X EUROPEAN SOVIET HISTORIANS PREDATE "COLD WAR" A THOUSAND YEARS

Munich, September 13 (Stankovic) -- Events that occurred more than a thousand years ago are not beyond use by the Soviets to promote their ideas on the "cold war" front.

This is shown in a report published in the September 12 issue of the Belgrade daily "Politika" of discussions in the tiny Macedonian town of Ohrid where the 12th International Congress of Byzantinologists started September 11.

With the same vigor used in the current conflict over Berlin and nuclear tests, East and West clashed over life under the Byzantine era. Feudalism existed, claimed the Soviet delegate Mme. Zinaida Udal'tsova, but the French delegate, Professor Paul Lemerle, rose to heatedly contest the theory, rejecting the Soviet delegate's view and claiming that no feudal relationships had ever existed in the old Byzantine Empire.

Mme. Udal'tsova, who only read a summary of a report made by the Soviet scientists Mme. Pigulevskaya, Mr. Lipshich and Mr. Kazhdan, also claimed that "from the 7th century on, the Slavic tribes had to the greatest extent influenced the whole political, social and cultural life of the Byzantine state". This claim too was "empathically and without compromise" contested by Professor Lemerle.

Because of this "vigorous exchange of opinions", "Politika" said, the first plenary session, instead of lasting for only two hours, was prolonged like a Geneva disarmament meeting. For after Professor Lemerle finished his vigorous explanations, Mme. Udal'tsova took the floor again and "still more energetically than before, made efforts to confirm the theses of her Soviet colleagues, expressing the hope that Professor Lemerle, who obviously defended the old conceptions of the Western Byzantinological schools, would one day by himself come to the conclusion that the assertions made by the Soviet Byzantinologists were undeniably correct".

AMERICANS TAKING THIRD ROAD

This Soviet-French conflict attracted great interests among the participants in the Congress. The American delegate, Professor Peter Harrison, a well-known American Byzantinologist, took a "non-aligned" attitude. He took to task both the Soviet and French "extremist views" and "attempted to find the truth somewhere in the middle".

"Politika" said that "many participants who did not intend to talk at all" on the theme discussed by the Soviet historians ("Towns and Villages in the Byzantine Empire Between the 4th and 12th Century") suddenly came forth and asked for permission to take the floor. Consequently a special session was convoked for the afternoon. There is no report yet how the "cold war" over the Byzantine Empire ended -- if it ended at all.