

U DIVS

International Voluntary Service archive

1920s-1990s

Accession number: 2010/11

Historical Background:

The International Voluntary Service (IVS) is the UK branch of the Service Civil International (SCI). The SCI was created by Pierre Ceresole in 1921 and its first project involved volunteers from France and Germany repairing a war damaged French village.

The first SCI project in the UK was in 1931 and heralded the beginning of the IVS. The project was to build an outdoor swimming pool for the colliery town of Bryn Mawr in Wales. The work of the SCI continued even throughout the Second World War, in particular, working to make safe buildings damaged in air-raids. After Europe was liberated groups also helped refugees and to reconstruct the damaged societies. The work of the SCI and IVS now extends to approximately 800 international projects every year. Projects include work such as building playgrounds for children, improving facilities in isolated villages and helping to clear flood damage.

The original name of the IVS was IVS for Peace. However, the word Peace was later dropped, in the 1960s, as it was thought that this gave the impression it was an organisation that only allowed pacifists to join.

Custodial history:

The files in the archives were rescued from the Leicester office of IVS in 1991 in the two-day interval between the decision to close the Leicester office and its actual closure. Filing cabinets were hurriedly emptied into any boxes that could be found, transported to the garage of Norman Dobson former member of staff of IVS. Some months later (when some listing work had been carried out) the records were deposited at the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland on a temporary basis, pending the identification of a more suitable repository. The deposit included material which was held in the Commonwealth Collection at the University of Bradford for a time, but returned to Norman Dobson in 1990. All material was transferred to Hull University Archives, with the agreement of IVS, June 2010. There have been three further deposits of IVS material at the Hull History Centre, with the accession numbers 2012/05, 2012/25 and 2013/02.

Description:

This large collection consists of records relating to both International Voluntary Service (IVS), formerly the International Voluntary Service for Peace (IVSP), and The Service Civil International (SCI).

There are minutes for IVS Annual General Meetings 1947-1949 and 1955-1990, for the National Committee 1963 -1987, Executive Committee 1963 - 1989 and other committees and groups from the 1940s to 1990s.

There are copies of the constitution of the IVS from the years 1946, 1962, 1968, 1970 and 1973, annual reports from 1933 to 1996 (with some gaps); policy discussion papers mainly covering the period from the 1960s to the 1980s; and papers relating to finances and fundraising, 1959-1985

In terms of the activities of IVS, there are files relating to Peace Work during the 1930s and 1940s predominantly involving Germany and Greece, which cover logistical concerns and

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conditions in the countries. There are also records relating to work camps, work exchange schemes, long term and medium term volunteers in countries across the world, dating from the 1950s to the 1980s; and to Teenage Projects and other work in Leeds, London and Tyne and Wear in the 1980s. Records can also be found relating to local groups within the UK and in Ireland, mainly 1970s and 1980s. Long term overseas projects focus mainly on Africa and Asia.

The printed material found in the collection contains various journals, including Service, IVS News and IVS Bulletin, dating between 1934 and 1990, an almost complete run of Le Service Civil as well as several books on the SCI and Pierre Ceresole, a History of IVSP and other pamphlets from 1935-1950.

Other records relate to old members and their work with the IVS including items relating to the Bryn Mawr reunion in 1981. These items are mainly correspondence regarding the reunion. There are also some reports from the original work camp on conditions at Brynmawr.

There are some records relating to staff training and minutes of staff meetings 1972-1990.

The collection also contains photographs and press cuttings relating to work camps in the UK and abroad dating mainly from the 1930s to the 1960s

The material relating to the SCI includes some minutes and other papers of the International Committee and Secretariat dating between 1946 and 1985; records of SCI Europe from the 1940s to 1980s, and of SCI in Africa and Asia, 1940s-1980s

Extent: 25 linear metres

Related material:

Main SCI archives are in the Peace section of the Bibliotheque communal de la Ville de la Chaux-de-Fonds, Neuchatel, Switzerland CH

Access conditions:

U DIV (83 boxes, 25 linear metres) is currently un-catalogued. In some cases a draft or box list may exist which may allow us to provide access to the collection ahead of the material being catalogued. If you are interested in this collection please contact Simon Wilson, Archivist, at s.wilson@hull.ac.uk clearly outlining your interest and timescales.