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The Chairman of the International Christian Youth Exchange (ICYE), David Holm, to the Secretary of the Federation of Protestant Churches in Switzerland, Hans Ruh¹

Stockholm, 6 September 1966

As chairman of the International Committee of the International Christian Youth Exchange (ICYE),² I am writing you on behalf of our Interim Committee. We should like to ask the assistance of the Swiss Federation of Churches in seeking to solve a problem, which has arisen within the Swiss national committee of ICYE.

As the Swiss involvement in our program has increased during the past few years, there has developed a very natural need for three regional subcommittees to begin functioning, one for each of the three major language areas in your country. Their prime responsibility has been to introduce our program to the churches of their respective areas as well as to select students and host families on this regional basis. We have been very happy with the consequent increased Swiss participation.

However, there has arisen a rather serious difference of opinion within the national committee, composed of members from all these language areas. The main tension seems to be between a policy of partial or complete regional autonomy, which in turn has led to difficulties in connection with the orientation and evaluation programs of our students. This and other tensions have finally resulted in a declaration on the part of the German-speaking subcommittee stating that they in the future will be completely autonomous and suggesting that the national committee become merely a formal institution meeting annually for a very limited and insignificant amount of business.

Unfortunately, we cannot accept this decision, since ICYE's principle of operations has always been to work with only one national committee, which would then assume *full* responsibility for ICYE in that particular country. The Interim Committee is convinced that this principle is both sound and necessary. Any exception with regard to Switzerland could, furthermore, conceivably set a precedent for divisive actions even within other national committees.

Since earlier attempts by our international staff at mediating this problem have failed, we are now turning hopefully to the Federation of Churches requesting arbitration in this matter.³ The names and addresses of Swiss subcommittee members, who might be contacted are:

¹ Letter: CH-BAR#J.257#2001/124#893* (F.3.41). Written and signed by David Holm, dodis.ch/P58532, chairman of the International Christian Youth Exchange (ICYE).

² Cf. doc. 27, dodis.ch/54488 and doc. 28, dodis.ch/54489.

³ Cf. dodis.ch/54444.

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Mrs. Cécile Stickelberger
Rorschacherstrasse 272
9016 St. Gallen

The Rev. Alfred Gugolz
6605 Locarno-Monti

The Rev. Jean N. de Jonge
79, Ancienne-Route
1218 Grand Saconnex/Genève

Our international staff member in Europe, the Rev. Henk van Andel, is also located in Geneva, 150 rte de Ferney, room 226.

We earnestly hope that you will consider our request. I look forward to hearing from you.