

CURT - (B) CRITICISM

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News Background

CURT -- BELGARIAN CRITIQUE OF WESTERN SOCIALISTS;
"DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM"

MUNICH, January 13 (LEASON) -- At a time when MOSCOW is apparently attempting to build a "popular front" of Western Communist and Socialist Parties against the "enemies of peace", the Bulgarian Communist Party has attacked "the bourgeois and reformist left-wing parties" of the West for their "empty" and "formal" democracy.

A radio talk (January 9) over Radio SOFIA by Kiril IVANOV entitled "For Correct Observation of the Principle of Democratic Centralism" contained the charge that democracy in these Western parties is only formal because the "will of the majority cannot be implemented... The continuous struggles between the individual groups and fractions, which are normal in them, are a serious impediment to reaching decisions which will protect the interests of the majority. Even if such decisions are taken they remain on paper."

Properly operating "democratic centralism" in the "socialist" states, IVANOV said, is therefore the "object of fierce attacks" by the reaction. Helpers of the latter are "various contemporary revisionists and opportunists" who "turn themselves inside out in order to present the Communist Party as an organization in which democracy is lacking, to show that it is impossible to combine democracy with centralism".

But, "it is not in the bourgeois and reformists' parties that a real democracy exists, but in the Communists' Parties alone," IVANOV said.

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One of the points of the "Communist and workers' Parties" declaration signed in MOSCOW in November last year, was that the Communist Parties outside the Soviet sphere "seek co-operation" with these same socialist parties to attain "better conditions for the working people, for preservation and extension of democratic rights, winning and maintaining national independence and peace among nations and also in the struggle for winning power and building socialism..."

The MOSCOW declaration -- called by first secretary of the Slovak Communist Party, BACILEK (in a speech January 11), "the basic political line for the world Communist movement" -- was followed

up in a recent (January 7) "Pravda" article with a new appeal for joint action between Western Communists and socialists.

The article, written by D. SHEVLYAGIN (identified as a "responsible worker" with the Central Committee CPSU) was called "major" by the LONDON "Daily Worker" which quoted it January 10. It was also printed in extracted form in the Hungarian Communist Party paper "Nepszabadsag" of January 10.

SHEVLYAGIN, according to the "Worker", gave the first full-length analysis of the replies of socialist parties in the West to appeals made by the CPSU last October for joint action against the war danger in the Middle East. The article found, said the newspaper, that the British, Italian and German socialists had left the door open to further contacts while the Belgian, Dutch and French "right-wing socialist leaders" were criticized for their "negative attitude".

SHEVLYAGIN stated that the "historic responsibility" for preventing war devolves on the Communists and socialists "as leaders of the overwhelming majority of the working people in many capitalist countries." The writer continued that the present anti-war activity of the socialists is curbing the aggressive intentions of the imperialists but that socialist influence would be incomparably greater if they worked with the Communists.

As in the November declaration, SHEVLYAGIN says the main stumbling block in the way of joint action is the attitude of "right-wing socialist party leaders" who claim that co-operation is impossible because of ideological differences.

It would appear that the attitude of such Communists as the Bulgarian -- whose "hard" position is presumably reflected somewhere in MOSCOW -- is also a stumbling block.

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IVANOV said Lenin "established democratic centralism as a basic and firm principle in building a party of a new type and in an irreconcilable and consistent struggle against the organizational opportunism and revisionism of the parties of the Second International." These parties had denied the necessity of strict discipline.

Only Communist Parties are built democratically, said IVANOV. Only in Communist Parties does the will of the majority dominate. "This means that after the discussion of a given question by all members of the organization has taken place and a majority decision has been adopted, the decision becomes obligatory for all members of the organization, including those who did not agree with it. They are bound to comply with the will of the majority."

"Real democracy" must combine with "centralism", IVANOV wrote, and in turn "centralism without democracy becomes a military and bureaucratic centralism which freezes the initiative of Party

CURT-②-③ CRITICISM

NEWS BACKGROUND REPORT, No.13/58, page 3

1-140

members, leads to stereotyped behavior and dogmatism in Party work."

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The French Socialist Party's general secretary, Guy MOLLET, comes in for separate criticism by IVANOV. The will of French socialists on such problems as Algeria, which was expressed at a party congress in 1956, was "rudely disregarded", according to IVANOV, and this illustrates the "actual situation of democracy in the reformist parties."

End

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