

WEEK ENDER REVIEW (23 May 1958)

The Result of the Moscow Conference of the East Bloc States

The outcome of the Moscow Conference was announced in two communiqués, in a political declaration and in a draft of a non-aggression pact with the West. The first impression one can have after reading these documents and Khrushchev's speech, is that Khrushchev could again maintain his position in international communism. But this relates more to the political than to the economic results of the conference.

The communiqué about economic agreements says so little that one cannot comment about important decisions in the framework of Comecon. It is quite possible that some participants, probably the representatives of Czechoslovakia and Eastern Germany succeeded by tactical manoeuvres, to delay a change in the previous terms of reference of the Council for Mutual Economic Aid. But the fact that this time party chiefs and Prime Ministers have signed the plan for a maximum of co-operation, means it will probably take effect in future conferences of Comecon. The vague and generally worded communiqué about economic discussions should not give any reason to surmise that the position of the Council for Mutual Economic Aid has become weaker in the Eastern bloc system. On the contrary, it can be rather expected that this institution for a communist integration of the Eastern bloc will only gain importance and weight in the future.

Whether the Chinese request for an increased economic aid for support of Mao Tse-Tung's ambitious industrialization plans will be fulfilled, has not been answered in the communiqué. One can only advance the hypothesis that Khrushchev made new promises to China in order to appease the Chinese Communists.

The Conflict with Yugoslavia

The participants did not take an official stand in the economic side of the conflict with Yugoslavia. But the fact that the Yugoslavs, who were present as observers at the Comecon in the last two years, were not invited to the Moscow Conference can only mean that Yugoslavia was excluded from the general structure of communist economic planning. The participants in the Conference also did not mention in the communiqué whether there might be any prospect of future economic co-operation with Yugoslavia.

The participants in the Conference decided on a foreign and military policy programme which Belgrade will not be able to ignore. The political declaration of the signatories of the Warsaw Pact is nothing but a practical interpretation of the peace manifest of the international communist movement which was prepared last November in Moscow and which was also accepted by Yugoslavia. It will not be so simple for Tito to simply say "no" to this resolution. The call for a summit conference, the new demand for stopping of atomic tests, the support of the Soviet Plan and the warning up of Khrushchev's vague statements about an East-West non-aggression pact are a collection of Moscow's clever moves which

the Yugoslavs will not be able to oppose. It is very characteristic that Khrushchev in his speech before the political committee of the Warsaw Pact did not attack Yugoslavia at all and that the Albanian Prime Minister even made friendly gestures towards Yugoslavia. The participants have avoided sharpening the conflict with Yugoslavia but they tried to play ball with the Yugoslav party leaders in such a way that they are now in a more difficult position for taking a stand.

The French Crisis

The French crisis probably greatly influenced the Conference. Whether a decision was made, is not mentioned in the communiqué. There were rumors that there was no unity among the participants about an attitude towards the French events. Some thought that a people's front policy is the best solution for the communist interests. This opinion was represented by the more moderate parties, among them the Polish representatives. Others would like to see a civil war in France in which the NATO forces could get involved. There were also voices which considered the semi-dictatorship of de Gaulle not to be completely against the interests of the communists. Which of the three conceptions will be accepted and followed by the Moscow Politbureau, is not yet known. Probably, Khrushchev did not inform his satellites at all in this matter in order not to provoke premature conflicts inside the communist movement.