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NEW DUTIES FOR PODGORNYY?

Since N.V. Podgorny was transferred from his former duties as 1st Secretary of the C.C. of the Ukrainian C.P. to still more responsible work in Moscow as a Secretary of the C.C., CPSU, in June of this year, there has been considerable speculation as to the precise nature of his new duties. By now two reports have appeared in the columns of Pravda which enable a preliminary suggestion to be made on the basis of evidence rather than guess-work.

When the delegation of the Communist Party of Indonesia, headed by D.N. Aidit, left Moscow on 27th August, the two secretaries of the C.C., CPSU, who accompanied the Indonesians to the airport were N.V. Podgorny and V.N. Titov (see Pravda, 28th August 1963). That in itself was interesting because liaison with the communist parties of the free world is normally the duty of B.N. Ponomarev, another Secretary of the C.C., CPSU.

Moreover the two officials who discussed "questions of interest to the two parties" with Aidit on 26th August were Podgorny and Leonid Brezhnev, the Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. This vague formula certainly covered the Sino-Soviet dispute, on which Aidit and his followers tend to take a pro-Peking line in a way most unwelcome to the Kremlin. At the time it seemed possible that Ponomarev was then on leave, and therefore Podgorny was deputizing for him.

Subsequently, on 2nd October, the delegation of the West German Communist Party led by Max Reimann was received by both Ponomarev and Podgorny for discussions which covered "the fight to reduce international tension, to lessen the danger of thermonuclear war, and to strengthen peace" (Pravda, 3 October 1963). Evidently Ponomarev and Podgorny were mainly concerned with briefing Reimann on Khrushchev's current foreign political and ideological views, but it is certain that the anti-Mao campaign was also discussed since Pravda adds that:

"Opinions were exchanged on the topical problems of the international communist movement."

Thus the theory that Podgorny was temporarily substituting for the absent Ponomarev in August is no longer adequate. Since

¹Tass, 26th August 1963

both men were engaged in the briefing of the West German communists, it now seems more likely that Podgorny's new duties cover much the same field as Ponomarev's, i.e. liaison with the communist parties of the "non-socialist" world, and perhaps Ponomarev himself will be transferred to other work after the next Plenum of the C.C., CPSU. By that time Podgorny, who at present seems to be understudying Ponomarev's role, would be fully capable of tackling it independently.

r.r.g.