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EAST GERMANY

French Senator Eyes East BERLIN.

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EVAL. COMMENT: It can only be hoped that the gentleman from France will spread the word among the left-wing zealots in his country, and to reflect on the results of one type of "Socialism."

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Pierre COMMUN, French Senator for the department of Seine-et-Oise and second Secretary General of the French Socialist Party, who has been attending the International Socialist Press Conference in BERLIN, stated on 19 October 1953 that the outstanding impression of his tour of East BERLIN -- the first time he has been behind the Iron Curtain -- was that of "penetrating into another world."

At a press conference which concluded the three-day conference of some forty Socialist editors from eleven European countries and one from Japan, Senator COMMUN declared that he left the Soviet sector of the former German capital with a feeling of "profound sadness. I interpret the prevailing attitude of the people I saw in East BERLIN as one of sullen resignation."

"What a contrast between the shops in East BERLIN and West BERLIN. I am not speaking now of the quality of the goods displayed in them, but of the customers. What struck me about the shops in East BERLIN is that they are so quiet. The customers either say nothing or talk in undertones as if they are afraid of being overheard. They give the impression of people who are afraid to express their opinions because if they do they will get into trouble. The silence of the East BERLIN shops is indeed a striking contrast to the bustle and animation that one notices in the stores in the Western sectors."

Asked what were his reactions to Stalin Allee, the celebrated show street of East BERLIN, the French Senator said that it had not made much an impression on him.

The famous building plan is limited to this boulevard and as a technical achievement it is not impressive. I am a

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Socialist and we Socialists are not as much impressed by the number of smoking chimneys as we are by moral and spiritual values. The Stalin Allee left on me a chilly impression of drab uniformity."

Before adjourning the Congress adopted a resolution declaring that "freedom of information is one of the essential principles of democratic Socialism. Information freedom is one of the fundamental human rights without which every form of government must lead to a dictatorship. The Socialist editors recommended the conclusion of international treaties on the model of the Pact of ROME, guaranteeing the "fundamental freedom of thought and opinion."

End.