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COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND CULTURAL RELATIONS

EIGHTH WORLD YOUTH FESTIVAL, HELSINKI, JULY-AUGUST 1962

Note by the German Delegation

In our view there are at least four reasons why the Communists decided to hold world youth festivals and to repeat them at regular intervals of two and lately three years:

- (a) the possibility of general indoctrination of the participants coming from non-Communist countries;
- (b) the opportunity to reward - with relatively little risk - middle-rank Communist youth officials with a journey to a foreign country;
- (c) the possibility of trying to influence all youth, students' and trade union federations of the world, including those which are not affiliated to WFDY, IUS and WFTU;
- (d) the possibility of maintaining in existence the so-called "International Preparatory Committee", i.e. a permanent apparatus which is represented as another "non-partisan" organization, which is, however, in reality a Communist cadre organization.

2. The choice of Helsinki as the meeting place for the 1962 World Youth Festival may have been determined by the following considerations:

- (a) Finland is a neutral country.
- (b) It was felt that the Soviet Union could, if required, exercise a decisive influence on the course of the World Youth Festival by bringing pressure to bear on the small neighbour country.

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- (c) It was taken for granted that the Finnish Government would avoid everything which might provoke Soviet criticism.
- (d) The geographical vicinity of the Soviet bloc was considered to be of value for the solution of technical and organizational problems.

Analysis of participating countries, organizations and numbers of participants

3. The 1st Festival in Prague in 1947 was attended by 72 delegations with a total of 17,000 participants, the VIth Festival in Moscow in 1957 by 131 delegations with a total of 35,000 participants, the VIIth Festival in Vienna 1959 by 133 delegations with only 18,000 delegates, while the VIIIth Festival in Helsinki was attended by 116 delegations with a total of only 12,000 participants.

4. A comparison between the figures officially released by the Festival management and those ascertained by German observers shows the following differences:

139 delegations with 18,000 participants were expected, while according to the Festival management 137 delegations with 13,374 participants were actually present.

116 delegations with 10,921 participants were counted marching into the Olympia Stadium.

Particularly striking discrepancies between the officially quoted figures of participants and those counted marching into the Olympia Stadium existed in respect of the following countries:

	<u>Official figure</u>	<u>Actual figure</u>
Argentine	112	60
Brazil	209	140
Bulgaria	343	170
Cuba	425	240
France	963	470
Great Britain	209	120
Greece	80	45
Italy	980	630
Corea (North)	183	110
Lebanon	186	120
Netherlands	215	120
Nigeria	24	4
Hungary	400	230
United Arab Republic	74	45
United States	435	300

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5. Whilst 4,000 delegates came from the countries of free Europe alone; nearly 400 from the United States, Canada and Australia; and more than 3,000 from the Soviet bloc (including Yugoslavia and Cuba), only about 2,500 delegates came from the Afro-Asian and Latin-American countries - although it had been the main objective of the Communists during the last festivals to win over the youth of these particular countries. Thus, these countries were only represented with 25-30% of the total number of participants. Furthermore, a considerable percentage of these delegates had not come directly from their native countries but from universities of the Soviet bloc.

6. In this context it is also of interest that Ghana, Ethiopia, Malaya, Thailand and the Philippines did not take part at all, while Tanganyika, Afghanistan and Pakistan were practically unrepresented. Half of the Lebanese Delegation failed to arrive and the following countries - like most of the French-speaking black African countries - were represented only by very small groups: Congo (Leopoldville)(8); Kenya (8), Somalia (8), Togo (6), Uganda (5), Nigeria (4). Instead of the expected 500 only 45 delegates arrived from the United Arab Republic. It should, however, be stated that for instance the African Delegates included a number of leading youth officials.

7. Finally, the small number of Communist Chinese attending the Festival (60 compared with 600 at the VIIth Festival in Vienna) was striking, while there was a relatively strong Albanian Delegation (40) and a delegation of 18 under the name of "Kurdistan", among them at least 5 delegated by the "Association of Kurdish Students in Europe".

8. The strongest delegations were sent by Finland (1,950), the Soviet Union (650), Italy (630) and the Federal Republic of Germany (600). With regard to the latter Delegation it should be noted that all political, non-political and students' organizations in the Federal Republic which are members of national federations had expressed themselves against participation in the World Youth Festival, and that a "National Preparatory Committee" did not exist in the Federal Republic. The 600 (originally 734) participants were chosen by members of the International Preparatory Committee from a number of only about 2,000 applicants. The Delegations from Italy, France and the Federal Republic were much stronger than at previous festivals. The big Delegations from Austria (370), Denmark (100) and the Netherlands (120), were also particularly noted.

9. An analysis of the participating organizations shows that interest in the Festival appears to be greater among the students' federations than among other youth organizations. According to the Festival management 80 per cent of all existing national students' federations (i.e. 74) had sent delegates to Helsinki. Altogether 184 students' federations from 87 countries were represented.

10. As to the political leanings of the participants, German observers have estimated the share of Communists and "fellow-travellers" at 60%.

11. Leaving aside the participants from Communist countries and the confirmed Communists from Western and non-committed countries, an analysis of the motives which induced participants to attend the Festival leads to the following conclusions:

- the general wish to meet people and to exchange ideas with them;
- among the youngest age groups and the naive, the desire for solidarity amongst youth and fraternisation;
- among Afro-Asians, primarily the need for recognition and an affirmation of their equal rights with the "whites" (hence the great desire of these representatives to present their own old culture in the framework of cultural and folklore events): in addition, pride in their newly-found national independence and the need to represent it as its spokesmen;
- among Latin Americans, frequently the hope for support in their struggle against the "ruling class" and in their search for new political concepts;
- generally, love of adventure and the temptation to take advantage of a possibility for cheap travel.

It goes without saying that it is not possible to draw a clear distinction between these motives and that many participants may have had several motives.

Groups of Participants

(a) India

12. The Bharat Yuvak Samaj, a youth organization receiving financial aid from public funds, was asked by the Indian Government only to send a delegation of observers to Helsinki.

(b) Palestinian Students' Federation in Cairo

13. This Group, consisting of 10 or 11 persons, was not recognised by the Festival management as a delegation and left Helsinki prematurely under protest as they had not been allowed to hoist the Palestinian flag.

(c) Senegal

14. Violent controversies broke out in this group of 106 persons after those responsible for the discussions in the political seminars had authorised Senegalese "turn-coats" from Moscow, Prague and Paris to speak on behalf of Senegal, and after they had called

Senghor, Dia and other national leaders "corrupt agents of Colonialism". Thereupon about a third of the delegation wanted to leave immediately, but was unable to do so against the resistance of those who either sympathised with the "turn-coats" or were indifferent.

(d) Togo

15. Two of the six delegates returned prematurely to Togo and commented in highly negative terms on the Festival. Two others returned to Poland to resume their studies.

(e) Iraq

16. As far as is known only 20 of the 185 members of the Iraqi Delegation came from Iraq itself; the rest probably consisted of Iraqi students attending foreign universities. From the very beginning the Iraqi Government had opposed the sending of an official delegation. Six of the groups were arrested on their return, while nine persons who had been concerned with the preparation of the visit - among them an official of the Planning Ministry - were sentenced to nine months' imprisonment.

(f) Tunisia

17. Ben Ayed, the head of the Tunisian Delegation, stated at a press conference after his return that the World Youth Festival had obviously been Communist-influenced and had served Communist propaganda purposes. On the other hand, he commented very positively on the impressions of his delegation's visit to Berlin as a result of a German invitation. In a broadcast delivered immediately on his arrival he devoted only about a quarter of his time to the Festival and three quarters to Berlin.

(g) Ceylon

It is assumed that the events within the Ceylonese Delegation and the premature departure of 44 non-Communist members of this delegation who subsequently visited Sweden, the Federal Republic and Berlin are known.

Festival Organization and Programme

19. The cost of the Helsinki Festival was estimated by German observers at approximately 25 million dollars.

20. The organizers endeavoured to arrange for participants to arrive at and to leave Helsinki in groups and not as individuals and to send them as far as feasible through the Soviet Union and the other bloc countries, obviously in order to avoid that delegates from the developing countries might visit Western countries on their way to or from Helsinki.

21. The quality of board and lodging for delegates as well as the technical arrangements for the Festival was lower than on previous occasions. In contrast to the preceding festivals there was virtually no festival centre. Even the press centre had considerable organizational shortcomings.

22. Frequently delegations lived miles apart and far away from places where the various Festival events took place. In many cases they were transported to and from the inner city in groups to take their meals, and left to their own devices for the rest of the time. Frequently they did not get to the meeting places because they did not know the way and could not ask for directions because they did not speak the local language. There are also reports that Lumumba students from the developing countries sent to Helsinki were given non-convertible rouble notes. Non-Communist Swiss journalists donated money for the financial support of these students.

23. On the whole, it can be said that the organizers did not succeed in ensuring a proper organization of the Festival; it was striking how frequently - and often without success - it was necessary to improvise.

24. A reduction in the number of mass meetings and a greater number of smaller events with the emphasis particularly on cultural and sports events was clearly noticeable. The numerous "friendship meetings" had the biggest attendance. But also the cultural events found a positive response, whereas the sports programme was less successful and the "professional meetings" which in Vienna had still been of major importance, were this time practically non-existent.

25. After the first four days the interest in the official programme declined noticeably; festival badges and scarves disappeared more and more from the streets, and particularly among the participants from developing countries there was an unmistakable trend towards "tourism". This is probably why towards the end of the Festival certain events were postponed at short notice or cancelled altogether. Even at the reception of astronauts only about 4,000 participants were counted.

26. By means of the written requests for leave to speak, the list of speakers in the political seminars was manipulated in such a way that the official heads of delegations from the developing countries with a non-Communist majority were not given a chance to speak and the floor was instead given to Communists. It thus happened that in a number of cases participants were allowed to speak who did not even belong to the official delegation of the country concerned but had been delegated by the Lumumba University or similar Soviet bloc institutions. As is typical at Communist meetings, the speakers invariably appeared with prepared manuscripts. Thus, no real discussion could develop, and any attempts in this direction were suppressed by the Chairmen.

27. It was generally observed that the speakers from the Soviet bloc showed a rather reserved attitude, leaving it largely to delegates from developing countries to launch violent attacks against the West - a task in which the students of the Lumumba University particularly excelled. The main objects of attack for these speakers were the "Imperialist" United States and the "Colonialist" or "neo-Colonialist" Western industrial countries, while the Communist Delegates of these countries defamed their own governments.

28. The relatively strong attendance registered at the inauguration ceremonies of the seminars gradually declined as time went by.

29. With regard to the freedom of movement of the Soviet bloc Delegates in Helsinki it was observed that Soviet Russians and Poles were obviously not subject to any restrictions; Czechs, Bulgarians, Hungarians and Rumanians turned up in groups of two or three; while the delegates from the Soviet-occupied zone were only allowed to move about in larger groups.

30. The Delegation from the Soviet Zone had travelled to Helsinki in a group on board the passenger ship "Völkerfreundschaft" which is owned by the Communist Trade Union Federation of the Soviet Zone. This ship also served as their accommodation throughout the whole Festival. She was berthed far away from the town centre at the extreme end of the quay in the South port which cannot be reached by public transport. All "friendship meetings" in which the Soviet-Zonal Delegation took part were held on board the "Völkerfreundschaft". The Delegation was transported to all other events in a group by bus. If members of the Delegation played a part in any cultural performances, they had to leave the stage in what was called a "merry chain", i.e. holding each other by their hands.

31. It was further noticed that the Soviet bloc Delegates ostracised the representatives from the Soviet zone while they frequently sought conversations with the observer groups from the Federal Republic.

32. The Albanians were also cut by all Soviet bloc delegations with the exception of the North Korean, the North Vietnamese and the Communist Chinese Delegations.

Advantages of the Festival for the Communists

33. The Festival produced the following gains for the Communists:

- (a) The fact that a UN observer had been delegated to the Festival;

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- (b) the inclusion of UNESCO performances in the Festival programme and the keenness displayed by the UNESCO Representative;
- (c) the meeting of "Young Christians" in which Pastor Niemöller, member of the Presidium of the World Church Council, also participated;
- (d) the fact that the Delegates from the Soviet bloc only met such Western delegates who more or less shared their views: they were thus not made aware how unrepresentative these people were of their respective countries, with the result that they found their convictions confirmed that Communist doctrine and policy were right.

Disadvantages for the Communists

34. The following factors were detrimental to the Soviet bloc:
- (a) the manipulation of the list of speakers as mentioned above which was noticed by many Afro-Asian and Latin-American participants in the political discussions and partly criticised in public; the clear preference given to Communist speakers; and, in general, the suppression of any real discussion;
 - (b) a number of successful Western activities, such as that of IUSY, the "Swiss Centre", and the international European observer groups;
 - (c) the daily publication of the "Helsinki Youth News", an extremely well-made paper edited by United States journalists which by its topical news, its unbiased views in spite of all criticism, the inclusion of world reports and the fact that it appeared in English, French and Spanish, was very popular and even read publicly by certain delegates in the seminars;
 - (d) the visit of at least 500 Afro-Asian and Latin-American Festival participants to Western European countries.

Counter-demonstrations

35. The counter-demonstration staged every night by young Finns during the first three days of the Festival have, on the contrary, hardly had any positive results for the West. The same applies to the frequently erroneous evaluation and dramatisation of these events in the Western press.

36. A considerable number of delegates had not even become aware of these demonstrations; those non-Communist participants, however, who witnessed them thought that they were directed

against the Russians and Communists in general, but not against them. However, they strongly criticised this form of political contest. It is difficult to answer the question to what extent the unpopularity of Communism among the inhabitants of a neutral country directly adjacent to the Soviet Union has caused the delegates to wonder about this political system. It has merely been noticed that, in general, the Finns were very friendly towards individual delegates from the developing countries and in a number of cases even invited them to come to their homes. It may well be assumed that on these occasions political problems were the main subject of conversation.

Western Post-Festival Activities

37. Thanks to the activities of certain Western observer groups approximately 500 to 550 delegates from Afro-Asian and South American countries visited Western European countries at the end of the Festival. These included:

251 delegates to the Federal Republic and Berlin;

120-170 delegates to Scandinavia, Austria and Switzerland;

94 African students from Soviet bloc universities to Austria (where they took part in the activities of an Austrian Socialist Students' Camp near Villach);

50 African students from Soviet bloc universities to France and Sweden (joining the activities of International Youth Labour camps).

38. The German youth organizations which looked after their guests in the Federal Republic believe that the invitations were a clear success for the cause of the West. No detailed analysis of the experience gained by these visits is as yet available. However, the following tentative conclusions may be drawn:

- (a) most of even the non-Communists among the participants of the Festival are convinced of the desirability and necessity of world-wide youth festivals;
- (b) in spite of the numerous organizational deficiencies and the negative experience in the political seminars in Helsinki the majority of participants from developing countries would attend future festivals even if they were again organized under Communist auspices;
- (c) non-Communist participants from South America sharply attacked United States Imperialism and the ruling political circles in their own countries; these South Americans - mostly students - are looking for a "third alternative"; they stated that Communism would appear to them the lesser evil compared with American Capitalism;

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- (d) South American students also criticised the procedure applied by the Federal Republic and other Western countries for selecting students for scholarships; by going through the respective South American governments, students from reactionary circles were continuously given preference while they, the "true democrats", had to go empty-handed.

Future Festivals

39. It is not impossible but by no means certain that Helsinki will have been the last festival of this kind.

40. In our opinion, the VIIIth World Youth Festival was no undivided success for the Communists.

41. That the Communists, in spite of all the safeguards which they had built in at Helsinki were not fully successful in their attempt is, last, but not least, due to the fact that the Festival took place in a country on this side of the Iron Curtain, where the population and partly even the authorities were, to say the least, not very co-operative and where, despite all precautions and protective measures taken by the Communists, and in spite of all the respect for Finland's precarious situation, the West still had considerable possibilities of making its influence felt.

42. Whether, therefore, the Communists will repeat the experiment of Vienna and Helsinki is not absolutely certain. Sofia and Havana have been mentioned as possible sites for future Festivals. In either of the two cities the Communists could count on the full co-operation of the authorities and be certain that the delegates would only come into contact with such groups of the population as are devoted to Communism. Western activities outside the Festival would be practically impossible and the inclusion of pro-Western members in official delegations would be extremely problematic. On the other hand, Festivals held in a Communist country would be bound to become even less attractive and it might well be that a considerably greater number of Afro-Asian and South American governments would refuse to give governmental support and subsidies to delegations attending these festivals.

43. Whether and to what extent the Communists are now calculating whether the costs incurred by the World Youth Festivals of the present pattern have been worthwhile is not yet known. It may, however, be assumed that they will only abandon the idea of World Youth Festivals if such a balance-sheet should be heavily on the debit side or if they should discover other methods of organizing such Festivals which might bring at least the same, if not higher profits for a minimum of financial expenditure.

44. It is, therefore, not unlikely that the idea of a Festival to be held under the sponsorship of UNESCO which came up during the Helsinki Festival will be taken up by the Communists or even launched by them as their own idea. The idea of a UNESCO Festival has, in fact, met with considerable interest, not only among the delegates from developing countries, but also in Western circles. Non-Communists regard this as a possibility of wresting this propaganda instrument from the hands of the Communists or at least of achieving a better-balanced distribution of political weights; the developing countries would no longer need to have a bad conscience if they continue to wish to take part in such "de-Communisted" festivals as UNESCO will necessarily appear to the whole world as beyond suspicion; the Communists, finally, might hope to find a still better approach than hitherto to the youth from the developing countries if they could operate under the guise of UNESCO.

45. On second thoughts, however, it appears that a UNESCO Festival is likely to create considerable problems for the West. Quite apart from the fact that it is doubtful whether a corresponding resolution can be adopted by UNESCO within two years and whether the organization of such mass events would be compatible with the terms of reference of that organization, the question of financing and particularly of organizational preparation and implementation of such festivals appears to be almost insoluble. It seems quite impossible that the UNESCO machinery would be capable of doing the work which has so far been carried out by WFDY and IUS with the help of the Soviets. A new International Preparatory Committee would have to be established. It goes without saying that on the part of the Communists the centrally-controlled representatives of WFDY and IUS who have gained experience during eight previous festivals would have a say in this Committee. Who would be the Western representatives with whom they would have to deal, and who would represent the non-committed countries? In which country could such a festival take place? How would UNESCO or the Preparatory Committee solve such problems as the participation of Spain, Portugal, China or the Soviet-occupied zone? What internal difficulties might arise if the West would no longer be active outside the Festival but be represented by official delegations composed of the whole range of its free youth and students' organizations which take no instructions from anywhere?

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