

5 November 1968

"THE SED AND THE CPCS"

Summary: In a major article entitled "The SED and the CPCS," which appeared nearly simultaneously with similar analyses in the Polish Trybuna Ludu and the Soviet Pravda, the SED once again outlined the situation in the CSSR leading to the events of 21 August and expressed dissatisfaction with the present CPCS leadership for its failure to implement the Dresden, Moscow, Warsaw, Cierna and Bratislava agreements.

East Germany does not tire of the subject of "Czechoslovak revisionism." Neues Deutschland had hardly finished reprinting the speeches made during the Ninth SED-CC Plenum, all of which dealt with the CSSR and justified the intervention in one form or another, when a full-page unsigned article was published in the main SED daily which once again reviewed the developments leading to the 21st August invasion and expressed strong dissatisfaction with the performance of the present Czechoslovak Party leadership.

Despite the repetition of many arguments expressed during the 22-25 October Plenum, the present article takes on additional importance because, for one, it is unsigned, therefore representing a programmatic platform of the SED on the present Czechoslovak situation, and for another, because the article appeared nearly simultaneously with equally sharp attacks against the CSSR in both the Polish Trybuna Ludu (1) and the Soviet Pravda. (2) The coinciding publication dates by the three main dailies of the CPSU, the PZPR and the SED can only signify a concerted effort by the Soviet Union, Poland and East Germany to bring the Czechoslovak leadership to heel now, at the time of the October Revolution ceremonies.

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1. 3 November 1968, on the same day as the Neues Deutsch and piece.
  2. 4 November 1968.

### Past Sins of the Czechoslovak Leadership

After having stressed the long common road of the Czechoslovak and the East German parties in their struggle against fascism, the East German article claimed "general concern among all strata of the East German population" about the policy of the CPCS during the past few months (3) for the latter's underestimation, or even ignoring, of the rise of alleged "organized anti-socialist, bourgeois-nationalist and rightist forces in the CSSR." Neues Deutschland admitted that the "former CPCS leadership failed to overcome serious shortcomings in the country" which, according to the article, was the reason why the SED supported the decisions of the January and May Plenums, which resolved to deal with the accumulated problems.

With this statement recognizing the mistakes of the "former leadership", i.e. of the Novotny regime, the SED stated explicitly that it has no desire to reestablish the former leadership or to identify itself with it -- a small concession to the Dubcek group, but one entirely in accordance with Soviet policy.

Continuing to describe the chronological developments, Neues Deutschland referred to the loss of the leading role of the Party in the CSSR; the post-January alleged anti-Soviet campaign by the mass media, which were said to be dominated by nationalist intellectuals; the rise of the pluralist ideology; the intended collaboration of the socialist economy with capitalist monopolies; the tolerance of a "creeping counter-revolution" which was aided and abetted by Bonn's new Ostpolitik; the under-estimation by responsible Czechoslovak functionaries of the dangers of revanchism, etc. The paper also claimed that a large number of these concepts, which are "unacceptable to Marxism-Leninism," had been incorporated into the Action Program which was adopted by the April Plenum of the CPCS. In other words, the Action Program is plainly unacceptable to the SED. This is not new, as generally only the January and May Plenums are mentioned favorably, but it is the first time that the Action Program has been mentioned as containing un-Marxist, un-Leninist principles.

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2. It is not clear from this passage whether "the past few months" refers to pre- or post-August events. From the context, however, it is likely that pre-invasion developments are meant here.



Specifically mentioned as individuals who had misused the mass media were only such intellectuals as Svítak, Goldstuecker, Liehm, Kohout, Prohazka "and others"; there were no direct attacks by name on leading functionaries.

Having recognized this dangerous situation, Neues Deutschland continued, the SED and the other fraternal parties offered the CPCS every possible political assistance. This was done at the conferences of Dresden, Moscow, Warsaw, Cierna, Bratislava and at the bilateral meeting between the CPCS and the SED at Karlovy Vary. However, though everything was done to "help the CPCS to solve the crisis, the steps commonly agreed upon were not implemented consistently, and the situation deteriorated further."

#### Present Sins

Without repeating that the so-called "political assistance" was followed by military "help," the SED paper asked the CSSR leadership why it is still failing to divulge to the population "the seriousness of the present situation" and the measures agreed upon during previous meetings with the fraternal parties. Why, the paper asked, doesn't the leadership strengthen socialist consciousness, eliminate anti-socialist forces, chase "imperialist secret services" out of the country? The most direct attack against the Czechoslovak leadership launched by Neues Deutschland was:

Indeed, a number of leading functionaries of both Party and government are performing double bookkeeping, are conducting a two-faced policy. They have agreed to common resolutions and have signed them, on the one hand, and, on the other, they don't have any intention of implementing these resolutions. This is also the reason why they have not published the agreements.

Finally, the basic SED article stated that while Czechoslovak Party members and individuals might not understand the events of 21 August, the SED is watching carefully to see how the decisions of 26 August are being implemented. It is clear to the SED, the paper said, that the process of normalization is extremely slow and "full of contradictions" which is due to the fact that "until today, there is no clear evaluation, no Marxist-Leninist view of the developments which followed January of this year." What is needed, according to the GDR's concept, is that "sound communist forces" correctly reappraise the post-January developments in order to defeat mass hysteria, petty-bourgeois and nationalist thinking, since "generalized statements do not help either the economy or socialist evolution."

Conclusion

Besides the SED's compulsive need to justify the intervention of the Warsaw Five, the present article once again clarifies the SED's stand on the present Czechoslovak Party leadership which has become apparent during the Ninth SED-CC Plenum: there is thorough dissatisfaction with Dubcek and his colleagues, though they are not mentioned specifically by name in this instance, primarily for their failure to curb mass media and for their alleged inconsistencies in supporting true Marxist-Leninists, as prescribed by the aforementioned agreements.

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