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3 Dec  
XI - 1020

MIDEAST

RUMANIA

PROPAGANDA

COMMUNIST-SPONSORED ORGANIZATIONS

YOUTH

RESISTANCE

POST  
Censorship

UNIVERSITIES  
Students

GENERAL MOOD

COMMUNIST PARTY  
Foreign Relations

BUCHAREST Youth Festival A "Propaganda Boomerang"

SOURCE ATHENS: Greek-Rumanian exile in BEIRUT.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Current.

EVALUATION COMMENT: This is a very interesting and lively summary of testimonies, showing how the Communist-staged Youth Festival backfired in the West as well as in the Near East, two targets of first priority for World Communism. This vivid collection of facts, articles and statements made by private persons -- which is incomparably more eloquent than the claims of Communist functionaries and of the few Soviet-paid journalists and crypto-Communists throughout the world -- illustrates not only the confused attitude of the Communist organizers who had to acknowledge the poor results of the big show, but also provides very valuable details on insidious means by which the temporarily "mannered" Rumanian security police managed to keep under control every genuine reaction of the masses. The methods of the Rumanian censorship for instance, were known here, from previous reports. It should also be mentioned in connection with the reportedly planned demonstration of students around 12 August 1953, that the

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Rumanian radio had announced on 11 August 1953 that all tickets distributed for the "Friendship Carnival" in the Stalin Park that same night were cancelled. At that time, we pointed out to our readers that there was much speculation about this last minute security measure. Details on the arrest of the students under reference are not known here, but numerous previous reports mentioned mass arrests before and after the Festival. See for reference Item Nos. 11028, 9851, 10107 and 9828/53.

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Communist propaganda in the Middle East has suffered a damaging blow as a result of the much-ballyhooed International Youth Festival held in BUCHAREST in August, which gave hundreds of delegates from the Arab States an opportunity to see for themselves the conditions in Rumania.

That is the opinion expressed by a high Lebanese security official to a reliable and well-informed Greek-Rumanian source in BEIRUT.

The official disclosed that the great majority of the members of the Lebanese delegation to the Festival have been transformed into ardent volunteer anti-Communist propagandists as a result of what they saw and heard during their stay in Rumania. More than 300 delegates from Lebanon made the pilgrimage to BUCHAREST; most of them, according to our source, were either "open-minded" or sympathetic to Communism before visiting Rumania. Except for the hard-core Communists in the group, the delegates are now disenchanted almost to a man.

Visa Restrictions Reportedly Not To The Advantage Of The Free World.

In the beginning the Lebanese Government had been reluctant to issue passports for delegates to the Youth Festival, and it was only after public demonstrations and a press campaign by Communist-sympathizing newspapers that the authorities finally granted the 300-odd passports. In view of the aftermath, the high security official told our source that he is now convinced that the government made a serious mistake. "We should have been able to foresee the result of letting them see Communism with their own eyes," the official said, "and we should have issued passports for Rumania in profusion -- the more the better."

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The official said that none of the high cadres of the Lebanese Communist Party applied for permission to go to the Festival, apparently for fear of arousing the suspicion of the authorities. However, the delegation was heavily colonized with "little Communists" and crypto-Communists, in addition to deluded "progressives." The official said that as a result of his investigations he is convinced that the faith of even many of the "little Communists" has been shaken by their experiences in Rumania; most of them, however, are not expressing their disillusionment openly because they draw material advantages from party membership.

Reaction of Socialists and Deluded "Progressives."

As for the deluded "progressives," our source cited the following instance. The newspaper of the "Progressive Socialist" Party of Lebanon sent a special correspondent to BUCHAREST with the Festival delegation. On his return to BEIRUT the journalist published an article in the newspaper which condemned the Rumanian Communist regime and described the poor living conditions of the Rumanian workers and the country's critical economic conditions. The article caused a sensation among the Lebanese working class, from which the "Progressive Socialist" Party draws its rank and file; the newspaper published additional editions and copies sold at a premium. (Unfortunately, our source in his written communication to the ATHENS Bureau did not name the newspaper or the author of the article.)

This article, and the effect it produced, was in itself a heavy blow to the Lebanese Communists, who have been attempting to infiltrate the "Progressive Socialist" Party and take it over from within. George HANA, chief of the Lebanese Communist Party, has been for some time "paying assiduous court" to the "Progressive Socialist" chief, Kamal JOUMBLAT, our source said, and has been proposing a united front of the two "working class" parties. The chances of such a coalition would now appear to have gone glimmering.

Objective Delegates Threatened by Communists.

The security official quoted above told our source that the Communists, disturbed by the deplorable results of the excursion to BUCHAREST, have been making threats of physical violence against those members of the Lebanese delegation who have been "talking too much." The chief effect of the threats has been to infuriate the persons

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threatened and spur them on to even more active anti-Communist propaganda.

Our source reported that he has been able to confirm, on the basis of his independent personal observations, the findings of the Lebanese security official that the Youth Festival was a massive propaganda fizzle for the Communists -- at least in the Middle East. He knows many of the Lebanese who went to BUCHAREST as members of the delegation and has talked with them since their return. Those who were philo-Communist have almost uniformly assured him that they are thankful to have had the opportunity of visiting Rumania and seeing with their own eyes that the Communist propaganda had been "lying all along."

#### Communist Interpretation of the Festival's Boomerang Effect.

Our source engaged in a controversy with one of the hard-core Communist members of the delegation -- "one of those," he said, "who returned from BUCHAREST with his fanaticism intact." The source asked the Communist: "How do you explain the fact that 80 per cent of the delegation left BEIRUT full of admiration for Communism and have now changed their minds as a result of seeing the misery in which the population of such a rich country is living? And how do you explain the fact that the overwhelming majority of Rumanians who had the opportunity to talk privately with the Lebanese delegates described in the blackest terms the life imposed upon them by the Communist regime?"

The source reported that the enraged Communist replied, "in a mélange of dialectic and ridicule," that (1) the great majority of the Lebanese delegates were "capitalists" who were unable to appreciate the life of the Rumanian working people, (2) the fact that so many Rumanians spoke against the regime to the visitors proved that freedom reigns in the country, and (3) the Rumanians who spoke against the Communist regime were "traitors."

The source reported that, far from being "capitalists," the members of the Lebanese delegation were in the preponderant majority workers and office employees. Typical of the social class of the members was the delegate who was interviewed by the source in extenso on the return of the Lebanese delegation to BEIRUT in September (see Item Nos. 9531, 9786 and 10161/53.) This delegate is 34, a graduate of the Commercial Department of the American University in BEIRUT and earns his living as an office employee of a commercial house in that city. He was of the "open-minded"

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variety; although antipathetic to Communism as such, he was socially conscious and inclined to be skeptical of the source's harrowing description of the Communist tyranny in Rumania. When he returned from the BUCHAREST excursion he admitted that the trip had convinced him that the source's descriptions had been accurate in every detail.

From this delegate come the following miscellaneous information, which he received from Rumanians in BUCHAREST.

Open Resistance in Rumania.

Twenty six students were arrested on the night of 12 August, on the eve of a planned anti-Communist demonstration in which some 500 students were to have taken part. The purpose of the demonstration, scheduled for 13 August, was to show the foreign visitors in BUCHAREST for the Youth Festival that the Rumanian student-youth was anti-regime. The 26 students were betrayed to the Securitatea by informers in their midst.

Arrests Based on "Black Lists" Supplied by Mail Censors.

A month before the Youth Festival convened, a "Control Unit" was instituted at the Ministry of the Interior to check the names of every delegate scheduled to attend. The record of each delegate was searched to discover if he had ever previously visited Rumania or if he had been in correspondence with anybody in Rumania (all correspondence from abroad is registered on special lists, which served as the point of reference for the "Control Unit.") A special list was drawn up of the names of all delegates who had previously been in Rumania and had corresponded with persons abroad during their stay, along with the names of the persons abroad to whom the correspondence was addressed. A whole "army" of the Ministry of the Interior functionaries worked at this exhaustive checking project to guard against the possibility that "secret agents" of the Americans or of the Rumanian democratic exiles might succeed in gaining entry to Rumania in the guise of delegates to the Youth Festival. This information was given to the Lebanese delegate by a post office functionary whom he met through Rumanian friends.

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