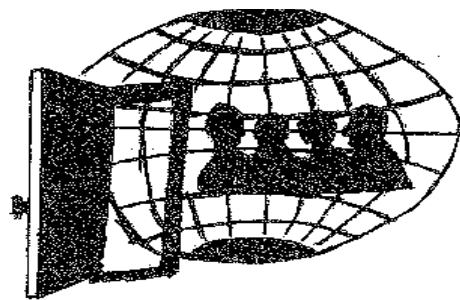


SERVAS



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

With every true friendship, we build more firmly the foundations on which the peace of the whole world rests.

– M.K. Gandhi

No. 1.

January 1974

ADDRESSES OF SERVAS BRANCH SECRETARIES

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Rangpur (Kavant), via Kosindra, Dist. Baroda,
Gujarat.

Continue on the last page

LOOKING BACK

It seems appropriate to devote part of this first issue of our quarterly to a consideration of the aims and origins of 'Servas', since it began a quarter of a century ago. Evidently some of our founder-members feel that it has deviated somewhat from its original ideas and is well on the way to becoming merely a travel agency. On the other hand, some of the more recently associated do not like the membership to be restricted to people with an active concern for peace and social justice, because it seems too like a club for the already converted. In the meantime, the 'Travelers' Directory', ten years younger, has set up a large organisation for international hospitality on rather similar lines, and set us wondering whether, in the absence of any constructive peacebuilding aims, we have any special reason for existence.

There has been development within 'Servas' also. The branches in Japan and Australia, as well as some large cities in Britain and U.S.A., have adopted a system of co-ordinators instead of issuing host lists; this may prove both more economical and more satisfactory. After all, our aim is not only to provide the travellers with hosts, but also to provide the hosts with travellers, and under present arrangements, many of them hardly get any! The fact that our branches are autonomous may also prove an advantage when we seek to extend our facilities eastward to countries with more political restrictions, or southward to countries at a different stage of economic development. And this extension is essential to our aim; we cannot pretend to build peace without having some significant contact with countries all over the world, and perhaps especially in those regions where some of our compatriots insist on seeing future enemies.

We hope that this quarterly will enable hosts and travellers to exchange views on these problems, so that in the course of time, our philosophy may become clearer, and our method more practicable. In promoting contacts between the generations as well as the nations, we seem to be offering something which is not so readily available in youth hostels and workcamps and caravan holidays abroad but we need a serious purpose behind it, if these contacts are to be really worth while. There is room in the world for any number of peace organizations, provided they justify their existence and do not waste their energy by fighting each other, or squander the world's resources by duplicating each other's efforts. So let us take new courage, and go on with the task of building a true peace!

B.A.

HOW SERVAS STARTED
(according to information in its archives)

In 1949, a movement called 'Peace Builders' was initiated by Bob Luitweiler, an American conscientious objector. He sought to develop a positive approach to pacifism, to offset the negative implication in 'War Resisters', and to link up groups of people, all over the world, who were working for peace and social justice. There were, already, in several countries, colleges and centres dedicated to peace, such as Viittakiivi in Finland, the Freundschaftsheim in Germany, the Nansen School in Norway, and the Folk High Schools in Denmark. One of the aims of this 'Peace Builders' movement was to set up a 'work-study-travel system' for intervisitation. In this, Bob was greatly helped by an old friend, Grandma Esther Harlan, of California, who had a card index with 1800 addresses of people willing to receive visitors interested in any kind of peacemaking activities.

A number of people interested in this idea met together in 1950, and worked out a system whereby approved travellers could receive list of hosts in different countries, and write to those they wished to visit. They were to carry, their own bed-linen, and stay only two nights, unless the host gave them invitation to stay longer. During this time, they were to share in the activities of the family, helping with their work, studying the social conditions of their country, exchanging ideas with them on constructive efforts to further international understanding. It was hoped that through this experience, many would be led to seek a creative vocation, either in groups, or as individuals. In 1952, the movement was given the name 'Servas' (from Esperanto 'ni servas' meaning 'we serve') in order to stress that its purpose was service in the cause of peace. It tried to offer not only short-term hospitality, but also the possibility to link travels with periods of work or study, for instance at work camps and international seminars. Now, twenty years later, with branches in forty countries on six continents, it is still trying to encourage people to travel seriously and thoughtfully, rather than fast and far, and to turn their minds toward building peace, the original aim of the movement.

The first conference was held in 1952 in Hamburg, Germany, and issued a revised edition of a handbook "originally written in England and in Jerusalem and duplicated in Calcutta". This contained instructions for the 'Working Committees' which were to form the basis of the movement. Publicity for 'Servas' was to be sought amongst pacifists, workcampers, co-operatives, settlements, religious social action groups, international and World Government movements. It was stated that "Servers has only the kinds of membership: 1) Active team members who are full members of the movement, and 2) Those active in working committees and contact centres of the work-study-travel system - but not travellers and hosts." The team members were to run service projects, including some involving physical work, to have regular serious study groups, to examine their

basic personal values, and help each other to express brotherhood to all men by creative service. A team was to be a closely-knit group of six to fifteen members, living in community, and establishing the centres for 'Servas' in each of the participating countries.

In 1953 there was a conference at Askov, Denmark, attended by sixteen people from six European countries. At that time, there were already 374 Open Doors in Europe, including 113 in Britain and 135 in Germany. There was much criticism of the idea of living in community, from people with family and other responsibilities; but the working committees of various kinds were beginning to take shape in several countries, including India, where, thanks to leaders such as Gandhi, community living was already an established feature of national life.

In 1954, representatives from ten countries attended a conference in Epe, Holland, where reports were received from thirteen European countries, and also from Israel, Lebanon, India, USA and Mexico. There were proposals from Denmark for 'planned tours for immature youngsters' and from USA for 'group travel', but it was generally felt that Servas travellers should be able to plan their own study tours and not expect to be 'organised'.

In 1955 there was a conference at Schluchsee, in the Black Forest, in Germany, with nine countries represented. In this year Bob Luitweiler also founded the 'first Servas Centre', a farm called Woolmandale, in Pennsylvania, hoping to organise 'weekend workshops'. The British Working Committee, however, found its spare time fully occupied in organising the travel system, and there was no possibility of founding a Centre in Birmingham. The community life of the team did not take shape as they had hoped, and even Woolmandale was able to last for only a few years. The magazine 'Broadsheet', however, edited by Pat Knowles, continued to flourish for another ten years, and did much to hold the movement together and help it to maintain its ideals.

In 1959, Servas reached Africa, where three former hosts found themselves able to offer hospitality. Barbara Acquah from England in Accra, Hodee Edwards from USA in Kumasi, and Albert and Rakel Szabo from Canada and Finland in Navrongo, were able to provide Open Doors from South to North of Ghana but very few travellers were able to get there apart from some German and Canadian work campers. It was also far from ideal to have only expatriate hosts, and it was not until some ten years later that indigenous ones were found to take on the rather complicated work of establishing a branch there. Contacts were made also with East Africa, but the problems of creating a similar work- study- travel system in countries where educated people are uncomfortably busy, transport is not always on time, telephones are scarce and voluntary work unpopular, are considerable, and in expanding, Servas will have to be adaptable.

In 1960, a conference was held in Belgium, which showed that the branches of Servas were still making steady growth. Much thought was given to the problem of extending to totalitarian countries such as

Spain, South Africa, Algeria and Eastern Europe, but although hospital could readily be given to travellers from these countries, the possibility of hosts seemed doubtful. The position of Servas in regard to the pea movements was also examined, and considerable differences of attitude were observed; in some countries, co-operation with communists and protest movements was possible, in others it was felt that the gains were outweighed by the disadvantages, since the violent elements were always apt to set more publicity, with unforeseen consequences for their associates

In 1964, Japan entered the Servas field, with Iasuo Amano, a keen and extremely energetic organiser, following up the publicity efforts of Russell Schiller, an English traveller who visited there, and Kenneth Strong, a former English host residing in Japan. Owing to the language difficulty and the need for cultural orientation, Amano-san reverted to the card-index system of Grandma Harlan, generously receiving all Servas travellers in Japan for an initial visit with his family. He recruited hosts from the most varied professions, and organised them into regional gatherings which met once a month to discuss Servas problems and compare their experiences. The system worked very well, and neatly avoided the difficulties of lists getting out-of-date, mislaid or stolen, as well as the heavy charges involved in postage. The work of the Secretary and of the regional co-ordinators, however, was relatively onerous, and because of this, other Servas branches were slow to follow Japan's example. It is now being tried out in Australia, and also in some smaller countries where there are as yet very few hosts.

In 1970, a conference was held in Vienna, the beautiful capital of Austria, and thirteen countries were represented. Problems of group travel, ideological basis for Servas, and the employment of conscientious objectors on the secretariat were briefly discussed, though no conclusions were reached. Publicity which laid emphasis on free hospitality was disparaged, as this had led to superficial travelling, and in some places even to resignation of disgusted hosts. Recent events in Czechoslovakia indicated the dangers of links with totalitarian countries, where any political changes could so easily get hosts into trouble. Nevertheless efforts were continued to extend Servas into Eastern European countries. There was also a proposal to hold the Servas international conference in India in 1971, but not enough participants were able to go, so the very generous offer of Servas India's hospitality, like that of Japan a few years previously, was not taken up.

In 1972, at an international conference in Wetzlar, Germany, when sixteen Servas branches were represented, it was resolved to establish 'Servas International' as an organisation with a registered headquarters in Switzerland, so that funds could be exempted from taxation, and a legal document was signed, appointing international co-ordinators, regional co-ordinators, a treasurer and a Peace Secretary. The hope was expressed that the movement would develop essentially as an influence for peace, and that those who use it would increase this influence by their creative encounters and exchange of ideas.

OPEN LETTER TO SERVAS INTERNATIONALE CONFERENCE IN VIENNA, AUGUST
1970

We, the hosts and contributors from the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Area, send our greetings and regards to all our international friends. We regret that we cannot share directly your experience and that more Servas members are unable to benefit from the educational value of such a conference.

The concern which we would like to express at this time is no doubt shared by all of you. The number of travelers who are interested in sightseeing only, or in superficial contacts with host families seems to be increasing. Many of us, who are interested in perpetuating the ideas on which Servas was founded are becoming discouraged and disappointed. Where are the travelers who are interested in serious social questions? Who are committed to pursuing Servas ideals of promoting peace, equity and humaneness throughout our world societies? We find that most of the travelers know very little about Servas and seem only peripherally interested in establishing real contacts with their hosts. If this trend continues, we will end up with a system of cheap home hospitality for tourists.

Our increasingly successful efforts to build an exceptional and varied cadre of hosts who understand and can communicate Servas ideals are negated, if not continuously supported by travelers with similar ideals. A Servas 'feeling' is lacking. Travelers must commit an important part of themselves to this exchange. If they blithely accept hospitality, we can only be disappointed and lament the loss of a great idea. If they 'demand' accommodation, we can only be indignant.

We recognize that one of the greatest problems is that of communication. We shall do our best in this respect, both in the selection of host and travellers. We hope that all Servas members and representatives will make a greater effort to communicate a real understanding of Servas.

A second concern is that of group travel. Our passionate opposition to Servas sponsoring groups stems from the first concern: it seriously undermines the potential for a quality host-traveler exchange. Our recent experience with a tour only illustrated this dramatically. Their trip was a traveler's nightmare. They certainly had no time to make friends on any but a superficial level. A charter flight may have economic advantages, but once they land, as one host observed, it is important that they split up so as to really come in touch with the people in the country they are visiting and not just talk to each other in their own language with incidental contacts with their hosts. I fear our experience here only created ill-will, not goodwill. In lieu of creating new hosts, it alienated old ones. In this, we differ, as you may observe, from our national office. We heartily welcome all travelers from Earth, Mrs, Venus or the Moon, but not as groups. We hope you do not think our concerns overly critical, and will accept this as constructive criticism.

Peace, Janet Killer.

(for the hosts of San Francisco-Oakland Bay Area)

EXIT SERVAS ? OR A NEW DEAL?

The number of travellers has increased as much as the Norwegian Servas list has dwindled. While hosts in distant places still hardly receive visitors at all, those in central places have been run down. On this background I was shocked to ascertain that a traveller had paid twenty dollars for Servas lists. This puts an obligation upon us hosts. No wonder some of us have been inundated with types who

seem to expect free accommodation and meals without offering any service in return. Such fees put off the best and most deserving of travellers! Even I have reason to complain that I've had a bit too many egocentric tourist-minded guests - so that I often feel I might as well have left my name with the travel accommodation bureau downtown.

When I helped Bob Luitweiler to start up the Servas movement in Norway, we charged only cost price for the lists a Krone or dime for each something like a percentage of what is now paid. On the other hand we sought and got a little support from other sources. We took great pains to hand out the lists to travellers who had put in an effort for some social cause.

Servas notices were then to be found in well written, yet almost persecuted periodicals. Now I have come across Servas notices in tourist publications. In my estimate, we had more conscientiously involved and engaged travellers before. Also they were more ready to help their hosts they used to bring their own sheets - and didn't all turn up in the summer months.

- Ulf Christensen, Norway, 1971

A CLUB FOR THE 'SAVED'?

I don't think that Servas should be too exclusive. I believe in giving young people a chance to have their prejudices broken down, their horizons widened, helping them to feel that are all responsible for each other. Even though they don't have great ideals before they leave, they may come back with some. I cannot screen the travellers on their idealism or their membership of international organisations; I just want them to be open-minded and interested and eager to learn.

One applicant returned the list, after reading your Servas circular He felt that he was not good enough. at he wanted was just person- to person contact with common people, with no "strings". Just liked to see how their daily life was, how they thought and felt. I was rather sorry because I felt I had to accept his resignation where Britain was concerned he travelled with his wife and children camping, and even if he maintained that he did not have any special interests except bird-watching and farenim, I am sure that he would be a good guest. The eternal problem of Servas philosophy! As you know, any Servas travellers, who are just interested in meeting other people abroad, or at home, are welcome with me, and, I feel rather sure, with the other Danish Servas hosts.

- Birgitte Damsgaard, Denmark, 1971

SERVAS AS N.G.O. AT THE U.N.O.

Following the Servas International Conference at Wetzlar, an application was made for non-governmental status at the United Nations, and this was approved in a letter addressed to Reva King by the N.G.O. Liaison Officer Jean-Claude Faby on 12 October 1973. The Servas representatives at the United Nations are Mrs Jean Larkin, with Mr Joseph Jiggetts as alternate representative.

A Non-Governmental Organisation is a voluntary grouping of private individuals or of associations that have a common ideal and objective and have organised themselves nationally and internationally for their promotion through exchange of ideas and information, and for common action. Many of them pioneered in and established precedents for the economic and social programmes of the U.N. Some were closely associated with the work of the League of Nations: in the social field. Their various activities express the professional, technical, scientific, cultural and humanitarian concerns whose realization is the objective of organisations such as trade unions, associations of cooperatives, industrial and other business groups, religious and confessional groups, youth movements, veterans' associations, social welfare agencies and others. What they have in common is the wish to cooperate with the U.N. and to promote the ideals set out in the U.N. Chapter

How are they able to do this? First, they can educate their own members, and through them, a wider circle of people, as to what the U.N. is doing. The popular press is notoriously inadequate for this purpose, since anything which is quietly constructive is considered to have far less news value than deeds of violence and vandalism. Secondly, they can actively support operational projects of relief and rehabilitation, such as those of UNICEF, UNESCO, FAO, WHO, and other agencies. Thirdly, they can use their consultative relationship with these bodies to supply and obtain information.

Through replies to questionnaires, as requested by the secretariat in carrying out specific resolutions, and through submission of statements and comments on agenda items before ECOSOC or its functional commissions, NGOs have contributed to numerous UN studies. They have also provided supplementary information and opinion from various segments of the public as well as recommendations based on research or actual field experience, particularly in the area of the world economic situation, the world social situation, technical cooperation, refugees, transport, various aspects of development, tourism, housing, nutrition, discrimination, migration, etc. to name but a few.

In turn, contacts with the UN, at numerous world and regional meetings of specialized agencies, the study of current literature and UN reports, enable NGOs better to discern new social and economic trends and unmet needs, and thus help them to take appropriate action.



REPORT ON THE WORLD CONGRESS OF FORCES FOR PEACE HELD AT MOSCOW
25 to 31 OCTOBER 1973

On the initiative of the World Peace Council, with its headquarters in Finland, this Congress was called together by an internationally composed executive committee, under the chairmanship of an Indian, Romesh Chandra. On this committee was a Swiss, Dr Max Habicht, Quaker, and one of the sponsors of SERVAS, and it was at his suggestion that our organisation was represented at the Congress.

Sean McBride, of Amnesty International, said in his speech opening the proceedings, "This is the largest, most significant congress ever. Present here are approximately 3200 delegates representing 144 countries, 9 international non-governmental organisations affiliated to the United Nations, and 117 international and national organisations." Romesh Chandra later remarked, "This Congress can well be called the first General Assembly of the Peoples of the World." One could also mention, that in addition to representatives of Peace Organisations, a large number of political parties were represented there.

These enthusiastic words cannot, however, conceal the impression, that in such a huge gathering, there was little possibility for fruitful dialogue. Moreover, considerations of peace prospects were necessarily overshadowed by news of the crisis in the Middle East.

Even when, after two days in full session with speeches from all sides, including one from Mr L.I. Brezhnev the gathering was divided into fourteen study groups, these committees were much too large for any real discussion to be possible. The results were accordingly lacking in constructive content.

I concerned myself in particular with two of these committees, those on "The Near East" and "Cooperation in the field of Education and Culture". Various speakers, including two Russian authors - Evgeni Yevtuschenko and Sergei Michalkov - demanded an "education of youth towards friendship amongst peoples". This is something to which SERVAS can make a good contribution. But here also, we did not get beyond the stage of theoretical proposals delivered in five-minute speeches. It seemed impossible, in this group consisting of still more than three hundred people, to achieve a real dialogue.

I was unfortunately also unable to achieve anything concrete in the direction of SERVAS relationships. The idea in itself was welcomed, but one saw at present no possibility of forming such groups within the Soviet Union - it "didn't fit into the system" as they explained to me. So I contented myself with distributing as many as possible of our leaflets and letters of greeting, in appropriate places. We may hope at least, that this little seed may sprout and perhaps show some sign of bearing fruit in the future.

- Denise Vollenweider, Vice President

---oOo---

A BOUQUET FOR SERVAS-JAPAN

Out of the confusion of Tokyo Airport rang a joyful familiar voice. "Hello Ruedi-san, hello Denise-san!" We breathed a sigh of relief. They had come! A bewildering babble of sound surrounded us. It seemed like an incomprehensible sort of Italian. Laughing faces to left and right. So good to see one at least that we knew!

Our first stay was at Amano-san's "International House", and Mr Amano gave us many good tips and instructions about Japan and its local customs. Our journey through a part of these fascinating islands soon became a living proof of Japanese hospitality, and we can only relate here a few small episodes as illustration of the countless kindnesses which we experienced everywhere.

We arrived in Kyoto about ten o'clock in the evening. Actually we had meant to be there much earlier, but the Japanese system of addresses is so complicated that it causes even local people considerable trouble. Eventually we found the right door, and our hosts welcomed us warmly. With the customary welcome cup of tea, our hostess served an American cake (she had been given the recipe by a foreign neighbour). Ruedi had to muster his linguistic ability and make an appropriate compliment. There followed a deathly hush, no sound, only exchanged glances...then the relief of laughter. They had never expected a European to manage even one word of Japanese! .3ut it served to break the ice, and despite the lateness of the hour, we talked for a long time.

"Please, would you speak a few words of English with these children?" a young teacher asked us. The charming little girls, aged between five and seven, had already had some English lessons, and they answered our simple questions with great pride.

In Kyoto castle, we were amazed at the twittering of the floors! It sounded like a hundred excited birds, when one walked, even lightly, over these boards fashioned from beautiful wood. It was explained to us that they were constructed like this on purpose, so as to serve as an alarm mechanism. In this way, nobody could approach the royal family apartments without being heard!

After travelling one day for an hour on the Underground, we reached our destination, the centre of Tokyo. Did I say destination? The station has nineteen exits, and we were in a hurry to get to the Bank. We stood, baffled, in front of the signboard, studying the characters. A young man, with an elegant bow, offered to help us. "The best way is, I go with you to your bank", he decided, and a few moments later, there we were, standing in front of the shining marble doorway. We had barely the time to say 'domo arigato' before our modest guide had vanished!

"We would like a ticket to Mount Aso, please." But it was evidently not so simple. The smiling young lady did not seem to understand us. Her smile increased, each time we repeated the request. Language being inadequate, we thought a drawing might help...



And in a very short while, we were relieved to find ourselves provided with a ticket for the journey to this still active volcano!

We always used the buses for Japanese, and dispensed with the tourist commentary in English or American. After all, it is all to be found in the guide book! And we enjoyed our journeys so much more. Travelling Japanese are joyful, open and friendly, and we had many quite delightful encounters. We almost suffered from bruises as a result of being clapped on the shoulder so many times, and it was quite impossible to drink all the beer, and eat all the cake, which were offered to us during our travels.

Japan, domo arigato and sayonara!

- Denise Vollenweider

A NEW LINK WITH INDONESIA

The myriad islands which make up Indonesia (including the well known and delightful Bali) have a population of many millions of friendly, hospitable people few of whom know anything about Servas. However, Australian Servas hopes it won't be too long now before an Indonesian branch is firmly established.

The main reason for this optimism came about following a luncheon party at the beachside home in Sydney of Australia's national secretaries, Ronald and Maris Golding. There, a group of Servas hosts talked and exchanged views with some Indonesians.

Willi Hotaitso, Ronald Golding's original contact, has been doing his post-graduate thesis on education, and is fervently hoping the results will be through before he and his Australian wife Jenny, little daughter Mirna and new baby son John, return to Indonesia in November. Willi brought with him three other Indonesian students, Ismail, Rallis and Mukta, who are all doing an eight-month educational course. By the end of this year, all will have returned to different parts of Indonesia to pass on their knowledge to other teachers and students. It is hoped that they will also pass on the aims and ideals of Servas. The Geldings will keep in touch with these new found Indonesian friends, and as other hosts and travellers also make contacts in Indonesia, let's hope that Servas will soon flourish there.

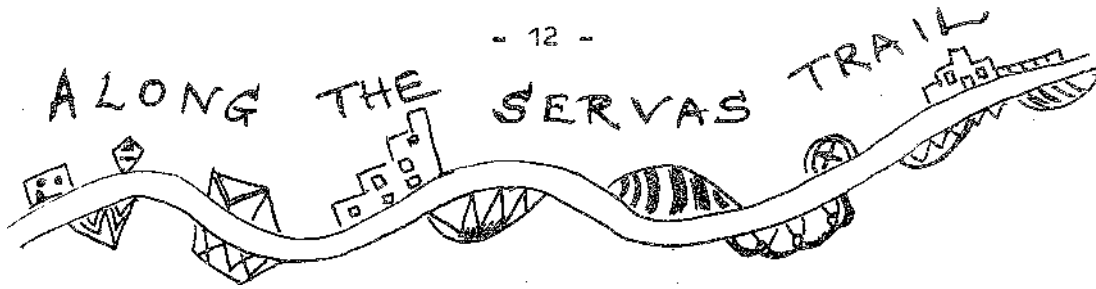
(from Australia, September 12, 1973)

FROM A TRAVELLER IN THE U.S.A.

"It seemed that Americans are natural hosts; they neither fussed over me nor ignored me but let me share their homes and everyday lives. They all seemed to like growing their own vegetables. Apart from that, they were a mixed bunch, rural and urban, insular and worldly-wise.

I was deeply impressed with the radical sincerity with which Friends (Quakers) there analysed their own lives in society, but a little surprise that they neglected the dominating role of their society in their own live The individual ethic is very strong there, compromising one's own truth in order to work with that of others is an extreme effort for them. But the openly and easily expressed friendship was a real treat. Even a miserably inhibited Englishman like me started to warm-up, only to revert once more amongst our relatively off-hand and subdued manners. I am still heart-broken that I can't bring back home with me all the lovely people I met there."

Barney Smith



Without Servas, I would today be back in the United States. I would have travelled throughout Europe for about a year, but I would have met relatively few local people, and I would have found out very little about what the people of each country are thinking about, and their views about many different subjects. But, most of all, I would have missed meeting, talking with, and visiting with, a group of most unusual people.

My first Servas host, in Paris, was a most interesting and unusual man. Leon Bensimon lived in a tiny room on the sixth floor of a building across the street from Notre Dame Cathedral. He had running water in the room, he used his own small stove for cooking, and he eats macrobiotic food. It seems almost impossible for two or three people to sleep in this small room, but they can do it fairly easily. Leon had been in India for a total of ten years, and he is now an instructor in Yoga, and a teacher of French for foreigners. He had taken a course in a new healing therapy from Japan, but my adventures with this Japanese therapy will have to be told elsewhere. Leon is a very kind and wonderful person, and we communicated almost instantly. If it weren't for him, I would have had, great difficulty in getting my car registration. I saw him again, recently, in Saanen, Switzerland, at the Krishnamurti dialogues. He gave free Yoga lessons, and we had a few very good macrobiotic meals.

At the Utrecht home of Linde and Siebe Lijftogt, a very wonderful Quaker family, I met Joseph Abileah. Joseph makes an almost instant impression on you; his unlimited energy and vibrations engulf you. In his presence I knew and felt I was near a great man. Joseph has lived, has been educated, and has lived in Israel for most of his life. He has many Arab friends and he is familiar with the Arab way of thinking. Two and a half years ago, he was instrumental in forming the "Society for Middle East Confederation", composed of Jews, Arabs, Christians and others, to try to bring about a solution to the Middle East problem. Joseph has been speaking about his plan to form a confederation of Israel, Jordan and Arab Palestine, at meetings all over Israel, Europe and America; also to individuals, small groups, anyone he meets in the street, in a taxi, or in a restaurant. He has now given up his occupation as concert violinist and teacher in order to devote full time to peace. The main stumbling block, now, is the fear of the older Jews, those who lived through the Second World War. Joseph thinks that it may take forty or fifty years before his or a similar solution will be accepted by both Arabs and Jews. But he will continue in his quest for peace for the rest of his life, and he is convinced that those who come after him will, one day, see real peace in the Middle East. Can one man be the instrument to bring about peace? When you meet him, decide.

South of the city of Maastricht, Netherlands, just over the border in Belgium, lies the tiny village of Eben Emael. Living there, in a stone house he has built himself, is another most unusual man. My visit, with my Servas host Cobi Molenaar, to Robert Garcet and his museum of paleontology called "Eben Ezer" (for the good of humanity) was the most fantastic experience of my life. Up on a hill near his home, he has built a four storey stone building, with three giant stone sculptures of birds on top of it. In the building are Robert's oil paintings, anti-war wall and placard drawings, and a giant sculpture running the length of the room. Near the door, on the outside of the lower entrance, on the right side, is carved in very large, noticeable letters, "Liberty, Equality; Fraternity"; on the left side, in small, hardly noticeable letters, "Love, Think, Create". Robert says that the first, written on the French coins, is obvious to people. But it is too general. The second, hardly notice able, applies to the individual, and is much harder to practice. A short distance from the building is a long cave containing one of the museums (the other two we couldn't see in the short time we were there). In it are a large number of old arrowheads, bones of animals, and wall paintings. Robert is a self-educated man, reads many books, says he is a citizen of the world, not of Belgium, and he has evolved a theory of how wars occur in cycles. I would have liked to talk to him, but he could speak very little English, and Cobi knew only a little French.

In the very lovely old town of Aix-en-Provence, in Southern France, at the home of a Servas host, I had an interesting conversation with a little Japanese girl, who was staying there for some months. she is a very sensitive girl, and is an artist. While we were talking about drugs, she confided to me that she was taking drugs. She said that they helped her in her painting, and that this was another part of her personality that she would like to know better.

Northwest of Montpellier, France, in the mountainous area near Bedarieux, far from any town or village, is the "Communaute de l'Arche", a Gandhian commune founded by Lanza del Vasto in 1948. The commune, of about a hundred people, consists of many families with children. They grow almost all the food they need. They only have to buy rice, the money for which they get by making clothes. There is no electricity, and the only heat comes from the fireplace. Prayers are said five times a day. ,Before dinner, everyone stands in a circle around a candle, holding hands, and a short prayer is said, at the end of which everyone introduces himself to his neighbour and shakes hands. It was very good to see people living, eating and working the way our ancestors did many years ago. However, it takes a special breed of person to live his whole life under these conditions. I don't think I would want to live that way. could you'

In a modest apartment in the city of Vienna lives an angry young man, Walter Weiss, thirty years old. Re is a geographer, writer'(has written four books), T.V. film maker, radio commentator, and a very articulate and convincing speaker. Re is convincing because he deeply believes what he says. Re has been all around the Third World; he has seen the poverty

and slums of America, and he blames the "damned capitalistic system" of America for the condition of the world. He said that, today, nobody wants war except the rulers of the countries. He said that every country must have its military. In some countries, 60-70% of the income of the country is spent for the military, while the people go hungry. He said that the military never could prevent anything, and that within hours, Austria could be overrun. Let them have their military. He said that a star towards peace would be for all the small countries to give up their military. He doesn't see conditions getting any better, and he believes that within ten years the world will be destroyed. He said much more on many other topics during the 45 minutes interview I taped with him. But you cannot do justice to his words unless you hear him yourself; then you might become convinced of what he says.

West of Vienna, the Danube river flows through the beautiful Wachau valley. In the town of Rohrendorfe-bei-Krems, in one of the richest wine growing areas of Austria, I stayed with Franz Rosenberger and his family. They have large vineyards on the top of a hill, and they sell their wine throughout Austria. Their Riesling wine was excellent, as was their hospitality. On the Sunday I was there, I saw a few of their vineyards, tasted some of their wines fermenting in the wooden casks, had wine for lunch, went to a Heuriger (wine cellar) in Krems to taste the new wines, and had wine for dinner. I liked this Riesling wine so much that I fill up my car with it to give to future Servas friends.

In Zürich, one of the first Servas hosts I visited was Kurt Gruber and his wife Eva. Not only was my stay there excellent, but through Eva I visited three different kinds of schools for retarded children, one of them the famous school of Dr Maria Egg. I also visited and spent the day teaching at the 'Free School' where Eva taught. Eva was also instrumental in getting me a job as an English teacher in Zurich. She recommended me for the job after it was offered to her. I also visited the Grubers at their vacation spot at Pochtenalp in the dental valley. The scenery in this area is marvellous; we climbed to the top of the Abendberg and had a wonderful view of the Blümisalp.

In Luino, Italy, near the Swiss border, I visited the Fumagalli family; father, daughter (Anna Maria) and sons. It was here that I first met Maria Soresina, the Italian Servas secretary, who invited me to stay with her in Milan. The Fumagallis invited me to come back to do some hiking with them and the Italian Alpine Club. On one of the following Sundays, arising at 4.30 a.m. and then taking a bus to the area near the Simplon tunnel, I experienced one of the most unbelievable, unimaginable, and unforgettable days of my life. Wearing regular walking shoes and being prepared for a short four-hour hike, I found myself climbing, with the help of others, steep slopes with snow, rocks and narrow footholds, to get to a lake at 2400 metres, right above the Simplon Tunnel, and in full view of nearby Mount Leone. Altogether it took us over 91 hours to get back to the bus. I still don't know how I managed to do all that climbing, for if I had known what was ahead, I would never have attempted anything so foolhardy!

In Milan, while staying with Maria, I met two members of the "Children of God" (Jesus Freaks), one of whom was amongst those who started this movement three years ago in California. They seemed more anxious to convert people than anything else, and they showed me a book of pictures of people who had joined the movement. They were staying with Prof. Stoppani, who had recently been fired as a teacher because of his unorthodox methods. He did not use books, spoke to the children in their language, and tried to make school more relative to the outside world. He told me that to put retarded children in special schools and classes was worse than discrimination. He thinks that all children should be together in the classroom, just the same as outside school. He thinks that learning to live together with others is more important than learning classroom subjects.

In the town of Fribourg, I stayed with a Vietnamese student, Tsung, studying at the Catholic University. He had been in the war and had been wounded. His family lives in North Vietnam and he has not seen them for eighteen years. Only recently has he been allowed to write to them. He is a very nice, pleasant and amiable person, and knows almost all of the foreign students there. He believes that all foreign troops should leave Vietnam and that the people should be free to decide their fate. Tsung arranged for me to tour and eat lunch at the Hauterive Abbey (1138) The monastery church has some very good 15th century choir stalls. Also interesting are the tiny figures and scenes from the life of Christ. The brothers did not make the figures, but they did everything else.

East of the city of Bern is the town of Ostermundigen. Living here is the extraordinary Hobi family Toni (Mr) Karin (Mrs), Thomas (8), Dominic (5) and Chantal (3). I had some interesting conversations with the children, although I didn't understand everything they said. Dominic is the most talkative, and the smartest. Toni spoke very little English and he didn't do very much talking. I communicated very well with Karin. We had long conversations about parapsychology, psychology, education, teaching (she has taught English, retarded children and blind children), travel, and other subjects. It was Karin who started me off job hunting. I met the Robis a few weeks later in the Basle zoo. She told me she knew she would meet me there. I returned to visit the Robis a few months later. We talked about Karin's adventures during her 1½ years of travel in Spain, Morocco, France and England. She had a very interesting time during the six months in Morocco. Three weeks later I came back for a very special day, the first anniversary of my arrival in Europe. I brought the dinner, which consisted of salad, various cheeses, and a special macro-biotic mixture given to me by Leon Sensimon. Karin made a special apple pie for the occasion. For decorations, Karin borrowed some paper leaves and fruit she saw at a party, and Dominic drew some grapes and apples. The next day I helped Toni lay carpet squares in the workshop room of their new home. In the evening we had fondue, using cut up pears to dip in the fondue besides bread. We also dipped bread and pears in pear liquor before dipping into the fondue. Later in the evening I distributed gifts to everyone. It was a wonderful beginning to my second year. Who could ask for more delightful and congenial friends?

Leonard Baron

SOLUTION OF MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT BY CONFEDERATION

Throughout the past decades, proposals for Jewish-Arab co-operation have been put forward on various levels. They had in view to create economic conditions which would enable the inhabitants to live in peaceful relations. These plans took also into account a considerable amount of immigration from the West as well as from the Eastern adjoining land

Having lived for almost fifty years in the region, I have become concerned about its future. As a convinced pacifist, I have always been in search of peaceful solutions on the basis of a common homeland for Jews, Arabs and any other people who would like to share our fate.

Asked to express my views, I suggest the following six points towards a solution of the conflict situation:

- 1) Confederation of three states, viz. Jordan, Arab Palestine (West Bank) and Israel, with a federal capital in Jerusalem.
- 2) The federal government should deal, for the beginning, with foreign policy and economic integration.
- 3) The economic integration will enable the federation to solve the refugee problem almost without foreign help.
- 4) The help of the U.N.O. is required for an enlargement of the irrigation scheme in the Syrian desert with the waters of the Euphrates and the Tigris. This in order to accommodate Iraqis and Syrians with irrigated land.
- 5) A religious council, which will form a second house in the federal parliament, should be composed of representatives of all faiths and religious communities in the area. This council will be entrusted with the creation of a federal constitution based on ethical principles.
- 6) The Federation should be open for any other country in the Middle East to join. It is formed with a view to create a United States of the Middle East.

These points were included in an open letter which I sent on the 4.12.68 to King Hussein of Jordan in my capacity of Special Commissioner of the Mondcvitan Republic (the Servant Nation) for Middle East Media. It was transmitted with a covering letter through the kindness of the Mondcvitan Republic's President at that time, Dr Hugh Schoenfield of London. The plan evolved from a former proposal which visualized a common government on both banks of the Jordan (the original mandatory area) and which goes back as far as 1947, when it was submitted by me in the form of a memorandum to the United Nations Special Commission of Palestine. I was invited to Jerusalem to give evidence to the Commission and was already at that time opposed to the partition plan and the erection of a Jewish state with national sovereignty, limiting at the same time Arab national aspirations. The underlying idea was that, viewing the matter geo-politically, Jordan cannot develop without a way to the Mediterranean, while Israel and the West Bank cannot live without the hinterland of Trans-jordan.

The Jordan river, common to both territories, is a vein flowing in the middle of a country, and not a boundary. The Lowdermilk irrigation plan, published at that time, was the central point of my submission.

Considering the wider circle surrounding us, I propose trade agreements with Egypt to tie this country to the confederation. In the far future it may become a useful link to a Pan-African constellation.

The irrigation of the Syrian desert will create a change in the social structures of Syria and Iraq within a generation. The option of joining us in confederation or on a common market basis must always be open. The same for Lebanon which will be invited to join or remain a peaceful neighbour.

The still larger circle is the involvement of the great powers, Here, interests of oil concessions play their role. I propose that these concessions be assured in order to avoid intrigues. A U.S.A. journalist summarized my plan in the heading: "Take your oil and give us the water."

Though my eyes are turned to the future, I always link the Middle East happenings to history. The rivalries of Mesopotamia and Egypt were always a reason for war in the region. The Syrian desert could not feed its inhabitants when civilisations grew and the Nile was an adequate for large Egyptian populations. The ancient Hebrews fought their wars to establish and fortify their state about three thousand years ago, but these lasted only a relatively short time. Later, all the wars were caused and waged by the above rivals, owing to the prevailing geographic conditions. Today's technology can cope with these problems in a different way, i.e. by creating the infra-structures lacking in the region.

Finally I want to say that the foreign policy of the confederation must be the "Welfare of our neighbouring states" while the security boundaries should always be "the friendship of our neighbours".

Let us try for once to approach politics by ethical principles which are governing relations from man to man and mould policies accordingly.

Ibseph Abileah, Haifa,
22 October, 1973.

EQUALITY OF RIGHTS

In July 1972, I received a letter about a chance to go as a volunteer in the U. .V. service, and since March 1973, I've been here in Sana'a on a nutrition project. I work as school feeding manager in the central kitchen of the school centre, together with another volunteer and 17 Yemeni workers. The situation in the kitchen is complicated by the fact that most of these come from small villages and have light experience of kitchen work, even less of sanitation and nutrition, and they are also poorly paid and frequently ill. However, we try to make some progress nevertheless, and gradually introduce necessary changes.

It is through the school feeding programme that nutrition and hygiene can be introduced into the lives of local people, and this is true of a large number of developing countries. Family health depends on the quality of supplies in the local market, and the ability to buy Yemeni people normally live in extended families, so the child will be depending on the home for food all his life. The Yemen Arab Republic is one of the world's least developed countries, and Sana'a is said to be the oldest city in the world, so it isn't surprising to find that in some cases, malnutrition is due to following a two-thousand-year old tradition! One finds children suffering from kwashiorkor, a protein-deficiency disease, resulting from an insufficient knowledge of which foods are essential and in what proportions. Sometimes there is not enough good quality food available, and prices are too high; and the distribution amongst the family is influenced by custom and tradition in a way which leaves the children inadequately fed. As a result, they lack resistance and concentration, which of course is serious in the case of students; and this is why school feeding is so very important. It is often too late for old people to change their feeding habits; but the school children can be taught by experts and trained people of their own country, to improve their diet and consequently their health.

A prerequisite for the school feeding programme is research into the economic situation in a particular country, its traditional foods, its agriculture, its stock-farming, its climate, its natural and also its financial resources. There must be understanding of the social and educational situation, and the need for a school feeding programme, especially amongst the underprivileged classes of society. Finally, there must be financial and personnel aid, and favourable conditions of trading, offered by industrial states, and international aid through non-governmental organisations and from the specialized organisation of the U.N. for instance WHO, UNICEF and UNDP (with FAO and UNV!)

Thus, the school feeding programme is a link of a chain, which will eventually lead to improved living standards, equal opportunities, equal rights, and the unity of developing countries, so that they can help themselves, and hold their own against the industrial states; all that can come from the right kind of aid to the third world! And I hope that many service travellers will be coming this way to study the present situation for themselves!

Hans-Werner Emrich (Sana'a, Yemen)

"GETTING TO KNOW YOU..."

How simple... and how dull!...it would be, if we all fitted into the same pattern... of clothes, food habits, manners, reactions, etc! Quite the contrary is the norm... and although sometimes disconcerting, it is more interesting and stimulating.

With increased travel, we all get shaken up a bit, and realize that there are basic cultural differences of treatment of the opposite sex, of children, elders, and animals. Habits of sanitation, eating, drinking, smoking, etc. vary from country to country. Are we sure ours are best? Can we accept those that are different? Can we adapt either as hosts or guests? Can we try and put ourselves in the other person's position? Can we understand when it is more important to him to please us than to be truthful?

Two things may help... Sensitivity is the prerequisite for good relationships. To try and understand and appreciate the interests, needs and potentialities of the other person, should help us to accept him as he is... although this does not necessarily mean to condone or approve of all his behaviour... of hair, or clothes... or lack of them. It helps, too, to try and get some insight into his background, his family, his education, the politics and life of his country... to understand, not to evaluate or judge.

The second is Adaptability, which is the opposite of rigidity, and should be kept 'well oiled'. While there are certain principles which we refuse to violate, there are many areas of behavior that can be modified without sacrificing our ethical standards. What if it is awkward to serve breakfast at six, or ten? Or should the guest be more accommodating in the matter of mealtimes? Servas travellers are expected to give their hosts as little trouble as possible. How do we adapt this principle to various customs of hospitality?

Most important of all is our attitude. To reach out with warmth and friendliness, to be open and accepting, to state our limits firmly but kindly, without a trace of hostility or accusation, should help towards an empathy which will transcend cultural differences. And the way may be smoothed by a good sense of humor... and a cup of coffee?

M. Fahrni(1973)

---oOo---

Treat your guest as a guest for two days. On the third day, give him a hoe.

Swahili proverb.

"Mgeni siku mbili; siku ja tatu mpe jembe"

"FRIEND"

No matter what colour, no matter what race,
What your language, hopes or faith may be,
These are but the mask concealing your face,
And I stretch out my hand as you come towards me.
My wandering days you now shall share,
And bid farewell to gloom and care -
We shall both be richer than royalty...

Flowers are found on the rubbish heaps,
And nuggets of gold in the gutters lie,
A hidden joy amidst sacrifice sleeps,
And hope shall dawn as the days go by.
Sweet music sounds from the old guitar,
And in the night, there gleams from afar
The lighthouse guiding the ships that ply.

And there are hands to clasp our own,
A scent of love to enfold us so,
And far from the sorrows where man sinks down,
Small sparks will kindle a mutual glow.
But for friendship to be reborn at last,
To love, understand, and forgive the past,
Tomorrow, we must more deeply know....

(translated from the French poem "Ami" by Michel Beau, published
in the 'Servas Broadsheet' of Autumn 1960)

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SERVAS SONG

Em Em D D Em Em D Em

Fratoj, ni servas tutta la mond', Ni estas pacistoj, Pacema nia rond'!

Em Em Em Em Em B7

Good friends in Servas, these are my kin; Where the door opens I'm glad to wal

chorus: Fratoj, ni servas tutta la mond',

Ni estas pacistoj, pacemania rond'!

1. Good Friends in servas, these are my kin,
Where the door opens, I'm glad to walk in.
2. All the World over, we feel the same,
Love is our method and peace is our aim.
3. Work, study, travel - learn as we go,
So much to help with, and so much to know!
4. Good friends of Servas, help me to roam,
When you come my way, I'll give you a home!