

INFORMATION REPORT

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On 5 August 1950, the Danish Communist Party (DKP) held four regional conferences for local Party leaders outside Sjaelland. The conferences were held on Lolland-Falster, at Kolding in south Jutland, at Aalborg in north Jutland, and at Odense in Fyn-Langeland. The following report is a summary of the Odense conference. A fifth conference of similar type was held at Aarhus on 13 August 1950.

1. The Odense conference began at 1030 hours and ended at 1555 hours, with a one-hour intermission for lunch. The meeting was open only to about 50 DKP members, selected from the following groups, who had been specifically asked to attend:
 - a. Members of the District Leaderships of DKP.
 - b. Members of the DKP City Leadership in Odense.
 - c. DKP Section Chairmen.
 - d. One representative of the Danish Communist Youth Organization (DKU) in Odense.
 - e. Individual DKP members who are particularly active in Fyn trade unions.
 - f. Individual DKP members who are particularly active in the peace campaign.
2. The regional conferences were originally called to discuss two subjects:
 - a. The war in Korea and resulting danger of general war.
 - b. The need for greater DKP efforts in supporting the World Committee of Partisans of Peace, through Fredens Tilhaengere i Danmark.

When plans for the meetings were nearing completion the Danish Folketing election was scheduled for 5 September 1950. The DKP thereupon added domestic politics as the third subject on the agenda of its regional conferences.

3. The principal speaker at the Odense conference was Aksel Larsen, who covered the following topics:

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Internal politics and the DKP election campaign. A long elaboration on the usual DKP line: The Social Democratic government of Denmark is a puppet operated by the U. S. Government which is, in turn, run by Wall Street. Denmark's present economic difficulties are the result of Danish acceptance of the Marshall Plan and the Atlantic Pact.

The Marshall Plan and the Atlantic Pact. The DKP slogan, for the election campaign and at all other times, is "Denmark Out of the Atlantic Pact and the Americans Out of Denmark". Larsen explained that if Denmark withdrew from the Atlantic Pact she would undoubtedly be excluded from the Marshall Plan as well. This, he stated, would be beneficial because "if we could stop selling our butter to England at a loss we could improve our valuta situation by trading with part of the world which has the greatest economic resources and is best able to deliver the goods. This would put our economy on an entirely different basis. Danish withdrawal from the Atlantic Pact and the Marshall Plan would create the conditions necessary for free trade between Denmark and other countries. If we can trade with the countries which can benefit us we can thereby prevent unemployment, solve the valuta problem, and put our economic affairs in order." He explained at some length that because of Marshall Plan restrictions Denmark can now trade with Eastern Europe only through a system of barter which is so cumbersome that Eastern trade has almost ceased to exist. He added that withdrawal from the Atlantic Pact would obviously relieve Denmark of the economic burden of rearmament.

Threat of war. Larsen stated that the Americans and their Social-Democratic allies have managed, by playing upon the fear of Soviet invasion, to stampede the Danish public into continued support of the Atlantic Pact. "They say to us, 'If you don't arm within two years Western Europe will not be able to get ahead of the USSR and will be unable to protect itself when the USSR attacks.' That is fantastic nonsense--if the USSR intended to attack, the men in the Kremlin would be insane idiots if they waited two years." Because of Danish membership in the Atlantic Pact, "if the war the Americans want and for which they are preparing comes, our soldiers will go out of Denmark to be slaughtered. While they are doing this the Americans can bomb our cities, and if their warships can get near enough they will shell our country while their fliers shoot down our civilian population and drop atomic bombs on our heads. Is that the road we want Denmark to travel?"

The war in Korea. China intended to conquer Formosa in July or August, and the inability of Chiang Kai Shek to defend the island was obvious. Formosa must be defended because it is "a very important pawn in the American game of achieving world mastery and of defending what she already has." The Americans realized, however, that it would not make a good impression upon world opinion if they sent their fleet and air force to Formosa without an excuse, "particularly since the Chinese People's Republic has at last been recognized by the more respected countries, including even England and Denmark." A plausible excuse for defending Formosa was therefore necessary, and the United States chose Korea as this excuse. The choice of Korea was not made at random, but for the following reasons:

- a. The Americans had spent five years training the South Korean army for attack upon North Korea. With 100,000 American-trained South Korean troops there would be no need to risk the lives of American soldiers. The South Koreans would need to be supplied only with American officers to direct them from good cover, and perhaps a few American planes.
- b. Korea would provide the Americans with a useful and easily defended bridgehead on the eastern flank of the USSR.
- c. North Korea would be a splendid acquisition for American capitalism and for the American war economy. South Korea is chiefly rural, but North Korea is highly industrialized, with enormous wealth in important minerals. The fact that the Americans wanted these minerals was a major factor in the choice of Korea as the excuse for shipping arms and men to the vicinity of Formosa.

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Fredens Tilhaengere. The campaign to collect Danish signatures for the Stockholm appeal has collapsed and must be started all over again. The revival must be under way by the time Fredens Tilhaengere holds its congress in the fall of 1950. The number of signatures collected before the drive expired was good, but not extraordinary. Larsen stated that he knew of no other country in which the Stockholm appeal had been sabotaged as effectively as in Denmark. He also found the attitude of many DKP members toward the peace campaign unfortunate: "The attitude of some of the comrades is, 'if we're going to have war, let's get it over with!'" Larsen pointed out that this outlook, based upon the belief that capitalism can not survive another war, is erroneous and hampers the Party peace campaign. A good Party member must not advocate war, because "the damage which would result from atomic bombs in a future war would be so great that it could not be remedied within a century." The time may come when the populations of the various countries will voluntarily reject capitalism. The greatest factor in preventing war at this time is the Communist peace campaign, and all Communists must remember that they can harm the capitalists most by preventing them from making war.

The DKP and Propaganda for the USSR. This problem has been discussed in Central Committee meetings. The Central Committee has decided that the DKP has been seriously at fault in failing to inform its members adequately "concerning what the USSR really is, and that it is a socialist state". Larsen is willing to wager that within the ranks of the DKP itself there are actually many members who have no idea of what the USSR is and what the People's Democracies are like. "If an adequate educational campaign had been begun in 1945 the attitude toward the USSR would be very different than it is today. It was very sad that when the Communists in Czechoslovakia made such colossal progress in 1948, Communism in Denmark slipped back so badly. This would not have happened if the public had been adequately informed on what the People's Democracies really were."

Difficulties of the DKP Press. Larsen reported that circulation of Land og Folk has declined steadily throughout the past six months. The Party feels that the size of Land og Folk editions must be increased at this time for political reasons, but does not have the funds this step would require. Land og Folke Ugeblad is, according to Aksel Larsen, widely criticized because it is too much like Land og Folk. This is true, but is entirely the result of the serious financial situation of the DKP press: Because of lack of funds, Ugeblad is forced to reprint articles which have appeared during the week in Land og Folk. He stated that he knew of no other country in which the Communist press is boycotted by advertisers as completely as it is in Denmark, adding that while the Swedish Communist Party is less influential in Sweden than the DKP in Denmark, the Swedish Communist paper Ny Dag carries far more advertising than Land og Folk.

Strength of Scandinavian Communist Parties. "...From any viewpoint, the present situation confronts us with colossal and unescapable responsibilities. We are placed at one of the most serious sectors of the front, and we may as well admit that it is one of the sectors where the work for peace seems to be weakest..." Larsen continued this theme with the explanation that because of Social Democratic strength in the Scandinavian labor movement, it is "the three countries with Social Democratic governments that have succeeded to some extent in isolating the peace movement..." so that the peace campaign has been less successful than in other countries, such as France. (In this connection Larsen excepted England from the list of countries with Social Democratic governments, because there "the Social Democratic party really isn't entirely a Social Democratic party".)

DKP Election Expenses. Aksel Larsen warned his hearers that the provincial branches of the Party would have to handle the problem of election expenses independently, since they could expect no assistance from Copenhagen.

4. The director of the conference (an unidentified man from Odense) discussed the failure of the DKP in Odense to make the most of its opportunities in Odense industrial centers, particularly the Thrigo plant and Odense Stealskibsvaerft.

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He stated the Odense Communists take a defeatist attitude toward the possibility of organizing within these two establishments, because Thrige is divided into so many separate sections that it is impossible to make contacts in all of them and at Odense Staalskibesvaerft "there are two slipways, four ships, many machine shops and offices, each isolated so that DKP members in one cannot contact workers in the others." The speaker stated that "we must make our members in these places see that the various units at Thrige and at Staalskibesvaerftet and in other establishments are connected and that it is possible...for each comrade to find people in the various sections and gradually get them all together...They have never tried to get together on an assignment within one factory so that we can join the links in all the various sections to make a natural connection with the Odense City Leadership of the DKP..." and through that to the Party Leadership. He stated that a "political action leadership" must be established in each of the large factories.

5. Dr. Minar Kruse of Odense reported on the work of the Fredens Tilhaengere committee which was established in Odense in the spring of 1950. "It may be a little too pink, but it does include good, well-known elements outside the Party... Aside from the committee itself we are trying to get well-known people all over Fyn to sign a statement supporting the committee. We believe that it is time for a public statement by good, respectable people who are not known as Communists or as any other kind of rascals. The Committee ordered a special number of Kaasen for Freden, in an edition of 35,000 to 36,000 copies...The distribution didn't work out very smoothly, and a lot of criticism could be made of the paper editorially, but we did succeed in getting most of it distributed among Odense households and some of it got out into the coastal towns. In the coastal towns, however, the peace campaign and the work of establishing peace committees has been weak..." Dr. Kruse stated that the Odense committee hoped to have subsidiary committees in the near future in Middelfart and in Svendborg, but that in Nyborg they had been unable to find well-known non-Communists to head the committee. "...Where the peace work in rural areas is concerned the situation is even weaker...Many communities, especially on Langeland and in some areas of Fyn, have established committees, but the really broad committee work has just not taken hold."
6. Dr. Kruse stated that the bright spot in the work of Fredens Tilhaengere in Odense was that "the peace project has succeeded in bringing in some entirely new forces whom we have not had as activists in the Party before and who have never before been active in political movements, peace campaigns or anything else. It is especially the women, who are trooping into Kvindernes Demokratiske Verdensforbund (WIDF)..." The speaker reported that "The work has also been taken up among the old Resistance people. We got a group of them together-- people we knew and worked with during the occupation--mostly our people and a few others, and explained that continuation of the work of the Resistance now lies in the peace campaign. It can readily be understood if one thinks the thing through that we were on rather thin ice here. The Resistance people are still people who want to see tangible results. They want something to happen. They want speed. People with that mentality...might very easily...get out of control, and might become a rallying point for provocateurs, so that they could easily be exploited against both the Party and the peace campaign. We therefore told these old comrades that we wanted only signatures for the Stockholm appeal and support for Fredens Tilhaengere, and nothing else. We are not winking an eye and saying, 'You understand--we are starting a little group, and this is the way we are beginning.' We told them very plainly that we didn't want that kind of thing. We debated the question, and I believe they understood that there are several distinguished comrades who are going on with this work. I also believe that we will succeed in this way in getting many good contacts in the industrial plants, since all these Resistance people in Odense are people who are well known and respected in their places of employment, and who have not heretofore attracted attention politically. With the Party comrades and other elements we have in the industrial centers, these people will be able to help a great deal when we are ready to establish peace committees, which is our principal task."

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7. Kruse stated that the Dalum Section of the Party has between 40 and 50 members, but that in the Dalum municipal election of March 1950 "a couple of hundred votes" were cast for the DKP. The Dalum Section had reached an impasse in its efforts to establish a local peace committee, because it had been unable to sign up non-Communist members. They had come to Dr. Kruse to ask whether they should give up the attempt to form a committee, or should "make up a committee of...people who can not deny, when asked, that they are Party members." Kruse had, he told the conference, explained to the Dalum comrades that "in my opinion it would not be advisable to set up an all-Communist committee. We have the Stockholm appeal, and in the manifestos of the World Committee of Partisans of Peace we have as wonderful a basis for mass movement as we could want. We have never had such possibilities of getting people into conversation in a simple and easily understandable way, and to talk to them about the things which are in everyone's mind and in which everyone can take an interest--things which do not demand great political insight or speaking talent. On this basis we must create a broad movement--broadly inclusive committees. These will naturally vary somewhat in color--redder in some localities than in others--but to set up committees consisting of Party members would...be a decisive error. We wouldn't need committees if we were to do that. We wouldn't need a peace campaign. We could simply refer to the Party statements on war and peace and consider that everything necessary had been said on the case for peace."
8. Dr. Kruse stated that Fredens Tilhaengere and the DKP suffer from a common fault--lack of initiative. Fredens Tilhaengere "has not, for example, been able to act against the hysteria in the (non-Communist) press. This shouldn't be such a colossal problem--these mean, baseless articles about Fredens Tilhaengere in the local press. You needn't be a professor to see that these must be answered, and that the simplest way to begin is to organize letters to the editors. They might not all be published, but they would all get into the editorial offices. It doesn't take any great mental capacity to organize telephone calls to the editors protesting against this kind of thing."
9. The speaker warned that members must not allow themselves to be drawn into arguments concerning the likelihood of war, who was the aggressor in Korea, and so forth, but must--particularly to hold the bourgeois elements--find points upon which there was not apt to be serious disagreement, and stick to those. "The viewpoint on which we do agree is that the atomic bomb must be forbidden and that we will fight for peace. We stand on the basis of the Stockholm appeal.."
10. [REDACTED] and it is a decisive weakness that we have not been able to set up local committees or to organize a really systematic signature collection campaign in the big industrial plants--and we have not been able to do so. Just now we have 7,000 signatures in Odense, and no more..." He stated that further work was impossible until the summer vacation season ended.
11. Concerning the future of Fredens Tilhaengere, Dr. Kruse said, "The Odense committee is based upon the Stockholm appeal and upon nothing else. This means that the collection of signatures will end eventually...and new assignments will have to be made as the need arises. However, collection of signatures is still the essential and the most important thing, and...we must blow life into the project".
12. Helmut Jorgensen spoke as representative of the DKU in Odense. His speech was a long complaint that the Party adults pay too little attention to the DKU, and that the DKU members themselves show too little initiative. He stated that the DKU in Odense has thrown all its energies into the peace campaign, but has shown too little independence...Members sit around and wait for literature and directives from Copenhagen or from the Odense City Leadership, rather than going ahead on their own...Another fault, in Jorgensen's view, is that "the DKU members are apt to regard all young people who are outside the DKU as political illiterates, beyond hope of redemption...We regard the DKU as a Communist Party No. 2, in which there is a place only for convinced Marxist youth." He quoted an unidentified Central Committee member who had said in a speech before the DKP Central Committee

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on 5 January 1950 that "we must understand the primary place of the DKU within the Communist movement. The DKU is the Party liaison--its transmission line to the broad masses of youth...We need a youth movement at least ten times as extensive as our Party. The DKU must not be a Communist Party No. 2. There can be only one Communist Party." He further quoted Ib Norlund, "...The Party does not adequately understand the youth question...or the significance of the DKU in the further development of the Party, as a connecting link in the training of young voters...In the Party sections the DKU is often regarded almost as a drag on the Party--a nuisance which under certain circumstances the Party would not be sorry to see disappear." Jorgensen also complained about the number of DKF parents whose children never joined the DKU. "Party members regard the DKU only as a source of assistance when there are newspapers, handbills and posters to be distributed. They never take an interest in increasing their influence over the young people they meet at work or at home. It would mean a great deal if our Party comrades in the work centers would look out for the young people--apprentices, young workers--because workers as able as our Party comrades usually are can exert a powerful influence on young people who are beginning work in a factory. If such young people once gain confidence in one of our Party comrades it is not a long way from that point to the DKU..."

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