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CZECHOSLOVAKIA

COMMUNIST PARTY

Personalities

Deviationists

Criminal activities

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Foreign diplomatic representation

JUSTICE

Show trials

PRAGUE-TRIAL ROUND-UP

SOURCE STOCKHOLM : No information available

DATE OF OBSERVATION : 25 November 1952.

EVAL. COMMENT : This report contains excerpt from various Scandinavian newspapers.

They reflect the natural reaction on the fabricated accusations made during the SLANSKY show trial in PRAGUE. It is interesting to note, that some of the articles still discuss the possibility, that SLANSKY and his acolytes were, in some way, responsible for the fact, that the full Sovietization and exploitation of CSR economy by the Soviet Union did not meet the Soviet expectation. This report was passed straight to the Newsroom when received.

The accusations against MARGOLIUS Rudolf, former minister of foreign trade, for having sabotaged Czechoslovakia's trade with the Scandinavian countries made huge headlines in the Danish, Swedish and Norwegian press today. In all three countries, the accusations are termed as "grotesque and ridiculous," and it is stressed that neither of these countries has been able to conclude particularly favorable trade agreements with the Czechs.

WINTHER Otto Wilhelm, the Swedish Minister to PRAGUE, whom MARGOLIUS described as "a rich and sly Swedish businessman" has never himself been anything near a businessman. He studied economics and joined the foreign service at the age of 25. He is, however, generally regarded as particularly gifted in drawing up trade agreements. Stationed in MADRID for the time being, minister WINTHER declares to the Swedish press that any accusations

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that MARGOLIUS should have helped Sweden i.e. the "capitalists" are more than absurd and groundless. "MARGOLIUS was extremely clever, he always protected the interests of his country and showed great loyalty toward Czechoslovakia," minister WINTHER declares. Swedish business circles point out that, despite MARGOLIUS alleged aid, Sweden's treaty with the Czechs is by no means very advantageous.

The Norwegian Foreign Office released a communiqué on 25 November. "The Norwegian-Czech trade agreements are quite ordinary and not at all particularly in favor to the Norwegians. The last treaty was signed in November 1951 in PRAGUE after discussions lasting a full month.

"According to this agreements," the OSLO Foreign Office goes on, "Norway is to deliver to Czechoslovakia goods for 32 to 33. mill. kronor in exchange for Czech goods worth 49 mill. kronor. The difference is to reduce the Czech debts to Norway, but hitherto Czechoslovakia has done nothing to liquidate this debt. The reason for this is that no agreement can be reached about a delivery of about 30,000 tons of sugar for which the Czechs have charged over-prices". Norwegian business circles say that the very nature of the Czech-Norwegian trade-agreement is enough to discharge the accusations against MARGOLIUS as fabricated and malicious.

The STOCKHOLM "Aftonbladet" takes a rather sinister view of the latest turn of the PRAGUE trial.

"The accusations against minister WINTHER can most certainly be regarded as a continuation of the Soviet Russian polemics in the Catalina-affair." /An unarmed Swedish Catalina aircraft was shot down by the Soviets in the Summer of 1952, the Soviets blaming the Swedes for having violated their territorial waters. The Swedes proved that their plane was over international waters at the time for the attack./ The purpose is to prove once more," says the "Aftonbladet", "that Sweden belongs to the powers that intrigue, spy and conspire against the Soviet Union."

Sweden's leading conservative paper, the STOCKHOLM "Svenska Dagbladet" in an editorial today /25 Nov./ says that the similarities between the witch-trials of former centuries and the PRAGUE trial are perfectly

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obvious. "Satan is here "capitalism" with a few minor potentates to accompany him such as "American imperialism", "Western warmongers," Marshal TITO and now even Sionism and Israel. The least contact with such evils is a sin which can only be atoned by death."

"The Socialist doctrines have been cultivated by the Communists who in their countries represent completely reactionary ideas - combining them with a foreign policy and a propaganda truly imperialistic because the aim is international supremacy of Bolshevism through world revolution."

"There is a Russian proverb saying that panic has large eyes," the "Svenska Dagbladet" continues. "The mere existence of TITO in Yugoslavia must be a nightmare to his former idols." The paper goes on to discuss the reasons for SLANSKY's arrest, contending "that it is more than likely that the Bolshevization of Czechoslovakia showed such poor results from the points of view both of the Soviet exploiters and the continually more discontented population, successively proletarianized, that the old, old Jewish myth of a "scapegoat" had to be revived. It was to be that the reorganization of Czechoslovakia naturally could not proceed as fast and efficiently as intended by the wise leaders, as there were some traitors in the very center of power who used sabotage, espionage and murderous conspiracy to oppose this reorganization. One of the accused has even tried to involve Sweden's former minister to PRAGUE, WINTHER Wilhelm into this maze of lies. The very same pattern was used in other trials and purges in the Communist countries. A secondary reason might be the wave of anti-Semitism sweeping the Eastern countries. When SLANSKY and others are accused of collaborating with Israel, this is a cynical speculation to win the sympathies of the Arab countries which are, formally at least, still at war with neighboring Palestine. We remember from the Czarist days that the pogroms, instigated by hooligans, were a symptom of the need for scapegoats and we might well wonder that will happen to the about three million Jews who still live between STETTIN and WLADIWODSTOK without permission to emigrate."

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The running Swedish-Czech trade agreement provides for Swedish deliveries of 500,000 tons of ore in return for 40,000 tons of sugar, 20 tons of welded goods and 50,000 tons of Czech coke. Swedish interests in Czech goods have, however, dwindled considerably during the past months, since the Czechs charge over-prices, here as in Norway. However, the Czechs have mounted up a debt in Sweden amounting to some 33 mill. kronor /about 6 mill.\$,/ which, according to the Czech-Swedish agreement is the mutual debt-limit. This debt has not been discussed lately and the Swedes are highly unwilling to proceed with their shipments of high-grade ore to Czechoslovakia in view of the fact that the Czechs are unable to pay for it.

The OSLO "Arbeiderbladet," social-democrate, in a leading article today terms the PRAGUE trials a "disgusting show, which is advancing towards its predetermined conclusion." The trial came by no means unexpectedly, the paper points out. It has several purposes, the most important being to get a scapegoat for inferior and insufficient production. Another purpose is to support the myth about Western aggression against the Soviet Union and her Satellites.

The reason why the trial is held just now is, according to the Norwegian paper, that the Party is desirous to remind its members of the discipline prior to the Party congress in December.

Generally speaking, the Norwegian papers have refrained from commenting on the trial, which, however, is treated a big news by all papers.