

How Unesco Helped 'Rust' The Iron Curtain Through East-West Volunteering

(An excerpt from the book One Million Volunteers - The Story of Volunteer Youth Service, Penguin Books, 1968, by Arthur Gillette, retired, former Director of Unesco's Division of Youth and Sports Activities)

Arthur stresses that the exchanges reported on below could almost certainly not have taken place much less "prospered" had they not been held under the umbrella of the Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service, an international NGO supported, housed and partly funded by Unesco.

East-West Workcamping

In the autumn of 1960, the author was astonished to open a copy of the popular American weekly *Saturday Evening Post* and find himself looking at a half-page photo of a Ukranian workcamp he had participated in that summer. An accompanying article --- that week's lead -- - by the authors of *The Ugly American* implied that the camp was designed to lure young Africans, Asians and Latin Americans to the Soviet Union and subvert their innocent minds. The photo caption neglected to indicate that the volunteers pictured included young non- and anti-Communist Westerners. And the authors and editors did not bother to find out (or were not saying) that among the participants were a Dutch Quaker, a Swiss pastor and assorted English, French and American civilists and other young people hardly in sympathy with Soviet policies; that discussion topics (presented by those believing in their point of view) included 'Multi-party Parliamentary Democracy' and 'Christian Pacifism'; that although little agreement was reached on these and other themes the sincerity of those expressing all points of view was evident and resulted in the formation of many friendships; or that the camp was one of a series co-sponsored by SCI, the World Federation of Democratic Youth and the Committee of Soviet Youth Organizations and was painstakingly organized as a place of meeting, exchange and co-operation for young people of different persuasions.

In short, the *Saturday Evening Post* was as guilty of sloppily ill-informed journalism and facile cold-war prejudice as the Soviet press organs that vilify the U S Peace Corps as an instrument of neo-colonialist infiltration. It is just this sort of petrified thinking that organizers have tried to chip away by holding camps for participants from countries of different ideologies, most often NATO and Warsaw Pact member-states.

East-West understanding has made some headway but it would be unrealistic to expect a few weeks in a necessarily artificial setting of East-West co-operation to work the wonders that years of diplomacy have barely made to seem possible. Yet while the statesmen tread water and their governments perfect and stockpile the means of joint suicide, it is ever more urgent to open as many doors of exchange as possible. Contact does not automatically lead to understanding, but it can transform black and white abstractions into shaded grey reality.

Indeed. the aim of East-West workcamping is not to make communists capitalists or capitalists communists, but to show both that neither has a monopoly of Truth and Right. Therefore organizers and volunteers realize that it is impossible to achieve an *entente* by ignoring the very real divergences between East and West. "By mutual understanding," wrote an American participant in the Ukranian camp misrepresented by the *Saturday Evening Post*, I do not mean a process which encourages young people to make tabula rasa of the thrust and

parry. incidents and responsibilities of the last twenty years of world history in order to approach one another in an 'open-minded' way. On the contrary, it is only when young people meet one another in an atmosphere of frankness and sincerity ... that the complex process of understanding may begin.”(18)

The occasional abrasion of frank intercourse is counterbalanced in workcamping perhaps more than in other forms of East-West youth exchange by the unifying influence of a shared goal: doing the job in hand.

And sometimes one can hope to achieve more. A Czech girl volunteer discovered during a 1966 SCI-IVS camp that one of the reasons why poverty still exists in England has nothing to do with class warfare. 'I have never seen so much misery and dirt as in England.' she wrote, the houses we were painting, papering, cleaning and varnishing. With one exception, I cleaned the flats of people who were no doubt poor but mostly and in the first place only because they were lazy. Among the thousands of possibilities they could find in British society, they freely and voluntarily chose laziness and consequently misery and dirt. In my country we have no such poor people. Not because we have no people who prefer to be lazy, but because there is a special law of work and everybody who can must work.

She also came to appreciate that not all Western youngsters are money-mad or subject to a more or less high degree of *ennui* or nihilism. “My greatest discovery was the enthusiasm with which Western students did the work.... It is possible that it was only coincidence, but they worked so perfectly, so steadily and so patiently that it exceeded all bounds.”(19)

Wrote a Soviet volunteer in a Swedish camp: “We could see for ourselves what a developed capitalist country that had been unscarred by war was like. There seemed to be no slums ... and very few unemployed ... “ (20)

Characteristically, it was the civilist faith that, in the still chilly early thaw, first used workcamps to dislodge the icebergs blocking the flow of ideas and people between East and West. “By faith,” wrote a chronicler of Quaker East-West projects, giving a definition applicable to the approach of both organizations, “we mean the refusal to accept a situation as hopeless and the insistence in seeking growing points in it.”(21) This faith took intrepid civilists to Poland in 1955 for the first East-West voluntary service project to be held since the cold war had halted international participation in the mass Eastern European work drives of the late 1940s. It was co-sponsored by SCI and WFDY.

The camp, which turned a Warsaw bomb-site into a playground, enabled exchange organizers to square off and define their terms for future East-West projects, to learn what to hope for and what not to expect. “The Warsaw camp did not achieve a conciliation of ideas between the two groups,” a British volunteer observed, “but it was able to make some progress towards such a conciliation and to show us clearly what are the principal obstacles to its achievement.”(22)

The second and third camps took place in Poland and France in 1956, and the fourth in the USSR in 1958. In 1959 East German Quakers confounded smug expectations of cold war analysts everywhere by sponsoring a workcamp at Dresden including participants from West Germany and Britain as well as representatives of East German churches and the official Free German Youth movement.

By 1960, the cautious, experimental phase of East-West workcamping drew to a close. Neither miraculous transformation nor disastrous catastrophe visited the pioneer camps, and the Co-ordinating Committee's 12th World Conference, held in Yugoslavia, put a firm foot in the door of exchange. Then in the early 1960s, came a period of lateral expansion as, one by one, more countries took up the method.

The establishment of East-West workcamping has been a collective effort. Through mutual concession and persistent trust, youth organizers in East and West alike have overcome the lethargy of their respective bureaucracies and methodological differences, not to mention their own personal suspicions. Like Columbus's sailors, those negotiating the first exchanges ventured into uncharted seas with a sense of giddy drama. Yet gradually, and without disavowing their ideological affinities, the handful of pioneer organizers multiplied, bonds of friendship replaced earlier, solely business-like relations. The earth turned out not to be flat after all.

Although no individual can be singled out as instrumental in initiating East-West workcamp exchange, a Polish artisan of their development may be picked at random as typical of this untypical group. Mieczyslaw (Mitek) Klos became active in voluntary work in 1947, during the early days of Service to Poland. When in 1960 members of WFDY created an International Bureau for Tourism and Exchange of Youth (IBTEY), recalls Mitek, "my experience fitted me to take the post" of director.(23)

Thanks to his realism and fine sense of diplomacy, Mitek was able to arouse the interest of IBTEY's Eastern members in workcamping while dispelling fears of Western organizers as to Easterners' ulterior motives. Many IBTEY members joined the Co-ordinating Committee --- Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary following Poland and the Soviet Union.(24)

Although no longer directly involved in administering exchanges, Mitek has, if anything, become more interested in voluntary service. He recently completed a doctoral thesis at the University of Warsaw proposing increased provision of Polish long-term volunteers to serve, without political strings, in developing countries.

The number of volunteers taking part annually in East-West workcamping has not yet risen above a few thousand, yet it would be impossible to give even a summary run-down of the projects that have taken place. One series will, therefore, have to suffice to illustrate what has been achieved, the Tripartite Work-and-Study Projects, known unglamorously as the 'Tripe-Wasps'. In each of three summers (1962-4) a work-and-study camp including one team from the USSR, UK and USA was organized, first in Britain, then in the Soviet Union and finally in America. Mornings were devoted to physical labour, afternoons to carefully prepared discussion. The AFSC, British Friends Service Council and Committee of Soviet Youth Organizations co-sponsored the services, each supplying ten volunteers to each camp. Several volunteers attended all three camps.(25)

The Tripartite Work-and-Study Projects wrought no radical re-orientation in the minds of volunteers. But that they could take place at all came as a surprise to some officials of the three sponsoring bodies. 'The attitude of co-operation which does not hide differences and does not fear imperfections,' concluded an American volunteer,

is one of the important experiences in the understanding that has developed.... Understanding, after all, is not something that is acquired and preserved, but an active, restless thought

process. Sometimes it is more perfect than others, but always it aims to strengthen the constructive relationships between men.(26)

Holding East-West workcamps has the advantage of placing participants squarely in the arena of the conflict they are attempting to allay. Russians find out that Republicans are not fire-spitting madmen and Americans see for themselves that *kolkhozniki* (collective farmers) are not down-trodden slaves. On the other hand, one group is always in 'enemy' territory and both may become preoccupied with their disputes out of all proportion to the cold war's importance.

Of late, workcamps in developing countries have been the site of East-West encounters where cold-war quarrels have paled before the problems of underdevelopment to which capitalism and communism as practised in industrialized settings are thought by many to be irrelevant. Uneconomical in most of the Third World, broadly international short-term workcamps in North Africa are near enough to East and West Europe to bring travel costs for youths of different ideological orientations within tolerable range.

Since 1962, the United Arab Republic's Supreme Youth Council has organized an annual international summer workcamp at Wadi el Natrun, a spot in the desert half-way between Cairo and Alexandria where young men from around the world have toiled to dig irrigation ditches and plant and water tree seedlings. In 1964, for instance, young people from twenty-five nations of Europe, Africa, America and Asia took part in the International Friendship Brigade. A Yugoslav volunteer found "4,000 kilometres away from their homes. East and West Germans are agitating for unification by singing old ballads together."(27)

In his 1961 Inaugural Address, President Kennedy invited East and West to "begin anew", to "explore what problems unite us instead of belabouring those problems which divide us", to 'push back the jungles of suspicion' and establish 'a beachhead of co-operation'. Today, more than any other form of educational youth exchange, East-West workcamping has a firm toehold on that beachhead. So much so that --- a bit prematurely perhaps --- many organizers no longer deem the very term 'East-West', with its overtones of political cleavage, applicable to the present situation.

While the Soviet Union has averaged just over one East-West camp a year, and the United States rather less than one, Poland and Czechoslovakia are holding between ten and twenty annually and elsewhere --- in Britain, France and Sweden, for instance --- Eastern participants in a plethora of normal projects not especially conceived for East-West contact are as commonplace as, say, Americans or Spaniards. In 1966 one hundred Czechoslovak volunteers took part in SCI-IVS's British camps. At the end of the season, SCI's European Secretary could conclude that there is now "ground for hoping that international rust has at last more or less got the better of the iron curtain" .(28)

What of the future? The continued escalation of the Vietnam war makes prediction hazardous. Its effect has already been felt, in terms of a slowdown in the rate at which existing programmes are expanded and new channels are opened. Yet much needs to be done if the painstakingly gathered momentum is not to be lost altogether. And much can be done to propel East-West voluntary service beyond the symbolic stage. Large national programmes like the Soviet Virgin Land brigades, Community Service Volunteers in Britain, Poland's OHP and Volunteers in Service to America would be ideal frameworks for a full-scale youthful incursion into the jungles of suspicion. Proposals in this direction will be elaborated in the book's final chapter.

Initiating programmes with countries not yet involved in schemes of volunteer exchange between nations of different ideologies depends almost entirely on political considerations. For instance, it seems highly unlikely that North Korea or Mainland China will participate in such programmes for years to come. A Westerner who proposed at this stage to sound out these countries' youth organizations on the possibilities of joint workcamping would be treated as unrealistic, foolhardy, or worse.

Yet these were just the terms used even by friends of the civilists to depict efforts preceding the first East-West camp a decade ago. Why accept the present situation as hopeless? Why not seek the growing points in it? For growing points there are. Already, a new dimension of inter-ideological workcamping has opened up. In 1965, volunteers from Peking, North Korea and Cuba joined Westerners --- including an American --- in Egypt's Wadi el Natrun International Friendship Brigade.

NOTES

“Civilist” refers to a volunteer from the NGO Service Civil International (whose British Branch is International Voluntary Service)

18. 'Correspondence', *Service*, International Voluntary Service, London, April 1965.

19. OLGA BARTOVA, 'Why I want to Come Back', *Service*, International Voluntary Service, London, November 1966.

20. ALEXEI OBOKHOV, 'A Beautiful Site for Friendship', *Workcamps Across the World*, Co-ordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service, Paris, February 1963.

21. JOHN MILLER, *No Cloak. No Dagger*, Society of Friends, London, 1965.

22. ROGER HADLEY, 'First East-West Workcamp', *The Railway Review*, London, 4 November 1955.

23. Letter to the author. 30 October 1966.

24. Yugoslavia never left CoCo, even at the height of the cold war. Only occasional Romanians have taken part and, to date, Albania has shown no interest in East-West workcamping. East Germany is active but has not yet joined CoCo.

25. J. RUSSEL CLEAVER, 'The Tripartite Work and Study Project', *The Friends Quarterly*, London, January 1965.

26. MARGARET ROSE, 'One Camp, Three Nations, Many Friends', *Unesco Courier*, Unesco, Paris, July-August 1965.

27. ALEKSANDAR KLAS, 'Miracle in Desert', *Youth Life*, Mladost, Belgrade, November 1964.

28. JANET GOODRICKE, 'The Growth of East-West Contact', *Service*, International Voluntary Service, London, November 1966.



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EAST-WEST COOPERATION AND THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

DAVID WIGHTMAN

Probably no other organ of the United Nations concerned with economic affairs has been so closely dependent on the current temper of east-west relations as the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE). The paralyzing effect of the cold war on ECE was such that its activities, as distinct from its membership, have become truly all-European only within the last three years. To outline this development and reflect upon the present character of east-west cooperation within ECE is the concern of this article.¹ But first a few words about the character of the organization itself, for its constitution is a poor guide.

ECE rests on three main pillars: the Commission, the Technical Committees and the Secretariat. The Commission meets annually in public plenary session and in theory directs and supervises the activities of its subsidiary bodies. But an essential clue to an understanding of ECE is the weakness in practice of what is in theory its top policy-making body. As sources of collaboration the Technical Committees have always been much stronger than the Commission—in the past, because the Commission was merely another cockpit for waging the cold war and now, because the current work program of ECE is very largely settled in the committees.

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¹ "East" and "west" are used in the conventional political sense, meaning member countries of the communist bloc on the one hand and the rest of Europe

The subsidiary bodies of ECE cover the basic sectors of the European economy: coal, steel, timber, the engineering industry and raw materials, housing and the building industry, agriculture, electric power and inland transport. In much the same way as the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has given ECE a large measure of autonomy, so in turn the Commission has allowed its Technical Committees to develop their functions in a very self-reliant manner. They choose their own problems, set up subsidiary bodies as and when required and make recommendations direct to the member governments, specialized agencies or non-governmental organizations taking part in their activities. Their effectiveness is further enhanced by the fact that they consist of representatives fully empowered to act on behalf of their governments. Agreements once reached can be put directly into effect. In short, they are operational bodies.

The Technical Committees always meet in private, rarely engage in procedural discussions and by long established habit tend to minimize, if not actually to isolate, the political aspects of the problems they take up. Voting is of little importance in their proceedings; major economic problems cannot be solved by majority decision and the possibility has

on the other. Parts of this article are very largely based on the author's book *Economic Co-operation in Europe: A Study of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe*, published in 1956 under the auspices of the European Centre of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace by Stevens & Sons Ltd. and William Heinemann Ltd. in London and by Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., in New York.

never been contemplated. What the committees aim at is the maximum collaboration among the maximum number of governments. Governments who cannot agree do not hinder those who can. The effect has been to give all their member governments a *de facto* status which many did not have *de jure* until they became members of the UN in 1955. In tackling a given problem, the usual method of these committees is to break it down into its components for study by expert groups. An average of two meetings a day of this kind are at present held in the Palais des Nations under the auspices of ECE. In other words, unlike many inter-governmental organizations, ECE is a continuing body, not an *ad hoc* conference.

The Secretariat of ECE has always been a strong one. The clues to its strength must be sought in the institutional setting which conditions it as well as in the quality of the leadership provided. In the first place, by taking over and continuing the work of three emergency economic organizations, namely, the European Coal Organization, the European Central Inland Transport Organization and the Emergency Economic Committee for Europe, ECE inherited something of the operational tradition of war time collaboration, and in the emergency of war the executive always takes a much greater initiative in the conduct of affairs. Moreover, at the first session of the Commission in May 1947, the Executive Secretary, Mr. Gunnar Myrdal, firmly established with governments the convention that the Secretariat should take positive initiatives in seeking agreement on points of substance. Although he has always kept open the post of Deputy Executive Secretary for a Soviet national, his refusal at that time to allow the

Soviet government, or any other government, to dictate his choice of staff was clear warning of his determination to preserve the Secretariat's freedom of action. This rugged independence and the certain element of daring that went with it made ECE a desirable place for able men seeking an outlet for their ideas. Finally, in default of governments taking up problems during the most paralyzing phase of the cold war, it fell to the Secretariat to take the initiatives necessary to keep the organization active. At the same time, the very existence of a state of cold war between east and west meant that any attempt by one side to restrict the Secretariat's activities invariably aroused the opposition of the other. For these reasons and because the Secretariat has never compromised its independence and impartiality, Mr. Myrdal has maintained both a hard-hitting team and the respect of the member governments of ECE.

These characteristics gave ECE a flexibility that was to prove indispensable during the cold war. But its initial strength was drawn from other sources as well. As already mentioned, it took over and continued much of the work of three emergency organizations. Secondly, ECE gained support from the European reaction against the continuing tensions of the cold war which gave it an importance above and beyond its practical achievements. It seemed to be one of the few remaining bridges between east and west. Finally, with the exception of Spain, all the countries of Europe were invited to participate in its work at a time when about one-third of them were not members of the UN. Arrangements were also made whereby the two political parts of Germany could be associated with its work through the presence of German experts attached to the dele-

gations of one of the occupying powers. The United States is the only non-European member of ECE.

Two main considerations appear to lie behind the original support of the east for the idea of an ECE: the need to coax American economic and financial aid into their war-devastated areas and the need to insure against a complete split in Europe or, rather, in the Soviet Union's case, against the possibility of a western alliance which could settle issues without reference to Moscow. In fact, the Soviet Union, by rejecting the Marshall Plan, defeated its own ends. When ECE began actual operations, therefore, it was not clear what interest, if any, the east would take in its practical activities. Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland participated in a number of committees but, even so, the only really effective collaboration with the west was that of Poland on coal problems. The absence of any Soviet collaboration was particularly felt by those committees trying to tackle the shortage of, for instance, timber, scrap supplies and railway rolling stock. The first six months of operational work did nothing to clarify the Soviet attitude towards ECE. But at the third session of the Commission in April 1948 the Soviet Union proposed new committees for trade and agriculture. This appeared tantamount to saying that the scope of ECE should be greatly enlarged.²

The creation of these two committees marked the beginnings of Soviet participation in the practical work of ECE. Yet both soon reached a complete impasse. The Trade Committee became deadlocked when the Soviet Union insisted in the face of firm opposition from

the west that it should discuss the western policy of applying strategic trade controls to a large range of exports to the communist bloc. As regards the Agriculture Committee, the east made it plain that it was not going to allow the west to discuss the possibility of east-west trade in agricultural products in the absence of a Trade Committee. In other words, both committees stood or fell together.

With the deadlock on the politics of east-west trade the first phase of east-west collaboration in ECE came to an end. All-European economic cooperation had so far yielded little fruit. Admittedly, ECE had no funds at its disposal to give priority to assisting the war-devastated countries of Europe as its terms of reference directed. It was also true that, on occasion, the west let petty political advantage stand in the way of assisting the east in modest ways. Furthermore, western politicians and generals evidently placed a faith in the efficacy of strategic trade controls which the facts of economic development in the Soviet Union and the nature of her continental economy hardly justified. All the same, when these considerations have been weighed in the balance it is still hard to believe that the eastern powers could not have made more use of ECE than they did. When the Czechs, for instance, were offered a loan that the Timber Committee had negotiated with the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development as part of a scheme for increasing Europe's timber supplies, they could have seized the chance to show that this sort of cooperation might well be extended to other fields. Instead, they quibbled over small details and negotiations broke down. Some of the areas of collabora-

² On the early history of ECE see: W. W. Rostow, *Organization*, III, p. 254-268.

"The Economic Commission for Europe," *International*

tion in which the Soviet Union's absence was especially felt have already been mentioned. Again, the east could not disguise the fact that one of the principal obstacles to an expansion of east-west trade was their own lack of traditional exports.

If the first phase of east-west collaboration in ECE yielded small results, worse was to follow. From about the middle of 1950 the east gradually withdrew from all the subsidiary bodies. Apart from continued Polish membership in the Coal Committee, ECE had virtually become a west European agency and lost a large part of its *raison d'être* in the process. So complete a withdrawal, even from bodies like the Housing Committee, cannot be explained solely in terms of the rapidly narrowing scope for east-west trade after the outbreak of the Korean War. It must have been a political decision deliberately taken. Its effect upon ECE was plain: it limited the scope of the problems taken up, the supply of relevant information and the interest of western governments who continued to participate. Yet this did not inhibit the eastern powers at the annual Commission sessions from attacking the Technical Committees for their alleged inadequacies. In addition to regular onslaughts on Anglo-American policy in Germany and everything that went with the Marshall Plan, they attacked the Secretariat and a number of committees for maintaining close liaison with such western organizations as the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) and the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). The east continued, however, to support ECE in principle: they, as much as the west, wanted to maintain this bridge between them.

From 1950 to 1953, at every Commis-

sion session, at the meetings of ECOSOC which discussed the annual report of ECE and in private representations, Mr. Myrdal bluntly reminded the eastern powers that their absence from the committees and their failure to respond to requests for information had seriously weakened ECE. For much the same reason, the Executive Secretary attached especial importance to finding a solution to the stalemate in the Trade Committee. Without going into the details of a complicated story, it must be admitted that the Secretariat's efforts did not achieve any marked success until April 1953. The method that finally produced results was the technique of trade consultations. Governments were asked to send experts to advise and consult with the Executive Secretary on the possibility of increasing the volume of goods exchanged within the existing pattern of bilateral trade agreements under which much of this trade was conducted. In fact, the government experts attended on the Secretariat's terms and, by taking the chair, the Executive Secretary made certain that these terms were observed.

The meetings were strictly private. Not even representatives of non-governmental organizations were admitted. No summary records were kept and only a very general report was published at the end. These methods ensured maximum freedom from outside political pressure. Nearly 80 experts from 23 European countries and the United States attended. Yugoslavia, the most notable absentee, did not attend because of the blockade maintained against her by the communist bloc. The first stage of the consultations took the form of a multilateral exchange of information among the experts of specific kinds and quantities of goods their governments were prepared to import

and export. The second stage was a series of bilateral discussions, over 100 in all, preparatory to the eventual conclusion of actual trade agreements. The Secretariat arranged the timetable of these talks and, as a rule, every expert had to be prepared to talk to any other expert. Without the Secretariat's intervention countries having no diplomatic relations would never have approached each other. In this way bilateral talks took place, for instance, between western Germany and the Soviet Union, Hungary and Greece, and eastern Germany and sixteen western countries. Contacts were also made between countries having diplomatic relations but no satisfactory trade relations as, for example, in the case of the Soviet Union with Iceland and France. The third stage of the consultations took the form of a general discussion of the technical obstacles to a higher volume of east-west trade, such as the crude bilateral character of this trade and the problems that arise between state trading and private enterprise trading economies.

The consultations were by far the most successful meetings ever held on trade problems within ECE. Both east and west were reasonable and realistic, no contentious political or constitutional issues arose, and in a number of specific instances bilateral talks led to the conclusion of actual trade agreements. The trade agreements the Soviet Union subsequently concluded with France and Iceland were cases in point. Moreover, the fact that by April 1954, about three-quarters of the more than 100 bilateral relationships possible in east-west trade were covered by trade and payments agreements, compared with only one-half a year previously, was due in part to the consultations. But too much must not be claimed for them. Other forces were

at work shaping the trend of east-west trade. Under the threat of actual or potential pressures on their markets, powerful business interests in the west were compelling their governments to relax the policy of strategic export controls. New policies in the east to raise domestic living standards demanded for their success greater trade with the west, particularly as regarded the import of consumer goods. But at least it can be said for ECE that the revival of east-west trade from 1953 onwards would have been slower, more intermittent, and in many cases much harder to bring about without the contacts it provided.

Trade consultations within ECE are not means of reaching collective recommendations or decisions, as is usual in inter-governmental meetings; nor do they replace actual trade negotiations. Unlike government trade delegations sent from one capital to another, the experts at ECE can explore trading opportunities without the pressure or need to conduct specific negotiations. Nor need they consider tactical maneuvers or face-saving formulae. Finally, as the Secretariat relieves governments of the responsibility for deciding procedural questions, contacts can be arranged even when no formal diplomatic relations exist.

The spring of 1953 marked a turning point in the fortunes of ECE as an all-European agency. At the eighth session of the Commission in March, an eastern country, Czechoslovakia, was for the first time elected to the chair. The debates were noticeably more temperate and the Soviet Union indicated that it would send a representative to take part in an important aspect of the Timber Committee's work program. The stalemate in the field of east-west trade was broken the following month. During the latter

part of 1953 the east began again to participate in the practical work of ECE and on a scale far greater than before. Finally, at the ninth session of the Commission in March 1954, the Soviet Union announced its intention to collaborate in the work of all the Technical Committees. That promise had been amply fulfilled by the end of the year.

This sudden and extensive participation by the east in the Technical Committees probably owed something to the more promising outlook for trade with the west. But there may have been other and subtler forces at work. Given its declared wish to ease international tension, what room for maneuver on the fundamental political issues in Europe had the Soviet regime that came into power on the death of Stalin? Economic and technical collaboration with the west, on the other hand, gave it plenty of scope for constructive moves. It is probably no coincidence that at about the same time as the east was beginning to collaborate widely in the subsidiary bodies of ECE, Poland and the Soviet Union for the first time contributed to the UN Technical Assistance Program and attended the fourth Technical Assistance Conference in November 1953. And in the following spring the Soviet Union joined the International Labor Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization.

As the activities of ECE are multifarious, only a brief indication of their scope is possible. In the first place, most of the Technical Committees are, in effect, market places where producers and consumers can discuss market prospects and work out methods of collaboration that will help to balance and stabilize supply and demand and promote trade between the countries of eastern and

western Europe. In such fields as international transport, coal distribution and trade, the committees have played a significant role in the conclusion of actual agreements. Collaboration also takes place on a wide range of technical problems to help concert national policies in fields like housing, transport, forestry and electric power. Again, the committees work to standardize and unify economic, industrial and commercial practices by drafting, for example, legal instruments of a permissive character which, if adopted, would facilitate and promote economic intercourse. Finally, to encourage the most rational use of productive resources and the spread of technological progress, they promote the exchange of relevant economic, technical and statistical information. Much of the work carried out under these headings is directly dependent upon and even inspired by the extensive and able research work of the Secretariat. While some activities are much less developed than others, the list affords some measure of the opportunities for all-European economic cooperation within ECE. The east, moreover, has not been slow to seize them. For instance, in 1955 some 60 Soviet delegations attended meetings held under the auspices of ECE in the Palais des Nations. There are very few subsidiary bodies of the Commission in which the east is not well represented, and by delegates of high competence; it is not unusual to find vice-ministers at even the most technical of meetings. The chairman of the Transport Committee is Hungarian and that of the Housing Committee, Polish. The chairman of the important Working Party on Rural Electrification is Professor Sazanov of the U.S.S.R. Institute of Scientific Research for the Mechanization and Electrification

of Agriculture. These chairmen have performed their functions effectively and impartially. In the camaraderie of technical experts, the distinction between east and west has lost its meaning in many instances.

The eastern powers are particularly interested in collaboration on technical problems.

The tenth session of the Commission, in March 1955, unanimously accepted a resolution, jointly sponsored by Britain and the Soviet Union, recommending that the committees parallel their consideration of economic problems by devoting more attention to an exchange on a reciprocal basis of production experience and scientific, technical and statistical information, including the organization of mutually beneficial visits by specialists. To some extent the resolution was an *ex post* formulation of recent trends; it merely strengthened an already existing and important function of ECE. Nevertheless, this sort of collaboration has since grown rapidly, especially the study tours by expert groups. Study groups have visited, for example, rural electrification installations in the Soviet Union and Austria; they have studied housing in Poland, logging and forestry techniques in France, modern cokerries in Belgium, and agricultural areas and installations in Czechoslovakia and in eastern Germany. Under the heading of the exchange of scientific, technical and production experience, experts have studied the problems of rural electrification, agreed on technical and practical requirements for forestry tractors, studied the scientific problems of coal classification and utilization and so on. Some eastern countries recently announced their intention of joining the International Council for Building Documentation and Research (CIB), the non-governmental

organization that owes its origin to the earlier work of the Housing Committee. The problems of natural and manufactured gas will be examined by a special working party, while Britain and the Soviet Union have studied together the economic implications of automation. The examples could easily be extended. As regards economic problems, the east collaborates in the market surveys conducted by the commodity committees; the Timber Committee is, indeed, the timber "bourse" of Europe. The east has also been active in the drafting of standard conditions of sale for commodities like timber, cereal, citrus fruits, coal and engineering plant and equipment which buyers and sellers, if they so wished, could embody in their trading contracts. In the field of transport, the east has taken a special interest in international transport tariffs and customs procedures, questions directly related to international trade. Among the many other examples of east-west collaboration that could be given, a number of new developments deserve special mention.

In May and June 1955, there was held, under the auspices of ECE, the first *ad hoc* meeting on inland waterway problems, indeed the first all-European meeting of its kind since the war. It will be remembered that the western powers were excluded from the Commission set up under the Danubian Convention which the Soviet Union drafted in 1948. The Convention removed the Danube from the status of a fully international river and introduced practices regarding its use differing from those of pre-war and of other international rivers in Europe. ECE is now trying to unscramble the egg by investigating ways of bringing about greater uniformity in the various regulations governing the use

of international waterways in Europe through, for instance, the unification of police regulations, signs and signals, boatmen's papers and ships' certificates. This may eventually open the door to a discussion of navigation rights on the Danube. It is interesting to note that during his visit to Moscow last June, Marshall Tito was reported to have urged the admission of Austria and western Germany to the Danube Commission and the granting of navigation rights to western countries as an earnest of goodwill.

The second illustration is also taken from the field of transport. One of the points on which the "big four" foreign ministers conference in November 1955, failed to reach agreement was east-west tourism. The subject arose again at a meeting of the Transport Committee the following month. The committee intends to go ahead on the transport aspects of this problem. But as other aspects such as exchange rates, visas and hotel facilities lie outside its competence, the whole question was brought before the last Commission session. The Soviet Union submitted a resolution calling for, among other things, the elaboration in ECE of recommendations for the development of contacts between scientific, technical, commercial and business groups, including the development of tourist traffic. As regards tourism, however, most western spokesmen thought that ECE should not duplicate the work of the International Union of Official Travel Organizations (IUOTO) which not only counts the Soviet Union, Poland and Rumania among its members but has already taken up the question of east-west tourism. The contribution ECE may make to the subject will therefore continue to be confined largely to the field of transport. Yet

while a rail sleeping car service to Moscow has already been inaugurated, the Committee has not so far had a chance to promote international tourist bus services across east-west frontiers. The schedule of international tourist bus routes for western Europe is annually fixed by negotiation in Geneva through the Working Party on International Passenger Services by Road. This body met again last May but no eastern representatives attended. It still remains one of the very few exclusively west European bodies in ECE.

The next illustration is taken from the field of electric power. The Electric Power Committee is to establish the hydro-electric potential of eastern countries as it has already done for western countries of Europe. It will also explore the opportunities for international exchanges of electric power among the countries of central and southeastern Europe. The interesting point about both problems is that they are bound to bring the question of the hydro-electric development of the Danube into the committee. The development of electric power from nuclear reactors is another item on the committee's agenda. At the last Commission session the Soviet Union proposed the setting up of an atomic energy committee within ECE. Most governments appeared to think the proposal premature, although they agreed to submit their considered views to the Executive Secretary in the light of whatever discussions took place in ECOSOC and the newly created International Atomic Energy Agency on the relation between atomic energy and economic development. The question of collaboration on the peaceful uses of atomic energy will then be put on the agenda of the next Commission session. Meanwhile, ECE

will give more thought generally to Europe's energy problems.

Finally, a new development should be mentioned as regards east-west trade, which is after all the common economic denominator of all-European cooperation and the economic basis upon which increasing contacts between east and west must rest. ECE still sponsors regular trade consultations though recent ones have inevitably been less spectacular and more routine than those of 1953. They are still, nevertheless, a useful technique for examining trading problems at an expert level in an atmosphere conducive to settlement. At the consultations held in 1954, for instance, the first steps were taken to regularize trade relations between Yugoslavia and the communist bloc. A little later the Trade Committee was revived and has since been energetically studying the more technical problems of east-west trade. The most important of these arise out of the crude bilateral character of much of this trade. A larger volume and variety of goods could be exchanged if balances arising out of bilateral trading accounts were more freely transferable. The Trade Committee accordingly set experts to work to prepare an international agreement for a voluntary system of compensating these balances. This, in itself, was an advance on previous discussions, for hitherto the Soviet Union had been unwilling to consider multilateral arrangements of greater complexity than tripartite agreements. The experts reported in April of this year. The essence of their scheme is that central banks would report every quarter to an agent the claims and/or liabilities arising in their bilateral trading accounts. It would then be the business of the agent to try to achieve the maximum possible amount of multilateral settlement in east-west trade

through proposals for compensation submitted to the central banks. The scheme would be entirely voluntary and non-automatic. In outline it is similar, in fact, to the system operating in western Europe from 1947 to 1949 before the European Payments Union (EPU) was created. More than twenty European countries favor the scheme in principle and are to meet in January 1957 to take the final steps for putting it into practice. The Federal Republic of Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands are reported to oppose the plan (although it is not known for what reason), while Britain publicly announced her opposition at the last Commission session even before the experts had put the finishing touches to their recommendations. Britain evidently feels that because the scheme is voluntary it is likely to have very little effect on the volume and pattern of east-west trade. What the British have suggested instead is that those countries participating in EPU should allow balances in their currencies held by their trading partners in eastern Europe to be transferred to other west European countries. Britain has, in effect, been operating such a scheme through the inclusion of certain eastern countries, notably Czechoslovakia, Poland and the Soviet Union in the transferable sterling account system. The British proposal was to be further considered at the meeting held in January 1957. Meanwhile, most western countries have decided that their interests will be better served by the experts' scheme. It is impossible to predict what effect its operation will have upon the total volume of east-west trade, as one cannot predict the number of voluntary compensation transactions that would take place. But at least it should allow this trade more readily to reflect the new international division of labor that is emerging in Europe

with the industrialization of eastern Europe.

Whatever else stands out from the present character of east-west collaboration in ECE, it is obvious that the eastern members have a great avidity for technical "know-how". They are really keen to know what is going on in western industry and for this purpose find the study tours especially valuable. This interest appears to constitute their biggest stake in ECE, although its importance can easily be exaggerated. The eastern countries certainly emphasize this sort of collaboration more than the west and no doubt get more out of it, although they have on occasion revealed technical information to visiting experts, for instance about particular aspects of steel production, which western countries keep from one another. For their part, the western countries probably regard the partial satisfaction of the east's avidity for technical "know-how" as a price that must be paid for collaboration on wider economic issues, including the exchange of economic and statistical data.

It is perhaps worth noting that these visits and contacts had been developing in ECE some time before this question was considered by the "big four" summit conference in July 1955 and by the "big four" foreign ministers conference the following October and November. At the former conference, Mr. Eden specifically referred to the technical exchanges being furthered under the auspices of international bodies like ECE. Yet the foreign ministers reached no agreement on the question. That ECE should be practicing what the "big four" governments preached but could not agree about is a curious paradox. There continues, indeed, to be something of a struggle to prevent ECE's becoming almost a purely technical organization.

Although the supply of economic and statistical information from the east has been steadily increasing, it is still inadequate for the purposes of ECE. The most complete coverage at present is in the field of housing. Neither Mr. Myrdal nor the west is satisfied with the amount forthcoming in other fields. The east frequently tends, moreover, to give information during instead of before a meeting. Part of the explanation for this delay is that giving information often seems to require high level ministerial clearance. The eastern administrative machinery has been especially slow in adapting itself to the need to supply quarterly as well as annual statistics. But in other respects the eastern countries have adapted themselves well to the working habits of the Technical Committees. Their delegations have acquired greater flexibility from the inclusion of high ranking representatives. They have fitted well into the practice of using government experts themselves to do as much as possible of the actual work of the committees. Again, virtually all of the eastern countries now have permanent delegations in Geneva, some of them quite large. This makes for much easier contact between the Secretariat and governments, as well as between the governments themselves.

It is also clear from recent developments that the initiative in ECE rests very much with the Soviet Union. The west appears to be so chary of Soviet moves as to have lost the capacity for taking the initiative. If leadership means something more than a conciliatory attitude and a respect for legalities, the west has shown precious little of it recently in an international conference like ECE. Throughout the last Commission session, for example, western diplomacy was somewhat negative. The most construc-

tive statement made by a western representative on the problems of east-west cooperation was composed by the chief Belgian delegate without reference to his government, which is still too preoccupied with the problems of western union to bother about all-European cooperation.

A further interesting feature of Soviet diplomacy in ECE is that even before the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party excoriated the sin of national communism, the countries of eastern Europe had shown in the practical work of the Committees a growing spirit and desire for independent action.

ECE is still the place where representatives of the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic can meet without political embarrassment, to discuss technical and economic problems of mutual concern in such fields as transport and trade.

The need to have some kind of formal relations with Germany has always been a highly controversial issue in ECE. For a time both east and west were content to acquiesce in arrangements whereby the two political halves of Germany could be associated with the work of the Technical Committees through the inclusion of German representatives in the delegations of the occupying powers. But at the tenth session of the Commission in March 1955 the Soviet Union submitted a resolution inviting representatives of the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic to take part in the proceedings. Most western delegations opposed the suggestion on the ground that as Germany was still occupied territory, it was inappropriate to take a decision for which no juridical basis existed. Consequently, when the western powers subsequently recognized the Federal Republic as a fully sovereign state, they had by their own logic to support its admis-

sion to full membership in ECE. This was granted by ECOSOC in December 1955. But the German Democratic Republic still remains outside. The east tried to persuade the last Commission session to recommend that ECOSOC admit the German Democratic Republic to full membership in ECE, or at least allow it to take part in the proceedings in a consultative capacity; but the west was firmly opposed to either course. In its view eastern Germany remained an occupied zone and it was not prepared to do anything which might be interpreted as a *de facto* recognition of this regime. The east will no doubt go through this ritual again in the future, but for the moment it does not seem concerned to press the issue vigorously. Indeed, recent sessions of the Commission leave the impression that neither side wishes to disrupt its present stability. Nothing is now said by the east about, for instance, the Secretariat's collaboration with the secretariats of organizations like OEEC or ECSC. Even so, most observers would agree that the political temper of east-west relations still sets definite limits on the scope of the problems governments are prepared to see taken up by ECE.

Those limits have been narrowly circumscribed by the political and security objectives of the big powers in Europe. The Soviet Union, however, appears to think the time is ripe for seeing whether the frontiers of all-European economic cooperation could not be pushed out to the point where they would begin to modify long-standing political and security positions. At the eleventh session of the Commission last year it introduced a resolution calling for the drafting within ECE of an all-European agreement on economic cooperation which should deal in particular with the following fields: trade and international payments;

transport and communications; credit and banking; insurance; shipping; cooperation in the joint use of natural resources; extensions of scientific and technical cooperation and exchange of experience in science, technique, production and the peaceful use of atomic energy; and consultations on the settlement of economic and trade questions requiring further decisions. What exactly the resolution means is not at all clear. Has the Soviet Union in mind a general declaration of intentions and policies or a set of contractual obligations to take or refrain from taking clearly defined actions? Is it seeking a general charter on all-European economic cooperation or a set of agreements on specific questions? To put the matter in practical terms, would the "joint use of natural resources", for instance, mean that Norway could raise the question of opening up the White Sea to Norwegian fishing? The Polish representative spoke of an all-European agreement on economic cooperation being able to liquidate certain effects of the cold war. Perhaps the Soviet Union hopes that ECE might formulate the economic basis of a European security system? That is, after all, what peaceful coexistence must mean in economic terms if it is to mean anything at all. The Commission has requested the Soviet Union to state more explicitly what it has in mind. Its proposals will then be submitted to the member governments for their views as to the questions ripe for discussion and the procedures required to achieve practical results. Even if groups of experts are set to work on specific questions, arriving at practical agreements will be at best a long and arduous business. For the moment it is instructive to reflect upon the irony of this Soviet move. One of the elements that went into the original conception of

an ECE and one of special interest to the west was the possible role it might play in settling the major political and security problems of the big powers in Europe. The wheel would appear to have come full circle, only now it is the Soviet Union which views ECE in this light while the western nations are skeptical and suspicious. Recent events in eastern Europe, however, could well change the whole picture of east-west collaboration in ECE.

How and to what extent Soviet military intervention in Hungary will affect all-European collaboration in ECE was far from clear at the end of 1956. Any intensification of the cold war would almost certainly stiffen the negative attitude of the west to the larger initiatives of the Soviet Union in ECE. On the other hand, recent happenings in Poland and Hungary have further loosened the Soviet Union's grip on eastern Europe and the western countries may think it to their advantage to seek every opportunity of strengthening their contacts and collaboration with that area. Moreover, because further explosions against Soviet intervention are very possible in eastern Europe—more particularly in eastern Germany—and might easily drag Europe into general war, the west may think it wise to negotiate with the Soviet Union some working settlement of the security problems of middle Europe. Finally, it is possible for developments that seriously affect international relations at one level to have little or no effect at the level on which collaboration takes place in ECE. Up until the end of 1956 at least, ECE committee meetings were still proceeding on a "business as usual" basis. Whether they can long continue to do so will be better answered after the annual Commission session in March 1957.

Winston Churchill

Delivered on 5 March 1946 at Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri

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A shadow has fallen upon the scenes so lately lightened by the Allied victory. Nobody knows what Soviet Russia and its Communist international organization intends to do in the immediate future, or what are the limits, if any, to their expansive and proselytizing tendencies. I have a strong admiration and regard for the valiant Russian people and for my wartime comrade, Marshall Stalin. There is deep sympathy and goodwill in Britain -- and I doubt not here also -- towards the peoples of all the Russians and a resolve to persevere through many differences and rebuffs in establishing lasting friendships. We understand the Russian need to be secure on her western frontiers by the removal of all possibility of German aggression. We welcome Russia to her rightful place among the leading nations of the world. We welcome her flag upon the seas. Above all, we welcome, or should welcome, constant, frequent, and growing contacts between the Russian people and our own peoples on both sides of the Atlantic. It is my duty however, for I am sure you would not wish me to not misstate the facts as I see them to you. It is my duty to place before you certain facts about the present position in Europe.

From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and, in some cases, increasing measure of control from Moscow. Athens alone -- Greece with its immortal glories -- is free to decide its future at an election under British, American, and French observation. The Russian-dominated Polish government has been encouraged to make enormous and wrongful inroads upon Germany, and mass expulsions of millions of Germans on a scale grievous and undreamed-of are now taking place. The Communist parties, which were very small in all these Eastern States of Europe, have been raised to preeminence and power far beyond their numbers and are seeking everywhere to obtain totalitarian control. Police governments are prevailing in nearly every case, and so far, except in Czechoslovakia, there is no true democracy.

Turkey and Persia are both profoundly alarmed and disturbed at the claims which are being made upon them and at the pressure being exerted by the Moscow government. An attempt is being made by the Russians in Berlin to build up a quasi-Communist party in their zone of occupied Germany by showing special favors to groups of left-wing German leaders. At the end of the fighting last June, the American and British armies withdrew westward, in accordance with an earlier agreement, to a depth at some points of 150 miles upon a front of nearly four hundred miles, in order to allow our Russian allies to occupy this vast expanse of territory which the Western democracies had conquered. If now the Soviet government tries, by separate action, to build up a pro-Communist Germany in their areas, this will cause new serious difficulties in the American and British zones, and will give the defeated Germans the power of putting themselves up to auction between the Soviets and the Western democracies. Whatever conclusions may be drawn from these facts -- and facts they are -- this is certainly not the liberated Europe we fought to build up. Nor is it one which contains the essentials of permanent peace.

The safety of the world, ladies and gentlemen, requires a new unity in Europe, from which no nation should be permanently outcast. It is from the quarrels of the strong parent races in Europe that the world wars we have witnessed, or which occurred in former times, have sprung. Twice in our own lifetime we have seen the United States, against their wishes and their traditions, against arguments, the force of which it is impossible not to comprehend. Twice we have seen them drawn by irresistible forces into these wars in time to secure the victory of the good cause, but only after frightful slaughter and devastation have occurred. Twice the United States has had to send several millions of its young

men across the Atlantic to find the war; but now war can find any nation, wherever it may dwell between dusk and dawn. Surely we should work with conscious purpose for a grand pacification of Europe, within the structure of the United Nations and in accordance with our Charter. That, I feel, opens a course of policy of very great importance.