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ITALY

FOURTH WORLD PETROLEUM CONGRESS.

SOURCE ROME : Regular RFE reporter.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: June 6 - 15 1955.

EVALUATION COMMENT : None.

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Delegates from the Iron Curtain Countries.

The IVth World Petroleum Congress was brought to a close on June 15, with a speech by the Italian Minister of Finance VANONI. The Congress was attended by 4,600 delegates representing 45 countries, including USSR and the satellites with the exception of Bulgaria. In comparison with the number of delegates from the Free World, the Iron Curtain countries did not send many representatives and, with the exception of the Soviet delegates, took no active part in the congress.

Russia sent 10 delegates headed by Prof. TOPCHIEV, a geologist and Member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences; the other nine delegates, CHUKIN, KRYLOW, TREBIN, MAMEDALIEV, TROFIMUK, FEDINSKI, SUCHANOW, CHATZKI, and DRAJEWSKI are all university-trained men. The group was accompanied by three interpreters, DENISENSKO, PANASZENKO and PAWLICZENKO.

There were five Polish representatives, headed by Prof. Stanislaw PAWLOWSKI. The other four, Zbigniew ONYSZIEWICZ, Jan CIESLICKI, Jerzy KULAKOWSKI, and Stefan NIEMENTOWSKI, are all engineers. Czechoslovakia was represented by Engineers KOZEL and POTUZAK, and Mr. WETZLER. Rumania sent three representatives, Engineer Stefan CHENDI, Wasile CHIRCU, and Silvio MARINO, while Hungary sent Engineers Michel FREUND and Laszlo VAJTA. Albania was represented by Dr. DAKLI.

Although the delegates from the Iron Curtain countries came to only one per cent of the total representatives in

(Over)

comparison with other international congresses held in Italy, their representation was numerous and complete. The smallness of their number arose from lack of interest.

There were at least two Iron Curtain delegates at each of the nine Sections of the congress, and with the unfailing and discreet help of Free World sympathizers, they were able to carry out their task of representatives.

They visited various plants in ROME and district, and the NAPLES Petroleum Exhibition, and are due to visit the Sicilian installations, thereby gaining a clear idea of technical progress in the West.

The Russians' minor participation in the work of the Congress can be explained by the fact that they did not wish to disclose their methods of production or statistics. However, it is doubtful if, in the face of the free world's incontestable supremacy, they could have presented many new ideas in this field.

Throughout the 10 days of the Congress, the delegates were extremely busy. The mornings and afternoons were occupied by the meetings of the sections, the delegates' free time was spent sightseeing, and almost every evening there were receptions.

The Congress was magnificently organized and ample entertainment was provided for everybody including 2,000 delegates' wives. The Communist delegates were not accompanied by their wives, perhaps because their governments like to have hostages at hand!

The Soviet delegates were rather isolated from the others and appeared ill at ease in spite of their efforts to appear dignified and indifferent. As usual, they all stayed at the same hotel and spoke through their interpreters. At the receptions they became more affable after a few drinks, but they were a little clumsy and ridiculous. Discreet but constant Embassy surveillance and their own self-control prevented them from drinking too much and displaying their true Russian temperament.

Another RFE reporter and I had a conversation with Professor TOPCHIEV, the principal Russian delegate, at a reception given by the Ministry of Industry for Congress delegates and the press, in the beautiful garden of the Baths of Diocletian. We also met a Czechoslovakian delegate who, oblivious of the fact

(Over)

that my colleague and I are RFE collaborators, tried to persuade one of us to go back to his country. Still chatting, we approached the buffet where the two Russians, TOPCHIEV and SUCHANOW were drinking. The former was definitely the worse for drink. When they saw us with the Czechoslovakian delegate, whom they knew, they mistook us for two Western delegates, and TOPCHIEV immediately suggested a toast to peace.

To avoid suspicion, I pretended not to understand Russian, and SUCHANOW and I exchanged a few words in French. He also spoke a little English and interpreted to TOPCHIEV what we had said. The latter, on hearing me speak French, immediately proposed a toast to France. He was obviously pleased to receive my colleague's congratulations on his lecture at the Congress.

The atmosphere became gay and we thoroughly enjoyed watching the behavior of the two Russians. The conversation, which had begun so successfully, was unexpectedly interrupted by the intrusion of a third Russian, the Embassy Commercial Adviser, who discreetly called TOPCHIEV to order. Both the Russians became serious once more and decided to leave. They looked like two schoolboys who had been reprimanded by their teacher.

This small episode shows the close surveillance which the Soviet Embassies exercise over Russians on official missions abroad.

Of all the representatives from the satellite countries the Polish delegates made the most favorable impression. They were mostly middle-aged and spoke both French and English and showed no embarrassment when in conversation with foreigners. However, when speaking to strange Poles in their own tongue, they were more diffident and generalized a great deal, as I was able to gather after exchanging a few words with them. All the Polish delegates were with the big group which was received in Audience by the Pope. At the end of the Congress they left for Sicily, and are due to return to ROME on June 23 and will leave for Poland the same day.

End.