presents". (Did she ask her hosts' consent?!)

Yes, having a good listener is may-be just what one host needs; others probably just want their guests to be good narrators, entertainers, and don't expect them to scrub floors or wash accumulated dishes. In our part of the world, the spreading of dish-washers unfortunately has made this obvious chore after the meals, often the only one accepted by a host, almost obsolete.

Finally, I expect there is quite a lot of hosts who haven't or can't travel abroad who are thrilled to meet foreigners, maybe for the first time, learn about a country they knew absolutely nothing at all about, and having fun with new friends. But let's hear another voice from David, USA: "I just returned from a wonderful trip around Western Europe after becoming a member in Holland... I only stayed with two Servas hosts (in Oslo and Torino)... I had so much in common with these people already; I wondered if there might be some way to meet people



more radically different from me in their beliefs. It seems, in looking through the lists of hosts and their interests, that most people in Servas are already predisposed to understanding and liking each other. To truly work toward peace, people who disagree (strongly) on how peace is to be achieved and maintained must somehow be brought together on an individual basis. I think Servas is great for helping peace activists (meaning left-oriented) to realize that there are people all over the world who are working in a similar way. But to break down the larger barriers between people in opposing camps, a different kind of effort is needed. I suggest contacting conservative groups to see if people on the right would be willing to host for Servas. This could contribute to some international mind-opening on both (or all) sides of the political spectrum. My understanding of the goal of Servas is to get potentially opposing sides to meet one another on an individual, person-to-person basis, thus preventing confrontation on the international level. At the moment it seems to me that people on the same side are being brought together by Servas, which is not nearly so difficult nor potentially productive. - Well, that's my two-cents worth!"

Though I am amazed that David draws his far-reaching conclusion after visiting two hosts, - and if I am not wrong many people in Servas would rejoice if all Servas hosts were in David's camp - I agree with his ideas. I have written in our info that the left no doubt is overrepresented in some countries, but traveller reports clearly indicate that "the other camp"

is represented too. Two Danish lads enjoyed visiting a host in California, who was a member of the far-right John Birch Society. This led to interesting discussions. They were asked to give their view on the Soviets, which differed quite a bit from that of the strongly-anti communist participants at a JBS-meeting. Their talk was however received with interest. Another host who worked in the armament industry also listened with interest to a peace oriented Danish traveller. Since these conservative people apparently are all very kind and generous, they at the same time break down prejudice in travellers who may start out with anti-American feelings.

I can only recommend David to try to find out for himself whether all American hosts share his ideals.

## Keep for future use :

Our travellers who visited hosts who found the armsrace necessary and OK and hence opposed peaceniks, also a racist-host, wondered why such people had joined Servas, but they shared my opinion that Servas should have as wide a spectrum as possible. Just like David. Now is the question: Are conservative, "militaristic" travellers to be allowed to join? Let us hear from you again, David?

Finally two letters from a content traveller and a content host:

Al from California visited 6 hosts in Denmark (1986).

"One of the most sincere and genuinely hospitable visits I've had was spending 3 days with Bitten and Troels in Rebild (Bitten is general sec' of Danish WRI. Ed.).

'You are now family' said Bitten. I felt like family, and loved drying the dishes and stuffing envelopes. I contributed, and that made me feel very good indeed. (Are you listening, Mr. London?). I felt that I belonged - sharing:

Waiting for Bitten while she shopped for tomatoes, - dinner, drinks and good conversation - a private room for my private times - using Bitten's bicycle for cycling around the wooded countryside (trying awfully hard to get lost) - learning about Bitten's role in the peace movement, and about Danish table manners - the phone calls she made on my behalf -drinking Polish vodka and many stories to exchange (the hosts had visited Servas hosts in Poland) - driving me 20 km to catch a bus to my next Servas host. It's the beginning of a lasting friendship."

It's interesting that Al mentions that Bitten taught him Danish table manners. The previous host was terribly annoyed because he always took too much food on his plate, and then shoveled the left-over in the garbagecan. Which probably is acceptable where he comes from. This host didn't like to teach him our manners. She realised she should have. Well, maybe Bitten just tried to teach him to eat nicely with knife and fork as we do it in Europe. (I think all Americans should adopt it. It makes a lot more sense and we think it looks a lot more elegant!

Knud Madsen has been a host in Aarhus for 15 years. He didn't have luck as a traveller in Berlin and South England, but on the other hand:

"I have had several nice and interesting visitors. Let me just mention what came out of two this year:

A Polish mushroom-farming student came and stayed for some days, giving me a good opportunity of practicing my Polish, and this especially because he did not speak other languages than his own (apart from a little of English). He gave me a wonderful book on Warsaw and later on there came, by post, a Polish grammar of 750 pages (!!), which was another incentive for me to continue studying the mother tongue of Chopin, my favourite composer.

Another interesting visit took place in the Autumn. A nice Spaniard from Asturias came. He offered generously to teach his language at my School of Modern Languages and Business Administration, which he did to everybody's

satisfaction. The whole thing ended up with an epistolary contact between my come out of that the next time my students are going on their studytour to Asturias and vice versa. So I don't complain, and I hope others can tell about similar happy results of their contacts through Servas. I am very grateful".

## Hints to hosts

The following Advice and Suggestions to hosts, issued by Birgitte Damsgaard, Servas Denmark, may be relevant elsewhere.

If a traveller writes to you about hospitality, obviously expecting an answer from you, enclosing an international coupon, please answer! Or don't mark "Write" in your entry in the hostlist. If you cannot receive the traveller, try, if possible, to find a host who can, or mention, in your answer alternative inexpensive lodgings. If you invite, stress that the traveller must confirm that she is actually coming when within phoning distance, e.g. the day before she is

expected. Too many travellers just never come, without telling you in advance, (letters do get lost, or your phone doesn't answer). So don't make elaborate preparations. If you won't wait indefinitely, put a message on your door or tell the hostcoordinator if there is one), or just leave.

If you cannot be telephoned, ask for exact arrival time to be sent as early as possible. Are you able to pick your guest up at stop or station, she will bless you. Put yourself in her position, also if someone calls with too short notice: imagine yourself in a strange place, maybe a big city, at night, not knowing where to go, having maybe received no positive answers to your letters, made many phonecalls in vain (and public phones are greedy and uncomfortable). Hotels, if they do have vacancies, ruin the budget. Let the stranded traveller get a roof over her head, if nothing else, and use your phone to find another host - and tell what the phone charges are. Show at least a kind face, if you can't offer a meal or a chat. On the other hand a host must be able to say "no, sorry", before she collapses and withdraws as host under the pressure, in overrun places, of never ending requests. In that case she should at least recruit some fresh hosts first! Some travellers may arrive dishevelled after spending 20 hours on a train or bus. Ask them, before starting conversation, if they feel like talking or would much rather have a shower, lie down and sleep. A host ought to have tried all this herself, and not be too quick to reject a traveller as untidy - or maybe as uncommunicative. True Servas hosts will not reject a traveller with black fingernails or unusual eating habits. You must always tell someone who is asking for hospitality if you are busy and can't offer but a bed and a place to rest. That may well be appreciated.

However you feel, try to present a kind face, and a kind tone of voice. Some of us may unfortunately be less



gifted than others in that respect! Excuses for refusing hospitality or for asking a traveller to leave are sometimes felt to be lies, and generally it is always better to be honest, certainly when a no longer-wanted visitor won't leave after 2 nights. Is a traveller asking for one night's hospitality, you may suspect being mis-used as free hotel. But she may have valid reasons, and even short visit may be mutually most interesting and giving (ask dayhosts). Travellers who have a tight schedule often abstain from using Servas. That is considerate, but also rather sad for many a non-visited host. Many travellers say that their hosts never wanted to see their letter of introduction. They just trusted them. - One of our hosts got angry when a traveller said he didn't have any. He then explained he had thrown it away (!) because hosts never wanted to see it. I know of several who stopped presenting their L.I. for the same reason.

If however a traveller disregards the Servas rules or misbehaves, you should ascertain that she has a L.I. properly approved. She may have got the hostlist otherwise. In that case you must tell her to give you the list and stop using Servas hosts, or refer her to an interviewer. If the traveller is approved, tell her to reread the Servas rules in the hostlist. If she has broken written or particularly unwritten (unknown) rules, it should be your duty, as a host, to discuss it openly. The traveller will be grateful.

Martin Luther King said: The worst thing is not the evil of bad people, but the silence of good people". I'm sure he thought of other evils, but ---!

Cultural differences give rise to embarrassment, possibly even anger. at any time you feel misused or badly treated by travellers, inform your coordinator. - Give her name and address of the "delinquents" (ask them to write in your guestbook early in the visit). Their national secretary will want to be informed in order to hear the travellers' explanation, and try to prepare new travellers better in order to avoid similar incidents in the future. She will also ask for a refund, if a traveller has left an unpaid phone bill. - I have heard of travellers who did their darndest to be helpful, as they had been told at home, and only irritated the host (usually the housewife).

# Servas and the UN

Infatigable Reva King, our Peace Secretary, has sent reports from her involvement in NGO (Non Governmental Organizations) with consultative status at the UN committees as well as that of our other UN-representatives in New York, Geneva and Vienna. - Six full pages describe activities going back as far as 1986. We bring some excerpts and one piece of more recent news:

## SERVAS VISITS BY MAIL

initiated in 1985 as our project for International Youth Year (SIN 23). There have been no new requests for visiting friends by mail. Nearly all earlier requests were matched according to interests. Many US members wanted correspondence with Europeans, but the interest from Europe was limited. We naturally encourage communication throughout the world but at this time especially need requests from Europe. - Coordinator is now:

Rita Alexander  
46 Lynwood Rd.  
Scarsdale, NY 10583. USA

## THE UN UNIVERSITY FOR PEACE

At the opening session the chancellor Or. Robert Miller, reported that this young institution is trying to survive on a limited budget. It is becoming well known with musicians and artists contributing their talent by organizing concerts and displays. It will now be included in the UN debates for training and education. Spain, Portugal and Finland are now proposing substantial contributions, but the long range future of the University is at stake.

A very successful 3-week University for Peace seminar, "The Philosophy of Communication for Peace" attracted professors of journalism, reporters, newspaper directors and professional photographers last summer (1986). A conference on Drug Abuse and Stability will be held in March in Costa Rica, participants will represent at least 21 nations.

I served as recording secretary for the opening sessions and recruited the permanent secretary. On Martin Luther King's birthday I was guest speaker, focusing on peaceful methods of conflict solution in coping with individual and institutionalized racism, overt community riots and international violence, all of which are on the increase.

I recommend for Servas members:

1. Take an active interest in the University for Peace during its formative years.

2. Travellers should increase world awareness of the University's aims.

3. Servas should consider the University, in Costa Rica, as a location for a future International conference. - Madrue Chavers-Wright, in a later re-port: My primary activities this 6 months were recruitment of committee members and coordination, serving as a re-source to the chairperson, after my "Book Talk" and subsequently responding to the University for Peace's re-quest for a copy of my book to place in its library. This was sent as a gift from Servas International, thus enhancing the prestige of Servas as well as the UN contribution to the

University World Center for Training and Education in Conflict Resolution. (Unfortunately the Editor is ignorant of the title of the book).

## YOUTH

As requested by a local university we supervise a political science student for her UN experience. She has been assigned to the Youth Committee; research on Foundations for possible help in funding the DISARMAMENT TIMES; participation in various other UN conferences on behalf of Servas.

## SERVAS TRAVELLERS VISIT THE UN

From Madrue Chavers-Wright: Through attendance at briefings, meetings, reviewing services and UN publications, NGOs learn constantly about changing world issues and the trouble spots that interfere with governments beginning to live together in a global community. Servas travellers report that the day spent at the UN with our NGO representatives is one of the most rewarding of their travel. It enables them to better understand and interpret the complications of achieving international dialogue in addition to the obstacles to the building, maintaining and defending world peace. Our role is to keep Servas informed of the achievements, the processes, the planning and coordination involved for the UN in reaching international understanding, especially when there is tremendous resistance with governments lacking political will.

## DISARMAMENT TIMES

Reva devoted a lot of energy and time to the Disarmament Times Publications Committee and fund raising.

"D.T. is unique in being the only concise publication offering balanced professional coverage in the field of disarmament within the UN context. It serves the general public, the NGO Community and especially UN-delegates.

Insofar as my funds permitted, I sent subscriptions to national Servas peace secretaries. I wish I could afford to send issues to more Servas leaders and members.

Of the Disarmament Educational programs the most valuable, for me, included reports by NGO leaders who attended the 14-16 Feb. Moscow meeting focused on disarmament and arms control issues etc. All speakers were much impressed by the changes in USSR, the openness of people and government official: in informal meetings and the extensive socialization etc. The speakers' primary concern was about the ability of the world, and especially the USA, to respond to the Soviet policy changes within the estimated 3 years allowed for successful results.

At this program, all NGOs were permitted to distribute literature. This was thus a major publicity supplement, since we can usually only mention the name of our organization (i.e. Servas International) when recognized to speak at other NGO/UN meetings.

The D.T. Fund Raising Committee is to raise money to pay for publication and postage. As the major readers are the staffs of various UN missions, my primary role was to reach staff at about 40 member states, to arrange

appointments. Reaching such busy delegates required at least 200 telephone calls. The calls had little direct value for Servas, but certainly made us better known, since I had to identify myself fully to each delegate.

## DISARMAMENT LUNCHEONS

I was able to attend a massively attended lunch with the Chinese Ambassador. He spoke about Chinese disarmament measures currently- taking place, as well as a program of conversion. The army has been reduced by a million men; military armament manufactures are gradually turned over to partly civilian production. Troops are often used for public work tasks.

Readers who are motivated for learning a lot more of what is going on at the UN, e.g. subscribing to Disarmament Times, should contact Reva King at her new address:

280 9th Ave, 1k 6G  
New York, N.Y. 10011  
ph (212) 242-1163

So should all Servas travellers who visit New York!

## THE PEACE DIRECTORY

Over 1000 worldwide addresses of organisations and groups working for the abolition of war, injustice, ecological devastation, you name it, you will find in The Peace Directory, issued by Housemans, 5 Caledonian Road Kings Cross, London 1 9DX, England,

All Servas secretaries should have a copy. For some countries Servas is the only address listed, while e.g. USA and Britain have several hundred.

The International Peace Communication Center, Anna Paulownaplein 3, The Hague, Netherlands, issue monthly "Disarmament Campaigns"; European Nuclear Disarmament, 11 Goodwin St., London NO 3HO, bimonthly the END Journal and also USA has a 'Disarmament Campaigns' c/o G. Vanderhaar, 3554 Boxdale Apt. 3, Memphis TN 381118.

## WORKCAMPS

You will also find, for many countries, the SCI (Service Civil Internationale). They arrange international workcamps. Servas travellers have recommended starting a journey in a workcamp. Here one will find friends and contacts galore in the host country and also from other countries. A Danish host, aged 70, spent her first month in Sri Lanka in a workcamp, and many Danish travellers do the same in India and in other countries.

## SIPRI YEARBOOK

For those who want information about a 1 1 the sordid facts and figures there is the SIPRI Yearbook 1987. Armaments and Disarmaments, from the Swedish Peace Research Institute (Oxford University Press). It appears that during the International Peace Year 36 wars were fought, which involved 5 million participants from 41 countries. Millions were killed. 53 countries have delivered weapons to the bloodiest of them all: Iran-Iraq - 28 being smart enough to serve both parties. Of 86 countries 60% have increased their military

budget, while as many as 40% cut down, actually a 10% improvement compared to 1981. - The book is

expensive. Disarmament Campaigns Newsletter costs \$15 a year (11 issues). Ask for it at your library.

# The Cultural Shock

## Why do the women of India wear sarees?

"Because then you notice only their beautiful deepbrown almondshaped eyes, their long eyelashes, their jet black hair.

And that was the only thing which Ravi, whom we met in Bharatpur, had seen of his wife, whom he married as a 19-year old. Now, at 125, he certainly wasn't satisfied with the rest of it. His father had arranged the marriage when Ravi was 5, and the dowry, which was given to the boy's family, had long ago been invested in palm wine. He had two small girls, whom he had no possibility of marrying off with his monthly salary. When the Indians heard we had four girls, they looked upon us with great pity".

This is the introduction to a 10-page report send to us by a countryman living in Spain, Jorgen Bernfeld, who with his wife Ulla, travelled in India. We bring some excerpts.

"We landed in Delhi Nov. 18th 1986 and during the following days got one cultural shock after the other. People were sleeping in public everywhere Lepers (4 mill.) lacked noses and ears. Invalids without arms and legs were moving around on a board with wheels bottom. Cows and goats were trotting undisturbedly down the main street leaving their calling cards. Dust, dirt and the smell of poverty hanging in the polluted air.

Two days after our arrival Ulla got some large rash on the left side of her face, here eye was almost closed. So we were ready to take the next plane back.

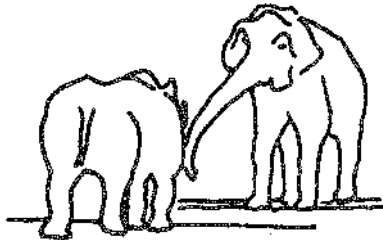
But helpful Indians got Ulla to skilled doctors and moved us out into cleaner air. We got the doctor's permission after two weeks to go and see the country and to experience the real India: magnificent palaces, enormous fortresses, temples with beautiful stone carvings and funeral pyres at dawn's early light. Mountain villages with clear dry air, green fields. National parks and jungles with tigers, elephants, rhinoceri. Crowds of people which took our breath away, and small villages where we would breathe relaxed. Sunsets so beautiful what we thought they could only be found in paintings. And - not to mention - kind and helpful people who invited us to their spartan homes and a tasty meal.

Fortunate that India is not wrapped in a saree. Then we would have only experienced the sad eyes of Delhi."

"Babu Lal Sharma, the co-ordinator for Servas, we met at our hotel the next day, where we had a good lunch and told him about our plans. He was a gourmand, which was quite obvious.

That evening we got invited to his place. His two very lovely daughters were serving the meal and taught us how to eat rice and vegetables in curry with our right hand - no knife, no fork, no spoon!"

The next day, riding on a bicycle rickshaw to the Red Fort, they felt "transported several hundred years



back... trying to get safely through the mass of people without getting stomped on or knocked down. - At an intersection, where our rickshaw driver did not immediately obey a cop's order, he got such a slap on his face that I in astonishment expected a civil war on the spot. But we just continued with extra speed as if nothing had happened.

In the evening Babu Lal arrived with bus tickets for our first itinerary. By this time Ulla's face was hurting very much, so we decided to visit a doctor who lived just around the corner. We found the good doctor in a small shop with waiting stools and examining table in the same room. It looked sensible enough. He took one look at Ulla and said she was suffering from herpes zoster (shingles), for which he gave 12 little pills in 3 different colours and charged her \$5 including consultation".

The pills had no immediate effect, so Jorgen went alone to Jaipur. "When I arrived I called Babu Lal's Servos friend, Mr. R. Agrawal, got housed in his carpet factory and was invited to dinner at his home, a beautiful old, narrow house with steep stairs and wooden fans above. I remembered to take off my shoes before entering, to shake hands with the men and to greet the ladies in the Gandhi-fashion with clasped hands below the face. I got a very cordial reception by the whole family and had a cosy evening with great food".

Whilst Ulla was recovering, he roamed in the Old City, where he experienced scenes that recalled the old movie "The Thief of Bagdad".

They took the plane to Agra, but from there made their first trip by a local bus: "It dashed off at 30 km/h, and it was shaking as if it were doing about 120. The horn was used incessantly. In between the ticketseller was using his whistle. The bus came to a screeching halt, everybody was yelling. One of the passengers wouldn't pay his way. After some negotiation everybody was laughing, the man paid, and we continued. - From the bus we saw a lot of vultures sitting on a bunch of bone next to the road, and I was wondering: were they dead animals drowned during the monsoon, or were they former bus passengers? The vultures looked fat & sassy.

... "On to Khajuraho, which is a small village where the temples with the most erotic art are located, done more than a thousand years ago. Why, nobody knows, but as this was the wedding season (winter), we were surrounded by many giggling newlyweds who were studying the options for the night. If they could copy what I saw, they could win olympic medals for acrobatics.."

In Varanasi "our boatman took us for breakfast in the old city, in which there is no more than a meter between

the houses, where people are doing their morning toilette, cows pushing by. There were streets so dark and sombre that one should not even let one's divorced wife pass through.

We were persuaded to visit a silk factory, in which children from 7-12 years were making \$ 1.15 a day making silk cloth. Only children could be used as tying of the knots can only be done by small fingers. The owner despaired over their high wages and thought of moving abroad."

They moved on to Katmandu sharing the plane with a Danish soccer-team. "The first day went quickly: we both danced the Katmandu quickstep (the Trot). They are the quick steps you take to get as fast as possible to the toilet. Most travellers in Nepal know this dance. We thought we had taken good precautions by only brushing our teeth in water and gargling with whiskey.

The next day we saw Denmark beat China 2-0, which made the Nepalese quite happy".

A trip to the Royal Chitwan National Park, including elephant-rides, "stumbling over an enormous rhinoceros", crocodile-watching etc. "costs us most of our almond harvest. I still have reminiscences: two tick bites which itch a lot when I think about the price of this trip.

We were accompanied by two Englishmen who had driven an old VW-bus from England. One of them was wearing a frilly shirt buttoned all the way up, blue jeans and patent leather shoes. The other a checkered viyella shirt, thin summer pants and huge home-made sandals. They were between 65-75 yrs old, spoke a high-falutin' English and only talked about England as a colonial power."

In Katmandu life is lived in the street, "which is evident if you see the dark damp rooms they sleep in. The milkman sells directly from the dairy, which his wife is milking with great energy. The hairdresser's shop consists of a mirror which the customer himself has to hold, plus a rusty pair of scissors"...

"In Madras we went in search for a place to enjoy our Christmas lunch. So as not to mix with the dressed-up tourists we chose a local eatery, which was actually a pity for our fellow diners. Their rice got cold and hard while they were ofling us. The whole dinner for two came to \$ 1,50 including tips.

Went to Bahabalipuram and Kanchiouram where some fabulous temples from the 7th century got me to think that today a bridge can hardly be built which doesn't collapse before it has been finished.

Intended to take a direct bus to Trichy (actually Tiruchirappalli, which neither we nor they could pronounce). But that called for a reservation, which again demanded a written order on which the passenger's name, address, sex, age a.o. had to be given. The questions are in the local language and that could have been a real problem, if the South Indians hadn't been such a helpful lot. Furthermore, women have priority at the ticket of-

fice, so although the lines were long, it never took more than half a day to get these tickets, which took us to the middle of Tamil Nadu. - India has 16 different languages and many hundred of dialects, which is why the only way Indians can communicate with each other as well as with the government is in English.

At a generous buffet, vegetarian food was served at one end and non-veg. at the other. Some of the guests were lucky and didn't get anything. We were among those who caught fire, so to speak. India has three types of spiced food: hot, hotter and hottest".

Next stop was Tanjore. "As we had no time to stand in line and couldn't afford the express bus, we decided to take the local buses. As there was no "queuing culture", I was almost run down at each bus departure: the strongest got there first and got the seat. Very soon, however, we found out how the system works in S.India: I remained with the luggage, Ulla moved into the front of the line, which was accepted because she was a woman, and when she had got seats for both of us, I shoved the suitcase in through the window. If there were no two seats together, she sat down next to a man, whom the driver then asked to move, as men were not supposed to sit next to strange ladies. It is cheap to travel by bus, but also a slow affair, an average 30 km/hr including coffee and other stop-overs. My problem is that when I got to go, I got to go", and right now. I do not have a "party bladder" like Ulla. Fortunately the Indians have them even smaller than I, so approx. every second hour there was a stop, the men going off to the left, the women to the right.

The peasants used the road for a threshing floor: they throw the rice sheaves on it where buses and trucks run over them, then they are scattered like chaff before the wind and the grains are caught in bamboo baskets.

When we got tired of rice, we went to the best hotel in town and got a western meal including knife and fork, which saved Ulla a lot of cleaning, as she had kilos of rice under her nails after each meal, which of course eased the budget".

With two Italian girls they later took a photo-safari in Mundanthurai national park and were given one cabin. "There were 6 beds and mattresses, and out of this we collected 4 useable beds. The two last ones collapsed. The floor and walls were full of bugs, and in place of the lightbulb there was a dead bat. Ulla found a millipede and insisted it was a millionpede. It was more than 20 cm long. The bite can be dangerous". - The park however was gorgeous with wild animals roaming about. - At the nearby village "the school marm released the kids so they could study us. Wherever we went we had a crowd of 100 yelling kids, while the adults peered at us from the huts." Back in Papanasam they met a ranger who had just been out hunting a tiger which had killed cattle in the small town they had visited a few days before.

"...We continued on to Trivandrum, which must be the main centre of bus chaos. The most beautiful beach of India was filled with topless and bottomless youth, and Indian men gawking at this spectacle...It was a very warm

and pleasant place after our jungle hardships.

While in the area we visited an Ashram in Velland, almost like a kind of folkhighschool, where the villagers were taught a handicraft to prevent them from migrating to the big cities. There was a carpentry shop, a tailor shop, a smithy, weaving as well as animal husbandry with Danish bulls. They had been able to increase the usual Indian milk production of 1,5 litres up to 8 per day. There was also a children's nursery where the tots were taught to keep themselves as well as the environment clean. There was a physician, a vet, an old folks home. When they had learned a handicraft, they would go back to their own villages where they would be given help in opening a shop, where the people of the village could learn a trade. Teachers as well as students seemed interested and happy.

On the highway we passed a quarry, where men were chopping out large blocks of stone, and at the roadside women with small hammers were reducing the blocks until they were gravel. Stone upon stone, pile upon pile, day in and day out. Their only protection against the sun was a palm leaf. It must have been India's toughest job.

In Aleppey we were given the bridal suite in the most inferior hotel in town. It was a round tower with 11 windows, and only when we were going to bed did we notice that none had curtains. The town's nightly show?

In Ernakulam, a big port...we tried to buy some toilet paper. The shopkeepers sniggered and said that indeed they did not sell that sort of thing. I therefore suggest that all travellers

room for souvenirs".

Much later, in Mysore, they found the palace of the Maharaja, where he is still living, an architectural misfit. The carved doors and floor mosaics were the best part. "The temples of Belur and Halebid were unusually grand. Built about 8-900 yrs. ago and showing on external as well as internal walls life as it was lived at that time. Not one of the carved thousand-and-odd figures are alike".

From Bangalore they left on Feb 8th by express to Delhi. "The difference between an express and a passenger train supposedly is that the first one runs more than is is at a standstill, but of that I am not quite convinced...11 million people make use of the 10.000 trains that run daily. That leaves one million hanging outside or sitting on the roof".

After they had reached Delhi, they tried to call a guy whom they had met in Bangalore. He had told them that his sister worked as a doctor in Denmark (and had learned from her the words he greeted them, as Danes, with: "Frikadeller (meatballs), with Carlsberg and Snaps"). He said he had been robbed, and borrowed 20 Rs. In return he would serve them meatballs when back in Delhi. - "Sad to say neither phone number nor address were in existence. Which is why one is happy to be a skinflint".

In Delhi they saw a graffiti that fits well with the introduction. Let it finish the tale: "People marry before they know each other and divorce when they do!" It, is, I believe, most relevant in our part of the world.

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## Bikini in Eastern Europe

Dan Erling, American, was lucky to hear about Servas in Europe:

"I began bicycling in Frankfurt, Germany. Just before the Danish border, in Flensburg, I met Per. He explained why he was a Danish minister in a Danish church in Germany - and then he told me about Servas, and I joined in Copenhagen. I set out to Sweden, then Norway, getting as far north as Trondheim, from there east to Stockholm, and south to Ystad. Took the ferry to Poland, on to

Czechoslovakia, Austria, Germany, and finally the Netherlands, where I sold my bike and hitchhiked to Frankfurt. I flew back to Georgia after my 6 month vacation.

I used Servas occasionally and it was a great help getting to know real folks. And how varied they were. I stayed with a nice old lady, who took very good care of me and showed me slides until 2 in the morning; I stayed in a commune with 7 people; I stayed on a goat farm and helped with the work; I stayed with a family that accept all guests that write or phone - all 20 or 30 a year. I stayed with another family that accepts all guests that write or phone, but that was only 1 or 2 a year. And I was turned down by a family that felt they had taken their limit of guests for this year. One host didn't to India fill half their luggage with toilet paper. When going home, there is lots of

pay any attention to me - they had work to do; they showed me the refrigerator and the bed, and that was the extent of our conversation. Another family hardly let me do anything alone.

In POLAND and CZECHOSLOVAKIA I never used Servas. I had the "underground" list of addresses, but I never used it. I never needed it. The people in the eastern countries were so friendly that I never lacked a friend or a roof over my head in the rain. I wanted to see what was behind the "Iron Curtain". I wanted contact with the real people of these countries. They wanted to talk. We talked of their ideology, their government system; the Russians. And of course they wanted to hear all about the USA, my ideology, my government. I had never seen a poor country & the disadvantages brought about by a poor country. I was amazed at the shortage of goods, the long lines, the stinking milk. But I also noted the advantages of a poor country - the closeness between families, the love that Americans seem to poor in these days. Yes in some respects I'll say these peoples were more rich than many in America.

And now I am back in America. Before my tour I had never heard of Servas. Now I return and find that my parents have become interested through my letters and are becoming host members".

# Go East

It is sad that so few Servas travellers from the "Western World" visit our many friends in Eastern Europe, and vice versa. The latter have obvious reasons: some countries don't allow their citizens to go; others make it difficult, e.g. Poles need a notarized invitation to get out and have to get hold of Western money at an exorbitant price. The black-market value of 20 \$ corresponds to the average wages of 1 month. However, the ticket, e.g. by the LOT airline can be paid in zloty as can railway tickets. So we Servas hosts should be generous to help bring down their expenses to a minimum, when they are here, and help with invitations (the notarization at the Polish Embassy in Denmark costs about 20 \$). Servas DK has done this for people who have hosted Danish travellers at home.

But to us, in the West, there are no such obstacles. There seem to be some fear about going, a fear that, I should think, goes back to Stalinist times. I know many people who had a wonderful time in Hungary and Poland & always want to go back. No trouble at all.

Recently our contact in Poland declared that even if Servas is not legalized in Poland, it is not illegal for our numerous friends to receive us at home, and he agreed that, in contrast to previous years, travellers could bring the list of friends along. Thus we are almost "back to normal". A visa to Poland I can get at the Polish embassy within 15 minutes.

## PERESTROIKA IN HUNGARY

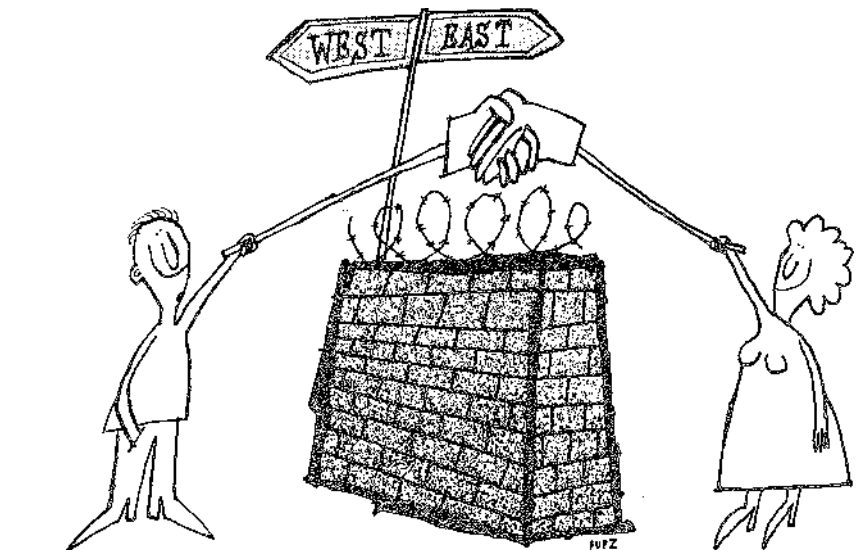
According to the latest news the situation in Hungary is entirely "back to normal" (as it was for a short period in the late 70'es until Servas was declared illegal).

This is great news indeed: Servas is now legal - though it will be under a different name - through "personal connections" our movement can now organise under the protection (but not the control we are assured) of the Patriotic Popular Front (NEPFRONT) along with over 100 other associations. NEPFRONT's only task would be "to defend Servas against attacks from ministries or any other organs".

Servas will even get an assembly hall for meetings, something that had been strictly forbidden, and 10 people are preparing a meeting of organizers in January, and a national secretary will be elected. Our Hungarian correspondent thinks there will be a lot of travellers from Hungary this year, because "there are no travel restrictions any more". So - the doors are wide open in Hungary.

In RUMANIA conditions are desperate. The conditions are comparable to the last years of the Second World War, Great shortages of everything: heating and electricity, food, petrol, rationing of almost everything. And no possibilities whatsoever to travel in the West. Nor are Rumanians allowed to accomodate us, our letters may not ever reach them. Though it may mean trouble with the police just to have

contact with foreigners, our few



hosts are more anxious to meet visitors from abroad than probably in any other country.

A retired Danish couple, Axel and Grethe Bohn, enthusiastic globetrotters, well known to Servas hosts in several countries visited BULGARIA in the Autumn of 1987:

If you go to Bulgaria, you have to realise that all accomodations must be booked through Balcan Tourist. (Bulgaria's 50 youth hostels are not available for Western tourists!) - This is the reason why the three Servas hosts, all in Sofia, are just dayhosts. Our "official" host helped us contact two of them (who are friends), both English interpreters. They have been hosts for some 15 years and said they received about 10 guests a year. They told us many interesting things, past and pre-sent. That Bulgaria had been relatively lucky during World War II. The army was not forced by the Germans to fight against the Russians, towards whom they feel gratitude ever since they, in 1878, delivered them from the oppression of the Turks during 500 years.

The Bulgarian Jews were not exterminated.

On our Servas friends' advise we visited during our 2 weeks' stay Safi, Veliko Tarnove and Plovdiv. We were enthused by the mountain scenery, the historic monuments; with theatres from the Greek-Roman past, the magnificent monasteries, which will impress any visitor.

In Plovdiv we had to use a hotel - the approved private accomodations are only obtainable when the hotels are full. Otherwise travelling in Bulgaria is cheap - There are language problems, but we managed. When some-one shakes his head, remember it means yes, and nodding means no!

Axel Bohn

It was typical that in lack of other communication, when understanding that the Bohns came from Denmark, a waiter at once called the names of Laudrup and Olsen - two soccer players, whose fame has been established all over the world since the Worldchampionships in Mexico. The same do people Danes meet say in Japan, or Egypt, people who never heard of Niels Bohr, Kirkegaard or even Hans Christian Andersen. I am sorry I cannot share their national pride. Though I wonder whether Bulgarians know the names of famous American football players!

In DDR, or East Germany, as everybody in the West persists to call it, we have several friends, including one parson in the Lutheran Church in Potsdam who, as he claims, can introduce visitors to any of his colleagues in the rest of the country. It is possible for East Germans to have friends staying at their home, though some red tape has to be cleared first. But for them to visit us is at present just something they are hoping for in the future. A clergyman from DDR was highly surprised being allowed to attend the ICP Summer School (mentioned elsewhere) last summer.

CZECHOSLOWAKIA: Friends there too. One of them, whom I had told that he would be welcome to visit Servas hosts in Denmark, now wrote to me that since travel restrictions had been lifted, he planned to come in the Spring. However, he would have to ask me to pay into the Czech State Bank an "allowance" for him of DM 25 per day. He suggested to work here, presumably to be able to pay the money back. Since the amount is pretty high, and working here would be illegal - if it were possible to find some, I recommended him to try to appeal to someone who had been his guest. There were no Danes among his visitors so far.

Finally, we also have several friends in the SOVIET UNION, who in spite of heavy restrictions, at least so far, on contact with foreigners, want to meet us. One of them, in Leningrad, has been a most interesting and generous host to several visitors from USA, Denmark and W.Germany. They were all enthused.

It might be an idea to discuss, at the coming Servas conference in London, whether Servas International and other sponsors could establish a fund giving financial help (and offering official invitations), enabling hosts from Eastern Europe to visit Servas hosts in the Western Europe. - We ought to do the same for hosts in the 3rd world, but travel expenses would be prohibitive.

Let the grassroots undermine the Wall that separate our sisters and brothers from us. GO EAST. (Or West, if you co-me from Asia or South Pacific!)

Birgitte

# LLANFAIRWLLGWYLLGOGERY CHWYCHWTRNDOROBWILLIAN TISILOGOCH

Aren't we all (non-British) used to talk about "the English", Anglais, Englender etc., when we mean the British? just as we let the Russians represent millions who are not Russians? They probably resent it as such as the Scots and the Welsh dislike being confused with the dominating tribe. May they forgive us our ignorance.

NORTH WALES, September 1986  
by Eva Krutein, USA

On our seven-month trip through four continents my husband Manfred and I had experiences with Servas which unveiled the past to us to an unexpected degree.

In Wales, I found it easy to confuse the time. Past and present were constantly exchanged. From reflecting on the Middle Ages of the majestic castles Conwy, Caernarfon and Beaumaris we stepped into the everyday life of the 16th century.

In the county of Gwynedd we were fortunate enough to stay with a Servas family, Quakers, that owned a country house built in 1562. The young couple, Adam and Frances, who lived there with their two small children, were both architects and as such qualified to purchase and improve this ancient dwelling.

The stony walls, 4 feet thick, kept the indoor temperature close to freezing point. The only time we warmed up was in the evening when we cowered in front of a small wood fire.

"We hope you'll get used to our spar-tan life style", Frances said. "It's close to that of the American pioneers".

We did get used to it. We warmed up when we went out to help load logs onto a hand-drawn carriage and piled them up for the usual one-hour fire in the evening. As for the toilet, it was only an oblong hole in the floor - Japanese style - over which we had to squat.

The most impressive features of the house were the low ceilings and door openings. Built to fit the short people of the 16th century, they had a clearance of only 5'-1". Even I, 5'-3", had to bend down. Manfred and Adam, 6' tall moved with bent heads under the low

ceiling. The two toddlers were the only ones who could run upright through the house. I suddenly understood how much shorter mankind had been four centuries ago.

This experience engaged me so much that I couldn't appreciate famous Caernarfon castle. I knew only that Edward I had built this fortress in 1283 as a Norman-English stronghold against the rebellious Welsh. But we learned much more about it from our Servas hostess Mary, who picked us up on Anglesey, an island off the northwest coast of Wales. Mary was a horsebreeder and kept a whole menagerie in her stables. She also was knowledgeable and understanding.

I complained to her about having missed out on most of Caernarfon Castle, famous because of Charles' coronation as Prince of Wales in 1969.

"Here in the North Wales we don't exactly like English authority", she said while driving over the Menai bridge. "Have you heard that about 200 people were arrested before Elizabeth II made Charles the Prince of Wales?"

"In America we saw only the ceremony on TV," I said.

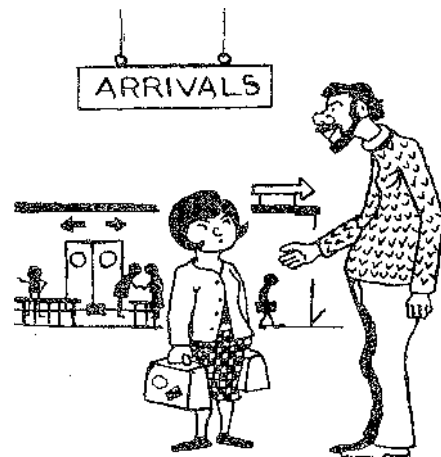
"They suppressed it here too," she continued with a bitter smile. "You know, in 1301 the English conqueror Edward I made his son a Prince of Wales in order to humiliate our nation. And

so did Elizabeth with Charles in 1969. But the authorities feared we Welsh nationalists would demonstrate and disturb the ceremony, so they arrested about 200 of us two days before the nomination. I was one of them. They re-leased us after the ceremony."

We told Mary we were glad someone was speaking English to us. In North Wales we heard Welsh, that ancient Celtic language, spoken everywhere, including on television.

"We call our land 'Cymru' (Mary pronounced it KUMMree). The Welsh national movement is very much alive. The Welsh language is our preference. English is spoken equally well, but not with pleasure."

We asked Mary why the demand for home rule had been defeated in the last referendum.



"Our unemployment is so high, that we need the English support," she answered. Sad, it was the same attitude we had encountered in Scotland.

After our pleasant stay with Mary we prepared for Ireland. Mary drove us west through Anglesey to the ferry to Dublin. She stopped at a sign with the name of a town:

LLANFAIRWLLGWYLLGOGERYCHWYRNDOROBWILLANTISILOGOCH

In translation (if correctly spelled!) "Church of St. Mary near the whirlpool beside the church of St. Celion near the red cave."

Wales is full of jewels and it was fascinating to stroll through her 2000 year old past. But I had the impression that the Welsh people are almost suffocated by tradition. There seems to be so much past and so little future.

"The one house rule we would dearly like to institute is one we refrain from doing so out of misplaced courtesy. Most of our guests seem to arrive in twos or threes, and can speak good English, but some carry on a conversation with each other in their own language at the meal table, and at other times in our company without any explanation or apology. We consider this both unethical and bad mannered. To have a house rule something like this: 'If you can understand and speak English we would greatly appreciate it, if you spoke English in our company' sounds presumptuous - what do we do?"

Institute it! - We do need to be re-minded. I wonder whether the Bradys never succumbed to the same temptation if visiting a German host?

## Max Habicht in memoriam

Due to the disastrous delay in the issuing of SIN 26 and a haphazard selection of articles by the former editor an obituary of Max Habicht, who died suddenly in Sep. 1986 in his home in Switzerland, has not been published in SIN. Though the people who knew him will have heard the sad news, we want to commemorate Max, who was Servas international sponsor and drafted the Servas Statutes in 1976.

We have taken excerpts from 'The Friend': Max, who died at the age of 87, was one whose main aim in life had been to seek a solution to international conflict by peaceful means... As a doctor of law he lectured in some 30 countries including the Soviet Union. He became a member of the Society of Friends (which some of us

better know as the Quakers) in 1964 strongly inspired by the peace testimony. For more than 50 years Max worked as an international adviser in several world organisations (including Servas). He was a co-founder of the World Confederation, being convinced that a world federation controlled by international law, a world constitution and a world parliament could be a solution for a world without war. As president of the Swiss Peace Council he tried to motivate the peace movements of Switzerland to unite in one strong movement.

Wherever he went he was always open to criticism and eager to meet in the other a person in search of truth, be it the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church in Moscow, a minister of the Swiss Government or an officer in the army. He was a fatherly adviser to conscientious objectors and a frequent visitor to people in

prison. He wrote several books in German, French and English; only a few days before he died he managed to complete his last book, "The Abolition of War".

He once said: "Working for peace needs intelligence, wisdom and faith in a Higher Power". He indeed had all three.

He had one more important quality, according to the Friend: humour.

Let us all, like Max, when meeting each other in Servas, search for truth and be open to criticism.

Bi rgi tte

# Ups and downs in Servas

UPS AND DOWNS IN SERVAS (Figures from annual reports)

	Hosts			Travellers		
	1985	1986	Diff %	1985	1986	Diff %
Austria	75	75	0	79	86	9
Belgium	162	170	4	56	80	42
Brazil	50	70	40	12	13	1
Denmark	230	275	45	881	1200	36
ESW	504	555	10	170	340	10
Finland	125	150	20	42	46	10
France		431			240	
Finland	125	150	20	42	46	10
Germany	985	1113	13	861	1200	39
Ireland	94	98	4	63	37	-41
Italy	596	655	10	365	412	13
Netherlands	150	175	16	110	103	-6
Norway	89	94	6	60	80	33
Portugal	29	30	-1	25	11	-56
Sweden	248	275	11	229	238	4
S. Africa	40	40	0	23	33	
Spain		80			39	
Israel	261	300	15	200	344	72
Japan	370	400	8	49	29	-40
India	366	390	6	23	8	-60
Australia	320	381	19	198	330	66
N. Zealand	639	611	-4	186	218	17
Canada	450	480	7	200	200	0
Mexico	80	108	35	24	30	25
USA	1870	2033	9	1937	1798	-4
Total		9199			7194	

## Ghandi in action

an interational group of non-violent activists, has planned to start regular courses in "Experiments in non-violent Living" from May 1988. The venue: SARUVODAYA SATSANG ASHRAM

on the bank of Ganges between the holy city of Haridwar and Rishikesh in Uttar Pradesh, foothill of the Himalaya. Each course will last 2 weeks. Boarding and lodging (simple vegetarian) will be provided. A fee of US\$ 100 has to be paid in advance. For further details write to the founder,

A. B. Bharadwej, Gandhi-in-Action,  
Sarvodaya Satsang Ashram, Saptasarover  
(opposite Bharat Mata Mandir)  
HARI DWAR (UP), India.

A. B. is a most active Servas host with over 100 visitors each year.

Countries with only few hosts and travellers are not listed. With the countries that didn't submit an annual re-port they had in all, according to the list of Secretaries and Contacts, just about 1000 hosts (including 300 in Eastern Europe).

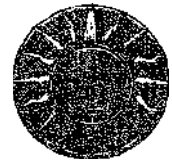
All in all, about 12.000 hosts in 105 countries (of which 35 have only 1 or 2 hosts) and about 7250 travellers. The difference is striking. How many hosts remain unvisited in countries with (too) many hosts? (In Denmark it's about 25% each year). On the other hand the % of travellers who have no luck finding a host in the majority of countries/cities who have too few hosts is, judged from here, rather up to 75%.

We need a lot more travellers, and a lot more hosts in "underdeveloped" areas, before we can fulfill the high expectations of both when they join. It is obvious from the figures that the real growth occurs where Servas is al-ready strong. I contend that starting a snowball of some size needs help from the media. One newspaper article set Servas DK rolling with a vengeance. Without that boost, one year after I became the secretary of what seemed a lost cause, I would have lost all enthusiasm, and we would probably still be among the little ones. In 1986 our 5 million population "delivered" 16,7% of all travellers (the same as W. Gemany, with 60 mill). I am sure that hosts, when they join, don't expect over 60% of the travellers (if any comes) to be either American, German or Danish. Some actually get fed up. But whose fault is it?

OK needed no help of the media for years now (but I cannot prevent returned travellers from mentioning Servas in travel reports to their local newspapers). Now mouth-to-mouth is more than enough. This, combined with the traditional wanderlust of the Danes, the call of foreign places; a minimum of red tape; low fees (and low expenses), not, as some seem to suspect, careless screening of applicants, accounts for our growth. I do hope the trend illustrated above, with considerable growth in some countries, will continue steadily; that the minuses will be reversed. That Servas may provide a million stones for building Gandhi's "foundation on which the peace of the whole world rests".

If secretaries insist they would never be able to cope with growth of such dimensions, I can only say I did. I don't think it's easy to find many people who are willing to devote so much time as I have done, with pleasure, but why shouldn't the number of enthusiastic volunteers grow along with increasing membership?

Once more, Birgitte!



## For Non Members: What is Servas all about anyway?

"With every true friendship we build more firmly the foundation on which the peace of the whole world rests." -

M. K. Gandhi.

Servas is an international co-operative system of travellers and volunteer hosts, established to help build world peace, good will, and understanding by providing opportunities for contacts between persons of different cultures and backgrounds.

Hosts (mostly individuals and families, plus some community groups) provide information about themselves for listing in a national host directory. Approved Servas travellers choose the hosts they wish to write to, or telephone, about possible visits (usually two nights), to

share life in the hosts' homes and communities.

*Servas* charges travellers a small fee. No money changes hands between travellers and hosts. (Ideas, we hope, pass freely between them.)

*Servas* is nonprofit, interracial, and interfaith. It has consultative status as a Non-Governmental Organization with ECOSOC in the United Nations.