

RAPPORT:

Van: KA-R.A.

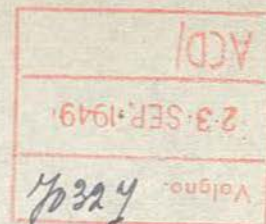
Aan: Hoofd B via H.B.V.D. en KB.

No. E.248.

ONDERWERP: Engelse overzichten.

1. Wij ontvingen van Sardine bijgaande overzichten:
- Communist activities in connection with strikes by Canadian Seamen in British Ports
  - The British Communist Party - July 1949.
2. De inhoud van bijgaande overzichten is gedeeltelijk samengesteld aan de hand van geheime inlichtingen. De inhoud is derhalve alleen voor eigen gebruik.

21-9-49. *Wf*



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COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES IN CONNECTION WITH  
STRIKES BY CANADIAN SEAMEN IN BRITISH PORTS

1. A strike started on 1st April, 1949, at Avonmouth, Bristol, on a Canadian vessel, the s.s. Gulfside. This is reliably reported to have been consequent on instructions received on board the ship by Steve TOKARUK, the delegate of the Canadian Seamen's Union (C.S.U), from Jack POPE (see Appendix A), the representative in the United Kingdom of the C.S.U. Subsequently, Canadian ships in other ports in the U.K., notably London, became affected, dockers and stevedores refused to work Canadian vessels and declared sympathetic strikes.
2. It is possible that the ground may have been prepared by Harry DAVIS, the President of the C.S.U., a Canadian citizen, and well-known as a Communist sympathiser, when he visited this country from 14th February to 1st March, 1949. DAVIS is reported to have instructed POPE, in August 1948, when POPE was a member of the crew of the m.v. Beaverbrae, to set up an office as representative of the C.S.U. in the U.K. Since that time POPE has been active. He has visited nearly every Canadian ship touching at ports in the U.K. and has succeeded, on several occasions, in fomenting trouble on board. At the same time, the Montreal headquarters of the C.S.U. is reported to have been in constant communication with POPE's office at 29 Pier Road, North Woolwich, London, E. 16.
3. On 4th April a Strike Committee (see Appendix B) was formed, composed of Canadian seamen from the m.v. Beaverbrae, named ARLAND, CARTER, DOUCETTE, MALONE, McNEIL, NICHOLS and WILSON. DOUCETTE seems to have acted as leader of the committee, supported and abetted by POPE. CARTER is believed to have discussed policy on the strike with Philip PIRATIN, the Communist Member of Parliament, on 12th April. WILSON and McNEIL are said to have gone to Avonmouth on 5th April to see Steve TOKARUK, stating that they had been sent as official delegates to cover the C.S.U. strike. Another Canadian, Frank J. RILEY, is reported to have been active in persuading Leith dockers to support the strike in that city; RILEY named as his address the home of a prominent Edinburgh Communist.
4. There is ample evidence that the British Communist Party, in furtherance of its advertised policy of defending the living standards of the workers, is giving support to the strike of the Canadian Seamen's Union. Members of the C.S.U. have visited Party headquarters. Arrangements have been made, particularly in the Stepney area, for the regular collection of food and money for the strikers. E. DICKENS, a member of the Communist Party and of the Transport and General Workers' Union, has arranged accommodation for strikers from the m.v. Beaverbrae. Jack GASTER, the Party's municipal election agent in Stepney, has been given the task of advising on the legal problems of the strikers. Early in April, the Party endeavoured to exert its influence on the strikers' behalf through the Stepney Trades Council. More recently, the Party has been more direct in its methods. Harry WATSON, the Party official in charge of work among dockers, tried through the Welsh District of the Communist Party, early in May, to persuade those dockers who had voted for the resumption of work at Newport on a Canadian ship declared "black", to reverse their decision, and offered to send a man from London to assist the local Party. A bulletin issued by the Strike Committee of the C.S.U. contained a

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statement by Richard BARRETT, a member of the Communist Party who is General Secretary of the National Amalgamated Stevedores and Dockers Union, that his men would never agree to blackleg on striking workers. In Birkenhead, a member of the Communist Party stated openly that the Party was supporting the strike. Communist Party activity in support of the strikers has also been reported from Avonmouth, Southampton and Hull.

5. Harry DAVIS has, since his arrival in England on 12th May, 1949, been in touch with Communist Party headquarters and with individual members of the Communist Party. On 15th May, a meeting was called at the Canning Town Hall, at which the speakers included Harry DAVIS, Richard BARRETT, E. DICKENS of the Transport and General Workers' Union, and W. ARLAND of the Canadian Seamen's Strike Committee. At Avonmouth, where he spoke on 13th and 19th May, Harry DAVIS was supported by local members of the Party. DAVIS was at pains to assert in public that, while Canadian seamen were grateful for the support afforded them, it was not his task to interfere in the affairs of British unions, or to call for strike action by British dockers. Nevertheless, it has been reported that his presence at Avonmouth influenced the dockers to vote against a return to work on 19th May. BARRETT was more outspoken. He warned British dockers to watch how the Dock Labour scheme would be used to break the strike by the withholding of work from those who refused to touch Canadian ships; and he urged the "Daily Worker" to gain the support of London dockers for their colleagues in Avonmouth, who had been "victimised" in this way.

6. There is evidence that during June Party attempts to aggravate the dispute continued. Communist agitators from Liverpool have been active in Bristol and Southampton. The decision of the Liverpool and Avonmouth dockers to return to work appears to have taken the Communist Party by surprise; nevertheless the Party has not neglected the opportunity for further agitation presented by two Canadian ships lying idle at the London docks. Its policy has been to persuade dockers detailed for work on these ships to refuse and, in the event of their being "victimised", to bring other dockers out in sympathy.

7. The measure of co-operation between the British Communist Party and the Canadian strikers is apparent from a report that Bill ARLAND, of the Central Strike Committee previously mentioned, has been in communication with the Scottish, Welsh and Yorkshire Districts of the Communist Party. He is said to have asked for support for the Seamen's Defence Committees which have been formed in various industrial centres, and to have requested that local representatives should be added to the committees.

8. Apart from the constant liaison kept between the C.S.U. offices in London and in Montreal, it is believed that DAVIS met French Communists when he visited Paris in February 1949. DAVIS also visited Paris from 25th May to 27th May, 1949, returning to Montreal by air on 28th May.

9. The C.S.U. and representatives of the strikers have made considerable use of pamphlets, some purporting to depict the brutal methods of "Government strike-breakers" in Canada and others containing exhortations to dockers and stevedores to maintain their support of the strike. Communist Party members are reported to have distributed these leaflets. On one occasion,

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men posing as seamen, who handed out leaflets alongside the s.s. Gulfside at Avonmouth, were not recognised by the captain's wife as members of the crew. On many of the pamphlets distributed the following statement appeared:- "Issued by the Central Strike Committee, Canadian Seamen's Union, 29 Pier Road, N. Woolwich, Albert Dock 3125".

10. It has been reported that, when the s.s. Primrose Hill unloaded bales of wool in Antwerp on 17th May, 1949, some of the bales were found to contain leaflets signed by the "Canadian Seamen's Defence Committee". Subsequent investigations indicate that the pamphlets were inserted in London, in an attempt to disaffect dockers in other ports. The Primrose Hill is a vessel chartered by the British Indian line and is believed to be bound for Calcutta.

6th July, 1949

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APPENDIX A.

John Robert POPE

POPE was born in Montreal on 10th January, 1910. Recent information from a reliable source states that POPE's real name is Israel POPOVITCH, and that his father, Elias POPOVITCH, died probably early in May, 1949. His mother and sister are reported to live at 5647 Waverly Street, Montreal. POPE is believed to have had a High School education and, on leaving school, to have had various jobs as salesman, canvasser, acrobat and commercial traveller. He claims to have been physical training instructor to the City of Montreal for seven years.

He first came to the U.K. in 1939, and took up residence at 229 Woodland Road, Manchester. On 3rd March, 1940, he joined the Auxiliary Fire Service in Manchester, but was discharged in 1944 on grounds of insanity. Little is known of his subsequent career, but at some time he must have returned to Canada, since, on 22nd August, 1948, he arrived in London as a member of the crew of the m.v. Beaverbrae.

Having received orders from Harry DAVIS (see paragraph 2 of note) instructing him to represent the C.S.U. in the U.K., he was paid off and established an office at 29 Pier Road, North Woolwich, London, E. 16. This is a barber's shop where correspondence and telephone messages have been received for POPE, who either collects them on his visits to London - usually two nights each fortnight - or has them sent on to him at various addresses.

Although Jack POPE is not known to be a member of the British Communist Party, he has been described as an "ardent Communist" and is known to have good contacts with the Party.

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Addendum

Harry DAVIS

DAVIS was born in Ontario on 12th September, 1917, and is the brother of Jack POPE, their father being Elias POPOVITCH. Some time at the beginning of 1948 DAVIS took over the presidency of the C.S.U. from J.A. SULLIVAN.

DAVIS has made no secret of his Communist views.

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APPENDIX B.

Canadian Strike Committee

The Strike Committee referred to above (paragraph 3) was formed on 4th April, 1949, and is as follows:-

1. William ARLAND: Born 15.9.09. Address, 512 Church Street, Toronto. An assistant steward.
2. Ralph Henry CARTER: Born 11.12.17. Address, 925 Cathedral Street, Montreal. A fireman.
3. Gerald Frederick DOUCETTE: Born 22.3.15. Address, Port Wallis, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. Quartermaster.
4. Gerald Joseph MALONE: Born 25.7.21. Address, 3. Baxter Road, Custom House, E. A pantryman.
5. Joseph Clarence McNEIL: Born 31.1.14. Address, 4707 Union Street, Vancouver. Assistant steward.
6. William NICHOLS: Born 10.8.10. Address, 1186 St. Urbain Street, Montreal. A plate sculleryman.
7. Norman Anthony WILSON: Born 9.4.22. Address, 1432 Chomedy Avenue, Montreal. An oiler.

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