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SUB-COMMITTEE ON SOVIET ECONOMIC POLICY

COMECON PERMANENT COMMISSIONS AND RELATED AGENCIES(2)

Note by the French Delegation

I. The 21 Permanent Commissions

1. Permanent Commission for Agriculture

The chairman of this Commission, which was formed in May 1956, is Marin Vatchev, Bulgarian Minister of Agriculture. The Commission's headquarters are in Sofia. Its meetings take place fairly regularly (five times since the beginning of 1963) and are attended by the eight members of COMECON as well as by Vietnamese observers. Representatives from North Korea, Cuba and the Chinese People's Republic make sporadic appearances. Despite the frequent meetings no tangible results have been obtained, in the field of co-ordinated planning in particular, and the Commission is still at the exchange-of-information stage.

Sub-Committees:

- Permanent Working Group on the Mechanisation and Electrification of Agriculture (meetings are held frequently, mainly in Czechoslovakia).
- Fodder Committee
- Seed Committee
- Working Group on Irrigation and Drainage
- Working Group on Plant Protection

2. Permanent Commission for Foreign Trade

There have been five meetings since the beginning of 1963. This is the only Commission whose meetings are regularly attended by its eight members and four observers. Its headquarters are at Moscow. Most of its recent activity seems to have been devoted to the organization of the COMECON Bank (see paragraph 15 hereunder).

- (1) This document was issued in French only on 29th September, 1964.  
(2) See Annex I to AC/127-D/165.

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3. Permanent Commission for the Construction Industry

The headquarters of this Commission, which was formed in June 1958, are in East Berlin. Three meetings appear to have been held since the beginning of 1963. The Commission discusses a wide range of general problems (returns on investments, co-operation on multi-national projects) as well as particular problems (qualitative and quantitative improvement in cement and concrete production).

Sub-Committees:

- (These all appear to have been created since June 1962)
- Working Group on Plumbing Techniques (which meets regularly in Bulgaria)
- Committee on Building Materials (in which all COMECON members and observers have participated)
- Town and Regional Planning Section.

4. Permanent Commission for the Co-ordination of Scientific and Technical Research

The headquarters of this Commission, which was not planned until June 1962, are in Moscow. It has already met six times but with only the seven European members of COMECON attending. Cuban observers were however present at the last meeting, apparently for the first time. The Commission seems to concentrate, on the one hand, on the collation and circulation of scientific data of different kinds and on the other hand on a few special problems (synthetic raw materials, artificial fertilisers, automation in industry). Its results so far seem rather meagre. It must be added, however, that a number of other Permanent Commissions are each attempting to establish their own research programme. A point to be noted is that the Rumanians were not present at a "conference on the preparation of organic fertiliser" which was held in Prague in April 1964 under the aegis of this Commission.

5. Permanent Commission for Electric Power

This Commission was created in May 1956 and its headquarters are in Moscow. It appears to have met five times since the beginning of 1963. Normally only the seven European members of COMECON participate in its work. Korean observers appeared fleetingly at the November 1963 meeting. Under the aegis of the Commission, an interconnecting electric power system came into operation at the beginning of 1963 and now links up the six Eastern European members of COMECON and part of the Ukraine.

Sub-Committee:

- Thermo-electric Power Station Section.

6. Permanent Commission for Geology

This Commission, for which plans were made in May 1956 was apparently inactive for seven years. It was set up again in July 1963. Its headquarters could well be at Ulan-Bator, the only capital of a COMECON country not to have a Permanent Commission. In any case, the first meeting of the Commission was held in the Mongolian capital and there have only been two others since. Co-operation between the different countries does not yet appear to have passed the exchange-of-information stage. At the last meeting, Korean and Cuban observers were present for the first time, in addition to the representatives of the eight member countries.

7. Permanent Commission for the Food Industry.

This Commission, with headquarters in Sofia, was created in July 1963 by splitting the Permanent Commission for Light and Food Industries. It is concerned with mechanisation and automation in the food industry but has only held two meetings so far.

Sub-Committee:

- Permanent Working Group for the Co-ordination of Scientific Research (which held its constituent meeting in April 1964 with representatives of the eight members of COMECON attending).

8. Permanent Commission for the Coal Industry

This Commission was formed in May 1956 and its headquarters are at Warsaw. Its chairman is Mr. J. Mitrega, Polish Minister for the Coal Industry. Because of the power shortage in the People's Democracies, the different meetings of the Commission (three since the beginning of 1963) have been particularly concerned with the need for increasing coal output as much as possible. However, judging from the final communiqués, co-operation is limited to an exchange of information. Mongol, Chinese and Vietnamese observers attended the last meeting but not the previous one.

Sub-Committees:

- Committee for Safety in the Mines
- Working Group on Standardisation (which meets fairly regularly, and has met at least nine times so far)
- Scientific and Technical Committee for the Design and Construction of Coal Mines (first meeting held at Katowice in January 1964).

9. Permanent Commission for the Chemical Industry

This was created in May 1956 and its chairman is Mr. Wolfgang Schirmer. The headquarters of the Commission are in Berlin. Its meetings are generally attended by the seven European member countries and by Korean observers. Chinese and Cuban representatives attended briefly at the beginning of the year. The Commission's work is mainly designed to facilitate co-ordinated planning, standardisation and scientific research. Efforts are being centred on synthetic rubber, cellulose, plastics petro-chemicals and, in conjunction with the Permanent Commission for Agriculture, the production of fertilisers.

Sub-Committees:

- Working Group on Reagents
- Working Group on the Pharmaceutical Industry
- Working Group on Chemical Fibres
- Working Group on Engineering.

10. Permanent Commission for Light Industry

This was created in July 1963 by splitting the Permanent Commission for the Light and Food Industries. Its headquarters are in Prague. The Commission has met only twice, with the eight members of COMECON attending, as well as Korean and Vietnamese observers on the second occasion. Little is known about this Commission, particularly about the exact area which it covers. The communiqués have simply referred to "the co-ordination of plans for 1966-1970".

11. Permanent Commission for the Engineering Industry

This Commission was set up in May 1956 and its chairman is the Czech, Karel Blacek. Its headquarters are in Prague. While only one of the sub-committees appears to have shown any signs of activity during the past two years, the number of meetings held by the Commission itself since the beginning of 1963 (seven) and their duration (at least a week each time) are a clear indication that the engineering industry is one of the sectors on which COMECON lays special emphasis. The Commission's activities seem to cover a wide range of spheres, from agricultural machinery to mechanisms for the Navy, roller bearings to problems of standard nomenclature and from machine tools to the co-ordination of investments. Mr. P. Jaroszewicz, principal Polish representative at the COMECON meetings, recently criticised specialisation in the industry, "as now practised", indirectly implying that the less developed countries were being unduly favoured. Be that as it may, the engineering industry is one of the very few in which a substantial portion of each country's production is earmarked for re-export to other member countries within the framework of the

specialisation advocated by COMECON. This portion could however be considerably increased if countries with fewer natural resources stopped producing goods which would be cheaper if imported. This explains the discontent of the more developed countries. All the European member countries attend the Commission's meetings regularly. Participation by other members and attendance by observers, on the other hand, is irregular and apparently haphazard.

Sub-Committee:

- Ship-building section.

12. Permanent Commission for the Oil and Gas Industry

The headquarters of this Commission, which was created in May 1956, are in Bucharest and all meetings are held there. Representatives of all member countries, except Mongolia, and all observer countries attend fairly regularly. There have been four meetings of the Commission since the beginning of 1963. Its work appears to consist mainly in the quest for remedies for the power shortage in the People's Democracies. This explains the careful study of power availabilities and the emphasis which is laid on the construction of pipelines and on the transformation of coal into gas.

13. Permanent Commission for Non-Ferrous Metals

This Commission was created in May 1956; its headquarters are in Bucharest. It would appear to have met only three times since the beginning of 1963. Its activities seem to be extremely restricted. The communiqué on the last meeting simply reported the "co-operation between member countries had continued to be developed" and referred to the "future trend of its activities for 1966-1970" without even mentioning the possible co-ordination of plans during that period.

14. Permanent Commission for Economic Affairs

Created in June 1958, this Commission has as its chairman Mr. Korobov, Vice Chairman of the Soviet GOSPLAN. Its headquarters are in Moscow. It deals with planning problems and its activities seem to overlap a little with those of the COMECON Planning Board. Few details are known of its work, which centres on labour productivity, investment, the co-ordination of research and problems of method. There have been at least four meetings of the Commission since the beginning of 1963, attended by all member countries and frequently by Chinese observers.

Sub-Committee:

- Working Group on Productivity

15. Permanent Commission for Foreign Exchange and Financial Matters

This Commission has met four times since it was created in 1962. Its headquarters are in Moscow. It is responsible, in part at least, for the creation of the COMECON Bank(1). Moreover, its activities appear so far to have overlapped with those of the Bank. All member countries have participated from the outset in the work of the Commission. They have gradually been joined by all the observer countries, China having remained outside the longest.

16. Permanent Commission for Radio and Electronics

This Commission was created in July 1963 and its headquarters appear to be in Budapest. Little is known about its work and it seems to have met only once so far.

Sub-Committee:

- Semi-conductors and Radio Section.

17. Permanent Commission for Iron and Steel

The Chairman of this Commission, which was created in May 1956, is Mr. V. Boiko, Chairman of the Soviet Union State Iron and Steel Committee. Its headquarters are in Moscow. It has met six times in ordinary session and has held at least two extraordinary meetings. Mongolia does not appear to have taken any part in its work. The four observer countries attend intermittently, North Korea being the most assiduous. Recently the Committee appears to have laid emphasis on the qualitative improvement of production (a statement by Mr. Boiko in particular would seem to confirm this) and on the need for solving problems bilaterally or trilaterally. ("Intermetall", grouping Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary, was created on 16th July 1964), whereas previously more importance was attached to the quantitative and overall aspect of the problem at COMECON level (co-ordination of planning and investments). The Commission seems to be concentrating in particular on the production of painted sheet iron, and above all on laminated sheets and tubing, "specialisation in which must have become effective by 1970".

Sub-Committee:

- Working Group on Rolling Mills.

18. Permanent Commission for Standardisation

This Commission, which dates from June 1962, has headquarters in Berlin. It has met five times since the beginning of 1963. Mongolian, Cuban and North Vietnamese observers attend

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(1) See AC/127-D/165, Annex III.

meetings irregularly but no Chinese observers have been seen so far. As was to be expected, the Commission's work has been centred mainly on iron and steel and the engineering and chemical industries. It seems likely that its activities will gradually be taken over by the COMECON Institute for Standardisation (see note in this connection) which was created in February 1964.

19. Permanent Commission for Statistics

This Commission, which was also created in June 1962, appears to be centred in Moscow. It has held three meetings since the beginning of 1963, which were attended by the eight member countries and, on the last occasion, by Cuban observers. On the other hand, non-Soviet Asian Communist countries have never taken any part in the work of the Commission which, for the present, appears to be dealing mainly with problems of nomenclature and the standardisation of references.

Sub-Committee:

- Demographic Section.

20. Permanent Commission for Transport

This Commission was created in June 1958 and its Chairman is Mr. P. Lewinski, Polish Minister for Transport. Its headquarters are in Warsaw. It has held seven meetings since the beginning of 1963 which have been attended regularly by Mongolians and by representatives of the Socialist Countries Railways Association (see note on this subject), as well as intermittently by Cubans and, very occasionally, by Chinese and Vietnamese. There is no record of Korean participation. The main concern of the Commission over the past year has been the creation of the wagon pool (see note on this subject). However, it has also dealt with problems relating to the construction and standardisation of ocean-going shipping and, in a more sporadic manner, with road and air transport. Apart from that it has tackled one of the problems which are often a source of difficulty in Central Europe, namely, the supply of spare parts.

Sub-Committees:

- Railways Section
- Motor Transport and Roads Section (which seems to be occupied fairly regularly with the exchange of information).

21. Permanent Commission for the Pacific Use of Atomic Energy

This Commission, whose Chairman is a Russian, Mr. A. Petrossiants, was formed in July 1960. Its headquarters are in Moscow. One of its features is that its membership is

limited by statute to the seven European member countries. Consequently Mongolia does not belong to it. Although the rules of the Commission provide for at least two meetings a year, it has, in fact, only met twice since the beginning of 1963. It is working, on the one hand, on standardisation and country-by-country specialisation in the production of advanced nuclear research apparatus - this has already been achieved in the case of 600 parts and components for such apparatus - and, on the other hand, on the co-ordination of research, particularly as regards the production and use of isotopes. The Commission is also studying safety techniques and a common solution to the problem of the disposal of radioactive waste.

Sub-Committee:

- Working Group on the Disposal of Radioactive Waste (set up in June 1964 in the presence of representatives of the six People's Democracies, but of no Soviet representatives).

II. Related Agencies(1)

22. The Secretariat

The headquarters of the COMECON Secretariat are in Moscow. The Secretariat is the administrative organ of the Council. It is headed by a Russian, Mr. M.N. Fadeyev, who is assisted by three deputies, Mr. Z. Zborowski (Poland), Mr. J. Rouzicka (Czechoslovakia) and Mr. A. Tabakopol (Roumania). Its activities have become diversified since the changes made in June 1962 and it now has a staff of about 420, of which 64 are Poles, as compared with 200 before 1962.

23. COMECON Wagon Pool

The Pool, the creation of which was delayed a number of times owing to differences between member countries, finally came into being on 1st July 1964. Its headquarters are in Prague and its Administrative Director is a Czech, Mr. M.J. Pospisil. The Pool comprises 92,700 wagons which have been supplied mainly by Poland (36,000, the largest contribution) by Czechoslovakia ("nearly 20,000") and by Hungary (9,000). All wagons have a gauge of 1.435 metres and are consequently not intended for use in the USSR. They remain the property of the countries which have supplied them to the Pool, but may be used, free of charge, by each member country up to the number supplied by the user country.

24. COMECON Institute of Standardisation

The decision to create this Institute was taken in June 1962. It finally came into being in February 1964. Its headquarters are in Moscow and its Director is a Soviet, Mr. M.N. Evstiuchin. The task of the Institute is gradually to

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(1) For the COMECON Bank see AC/127-D/165, Annex III.



standardise industrial protection, particularly in the fields of mechanical engineering, chemical equipment and iron and steel.

25. Socialist Countries Railway Organization

This organization is not a COMECON agency, though it co-operates with COMECON and a representative attends each of the meetings on the Permanent Commission for Transport. The organization's members are the eight member countries of COMECON, China, North Korea and North Vietnam.

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