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17.9.69

BRITISH EMBASSY,
MOSCOW.

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- (3/17)
1. Mr. Ferguson (we spoke)
 2. Parker.
- L 18/9

17 September 1969

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REGISTRY
18 SEP 1969
ENS 3/15

Dear John

Anglo-Soviet Parliamentary Group

Thank you for your letter reference ENS 3/15 of 28 August about the visit of Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P., and Mr. Paul Channon, M.P.

2. It so happened that when boarding an aircraft at London airport on Thursday, 4 September, I found myself sitting next to this group, and was able to have quite a long talk with them during the journey. Subsequently, they all came to the Embassy one day last week for a drink and to talk things over with the Ambassador. Nothing very much emerged from this: they had been on the usual expeditions, to Leningrad and Volgograd, and the political content of their visit up to that moment had been small. One point of interest was that they had been pressed by one of their Soviet hosts about the likely identity of the next Chairman of the Group, a post now vacant as a result of the death of Sir Cyril Osborne. The two M.P.'s seemed to detect some anxiety in Soviet minds about the next Chairman, not I think on the grounds that some prominent anti-Soviet figure might be selected, but mainly because of the Soviet feeling that the Group should issue more invitations to its Soviet counterpart, and play a more active role in developing these contacts in the recent past. They also reported that offence had apparently been voiced in Volgograd about the cancellation of a visit to Britain at the invitation of the City of Coventry, a decision taken by the city after the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

3. The Ambassador had the impression that the Members of Parliament did not speak up as they might have done on this issue. Indeed, Mrs. Thatcher said that she had found it impossible, as a guest, to reply frankly to the Volgograd officials; and appeared to be rather concerned about this - it is certainly one of the main difficulties about being an official guest in the U.S.S.R.

L 19/9 ma.

Yours etc
Tom.

(Bridges)

S. J. G. Cambridge, Esq.,
Eastern European and Soviet Department,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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RECEIVED IN
-8 AUG 1969
ENS 3/15

Mr. Cambridge, *L 8/8*
E.E.S.D.

You recently gave Mr. Julius Silverman M.P. briefing on his forthcoming visit to the Soviet Union as a member of the Anglo/Soviet Parliamentary Group. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, Conservative M.P. for Finchley, telephoned me today to say that she and Mr. Paul Channon M.P. (Southend) would be representing the Opposition in the delegation, and she also asked for briefing for the trip.

2. Accordingly I gave her your name and telephone number, and she will contact you on her return to London in about two weeks time for a similar briefing. Mr. Channon will not be able to join her, but she will pass on any necessary points to him.

K.I. Ferguson
(K.I. Ferguson)
7 August, 1969

noted
B.U. 18 August

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28.8.69

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FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE,

LONDON, S.W.1.

(ENS 3/15)

28 August, 1969.

Anglo-Soviet Parliamentary Group

Thank you for your letter of 26 August.

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(4)

2. What I omitted to tell you in my letter of 31 July - because I did not know at the time - is that Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P., and Mr. Paul Channon, M.P., are also to visit the Soviet Union as Fedoseev's guests. They will be arriving in Moscow by air on 4 September and will leave on the 14th. The Soviet Embassy here have been rather dilatory in arranging visas; but the latest I hear suggests that all will probably be all right in time for Mrs. Thatcher and Mr. Channon to leave as planned. Mrs. Channon may be in the party, but I have not been able to confirm this.

3. I am not clear why the Russians have arranged separate visits like this: perhaps they thought that the Socialist and Conservative M.P.s would not be very happy in each other's company.

4. Mrs. Thatcher is coming to see me on 2 September (after the bag leaves). If there is anything of consequence to add to the above, I shall send you a telegram.

(S.J.G. Cambridge)

The Hon. T.E. Bridges,
MOSCOW.

*Mr. Partridge (EWCD) was
the M.
Gus
Kelling*

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CYPHER/CAT A
PRIORITY FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH OFFICE TO MOSCOW
TELNO 780 2 SEPTEMBER 1969. (EN)

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ANGLO-SOVIET PARLIAMENTARY GROUP: CAMBRIDGE'S LETTER OF 28 AUGUST.

MRS. THATCHER HAS STILL BEEN TOLD VERY LITTLE BY THE RUSSIANS ABOUT THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THIS VISIT. SHE IS UNDERSTANDABLY WORRIED THAT THERE MAY BE NO-ONE AT THE AIRPORT ON 4 SEPTEMBER TO MEET HER. WOULD YOU PLEASE CHECK WITH FEDASEEV THAT SHE AND THE CHANNONS WILL BE MET?

STEWART

FILES:
E.E.S.D.

RESTRICTED

M.
Gru.
Wix

ENS 3/15 ✓

Miss Hughes

Anglo-Soviet Parliamentary Group

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f (10)

A number of our M.P.s, members of this Group, have recently visited the Soviet Union. The attached letter from the Embassy in Moscow reports the Russians as showing interest in when their side is going to be invited to London. The Embassy think we should encourage our M.P.s to ~~visit~~ ^{invite} the Russians.

2. Sir C. Osborne, who was the British Chairman of the Group, issued invitations to some of the Russians for a visit in November; but the invitations were personal ones and have presumably lapsed with Sir C. Osborne's death.

Recommendation

3. Mr. Thomson should have a word with Mr. Julius Silverman, M.P., Vice-Chairman of the Group, to find out how matters stand and, if necessary, gently ~~to~~ encourage the Group to reactivate Sir C. Osborne's invitations.

Background and argument

4. Mrs. Thatcher, M.P., another member of the Group, told me at the beginning of September that she thought a successor to Sir C. Osborne would be elected fairly early in the new session of Parliament. She mentioned no names; but it seems on the cards that Mr. Silverman will succeed ~~him~~.

5. The Russians are obviously intent on building up the exchanges in the Anglo-Soviet Parliamentary Group, if only to show that the invasion of Czechoslovakia is forgotten.

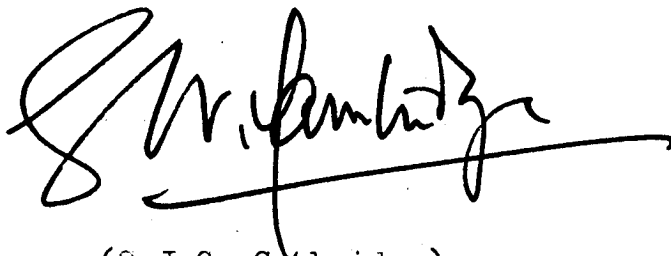
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All the same, the Group is a useful point of contact with the Russians, and the visits to and fro do enable us on occasions to put our views across. We should therefore encourage the Group's activities.

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6. A list of the British members of the Group is attached.



(S.J.G. Cambridge)
31 October, 1969.

Copy to

Mr. Ferguson

I spoke to Mr. Silvester yesterday
He has now become Chairman. They
had already considered receiving the
subscription and he was very glad to
have had a visit and a blessing.

h. 12/2