

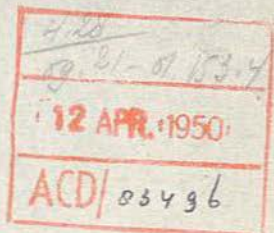
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RAPPORT

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THE BRITISH COMMUNIST PARTY

February 1950

1. THE GENERAL ELECTION

The full reaction of Party headquarters to the rout of Communists and fellow-travellers at the polls is not yet known. On 25 February POLLITT, in accordance with the policy formulated at Congress which rejected the Parliamentary road to power, reminded readers of the Daily Worker that "the great issues will be settled, not in the arena of this reactionary Parliament, but by the workers' mass struggle in the factories and in the streets." The fight for the policy to avert slump and war - now more imminent owing to the advance of Toryism - would be carried on in working-class organisations. A Communist candidate in the London area has suggested that Party members keep up continual canvassing by visiting people with whom they made contact during the campaign. At headquarters a leading official of the Party commented that the election campaign had been "a good one". Candidates had been received with attention, and the readiness of audiences to listen had been most noticeable. Although attendance at some meetings had been poor, it was at the factory gates and in the streets that the Party had accomplished best results. New applications to join the Party have been made, but the total is not known.

The election fight between Labour and Tory was described in a Daily Worker foreign despatch as "political shadow boxing", because of the "unity" of both Parties on the basic questions of frozen wages, high taxation and foreign policy. It was only in the constituencies contested by Communists that there was a "breath of reality".

The total number of votes recorded by the Party's 100 candidates was approximately 91,800, POLLITT, GALLACHER, and PIRATIN being the only Communists to save their deposits. The Party therefore lost, in deposits alone, a sum of £14,550. In 1945 the Party had polled, with 21 candidates, a total of 102,780. The five Labour Independent candidates, of whom the Party openly supported four, polled 26,888. The fifth, K. ZILLIACUS, was in disfavour with the Party for his declarations of faith in TITO, but officials were unable to decide whether Communists should be advised to vote for him or for his Labour opponent. The Party is as disappointed with the failure of the Labour Independents as with the defeat of its own former Members of Parliament and POLLITT.

Results by area were as follows:-

LONDON BOROUGHS

19 candidates polled approximately 20,100 votes, DUTT polling 601 and PIRATIN 5,991.

ENGLISH BOROUGHS

48 candidates polled approximately 29,700 votes, the two highest being JONES at Hornsey (1191) and ROWLANDSON at Wigan (1243). Mrs. POLLITT polled 918.

ENGLISH COUNTIES

13 candidates polled approximately 5,300 votes, the lowest being Mrs. LEIGH at Wycombe (199).

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WELSH BOROUGHES

2 candidates polled 5,845 votes, POLLITT polling 4,463.

WELSH COUNTIES AND MONMOUTH

2 candidates polled approximately 3,300 votes.

SCOTTISH BOROUGHES

11 candidates polled approximately 14,500 votes, McILHONE polling 1,088, LAUHLAN 1,547, KERRIGAN 2,426, and J.R. CAMPBELL 1,228.

SCOTTISH COUNTIES

5 candidates polled approximately 13,000 votes, GALLACHER polling 9,301.

2. NATIONAL YOUTH PARLIAMENT.

On 4 and 5 February the second post-war National Youth Parliament was held at the Beaver Hall, Garlick Hill, E.C., under the auspices of the International Youth Council. 324 delegates, 26 observers and 20 visitors attended, of whom the majority were members either of the Communist Party or of the Young Communist League. Among student bodies represented were the Association of Kurdish Students, the Democratic Union of Cypriots, Fedind, the South African Students Association, the West Indian Students Union, the Association of Ceylon Students, the West African Students Association, Hashomer Hatzair, the African League, Spanish Republican Youth, and the African Students Union. The National Union of Students declined an invitation to send delegates on the grounds that the Parliament was not sufficiently representative.

The Conference was officially intended to provide a forum for different sections of youth to express their needs and problems, and the announcement of the date of the General Election was felt to give an added significance to it. The Communist Party, urging its members and members of the Young Communist League to give the Parliament every support, considered that the Conference could play an important part in focussing attention on the problems of youth in the General Election period and would carry forward the spirit of the Budapest Youth Festival of 1949. Unofficially, the I.Y.C. considered that the Parliament could provide considerable opportunity for publicity and propaganda. The Parliament was supported by the Student Labour Federation which pledged itself to secure 10,000 signatures to a pamphlet, circulated by the I.Y.C. before the Conference, which urged the abolition of the atom bomb.

The National Youth Parliament held four sessions dealing respectively with "Peace and Democracy", "Needs of Youth at work and play", "Youth and the Empire", and "Adoption of a Youth Charter". Resolutions on these subjects followed the usual pattern of Communist propaganda, urging the end of sectional war blocs, withdrawal of British troops from the colonies, reduction of the period of conscription, destruction of existing stocks of the atom bomb, the end of the military occupation of England by American forces, the outlawing of Fascism and anti-Semitism and a change in the existing racial policy of the Union of South Africa. The Parliament also called for closer co-operation between Great Britain and Russia, in particular between the youth of both countries. The third session included statements by representatives of the main political parties on their respective policies for youth; George MATTHEWS represented the Communist Party and gave a summary of the Party's Election programme.

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The "Charter of Youth Rights" which incorporated demands for peace, employment, homes and equal educational opportunities for all, is to be supported by a National Campaign Committee and printed for distribution to all youth organisations, schools and colleges.

At the conclusion of the Parliament on 5 February a further meeting was held which included officials of the anti-Fascist Committee of Soviet Youth, the American Association of Medical Students, the World Federation of Democratic Youth, and the International Union of Students. The main theme of the meeting was that youth should unite on the basis of the Charter of Youth Rights.

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