

History of CIF and CIP

How it all begun:

We have to go almost 90 years back, that is to the 1930:ies to find the beginning of the story of CIF. At that time there were difficult times in Europe and especially in Germany. In Germany lived a young lawyer by name Heinz Bernard Ollendorff. He had a Jewish background but was raised Christian, he was a member of the Social Democratic Party and he was the legal advisor for some export/import firms owned partly by Jewish families - three bad things in Nazi-Germany. The Jewish owners of the firm were arrested by the Nazis and when Heinz as their lawyer proved that the charges were false he was also arrested. He spent 13 months in prison. Heinz had as many others heard rumours of Jews being taken to concentration camps where they were killed, what together with the fact that he had a Jewish heritage led to his decision to leave Germany. And so he and his wife Martha emigrated to USA when he was released from the prison in the summer 1938. Heinz Bernard Ollendorff became Henry B. Ollendorff.

Henry's degree as a lawyer in Germany was not valid in USA. He therefore become a student again, now at the New York School of Social Work where he got his Ph.D. Martha remembered him saying "My life was saved. I want to dedicate my life to assuring that something like the Holocaust never happens again. People, especially youth must learn early to respect religious, racial and other differences, understand each others and to live together". And that is in short what CIF-Exchange Programs still stands for.

Henry worked as the Director of Friendly Inn Settlement House in Cleveland, Ohio when he in the year 1954 was asked by the United States to teach a five -month seminar for German Youth Leaders. He had vowed never to visit Germany again but "after much thought and soul searching" as his wife Martha put it he returned to Germany for three months to conduct the seminar.

When he was there he found that there was a great interest by German Youth Leaders to see how youth groups in USA works. So he started to plan such an experience for German Youth Leaders. He got some fund from USA State Department and already next year, in 1955, he was able to invite a group of German Youth Leaders to USA for a four months program.

Cleveland International Program for Youth Leaders and Social Workers (CIP)

Next step was that Henry suggested to invite participants also from other countries not only from Germany and so the Cleveland International Program for Youth Leaders and Social Workers was born. The first international program took place in 1957 with participants from seven European countries - the idea was to invite participants from countries which had fought against each other during the Second World War. Participants from Finland were invited already from the beginning, that is from 1957 as one of those countries. The other countries were Germany, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, France and Italy.

Already next year also other countries were included and gradually the Program grew - participants from more and more countries were invited and affiliated programs in several cities like Chicago, Twins Cities and San Fransisco were established. In the beginning the

Program lasted for four months, later on an extended Program lasting for one year was established.

Henry was the leader of the program until his death in 1979. Henry's wife Martha became 101 years old and passed away only some years ago. Their son Frank Ollendorff and his wife Jane are still taking part in CIF International Conferences which are arranged biannually. Some years ago there were four generations Ollendorff participating in the Conference- Martha, Frank and Jane- their son and grandson!

Later on the name of the program was changed to Council of International Programs for Youth Leaders, Social Workers and Special Teachers as the professionals invited to the program was widened. Usually it is now called just the "CIP-program". There is still a program in USA but it has changed a lot as to the length, the content of the program and as to the professions represented.

The Goal of the Programs

Henry's idea was to invite not formal leaders nor politicians but those who work on a grassroot level with individuals and so he created the program with the goal to increase professional knowledge and to secure worldwide "person to person diplomacy" through educational and cultural exchange. At the end his idea was to promote peace and understanding on a global level.

There are some special features of the CIF-Exchange programs which were already defined by Henry

- * the participants comes from different countries, that is to form an international group for exchange of experiences also in between each others, not only to learn about the country in question

- * professional theoretical and practical experiences - that is lectures, study visits, discussions, field placement

- * cultural exchange -living in hostfamilies, sharing their daily life to get to know the way of life in the country

The main components in a CIF Exchange Program are:

Orientation which is aimed to provide a theoretical framework to understand social, economic and cultural trends in the hostcountry

Experience in a multicultural group

Agency placements

to observe and experience social work in the hostcountry

Host Family Living

to give the participants an cultural experience

Evaluation

where you have an opportunity to clarify new gained impressions, knowledge and experiences

Council of International Fellowship (CIF)

In the 1950:s and 60:s it was very special to travel abroad and still more special to travel to USA and very, very special for youth leaders and social workers, which were not considered to have an academic degree, to get a scholarship for studies abroad. Former German participants therefore started to meet after returning back home to share their experiences and memories. After a couple of years they decided to invite participants from other countries to their get-togethers. And so an Alumni Association was founded in 1960 in Hamburg. The Alumni Association was called Council of International Fellowship (CIF) with National Branches all over the world.

CIF Exchange Programs

In the 1970:s National Branches started to create "mini-CIF-programs". The aim and the structure of those Programs are copies of the original CIP-program only shorter and with less participants. There are now about 20 programs.

CIF Conferences

CIF arranges International Conferences every second year in cooperation with a National Branch hosting the conference to keep the spirits and goals of CIP/CIF alive. Besides the formal professional program it gives former participants a possibility to meet and make friends across the globe.

This summer the conference will be in San Maolo in France, July 1-6. Two years ago the Conference was in Kalamata in Greece. CIF in Finland hosted the Conference twice, in 1978 and in 2009.

CIF in Finland

The Finnish National Branch of CIF was founded in 1964. Over the years we have had different activities and projects going on.
Here some examples:

"Adoptid Children"

In the beginning of the 1970: ies Bangladesh was fighting for its freedom from Pakistan. There were many refugees coming to India. Henry Ollendorff visited Finland on his trip around the world to interview new participants on his way back from India to USA once in those years. He told us what he had heard when he met with Indian CIF-members. At his suggestion our Branch adopted two orphans from Bangladesh living in a SOS-Childrens village in India. The Director of the village was a former CIP-participant and happened to in the Program at the same time as I was. We supported the siblings for many years until they were ready to leave the Childrens village, the girl until she got married and her younger brother until he had finished his professional training. Our members raised money by arranging Indian dinners, selling theater performances etc.

Fund raising

At the end of 1970: ies CIF in Finland decided to start a CIF Finland Fund and succeeded to collect 3000 US dollars which was the basis for a Fund. Later on CIF in Sweden wanted to join us so it became a Finland-Sweden fund. The money raised was used to support CIF-members from countries which at that timne had currency restrictions especially those from Hungary and the Baltic States to participate in CIF Conferences.

Conferences 1978 and 2009

CIF in Finland hosted the CIF Conference for the first time in 1978. The Conference was held in Tuusula outside Helsinki. The Conference theme was "Having, loving, being". In 2009 we again hosted the Conference. It was held in Nurmijärvi and the theme was "Dialogue".

Exchange Program

In the year 1986 the International Exchange Program of CIF Finland was started. The igniting flash came during a get-together with of the Director of the Affiliated CIP-programs in USA -Joan Brady who visited Finland in 1985. She urged us to start an Exchange Program and also donated some money for that purpose. The Executive Committee of CIF in Finland had for some years discussed the possibility to start a Program but hesitated because of economical reasons. Encouraged by Jean the Executive Committee decided to start a CIF Exchange Program without knowing where to get the money. We thought that if we do not get any sponsors we as members of the Committee pay the costs out of our own pocket. We were fortunate enough to get enough sponsors and so we invited the first participants in 1986. Since then we have arranged the Program every year except in the year 2009 when we hosted the CIF Conference.

Baltic-Nordic conferences

At the end of 1990:ties CIF in Finland together with some former participants from the Baltic States, that is Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, started Baltic - Finnish weekend "mini-CIFconferences." CIF Sweden was invited to join us for the second meeting and later also some Scotch CIF-members joined us. The idea was that as former participants from the Baltic States for economical reasons had few possibilities to participate in the International Conferences the "mini-Conferences" were a kind of replacement and a way to keep the Baltic CIF-family together. The meetings gave us the opportunity to support the CIF participants from the Baltic States to start National Branches of their own. These "mini-conferences" were in the beginning arranged yearly but now we meet every second year, that is in the year between the International CIF-conference. The meetings circulate between the countries involved. Finland and Sweden have hosted the conferences a couple of times but mostly they are circulating between the Baltic States.

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