YUGOSLAVS STRONGLY OPPOSING SOVIET HEGEMONIC AIMS

Summary: The Yugoslav information media have continued condemning the aggression against Czechoslovakia. In the opinion of the Yugoslav journalists great internal difficulties in the Soviet Union should be blamed for the occupation of Czechoslovakia and for the fierce anti-Yugoslav campaign in Moscow, Sofia, Budapest, East Berlin and Sofia. The Yugoslavs are, however, convinced that -- as in 1955 when Nikita Khrushchev made his Canossa-like trip to Belgrade -- the Soviet leaders will eventually be repentant of the actions they have taken against Prague and of the pressure they now exert upon the Communist Parties and countries resolutely rejecting any kind of Russian hegemony.

"Those people in the Soviet Union who constitute the top of the colossal bureaucratic pyramid have ordered a total neo-Stalinist campaign against the essence of the Yugoslav revolution and its leaders." This claim was made recently in a Belgrade weekly, (1) which insisted that the present leaders in the Kremlin are even worse than Stalin himself. Both the occupation of Czechoslovakia and the fierce attacks against Yugoslavia reveal, according to the weekly, that something is wrong in the Soviet Union itself. A Zagreb weekly also said that "it is obvious that very great internal difficulties" in the Soviet Union have been the reason for the current aggressive policy of its leaders. (2) The Zagreb paper added that in

(1) Ekonomika politika, Belgrade, 22-29 September 1968.
(2) Vjesnik u srijedu, Zagreb, 25 September 1968.
Moscow "all ideological-political excuses have been worked out to justify all possible actions."

Both the Belgrade and Zagreb weeklies said that the basis for the Kremlin's aggressive actions is neo-hegemony. In the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary and East Germany, the Belgrade weekly said editorially, the leaders have abandoned "economic reforms, experiments with democratization and decentralization, because they are afraid that such measures would provoke processes feared by a bureaucracy unable, due to its narrow-mindedness, to understand them at all." The Belgrade weekly said:

It is well known in Moscow, Sofia, Budapest, [East] Berlin and Warsaw that all the stories about a counter-revolution in Czechoslovakia and about revisionism in the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, which allegedly has helped the counterrevolution, are smoke-screens aimed at camouflaging an attempt to regiment and to introduce discipline and hierarchical order within the camp; in this way all progressive forces are to be resisted... [For instance], our system of workers' self-management has freed society of the rule of a caste; this is why Moscow fears this system... [This is why they] have shamelessly offended the Yugoslav people and a revolutionary such as Tito... But here they have committed a mistake; not only in the eyes of the Yugoslavs, but in the eyes of the whole progressive and democratic world.... Yugoslavia is a small country and the League of Communists of Yugoslavia a small Party. However, even as a small country and a small Party we have never fled when some one of the big [powers] spit upon us.

According to the director of Vjesnik u srijedu, Pavol Novak, the Soviet leaders have made three miscalculations: 1) they have wrongly appraised the resistance of the Czechoslovak Communists, who resolutely rejected any "fifth column" collaboration; 2) the Russians have wrongly appraised the reaction of the international workers' movement "from which the Soviet Union, for the first time, has become isolated;" and 3) they have mistakenly judged the effect of their pressure upon Yugoslavia.

In Novak's opinion the present critics of Yugoslavia in Moscow "will one day be repentant of their statements" as they have been once in the past. In this connection, the Yugoslav press has started publishing articles on Tito's conflict with Cominform. A Belgrade daily recently published a thus far unknown statement by Nikita Khrushchev, made soon after his visit in Belgrade in May 1955. The statement, originally published in Vilko Vinterhalter's book The Life Road of Josip Broz Tito which has just appeared in Belgrade, was made
"at an intimate dinner." Khrushchev repeated his well-known accusations against Stalin and said that everything said against Tito and Yugoslavia between 1948 and 1955 were lies. Said Khrushchev:

Well, comrades, let us recall the warnings that were made at the time we discussed our trip to Yugoslavia, when I told my friends that we should go there. I was given a friendly slap on the shoulder: "Watch your step and keep both eyes open; they even might kill you there!" But why, comrades? Nobody believed that there were US bases in Yugoslavia. There was no doubt that our Yugoslav comrades had not sold themselves to the Americans. In the course of working out the directives for our delegation [to Belgrade], for negotiations — diplomats know how all this is done — we discussed whether socialism was prevailing in Yugoslavia and what was actually prevailing there; we discussed whether these people [the Yugoslav] would like to cooperate. This was a problem, although everything was clear, for we knew Comrade Tito and Comrade Kardelj as Bolsheviks who worked in the Leninist school. But the psychosis created was bad. Even my daughter, a pupil in the 10th grade, asked me after I said we would go [to Belgrade]: "What, you're going to the Fascists?" But she should not be blamed; we are guilty. I answered: "You pig, how do you know they are Fascists! You do not understand this thing at all!"  

Bureaucratic Agony

In the above-mentioned issue of Vjesnik u srijedu the chief editor, Kresimir Dzeba, said that "in the Soviet Union forces resolved to defend until the end the dogmatic and bureaucratic basis of the 'universal [Soviet] model' have won the upper hand." These forces, Dzeba added, "brutally resist any thorough evolution." However, "the fact that they made this last, almost desperate move [the occupation] indicates that bureaucratic socialist concepts and bloc-type practices are going through political and economic agony." The aggression against Czechoslovakia was "the culminating point" at which the bureaucratic forces, "fearing new ideas", started using all possible means to defend outlived practices. All this is being done, in Dzeba's opinion, to avert people's attention from the great difficulties which the invaders are having on their own home-fronts. If, for instance, Dzeba said, the Polish press criticizes the Yugoslav economic system, the Polish readers must pose the following questions:

But what about the Polish economy, which, for the past twenty years, has not been able to solve the problem of

(3) Politika, Belgrade, 26 September 1968.
supplying lemons and nylon raincoats? What about our [Polish] living standard? How does our [Polish] "non-abstract" sovereignty look? How about the Party, the Army? [But it is impossible for Polish critics of the Yugoslav system to discuss anything at all]. For whereas Polish analysts and ideologists see a "way out" and the "solution" to our individual problems, we see the causes of those problems and look for the solution in quite different corners.... (4)

Moscow's "White Book" On Czechoslovakia Counterproductive

Under the title "Documentation Of A Method," the Tanjug correspondent in Moscow, Aleksandar Veselinovic, said in a Zagreb daily that the "White Book" on Czechoslovakia, published recently in Moscow by the "Press Group of Soviet Journalists," gave almost "no facts, documents or certificates" that Czechoslovakia has been endangered by a counterrevolution. In Veselinovic's opinion the "White Book" is the best proof that the Russians have not been able to justify their aggression against Czechoslovakia. Said Veselinovic:

Even the most naive reader would hardly believe in the nightmare of a counterrevolution after having read the brochure and after coming to the conclusion that nearly every argument concerning the existence of a counterrevolution is made exclusively by quotation of Western newspapers. (5)

Veselinovic said that the "White Book" has even revealed certain important facts which the authors most certainly did not intend to discuss. First of all, the pamphlet admits that the troops of the five invading countries entered Czechoslovakia not because somebody in Prague invited them to come, as was originally claimed, but rather that the Soviet Union and its satellites "were compelled to take extreme measures including the employment of armed forces in the territory of the [Czechoslovak] republic." Veselinovic also said that in the "White Book" it is admitted that the so-called "underground radio stations" were actually operated by authorized persons who simply used the installations existing in Czechoslovakia for the case of a war and operated by the Czechoslovak Army.

(4) Vjesnik u srijedu, 25 September 1968.
(5) Vjesnik, Zagreb, 26 September 1968.
The fact that Yugoslavia was not mentioned at all in the "White Book" Veselinovic explains with the assumption that the brochure was obviously sent to the printing press before the anti-Yugoslav campaign was begun.

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