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COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND CULTURAL RELATIONS

NATO ATLANTIC EXHIBITION 1952 - 1954
ITALY, GREECE, TURKEY, FRANCE

Report by the Director of Information

BACKGROUND

The idea of a travelling exhibition to explain to the peoples of the NATO countries the origin and purpose of the North Atlantic Treaty, together with the agencies concerned with its implementation, goes back to May 1951. The scheme was worked out by NATO Information Service with the technical assistance of the Presentation Branch of a member country who offered to be responsible for the construction and financing of the exhibition.

2. The exhibition, which was housed in a large tent and four expandable trailers, had two themes: first, that of NATO as a whole, and secondly, the rôle in NATO of the individual country where the exhibition was being shown. This theme varied from one country to another. Every possible device was used for attracting attention and interest, and for driving home the importance of NATO: photographs, graphic displays, moving devices, pagivolts, vitrisopes, cinaffiche, illuminated panels, maps, cinema repeaters and films (15 and 35 mm.)

Part I - NATO Theme

3. The exhibition began by recalling (Trailer No. 1), through photographs, the happy days of 1945, after the defeat of Germany and Japan, when the Western World was living in hopes of continued peace and looking forward to repairing the destruction caused by war; then came (tent) the reminder of Soviet armed strength and the acts of Soviet aggression between 1945 and 1950. Next, under the heading "The Answer to the Threat", exhibits showed how the NATO countries came together on equal terms for the defence of peace and freedom. From this, the exhibition illustrated NATO's resources for the defence of peace, together with its economic possibilities, and explained the military framework of the organization. At the same time, stress was laid on the possibility of collaboration between the member states outside the purely military field (Article 2 of the Treaty).

Part II - the National Theme

4. Trailers 2 and 3 were placed at the disposal of the government receiving the exhibition to house a national exhibition, explaining that country's contribution and position and its relation to the Alliance as a whole.

VISIT OF THE EXHIBITION TO NATO COUNTRIES

5. ITALY: The first visit of the exhibition was to Italy. At the Italian Government's request, the exhibition was shown under the name of the "Caravan of Peace". During the period February to August 1952, it made a very successful tour of the principal Italian cities (Naples, Rome, Bologna, Milan, Bari, Genoa, Turin, Florence and Venice) where it was seen by 1,542,815 visitors.

6. GREECE: The Greek Government then asked for the exhibition. After adaptation, it visited Salonika and Athens (September to November 1952) and in these two centres it was seen by 755,148 people.

7. TURKEY: From Greece, the exhibition went to Turkey at the request of the Turkish Government. Between January and March 1953 it was shown in Ankara, Izmir and Istanbul. Here again it had a very favourable reception: visitors numbered 420,473.

8. FRANCE: In January, 1953, the Secretary General drew the attention of the French Government to the value of the exhibition and to the results it had achieved in other NATO countries, and asked whether France would like to see it on its return from Turkey. The French Government accepted the offer and a committee was set up to adapt the themes to French public opinion. It was decided to call the French version "Exposition Atlantique - Défense de la Paix". The national part of the exhibition covered the French defence effort as a whole, and the French struggle against communism in Indochina, as well as the French contribution to the Korean campaign.

9. On 3rd September, 1953, the preview of the exhibition took place in the presence of members of the French Delegation to NATO, senior French officials, and NATO staff members. Between 16th September, 1953, and 24th June, 1954, the exhibition visited Strasbourg, Lille, Paris, Lyon, Marseille, Toulon, Nice, Bordeaux, Rennes, Nantes and Le Havre, where it closed on 24th June. The total number of visitors during the French run totalled 1,099,860.

Comments

10. The presence of the exhibition gave rise in each of the four countries visited to numerous press articles, to broadcast commentaries and extensive newsreel-coverage (see Annex attached).

11. Other member countries have shown an interest in the exhibition, but unfortunately, in March 1954, the Information Division was advised that it could not expect further financial support for this project. In view of the cost involved it was found impossible to meet further requests, and this popular exhibition was therefore discontinued.

12. However, in view of the success of the exhibition in France, the French Government recently requested that a revised and smaller version of the Atlantic Exhibition be made available to tour provincial towns and rural districts in France.

13. This new exhibition, to be called "Amitié Atlantique", will lay more stress "on the idea of the Atlantic Community than on the notion of defence against a Soviet menace". It will consist of four trucks and trailers.

14. The French authorities have informed NATO that they will be financially responsible for the preparation and operation of this new exhibition. The Information Division, for its part, welcomes the initiative of the French Government and will furnish such technical assistance as may be required.

15. This report is sent to members of the Committee for information only and will not appear on a Committee Agenda.

(Signed) G. PARSONS Jr.

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ANNEX to
MC/52-D/54

ATLANTIC EXHIBITION - RECAPITULATORY TABLE

Dates	Attendance	Showing days	Column coverage in inches	Photographs	Radio	Publications distributed
<u>ITALY</u> : 16th February 1952 3rd August 1952	1,542,875	110	2,682	61	2h.37	1,242,160
<u>GREECE</u> : 7th September 1952 2nd November 1952	785,118	50	437	17		194,114
<u>TURKEY</u> : 10th January 1953 5th March 1953	420,473	29	1,735	81	3h.15	578,446
<u>FRANCE</u> : 16th September 1953 24th June 1954	1,099,860	158	1,996	34	2h.40	600,100
<u>TOTAL</u>	3,818,296	347	6,850	193	8h.32	2,614,820