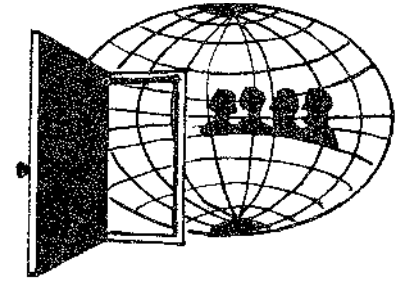


SERVAS

INTERNATIONAL NEWS



**The more we ask
how far we have to go,
the longer the road seems.**

-Maod proverb

No. 6

September 1976

Antonie Fried

PROBLEMS OR OPPORTUNITIES?

Amongst the stated aims of Servas are the building of peace and the promotion of international understanding. Some of its founder-members assure me that twenty five years ago these were considered essential, and the reason why membership was not extended to hosts and travellers in general, was that while these could benefit from meeting each other and exchanging ideas, they should not be committed to a pacifist basis; otherwise it would become, as one critic said, a 'club for the saved'. The inner core of the movement was composed of individuals and communities dedicated to peaceful co-operation and creative activity striving towards a new and better world; the 'work-study travel system' was a means towards this end. We reached a point where this is imperfectly understood; are threatening to become an end in themselves.



In recent years, I have noticed a tendency to avoid the very contacts where we could learn most about the way of life of our neighbours. First hand experience is too much for us. Some of our travellers cannot bear to see 'how the other half of humanity lives' even for two days, and want poorer hosts removed from the list, in order 'to protect others from negative experiences'.

Some hosts oppose the extension of the minimum stay to three days, because inconsiderate travellers try their patience more than they can stand for that long. But if we are serious about 'over-coming barriers of race, class and creed', how else are we to do it except by taking people as we find them, and learning to know and appreciate their good qualities? Even the less pleasant experiences are interesting and educational: If details on the host lists are provided so that we can select people of our own age and interests, are we not missing an opportunity to extend or develop our powers of adaptability?

We are too much in haste to explore the universe, while sadly neglecting the world in which we live. Many people travel widely nowadays, both old and young, but few travel deeply. Servas is not meant to provide happy home-stays all over the world for like-minded individuals, and I wish this could be made clearer in its publicity material. If we are going eventually to explore the whole world, rich and poor, bound and free, we must cultivate the qualities of tolerance, flexibility, imagination and courage. The task of reconciliation is not always easy and pleasant. But the greatest souls have always been ready to suffer joyfully, if

need be. Can we take up the challenge and play our part in building a more peaceful world?

One reader has protested against 'attempts at political indoctrination' by the Servas International News, following the appearance of the quotation from Julius Nyerere (which has also appeared on a Quaker peace poster in London and in the pages of the New York Catholic Worker). I have tried to select, for these six issues, cover quotations from each of the six continents in turn, and neither these, nor the articles published, represent the official views of Servas, but only those of the editor and various contributors. It takes all sorts to make a world, and we simply hope, by the wider exchange of ideas, that they will be open to new light from whatever quarter it may come, and learn to understand each other better.

B.A.

AN UNUSUAL HOST FAMILY



Mr and Mrs Lynes have been Servas hosts for five years, living first in Lancashire and then in Devon. Their family consists of six children, four adopted and two fostered, also two dogs and two cats, all of whom live harmoniously in a terrace house, and - most remarkable - are willing to move up and make room for as many as four Servas travellers!

The hospitality is very informal, but a warm welcome is extended to any wayfarers, with the opportunity to join in family activities, whatever is going on; maybe a rummage sale, maybe a seaside picnic, maybe a shopping expedition - you just have to take what comes!

Recommended as a most exhilarating and rewarding experience of loving family co-operation and real neighbourly help - especially for Servas travellers from small, conventional families - provided they are sufficiently adaptable to a different way of life!

International Tidbits

As some of our readers know, Japan has been the first Branch to realize Bob Luitweiler's dream of a "Servas House"- not a commune like Woolmandale, but at least with a nucleus of permanent residents to help orientate newly arrived travellers and provide accommodations for those wishing to stay for a longer period in Tokyo for purposes of study.

- - - - -

Auckland (Aotearoa-New Zealand) had a gathering of 28 hosts in March of this year, who related their experiences with travellers who had visited them recently. The National Secretary, Nan Smith, attended the conference of Servas International in Los Angeles in August, and was able to tell other delegates of the shining example of her country's Servas Branch in extending its membership by word of mouth - a method which she favours far above more conventional methods of publicity.

- - - - -

Ghana has five hosts, who between them have received about thirty-five travellers during the past year; they would be glad to welcome more. Likewise Nigeria. Charles Agbenyegah of Ghana and Christie Akinlolu of Nigeria, who attended the International Conference, told the gathering that travellers would surely find every-thing in West African Servas homes delightful - except for the mosquitoes, against which adequate protection should be brought!

- - - - -

Harivallabh Parikh, Secretary of Servas India, seems happy about recent developments in his country, and reports joyfully that they now have founded 396 irrigation projects in his district, with 55,000 acres irrigated, covering a thousand villages now able to grow their food and clothing. 860 students have taken part in workcamps at his ashram Anand Niketan. In November they held a Servas National Conference there, lasting three days, with over 900 hosts present.

- - - - -

Servas Germany is now divided into North and South regions; Antonie Fried is looking after the South, while Peter Brock in Hamburg takes care of the North, and Hans-JOrg Strohbach is the new co-ordinator for Berlin. In several of the larger cities of Western Germany, hosts have been able to organize local meetings.

1976 SERVAS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
August 1st thru August 7th

The 1976 Servas International Conference was held in Los Angeles, California, at the International Student Center of the University of California, Los Angeles, in Westwood.

Attending the conference were delegates and observers from twenty-one countries: Canada, Colombia, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Mid-East, New Zealand, Nigeria, Poland, Portugal, Sri Lanka, Sweden and the United States. There were more than 50 delegates and other foreign visitors, and more than 100 Americans, mostly - but not all - Servas members attending various sessions and programs of the conference.

The main theme of the conference was the future of Servas, its growth and development. The keynote speaker was Pastor Konrad Lubbert of Germany, whose subject was "Potential for Developing Servas in Eastern Europe". A summary of Dr. Lubbert's talk may be found in this issue.

In addition, Benjamin Jeremias of Israel spoke on the role of Servas in helping to develop peaceful relations between Arabs and Jews in Israel.

The main topics discussed at the Conference were host-traveler relations, peace, publicity, development of Servas in new countries and administration. The host-traveler relations committee recommended that an international host-traveler handbook be published. The publicity committee recommended that Servas International News be translated into other languages to meet the linguistic needs of those countries. The administration committee recommended that regional co-ordinators be appointed who would assume responsibility for the total administration of Servas in their respective regions. The following regional co-ordinators were designated:

Europe -	Antonie Fried, Germany
Africa -	Lydi Jones, United States
Southeast Asia -	Masuo Amano, Japan (pending)
South Pacific -	John and Judy Ebner
Mexico and Central America -	Laura Langagne, Mexico
South America -	Marcello Lorenzo, Argentina

Election of officers took place on Friday, August 7th, with results as follows:

President -	Reva King, United States
Honorary Vice Pres.	Harivallabh Parikh, India
Vice President -	Barbara Acquah, Great Britain

Secretary -
Ass't. Secretary -
Treasurer -
Ass't. Treasurer - Peace
Secretary - Ass't. Peace
Sec'y. - Editor, S.I.N.

Birgitte Daamsgard, Denmark
Neithard Petry, Germany
Denise Waech, Switzerland
Doris Bucher, Switzerland
Graham Thomas, Great Britain
Hans-Werner Emrich, Germany
Dr. Harry Steinmetz, United States

Ass't. Editor, S.I.N. -

Don Fawcett, United States

It is difficult to describe the remarkable and enormous job that was done by the Los Angeles Committee to make this Conference the beautiful event that it was. They arranged for home hospitality for the very large number of delegates and observers, which was an enormous feat. A beautiful incoming reception for all was held Sunday evening at the lovely home of the Landys. A visit to the Paramount Studios in Hollywood was arranged for all who were interested. There was a reception at the Student Center, a lovely picnic at a local park, a slide show and talk on China and Yemen, and a great farewell party at the Gardners with a dance band and singing and entertainment by our delegates from England, Germany, Mexico and Poland.

A special thanks to all the hosts in the Los Angeles and surrounding areas for this noble service, a special thanks to Ridge Walker for being our "official photographer", and a super special thanks to Sue Gardner and Don Fawcett who put it all together.

M. S. - USA

SERVAS INTERNATIONAL NEWS HAS

NEW EDITORS

Commencing with S. I. N. #7, Dr. Harry Steinmetz will be the Editor, with Don Fawcett, as Ass't. Editor.

Please send all articles, songs and poems to Dr. H. C. Steinmetz at 3518 Union Street, San Diego, Ca. 92103.

Subscriptions and orders for future copies should be sent to Don Fawcett, 10889 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, Ca. 90024.





POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPING SERVAS IN EASTERN EUROPE

I wish to thank you for inviting me as a quite new member of Servas. Three years ago, I tried to go to India to work there for several years. A friend of mine told me about Servas and said I should become a traveller within this movement. In that way, he said, you will get to know the Indian people much better, how they live, act and think, than if you stay in hotels. The friend gave me a list of Servas members in India - and I found out that I al-ready knew a lot of them through studies or peace work. So I be-came a member of Servas. Unfortunately I couldn't go to India,

but I still thought it would be unfair living *in* a house in Germany and not opening it for Servas travellers too. So I became a host. And being here today, I can say I am not only happy to see other Servas members, but I am extremely curious too - to discover what you are like, you think and feel, and what you think is required to reach a world of peace and understanding. A last preliminary remark - I beg your pardon that sometimes I feel in difficulty with the language and can't exactly say what I wish to express. It is like with a wife; you love her, but you can't master her. I think it might be the same problem too with others who don't speak English as their mother-tongue.

With this remark I come to one of the main items of my speech. Not being able to express what I wish to say, and not being able to say it in such a way that the other person under-stands it, is not only a problem of mother-tongue. I think that everyone has this experience in his own native language, too. You try to express, either at a conference or in a private encounter, your own opinion, and the other completely misunderstands you. The reasons are various: Perhaps your way of speaking inspires him to such animosity that he can't listen to what you say. This happens at conferences, and also on the very private level, for instance, of married couples. - Or, you are using words which your partner combines with such associations that it leads him to totally different thoughts. When you speak about rain in the desert, or in the centre of London, I am sure people will have very different associations with this word. And also, your surroundings, your social and historical background, *can contribute* to misunderstandings. If someone with a trained sense for responsibility speaks about peace, he includes in this word also justice for the people who are suffering, who are exploited or discriminated against. Someone else coming from a society where obedience is more important than responsibility, where law and order or their own living standards have more importance than change in order to find more humane social structures, he might understand the word "peace" as something which gives only stability - perhaps placing minorities in ghettos or camps, having police with a log of control-power in general, strict security through strong armament. These different possibilities for misunderstanding should be a reason for us to say concretely what we mean by what we are saying; it should force us also to say as concretely as possible what we mean by the word "peace".

Of course there are also hindrances to understanding because of our language. An exchange between two mathematicians or two chemists would not have the difficulties we are talking about.

If they say two and two make four, there will be no difficulty in

reaching agreement. They have an objective language which does not - or should not - depend on private feelings, personal associations or historical experience. Most often, moreover, our language is not more than this objective communication or impersonal information; we inform each other about facts and try to do with as little subjectivity as possible. It is the language which speaks about objects, how to handle them; you can say with - I believe it was Paul Tillich - it is the instrumental language. If someone refers to my white car as a black car, it would not need a very long and personal discussion about that item; either he means another car, or he is an idiot. Why should I feel personally especially challenged about such a kind of objective fact? I really would not personally fight for it. But it would be something else if he would say about my friend in whom I have full confidence, that he is a person no one can trust. We would have a long discussion, a dialogue in which I would try to convince him and he might try to convince me. We would try to bring this question into a personal encounter, because we feel personally about it. You see, I'm trying to explain what I feel about dialogue, one of the basic words for Servas. Dialogue might start as a mere discussion about facts, but it is more. Dialogue happens when I personally feel touched, when I feel challenged as a person, when a new dimension or insight might be opened. We know from the many discussions we have had with other people; sometimes they are nice talks and merely ex-changes of information and opinions, and sometimes suddenly we feel we are totally involved. After this kind of dialogue, we discover that we ourselves have changed a bit. Of course, this kind of changing, of deep and challenging dialogue, is seldom, but this is the aim, the purpose and hope involved in every dialogue.

Martin Buber, the famous Jewish religious philosopher, who gave perhaps the most profound insights to the meaning of dialogue, had, in the twenties in Frankfurt before he left Germany, a group of people gathered around him, and together they had some very ex-citing and fruitful discussions. Douglas Steere, a representative of the American Friends, once asked Martin Buber the reason why the discussions had been so extremely fruitful. Martin Buber, after a moment of reflection, answered that the reason was the sincerity and spontaneity of the dialogues. It shows that the quality of a dialogue depends on how open you are in expressing your opinion and responding to the opinion of the other person. *Openness depends on the amount of confidence the two partners have in each other.* And confidence in a dialogue is not something you simply bring with you, but something you gain during the dialogue.

This is also obvious for dialogue held on the highest political level. From September 18th, 1973, until July 21st, 1975, 33 European countries and the USA and Canada discussed with each other the relationship, the coexistence and the cooperation of countries with different social and political orders. In a fifteen-point declaration of the principles of the relationship between countries, they reached agreements to improve and strengthen relationships and to ~~discrim~~contribute to peace, security, justice and cooperation between those countries and the other countries of the world. This dialogue on the highest level shows that the presupposition for a dialogue is not having a similar ideology or opinion or social order, but the common wish to live in peace with each other. Because of this common goal, confidence developed during the dialogue.

A short time ago I got some more concrete information about the dialogues

held in Vienna about troop reduction and disarmament in Central Europe. Until now, no important facts or treaties have resulted from these meetings. But in spite of that, the participants in those conferences are in general quite optimistic, because they have the feeling that there is a growing confidence between them, developed during the dialogue, and that they increasingly understand each other in what they are saying.

Martin Buber has explained once that dialogue is the opposite to violence and war. With violence I try to abolish or even - as in war - to kill the other. In dialogue I try to understand the standpoint of the other, to make my own opinion reasonable to him. With violence I fight for my interest against the other, in dialogue I consider standing for my interest and also the interest of the other. I respect him as a personality who has his own interest too.

Dialogue between people of different preoccupation and ideology is needed, if mankind is to live in peace and survive. The result of growing confidence and of dialogue between nations and ideologies must lead to the reduction of armament and the reduction of threatening with violence. In the last year, about 280 billion dollars in our world have been spent for armament, for the machinery of violence, destruction and killing. 78% of this was spent by NATO and Warsaw Pact nations. If our industrialized countries continue that expenditure for violence, for the improvement of weapons and for the export of armaments merely for profit, mankind will not survive. We shall kill each other. Therefore very naturally in consequence of the Helsinki Conference, the nations in Europe are discussing in Vienna about disarmament and reduction of troops. The only possibility for the future of mankind is that reduction. If the global armament of the world today leads to a third world war, there will be no winners anymore, and those who survive it will envy those who do not. Those who will be killed are communists as well as capitalists, religious as well as secular, socialists as well as liberals. Our future depends - and I believe all responsible politicians know that - on our ability to progress in our dialogue with each other. Of course there are people who say it is impossible to make contracts with people of other ideologies. You can't trust them, they say. These are the people who make devils of those who have another opinion and who are living under other social orders. But with such people - I call them clearly cynics or reactionaries - we can never build up a human world for the future. They find the basis for future only in violence, in violent aggression or violent defence of their own interests. But this is not the basis on which we can build the future. It should be our way to have dialogue with all people on earth in order to find the way of living in peace with each other. And dialogue is needed especially there, where they are divided by borders of ideology, social order, race, by bitterness engendered by oppression and war, and by economic, social, religious or racial discrimination.

One of the most dangerous divisions in the world is still that between western and socialist countries, and to overcome that division dialogue is needed. I fully agree, therefore, with the attempts of Servas to begin the dialogue, or to say it more exactly, to try to continue the way of visiting each other and receiving guests not only within the borders of the non-socialist countries. If Servas really works for peace in this world, it must help to promote the dialogue between East and West. What has been done in Helsinki and what is to be done in Vienna should not be only on the agenda of politicians. It should be also a part of the life of ordinary citizens. At the World Congress of Peace Forces in Moscow 1973, where Servas was also represented, Brezhnev said "We the politicians can only bring things forward if the people are standing behind us". We are this people and we should work for an atmosphere of peace in our respective countries. Politicians in general are not as bad as many people say and think. But very often they can't act as they should do because of the prejudices of the people, because of their limitation of horizon, because of the bad influence of strong interest-groups or the cold war climate created by the mass media. Our task is, in the interest not only of ourselves but also in the interest of the others, of the whole community, and through training in dialogue, to form a better basis for a good policy and a peaceful future. For our understanding of the present situation there are two important schools of philosophy of the last century. The first is represented by Ludwig Feuerbach, who said "I can only recognise the reality of the world through my relationship to the other person, to what we call the 'you". The basis of every understanding was for him the relationship between 'me' and 'you'. 'Me' and 'you' together, that was for him a kind of anthropological substitute for God. The second line is represented by Soren Kierkegaard. He said that the human being only becomes a really and fully existing person as an individual in relation-ship to God. Man must free himself from all secular relation-ships, he has to become a responsible person. The first position, being very important for the development of humanity, led to the collectivism of the Marxist society. The second position, being very important for the development of the person as a human being, led to the individualism of our western world. Individualism, as Martin Buber emphasizes, might give freedom and spontaneity, but includes only a part of man's life. Collectivism stresses the unity of mankind, but with the exclusive measure of the just society, it leads to difficulties where the full development of the personality is concerned. Both ways as exclusive ideologies are no remedy for the sick society of modern times. The way of dialogue - that was one of the main aims of Buber - should include both ways of thinking and should discover both one's own position and that of the other side. The difference might become a bit clearer if we study further the peace work which is done in the socialist and western countries. If we look in Housman's World Peace Diary, we find there under the name of a socialist country generally only four or five organizations which represent the peace work of that country: the National Peace Council, the Committee of Youth Organizations, the United Nations Association,

and some institute for international relations. They represent huge and wide peace organisations which are active for peace within the framework of the official policy. The whole policy is understood as peace policy. And the officially institutionalized

peace policy tries to involve and bring into co-operation all the citizens of the country. We, the Westerners, might miss the element of criticism in such peace organizations towards the official policy. Our peace movements in general have a critical standpoint towards the official policy of our governments, and we understand ourselves as a corrective to the wrong policies followed by our official politicians. If we look again into Housman's World Peace Diary, we usually find under the name of the western 'countries' lots of different peace organisations: one may be especially concerned for non-violence or anti-militarism, another is an anti-imperialistic body, the next works for reconciliation with former enemies, another one for greater economic justice, for better understanding, against discrimination, for student exchange or for activity with international workcamps. A partner from a socialist country might ask us, "Are you really effective in advancing the cause of peace, or is your work more an expression of goodwill within the bad structures of society, which will not lead to a change of the situation of today?" On the one hand, peace work is done within the official political structures, on the other hand it is done on a personal level or as a co-operation of many people within a more or less private organisation and being free to criticize the official policies. With these definitions I try not to judge or value, but only to describe. Let me give an example of a difference of understanding. In the Federal Republic of Germany there is a peace organization called "Action for Reconciliation". They send out groups of young people to other countries which suffered during World War II under the oppression and violence of German Fascism. The young people work as volunteers in the social field or in other kinds of work to express by that - as a kind of sign - that they know about the misdeeds done by the German people, that they are seeking forgiveness and are asking for a new basis of friendship. I worked within such a group of volunteers for one year in a little Greek village which had been almost totally destroyed during the war. This organisation asked to send groups to Poland to work there in the fields of the former concentration camps. At the beginning, 1966-7, the officials of Poland replied to the request "It is good that you have such young people, who know about what has happened in the past from your side, and who wish to express their goodwill and their wish to find a new basis for peace for the future. But please don't let them come here, because they would express something which unfortunately is not the true expression of the policy of the government of your country. Let them work in your country. There at the moment is their main task - they should work in the Federal Republic to change public opinion and the policy of the government." This objection by the officials of the Republic of Poland to the representatives of a non-governmental private organisation was partly justified. From our side, we explained that the young people working in Poland and returning to their own country would work at home much more effectively for peace between the two nations. Then they would have had contact with the people in *Poland*, would know more about the sufferings of the past and the situation of today. There was a long dialogue between us before such groups of young people *could* start to do their work in Poland. But now, every year many groups are going to Poland to work there and they do, as I know ^{personally}, very good work afterwards in their own country to convince other people about

what is needed for a real peace between Poland and our country. Dialogue between people with a different activity and understanding of Peace-work is needed. But it is not easy. Dialogue and co-operation have started on many levels. The broadest meeting took place in October 1973 in Moscow, where 1223 different national and international organizations and representatives from 143 countries took part in the World Congress of Peace Forces. Dialogue and co-operation is needed and is possible. That became very obvious at the World Congress. Also in Section 3 of the Helsinki Declaration, the wish for contacts "whether collective or individual, on a private or on an official level" was expressed. But - and let me come to the last point with this - it is very difficult to find the way in practice towards a concrete work of co-operation.

Servas is founded in the western countries, and in its way of work it is structured so that it *functions well in the western* countries; it is a private organization with people of good will and with a very general description of what is understood by the word 'peace', and it often risks being misunderstood as a cheap way of tourism. In the information leaflet, Servas is described as 'a-political' or 'non-political'. I feel doubtful about that word, and a representative of a socialist country might feel even more so. To give an example: the Chilean branch of the Fellowship of Reconciliation told us two years ago at a meeting at Stony Point, "We understand our work as a-political". But some people at that meeting knew about how F.O.R. worked in Chile. When Allende was the president of Chile, they expressed their criticism very openly. Since the Junta took over, they kept very silent, not saying anything about the inhuman system in Chile and not showing sympathy with the suffering and persecuted people. But they still thought themselves a-political. This word often hides a very conservative or reactionary attitude, which means that agreement with one's own way of society is a-political or natural, and agreement with socialist ideas is political. This happens very often with the majority of people in our churches too: to agree with armament and becoming soldiers is a-political, to fight for disarmament and conscientious objection is political; to agree openly or silently with national or capitalist exploitation of poorer nations is a-political, but to work for international solidarity and more justice in the world is political. I believe every organization is more or less political; the question is only whether you are consciously or subconsciously political. You might be political by what you are doing, or by what you are not doing, by what you are saying, or by being silent. But it seems to me important in what way you are political: by making a devil of the adversary or using cold war methods or violence, or by being political in the sense of dialogue and non-violence. If we believe we are a-political and think it is possible always to have a neutral standpoint, we are deceiving ourselves. To work for peace means also to express one's own standpoint on the burning questions of our world. It can mean to express solidarity with the suffering people or to say a clear and open 'yes' to good agreements between political leaders such as the Helsinki Agreement which is promoting peace in the world, or to make a clear declaration against the continually extending militarisation of the world. I am stressing this

whole complex because I believe that this would be the question asked by a representative of a socialist country too. They would ask about Servas "What is it?" - and this would be a political question. There is a natural distrust between people who are not used to dialogue with each other. Would Servas - this can be a question in socialist countries - introduce through its private way of work agents of imperialism or men of the C.I.A. to the socialist countries, who would bring only rumors and difficulties? The socialist countries are suspicious and think very much in terms of security. We should not blame them for that. Imagine Servas were an organization in a socialist country and were sending representatives of their society to western countries. Wouldn't there be difficulties because our own people would immediately say 'This is a typical way of communist infiltration'? For us it seems that the natural way of building up contacts is that of private channels. Servas was built up by private persons of different countries who had friends and could convince these friends about the idea of Servas. I believe it would be difficult to follow this way also in the socialist countries. Establishing a network of hosts and travellers in these countries could only be done through the official channels. That means that contact should be started between Servas and the National Peace Councils or youth organizations. I can give two practical examples. In the socialist countries there are no national branches of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, and I believe in the near future there will be no chance of having such pacifist organizations in the socialist countries. But for our annual meetings of the German Fellowship of Reconciliation, we always invite representatives of the socialist countries, either officially through the national peace councils, or privately *inviting* friends whom we know. In spite of not having branches of our organization in the socialist countries, there is a growing understanding, confidence and co-operation on both sides. And naturally we are following up the invitations we get for conferences in socialist countries too.

A similar case we can find with the workcamp organizations. In our countries, they have more or less a private character. In the socialist countries they are part of the official youth organizations of the country. I take the example of the Christian Peace Service; we can now send every year some young people to the USSR, to collective farms or workcamps run by the national youth organizations. And I think there will come the day when we can receive young people from the socialist countries in our workcamps, too. At seminars and conferences it is possible already to have also as participants the representatives from socialist countries. I mention this because I believe Servas should establish these contacts with the official bodies of the socialist countries too, should invite representatives to our meetings and should send representatives from Servas to meetings organized in socialist countries also. Perhaps afterwards in this way there might be developed a possibility of creating - I underline, because it is important, always in contact with the official bodies - a way of Servas work which we know from our countries. This is a long way, and it needs patience. At the beginning, all of this might seem to us a bit too official, a bit too one-sided. Because there will be more people

travelling from the western countries to the socialist countries than the other way. But I think it would already be good progress, if an official group of Servas would go to a socialist country on a trip organized by the state tourist office, but with visits and contacts to local groups and peace activities provided by the National Peace Council. There is a special difficulty for groups from socialist countries to reciprocate with such a kind of tour in our country. It is the difficulty of money-exchange. At your international meeting two years ago, you stated this in respect to developing nations too. If as a result of mutual confidence it would later be possible also for people from socialist countries to visit the Western countries in the way Servas provides, we should have special funds for meeting expenses for the visitors from socialist countries. When we invite guests for German Fellowship of Reconciliation to our meetings from socialist countries, we always inform them in advance that we undertake to pay all necessary expenses in our countries for the invited guests. Servas should understand this as a challenge which is caused by the difficulties of currency-exchange. You see that there are a lot of practical difficulties. I explain them, not because I wish to say that the broadening of Servas work to the people of socialist countries is impossible. But I wish to make clear that it cannot be worked out overnight. It needs patience in that kind of dialogue, which always includes misunderstandings, but which leads to a growing confidence as these are cleared up.

I don't say we should not try, but I will try to explain what it means. Some specific suggestions therefore at the end:

1. Because of the lack of knowledge about Servas in the socialist lands, we should more clearly explain who we are and what we mean when we speak about peace. I believe that the different dialogues of the people of Servas, between hosts and travellers in such countries or from such countries each year should be evaluated and should lead to declarations either on the national or inter-national level. I believe too that this would strengthen the work of Servas itself and avoid the danger of becoming a mere tourist organization.

2. In order to create confidence, Servas should invite to its official meetings also re^Presentatives of socialist countries, to make itself better known, and accept invitations to official peace meetings in socialist countries.

3. Servas should consider the money difficulties and perhaps create a special fund to facilitate the exchange of people from

socialist and western countries.

4. Servas should try to come into contact with the National Peace Councils and explain the aims of their work. I would suggest that Servas try with a group of people to visit Poland. They should write to the National Peace Council, asking if they could provide for such a trip personal contacts or contacts with groups. It will probably not be possible at the beginning to stay in houses of hosts. But I believe it is already a good step forward if a tour through Poland could combine the official organization with personal contacts.

5. Servas should try to send an invitation to a National Peace Council to send a group to a western country, where Servas provides the hosts, the programme and the costs.

I know that all this does not agree exactly with the basic character of Servas contacts between individuals, but I believe that the establishment of such contacts can't be made at the beginning of the way but only, if confidence has developed, at the end. The way of developing Servas in socialist countries is therefore a challenge to the work of Servas itself and will mean building up something new in the old way of work. I especially recommended in my talk building up the first contacts with Poland, not only because I think it might be the best way to start with the people of Poland, but also because we have a friend from Poland with us here who might explain out of her own experience whether the suggested way of furthering dialogue and establishing contacts is possible and who could help us to realize it. Before inviting others to contribute to the discussion, I thank you all for listening to me.

Konrad Lubbart.



IS THERE A ROAD FROM SALAAM TO SHALOM?

(Salaam is Arabic for peace. Shalom is Hebrew for peace)

After thanking Dr. Steinmetz for his generous introduction, our speaker, Benjamin Jeremias (from Israel) explained that he spoke for himself and for OLIVA which he represents. OLIVA is the Latin name of the olive tree and the sign of peace since Noah and the ark.

In asking the way from Salaam to Shalom, our speaker stressed the special importance of eternal hope and reminded us of many developments that would have seemed hopeless even 40 years ago. "Who would have foreseen that Germany and France would ever become good friends?" The "renewal of relations between Germany and France took time, but it is also a long road from the signing of papers, the changing of behavior. Even today, not all Frenchmen and Germans like each other, but there are corresponding sister cities in the two countries. Could anyone have foreseen the steps to diplomatic relationships between Germany and Israel? Can't we gamble that some day an Israeli City will have a sister city in Egypt?"

What can be done to overcome hate? How far do we really want to go? And are we ready to achieve peace? Are we willing to fight the roots of hate, the underlying ignorance? Are we willing to replace ignorance with knowledge: We are so rich in the needed raw material - people. To tear out the roots - ignorance - we should not wait on governments to do the job. This job can be done only by grassroots organizations like SERVAS and OLIVA. They have the structure to organize volunteers for world wide peace work. Could SERVAS expand its program and, like OLIVA, invite guests in for a social evening even though they are staying elsewhere? This would foster an exchange of views between many more people from different countries. Contacts require no money. It is only a matter of taking the first step. Others will follow your example.

This is the philosophy of both organizations. The history of SERVAS can prove the method. From a few people, we have spread gradually to groups in more than 60 countries. Regardless of whether we will bring peace, we should, as emphasized by Pastor Lubbert, spread our dialogue and its significance into the many conflict areas throughout the world. But dialogue means not to force opinion on others...which was the tragedy of the Jewish-Christian dialogue for 2000 years. Since the Jews were not willing to accept the Christian position, this dialogue worked badly for the Jews until quite recently. But conditions have now .changed. There is hope for the road from Salaam to Shalom if we all work with faith, hope, belief, patience, understanding of differing cultures and recognize that the road must go both ways.

*From SIN No. 6 September 1976
Resume of Benjamin Jeremias' special at the*

International Conference in Los Angeles in 1976

In noting the regretful absence of Arab SERVAS members from this Conference, Benjamin Jeremias called on us to meet this challenge by having them with us at the next Conference.

Our speaker then closed with words by a famous American President, Abraham Lincoln. When he was asked why he didn't finish off all of his enemies, he replied "I destroy my enemies by making friends of them."

(Summary by R. King of Benjamin Jeremias' address delivered to the SERVAS International Conference held in Los Angeles, Aug. 1 - 7, 1976.)

REGIONAL CO-ORDINATOR FOR LONDON AND SOUTHEAST ENGLAND

Graham Thomas, who has been co-ordinator of the Greater London area for the past five years, is now taking on the south-east region as well; a logical development, when one considers that London is surrounded by that region, and having a short list of both together enables travellers with brief holidays to visit hosts in both town and country. He hopes that it will not discourage those with more time from visiting other regions, besides Scotland and Wales, which have languages, history and culture of their own, and where some hosts have spent more than ten years without seeing more than one or two Servas travellers!

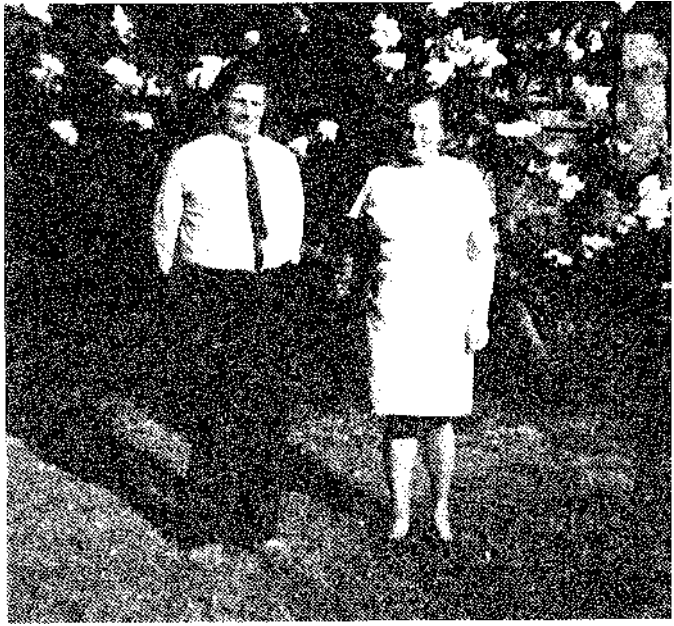
Graham is kept very busy finding places to stay for guests who drop out of the sky at short notice. Unfortunately many things can happen which alter the date and time of arrival, so hosts cannot always be sure when they will be visited, and the annoying experience of re-arranging engagements or buying in extra food, only to find that one need not have done so, is not uncommon. However, the telephone is a help, and Graham and his assistant Barbara Rosewarne have so far managed to cope efficiently and cheerfully with these unexpected birds of passage. Do please help to make their task lighter by making advance arrangements and keeping them wherever possible!



A VETERAN TRAVELLER

Sigvart Godeseth, a Norwegian who had been farming in Dorset for thirty years, retired at sixty-five owing to a cancer, and set off to enjoy the remainder of his life by exploring Europe on a bicycle. Happily, much more remained than he expected, and his kindly face and blue embroidered Swiss smock have become familiar to a wide variety of Servas hosts and other friends, from Scandinavia to Portugal!

The first journey covered five thousand miles, the second twelve thousand - but it wasn't the miles at interested Sigvart, it was the people. He says cycling is the best way to travel, far better than a car - people are always so friendly, and sometimes even invite him for a cup of tea! But unfortunately, one dark night, he was knocked off his bike by a car - not on the European highways, but in a Dorset lane - and spent some weeks in Salisbury Infirmary. After which, still not discouraged, he bought a new old bike and set off again!



Between journeys, he lives with his wife Elie in a bungalow near the farm, cultivates vegetables, and keeps bees. One wall of his sitting room is covered with books, for he is fluent in several European languages, and especially fond of the novels of Thomas Hardy, who wrote about the countryside in which he lives.



Their son - the eldest of the seven grown-up children - lives in the farmhouse with his family, and on the mantel shelf over the stone fireplace at the bungalow are photos of the grandchildren. The former secretary of Servas Britain, Connie Thorpe, described Sigvart as the ideal traveller - and we hope that other pensioners may be inspired to follow his example!
