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Van: KARA

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U gelieve hierbij aan te treffen 1 exemplaar van het
maandelijks overzicht van Sardine's dienst over
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THE BRITISH COMMUNIST PARTY

November 1950

1. GENERAL

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Commis from hand* → Communist Party policy has not undergone any significant change during the month. The Party's short-term attitude to all political and economic problems remains based upon their Peace programme. Discussions have taken place during the month on the terms of a new Party Programme to be based on the decisions reached at the Extended Executive Committee Meeting held in London on 14-15 October 1950. A draft of this programme has been issued to District Committees for study and comment. In this draft programme the Fight for Peace is again stressed as the most important issue. "Working class unity", "socialist nationalisation" - i.e. nationalisation without compensation - and the "socialist democratisation" of the Commonwealth are the other main planks in the platform.

In recent weeks the Party has been giving consideration to the number of Parliamentary candidates who should stand at the next General Election. District Committees have been asked to give their recommendations for approval by the Executive Committee at Party Headquarters. It was publicly announced that Harry POLLITT would not stand again for Rhondda or for any other constituency for reasons of health. This is probably the true reason, for his bad health is a source of anxiety to the Party. Other Communist leaders have also, for various personal reasons, decided not to stand for Parliament.

2. THE PEACE CAMPAIGN

The Communist Party, although giving the Peace Campaign its full support, has made a point of keeping as far as possible in the background. In connection with the preparations for the Second World Peace Congress it issued strict instructions that headquarters officials were not to contact the offices of the Organising Committee of the World Peace Congress directly, even by telephone. However, behind the scenes, the Party played a very active and indeed decisive part. In addition to individual Party members who worked in the Organising Committee's offices in London and Sheffield, a considerable number of Party officials both from headquarters and from the London District office were in Sheffield during the week preceding the expected opening of the Congress. The South Yorkshire District officials played a large part in the preparations, and the organisation of the stewards was in the hands of Bert RAMELSON, the Leeds Party secretary, who was also appointed Security Officer for the Congress.

As the time for the opening of the Congress grew near, the Party took a more and more active part in its organisation and preparation, on the lines of those adopted for Party Congresses. Arrangements were made for several headquarters officials to act as couriers between Prague and Sheffield throughout the duration of the Congress.

3. THE ORGANISING COMMITTEE OF THE WORLD PEACE CONGRESS

The preparations in this country for the Second World Peace Congress were in the hands of this Committee, which had an office in London and another in Sheffield. Both offices were staffed and run almost entirely by Party members. Ivor MONTAGU acted as the link between the British Committee, the World Peace Committee in Paris and the Preparatory Commission in Prague.

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During the weeks preceding the expected opening of the Congress in Sheffield the British Committee was seriously embarrassed by shortage of funds. The financing of the Congress was to have been covered by two methods, namely, by the contributions of individual delegates, which had been fixed at £14 per head, and by grants from the World Peace Committee in Paris. Since the contribution from the delegates would not be forthcoming until the Congress had begun and as the preliminary expenses involved were considerable, the Organising Committee was dependent upon advances from Paris. These were so slow in coming that the Committee was seriously worried. In the event a considerable sum in pounds and dollars was legally transferred through the Anglo-French Clearing Account, the money being banked with the C.W.S. Bank, Ltd., Leman Street, London, E.C. It is likely that whatever financial obligations may have been incurred in this country by the shifting of the Congress from Sheffield to Warsaw will be met by the transfer of funds by the World Peace Committee from Paris to London.

4. SECOND WORLD PEACE CONGRESS, SHEFFIELD AND WARSAW

It will be remembered that the Russian propagandist Ilya EHRENBURG visited the U.K. between 24 July and 1 August, 1950, as the Soviet delegate to a conference called by the British Peace Committee. During his visit he attended several private as well as public meetings and sharply criticised the conduct of the British peace campaign. The British Peace Committee was instructed that it must gain as broadly based support as possible and that the next World Peace Congress should be held in the United Kingdom on the grounds that there was small purpose in holding it in Warsaw where the population was already "converted". London was first chosen as the site but, owing to the difficulty of finding a suitable hall, Sheffield was later substituted by the British Peace Committee. The date of the Congress was fixed for 13-19 November and between 2,000 and 3,000 delegates from all over the world were expected. The Home Secretary informed the House of Commons on 19 October that the Government's policy regarding the admission of foreigners to the Congress would be to consider applications for entry on their individual merits, reserving the right to exclude any who might be persona non grata. Later the Organising Committee of the World Peace Congress was invited to produce the names of foreign delegates proposing to attend. By 10 November 561 visa applications had been received, of which 215 were refused. There were amongst these 333 applications for visas from Soviet and other satellite countries, excluding China and Mongolia; of these 160 were refused.

Most of the intending delegates began to arrive in the U.K. on the night of 10/11 November. Only 82 holders of visas presented themselves at ports and 75 were permitted to land. Then, in the evening of 11 November, the Organising Committee announced that in view of the restrictive policy of the Government the Congress would be transferred from Sheffield to Warsaw where it would open on 16 November. Delegates would be transported, if necessary at the cost of the Polish Government, to the new site, where free speech would be welcomed, not suppressed.

There is evidence that the holding of the Congress in Warsaw had been under consideration for some time. The final decision was taken by the Bureau of the World Peace Congress in Prague after it had been given a report on the evening of 10 November by Ivor MONTAGU.

A private meeting was held in the City Hall, Sheffield, on 13 November which discussed ways and means of going to Warsaw. This was followed by a public meeting where speakers protested at the Government's action. J.G. CROWTHER, the chairman of the British Peace Committee, was cheered when he declared: "We go forward to Warsaw and Peace, and intend to tell the world how the British warmongers have been unmasked."

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The movement of delegates to Poland went on through the week, a number of special aircraft having been chartered by the Organising Committee with help from the Czechoslovakian and Polish Governments. By 17 November about 2000 representatives of National Peace Committees were assembled in the Polish capital.

The Congress was opened with much pomp and ceremony by Professor JOLIOT CURIE, the president of the World Peace Congress, who had been turned back when he had tried to land in the U.K. Next came the Soviet representative FADEYEV, who uttered a bitter indictment of the Western Powers and declared: "A new war is knocking at the door, but it is not too late to save the peace." Amid the usual succession of speakers Dr. WOODARD of the British delegation was reported to have been received with enthusiasm. He asked his audience: "Where is the Iron Curtain? It is in Britain. The Americans are responsible but we are to blame for having sold our souls to them. Please forgive our trespasses. It appals me to think how misled we in Britain have been. We should do everything we can to make amends. Please pray for us." Another British delegate, Mrs. S.O. DAVIES, wife of the Member of Parliament for Merthyr Tydfil, on her way from a visit to Moscow as a member of a British Soviet Friendship delegation, declared that the peace movement would grow "in spite of the war propaganda and hysterical misrepresentations of the socialist democracies".

Discord was caused by John ROGGE, the American member of the Bureau of the World Peace Committee, who denied that all blame for world unrest should be laid on the U.S.A. ROGGE's speech, which lasted for an hour, was frequently booed and hissed. The former French Minister for Air, Pierre COT, proposed the neutrality of Western Europe. COT was followed by EHRENBURG who attacked the theory that war in East and West was inevitable. "War", declared EHRENBURG, "is not a midwife to history. War is a maker of little angels; it destroys the flower of mankind. War propaganda of all kinds should be forbidden." The speech of the chief Chinese delegate, KUO MO JO, was largely composed of praise of the Soviet Union for its attitude towards the Chinese republic. KUO demanded the end of the "war of aggression in Korea, begun by the U.S.A."; the end of intervention against Formosa; the abolition of the use of the atom bomb, and an immediate reduction of armaments.

The closing sessions, several of which were prolonged into the night, dealt with various resolutions for presentation to governments. It has been reported that a "World Council of Peace" was established, with JOLIOT CURIE as president, assisted by a bureau composed of 28 members. The "Daily Worker" of 25 November stated that the British Peace Committee intends to hold a series of report-back meetings to publicise the deliberations of the Congress.

5. THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE DOCKS

The Communist Party is not yet achieving its aim of establishing control over dockers throughout the country. It had been hoped to control the Merseyside Portworkers' Committee and to set up a National Portworkers' Committee to represent all dockers, under the leadership of the Party. However, no support is forthcoming from many of the Ports, and the Merseyside Committee, which, led by Joe HARRISON and Daniel BRANDON, extends its influence to Manchester and Hull, refuses to have dealings with Communists or their policy. This Committee is unwilling to allow the initiative to rest with the London Committee, the Communist domination of which it regards with disfavour.

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An important point of disagreement with Communist Party policy is over the method of implementing the "Dockers Charter", which the Merseyside Committee wishes to do by means of a breakaway from the T. & G.W.U. and the formation of a purely dockers' Union. To this end CONSTABLE, who is a member of the London Committee but aligns himself with the aims of the Merseyside Committee, intends to attempt the formation of a Central Committee, with representatives from the North of England ports.

The position therefore is one of a certain rivalry between, on the one side, CONSTABLE and the Merseyside Committee, and, on the other, the London Committee with the Communist Party behind it. At present the initiative lies with the former group, which, though ready to co-operate on matters where the two policies coincide, is in no way prepared to surrender its independence. Much may depend on TIMOTHY of the London Committee, whose exact position still seems uncertain: he is an associate but not known to be a member of the Communist Party. There is no evidence to show that there is any Communist control behind the Merseyside Committee.

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