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COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND CULTURAL RELATIONS

EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE ATLANTIC COMMUNITY AND THE SOVIET BLOC

RELATIONS WITH THE SATELLITE STATES

Second part of the United Kingdom Reply to the Questionnaire (1)

Question 1.

United Kingdom policy is in line with the recommendations in Document C-M(56)98 and C-M(57)95. As regards Poland however Her Majesty's Government's policy is more flexible and does not exclude manifestations of a type calculated to bring prestige to the Polish regime.

The policy on contacts towards the Satellites is based on the considerations that the Communist leaders are neither free agents vis-à-vis Moscow, nor representative of the peoples they govern; that action which might enhance their prestige should therefore be avoided; but that it should aim to reassure the subject peoples of our interest in them and to keep alive (but not encourage to the point of useless revolt) a spirit of resistance to Soviet domination. It is desirable to preserve and develop exchange visits with the Satellites; but visits by large delegations, dancing troupes and the like should not be encouraged while proposals for visits by scientists, technicians, doctors etc. should in each case be weighed carefully.

Her Majesty's Government's view is that contacts and exchanges with Poland in the economic, scientific and cultural fields should be expanded and systematically developed.

As regards Hungary the United Kingdom's attitude is more reserved and it is considered desirable to avoid completely large scale cultural activities and visits having an official flavour, while proposals for technical exchanges etc. should be carefully considered on their individual merits.

(1) The first part of the United Kingdom reply, in respect of the Soviet Union only, is contained in A.C/52-D/271/12. See footnote of cover page of this document.

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Question 2.

No permanent or semi-permanent body exists to arrange official exchanges with the Satellite countries. The Soviet Relations Committee of the British Council deals solely with the Soviet Union and not with the Satellites. The British Council is the normal instrument for executing the cultural policies of Her Majesty's Government but the Council does not operate in any of the Satellite countries save Poland.

Question 3

Arrangements for official exchanges with the Satellites (save certain exchanges arranged by the British Council in Poland) are invariably made on an ad hoc basis, when each case is examined on its merits. Proposals for such exchanges most frequently emanate from a Satellite country either direct or through international bodies such as the Economic Commission for Europe and are made either to the British official body concerned or through the Foreign Office. Suggestions are then considered by the Foreign Office and other bodies concerned in the light of the criteria outlined in the answer to Question 1 above.

Questions 4, 5, 6 and 7

The United Kingdom Delegation regrets that it is not possible to provide a complete list of all proposals and arrangements for exchanges made by the United Kingdom and the Satellite countries. Complete records are not kept, but a representative list of such exchanges, with comments, is attached at Annex.

From this Annex it will be observed that the vast majority of proposals for exchanges come from the Satellite side. No proposals which have been made from the United Kingdom side have been turned down.

Question 8

In assessing the value of exchanges with the Satellite countries Her Majesty's Government have been guided both by consideration of the possible advantages and disadvantages of such visits and by the experience of visits that have actually taken place.

The disadvantages and advantages may be summarised as follows:

Disadvantages

- (a) Contacts and exchanges, particularly when they are official, confer some prestige on the Satellite

Governments and we cannot, in view of their subservience to Moscow, expect any specific return in the shape of influencing policy, at any rate in major matters.

- (b) Contacts with Western Missions are liable to compromise friendly local nationals.
- (c) Well intentioned private visitors to the Satellite countries often find conditions superficially less miserable than they expected. They can easily have the wool pulled over their eyes and be kept from making genuine contacts; while fellow-travelling visitors to the Satellites obtain fresh ammunition for propaganda in their own country.
- (d) Congresses of "front" organizations held in Western countries may depress the East European populations by giving the impression that Western Governments favour, or are at least neutral towards, the views promoted by such congresses.
- (e) East European nationals who visit the West are inhibited by prudence from giving a favourable account of what they have seen abroad.

Advantages

- (a) The encouragement of contacts is in line with present Western policy, with the philosophy of co-existence as exemplified by the world-wide character of the United Nations and our frequent appeals to the Soviet Government to remove the barriers opposing freedom of communication. We wish to foster a Western outlook among the Satellite peoples and to prevent their becoming efficient cogs in a Soviet dominated Communist machine. It is inconsistent with this policy to exclude a priori any form of contact between East and West on ostensibly equal terms.
- (b) The more contacts our diplomatic missions in the Satellite capitals can have with official and non-official circles the more efficiently they are able to report on developments there.
- (c) There is probably no great danger that official contacts with the East European countries would be misinterpreted by the local population. The local governments themselves can be relied on to make it clear that there is no love lost between themselves and Western Governments.

- (d) While it is true that contacts with the Satellites have little or no effect on their policies, at any rate in the short term, they may affect both reformist and independent minded communists and also the pro-Western or anti-communist elements of public opinion (especially in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary) which might otherwise lose hope in the West. Poland and Hungary have provided striking evidence of the persistence of an independent spirit among intellectuals, writers and young persons generally and of the power of these circles to exert influence at critical times.
- (e) Contacts in the business and technical fields and in that of civil aviation serve to provide access to possible influential circles with which diplomatic missions are unlikely otherwise to come in contact. Academic contacts provide an opportunity for influencing university teachers and students and perhaps even, through them, of affecting their Soviet colleagues. Visits of responsible journalists in both directions are also valuable.
- (f) Business, technical and scientific contacts may also have intelligence value.
- (g) Visits of tourists from West European countries help the satellite populations to form an idea of the standard of living in those countries and so to discount official communist propaganda.
- (h) Both official and private visits may be open to abuse for propaganda purposes and may entail security risks. But Western people are exposed to communist propaganda anyway whereas occasional personal contacts would make a good deal of difference to the amount of information about the West available to the satellite populations.
- (1) Visits organized by "friendship societies" are clearly undesirable from the propaganda aspect. But we cannot prevent them and a rigid exclusion could be represented as inconsistent with our general policy of freedom in information matters.

A study of the effects of some of the principal visits to and from this country to the Satellites in the recent past suggests that the advantages even in the short-term have on the whole outweighed the disadvantages. This applies both to official and private contacts. The advantages are most noticeable in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary (in that order of priority). The conclusions of paragraph 8 of Part I of this paper are equally valid in the Satellites. There are advantages in spontaneous private exchanges as opposed to those officially organized. But no rigid order of preference as between the various types can be drawn up: much depends on circumstances and on whether British visitors have consulted the Foreign Office beforehand about what to expect in the country they are visiting and whether they maintain contact with British missions there.

Questions 9 and 10

These points are answered in the first part of the United Kingdom reply, dealing with the Soviet Union (AC/52-D/271/12).

Palais de Chaillot,
Paris, XVIIe.

EXCHANGES AND VISITS BETWEEN SATELLITE COUNTRIES AND THE UNITED KINGDOM DURING THE PERIOD MID-1956 TO MARCH 1958

I. PROPOSALS BY THE UNITED KINGDOM

1. Details of proposals made to satellite officials by private organizations or individuals are only occasionally known. But a few of the more important are listed below, together with those officially proposed.

(a) Poland

- (i) Sejm delegation invited by Houses of Parliament (November, 1957);
- (ii) group of four members of Polish Planning Commission invited for 14-day tour as guests of HMG (February, 1958);
- (iii) group of Polish lawyers to visit the United Kingdom and meet Bar Council etc. (accepted in principle);
- (iv) naval visit by three frigates to Gdynia, (November, 1957);
- (v) Town Council of Gdynia invited by Southampton Municipal Council (accepted in principle);
- (vi) Poland v. Scotland football match, accompanied by visit of a pipe band from a Scottish Regiment, in Warsaw (fixed for June, 1958);
- (vii) Polish Minister of Higher Education (Mr. Bienkowski) invited privately by Chatham House (November, 1957);
- (viii) individual study tours scholarships, etc. arranged by British Council.

(b) Czechoslovakia

Group of Czech journalists who were participating in inaugural flight of BEA Prague-London Air Service invited for 10-day tour of United Kingdom (October, 1957).

2. No proposals were made by the United Kingdom authorities to any other satellite governments.

3. No proposals were turned down by the satellite authorities.

II. PROPOSALS BY SATELLITE AUTHORITIES

4. Proposals for visits or exchanges emanating from the satellites which have led to results are included in the consolidated list below. They are all assumed to be inspired by or approved by the satellite governments concerned. Where official United

Kingdom organisations are involved, UK government approval can also be assumed; where they are not, it is largely irrelevant, since action to prevent visits or exchanges by withholding visas is not normally taken.

5. Unless otherwise stated, all exchanges and visits which have taken place and are listed below were proposed by satellite authorities.

6. In addition, a number of proposals have been floated by satellite officials unofficially but not pursued when it became evident that they would not be acceptable: e.g.

Czechoslovakia

has hinted that Parliamentary delegations should be exchanged;

Roumania

suggested that a group of doctors should visit Roumania;

Bulgaria

the city of Plovdiv proposed exchange visits with the city of Bristol;

Hungary

the Hungarian Society for Mechanical Engineering proposed collaboration with the Institution of Production Engineers (November, 1957).

III. EXCHANGES AND VISITS ARRANGED

7. The representative list below confines itself to giving details only of the more important exchanges which have been arranged; less important ones are treated as a class. Purely commercial contacts have not been included. Exchanges initiated by the UK either officially or privately are marked with an asterisk.

(a) Poland

- * (i) Official Parliamentary delegation visited London, November 1957;
- (ii) British Steel Industry delegation visited Poland November, 1957: return visit planned;
- (iii) Polish Coal Industry delegation visited UK in May, 1957: return visit planned;

- * (iv) group of Polish Planning Commission visited UK in February, 1958: return visit planned;
 - (v) ICI delegation visited Poland to see Polish Chemical Industry, April, 1957;
 - * (vi) Polish Minister of Higher Education visited London informally to lecture at Chatham House, November 1957;
 - (vii) tour of Poland by Shakespeare Memorial Theatre presenting "Titus Andronicus" (May, 1957);
 - (viii) group of Vice-Chancellors of British universities visited Poland and toured universities, September 1957;
 - * (ix) naval visit by three frigates of Dartmouth training squadron to Gdynia, November, 1957;
 - (x) visit of Polish atomic scientists to Harwell in return for visit by Sir John Cockcroft to Poland in April, 1957 (August, 1957);
 - (xi) in addition, a large number of official, semi-official and private visits have taken place in both directions: e.g. Polish technicians, architects visiting British research establishments professional bodies and industrial establishments or undertaking courses of study at universities financed mostly by Polish authorities, occasionally by British Council; Polish students doing long or short courses in UK; small groups of British and Polish students arranging exchanges and visits; journalists' visits in both directions; private or business visits by British Members of Parliament to Poland (about 10 during 1957 including two, Mr. Bevan and Mr. Crossman, who lectured to Polish Institute of International Affairs);
 - (xii) sporting fixtures, including athletics contests in Warsaw and London.
- (b) Czechoslovakia
- "(i) Tour of UK by four Czech journalists visiting Britain on occasion of inaugural flight of Prague-London Air Service (October, 1957);
 - (ii) visits to Czechoslovakia by individual British Members of Parliament invited by Czech authorities;
 - (iii) exchange of school children for holidays in summer arranged by British Czechoslovak Friendship League and Czech Education authorities;
 - (iv) individual journalists and groups of tourist agents officially invited to Czechoslovakia:

- (v) British academic personalities invited by Czech.-slovakia to centenary celebrations of Technical College and various medical and other congresses;
- (vi) a few visits of Czech technicians, sponsored by Czech authorities, to contact professional bodies, research establishments and universities for studies of technical matters (e.g. building, hydro-electric power, etc.);
- (vii) sporting fixtures, including athletics, table tennis and ice hockey matches in both countries.

(c) Roumania

- (i) Visit to Roumania by party of British Members of Parliament invited by Roumanian authorities (September, 1957);
- (ii) group of members of Royal Society invited by Roumanian Academy of Sciences (September, 1957);
- (iii) Roumanian Song and Dance Troupe (February-March, 1958);
- (iv) sporting fixtures including Anglo-Roumanian football match in London (in return for fixture in Bucharest).

(d) Hungary

- (i) Two directors of the Co-operative Wholesale Society visited Hungary to attend a Congress of the Federation of Hungarian Co-operative Societies (December, 1957);
- (ii) the Secretary of the UK section of the International Commission of Jurists visited Hungary at his own request to see something of legal procedures in Hungary (February, 1958);
- (iii) visits by individual artists and entertainers to the UK. The Dagenham Girl Pipers visited Hungary (January and February, 1958);
- (iv) a number of Hungarian doctors, scientists and technicians have visited the UK at the invitation of individuals and unofficial bodies. One or two UK citizens have visited Hungary under similar arrangements;

(v) a number of sporting contacts, notably athletics and football. A British team competed in the World Table Tennis Championships in Budapest (March, 1958);

(e) Bulgaria

- (i) two veterinary officers from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food visited Bulgaria to inspect animal health arrangements there (autumn, 1957);
- (ii) the Bulgarian State Folk Song and Dance Company visited the UK (September, 1957). Some individual Bulgarian entertainers also.
- (iii) some sporting exchanges, notably football.