

PRIORITY

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA

YOUTH (3500)
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DELEGATES REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL UNION OF STUDENTS

MEETING IN PRAGUE

SOURCE STOCKHOLM: Confidential source.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: September 7 1956.

EVALUATION COMMENT: Material on the International Students' Congress in PRAGUE, which took place between August 26 and September 3 1956, is available at the Czechoslovak Evaluation Desk. For Western press reports about the Congress please see "Economist" of September 8 1956 and "Neue Zuercher Zeitung" of September 19 1956.

Evidence of a clash between British and East European students is available here. Monitoring of September 8 1956, stated: "... some observers from Canada and England came out with various attacks and diffamations of the countries of Peoples' Democracies. But they were unsuccessful! How could such a clumsy statement be maintained that so-called East European countries are colonies!"

Jiri PELIKAN was again elected Chairman of the International Union of Students (see Monitoring of September 3 1956.)

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Source, who is an old hand at observing the machinations of Communist dominated youth organizations, stated that the latter apparently never tire, they come back to the same points again and again. Their aim seems to always be the same, that is the tendency to try to penetrate Western youth organizations as much as possible, at any rate to try to make them join bodies of Communist domination. Source pointed out that one of the

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main objects of getting the Western, or "neutral" youth organizations to cooperate is to collect suitable bait for the Latin American and Asiatic youth organizations who have not yet joined an international youth committee. The Asian-African organizations all have one thing in common: anti-colonialism. The Latin Americans, too, express a similar idea under their slogans of "Freedom," "Freedom to Organize, Assemble, Travel and Exist."

In August 1956, a youth delegation visited MOSCOW. Source did not go with the group, which, however, consisted of leaders of his country's national youth organization. His friends confirmed that certain delegations had been invited to MOSCOW for the sole purpose of obtaining their "agreement" to attend the MOSCOW Youth Festival next year. The delegation as a whole refused to commit itself, as had been hoped. But one delegate went so far as to say that he approved the idea of attending the Festival, but was afraid that no money would be available to finance the trip. The Russians, of course, intimated that the paltry sum of dollars required could easily be found somehow. The leader of the delegation, who was a Social Democrat, stated that he did not approve attendance at the Festival, neither did the country's national union of students.

651 Attended PRAGUE Gathering

It needs hardly be mentioned that in PRAGUE there was no list of delegates, nor any other written material of any interest. It was not even possible to check on the credentials of all the organizations who did send representatives, though some of them were definitely not student organizations of a national character, but instead small Communist outfits from some Western countries. Altogether 651 persons attended the meeting, including the observers, "guests," secretaries, etc. Of these, 250 were delegates, and of the delegates, as closely as could be approximated, 174 came from East bloc countries.

From the West, the following countries had sent observers: Canada, (who attacked colonization in Eastern Europe and said that Canada also opposed colonization in both Algeria and Tibet,) England, "UNEF" of France, Switzerland, the ex-President and ex-Vice President of the West German National Union of Students attended as guests. "CLARTE" of Sweden, about which there is a Red-tinged smell Uruguay, whose representative thought that the whole set-up was "very undemocratic," Iceland, one of whose delegates was elected to the "IUS" Executive Committee, Norway, and Denmark.

An unclassifiable delegation attended from Burma, which

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was represented by two organizations, even though each country was only to be represented by its National Union of Students (NUS,) Japan's delegation was the de facto "NUS," even though Japan has another de jure "NUS," which is ruled by a small and strong Communist clique. Egypt, Algeria, and Israel had also sent delegations..

Source stressed that the captive countries do not have any "NUS," as such. They are usually represented by the students section of the youth organization of the country. Albania, for instance, was represented by the "Working Youth of Albania."

The absence of a Yugoslav delegation was noted by all; one was expected, but never turned up. Source said that this may well be due to the fact that the Yugoslavs are waiting for a new "IUS" Executive Committee to be elected. They may have a long wait, as Jiri PELIKAN, of Czechoslovakia, was reelected as chairman. PELIKAN was chairman of the Executive Committee when the Yugoslavs were thrown out for being too Titoistic. Source's own delegation asked what the scale of representation in the "IUS" was. The Soviet delegation numbered 19 and the Polish delegation 25. But the question received no answer. Nor could anyone explain how the Albanian delegation claimed to represent the students of Albania. There is a board called the "Credentials Commission," which is to examine the eligibility for admission to the "IUS" of the various national and/or pseudo-national organizations. No Westerner managed to be elected to this Commission; source a Westerner, applied but failed.

The Business of the Meeting

There seemed to be only two main points which were considered at the meeting:

1. Amendments to the Rules of the "IUS," in the Constitution of the "IUS." As far as could be ascertained, the amendments aimed at making the organization more elastic, more able to change its position on international issues without approval of the "IUS" as a whole.

2. A Conference of Cooperation, that is, the perpetual attempts to lure the non-Communist organizations to cooperate with the Communist ones.

Interspersed between these two main items of business were various digressions. One afternoon, evening, and night were devoted to an Arab-Israeli fight in the debating chamber.

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The Egyptian delegate delivered a lengthy speech about the nationalization of the Suez Canal. The Canadians moved that at least half of the Egyptian's speech should be struck from the records, as being irrelevant and off the point. The Canadians were voted down. Another altercation came when the Algerian delegate proposed a minute's silence in honor of the Algerian students who had died fighting for the independence of Algeria. The Swiss proposed an amendment to the Algerian motion that a minute's silence be observed for the students all over the world who had died for their convictions. The Canadians went one better, and proposed that the students who had died in Eastern Europe deserved specific mention. However, the Algerian motion was carried.

The Rules

The final debate on the suggested amendment to the Rules took place after source left PRAGUE. But source had little doubt, in view of the preponderance of East bloc delegates, that the amendments would be carried as proposed. All delegates had received a copy of the proposed amendments about a month before the meeting. The final debate in plenary session on the Rules was scheduled to go on all night, owing to lack of time. No member of source's delegation was prepared to sit through such a session, which most probably applied to most of the Western delegations. However, there were some delegations who were firmly opposed to such an amendment, the Japanese for instance.

At a meeting in SOFIA, which seemed to be a preparatory meeting for the one in PRAGUE, there was a discussion about the ending of the affiliation to the "IUS" of the World Federation of Democratic Youth ("WFDY") with a view to encouraging the World Association of Youth ("WAY") to cooperate with the "IUS." Source said that as far as he could make out this had been dealt with by omitting "WFDY" from any mention in the amended Rules. Earlier there had been a blurb about cooperation with "WFDY." Now there is merely a general blurb about cooperation with international organizations. However, source is not positive on this point.

The Conference of Cooperation

Source himself spoke against this, saying that the very same people who split the "IUS" in 1948 are now crying for unity between East and West. He told the session that his country wanted no meaningless declarations. What his country wants -- and he believes what most Western countries want -- was direct contact between the countries, conferences of specialists (f.i. World University Service.) Most of the

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Western bloc, source stated, agreed with him completely. But France, inevitably, proposed that a conference of cooperation be held in France next year on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the "UNEF" (France's "NUS.") A number of Western observers stated that they thought that the International Students Conference was well able to take care of all cooperation which is needed.

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