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NON-RULING CPs/17

• SPAIN & PORTUGAL:

Foreign relations

27 August 1968

SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE CPs BACK CZECHOSLOVAKS

Summary: The exiled leaderships of the clandestine Spanish and and Portuguese Communist parties have condemned the occupation of Czechoslovakia.

The Spanish and Portuguese Communist parties -- some of whose exiled leaders are resident in Moscow, and therefore dependent on Soviet goodwill -- have both taken a firm stand against the invasion of Czechoslovakia.

The August 25 issues of the Italian and Austrian Communist party organs, L'Unità and Volksstimme, both carry reports from "well-informed sources" in Moscow that the Politburo of the Spanish Communist Party (PCE) has told the Central Committee of the CPSU that it "disapproves" of the "armed intervention" in Czechoslovakia. Volksstimme adds that the Spanish party's reaction was conveyed to the Soviet leadership by its veteran president, Dolores Ibarruri ("La Pasionaria").

No details of the PCE's position are known. It may be recalled, however, that the Spanish party had earlier backed the Dubcek regime and opposed the interventionist arguments of the Warsaw Letter, which Carrillo refuted in a statement published in L'Humanité on July 31. On August 8 the Rumanian organ Scinteia cited an article by Carrillo in the PCE's clandestine organ, Nuestra Bandera, in which the Secretary-General declared, in reference to Czechoslovak developments: "We Communists of capitalist countries have an interest in the democratization and removal of bureaucratic leadership methods in socialist countries... We look on the events in Czechoslovakia, on the removal of the bureaucratic leadership of Novotny, and on the measures taken for the democratization of party and state life and for the more active participation of the masses in the leadership of the country, as an aid in our own struggle."

The reaction of the Portuguese CP (whose Secretary-General Alvaro Cunhal, also resides in Moscow) is remarkably strong and unambiguous. It was expressed in a broadcast beamed to Portugal early on August 25 over the "clandestine" Radio Free Portugal -- whose transmitters, like those of Radio España Independiente, are apparently situated in Czechoslovakia.

The relevant passage in the broadcast was as follows:

The situation created in Czechoslovakia beginning 21 August by the military intervention of the forces of countries of the Warsaw Pact is extremely grave and may lead to incalculable repercussions.

We Portuguese anti-fascists place above all else, and therefore above any tactical considerations, the friendship with the peoples and parties which in Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America are trying to build a new life and fight against fascism, colonialism, and imperialism. The people's right to liberty, national independence, and the free choice of their destiny and the path of their political, economic and social development is a sacred right. The right of a revolution to defend itself is also a sacred right.

The occupation of Czechoslovak territory undertaken by military forces of the Warsaw Pact, whatever their political determinants, appear to world public opinion, the international workers' movement, and the movements of national liberation and the whole of democratic and anti-imperialist forces as an intervention in the internal affairs of the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia. We declare this with deep emotion, and our surprise is only equalled by our feelings of anguish in face of the situation thus created. Its first and immediate result in Western European countries is the justification and reinforcement of NATO, anti-Soviet and anti-socialist demagogy, and reactionary and imperialist arguments and maneuvers." [Emphasis added]

Like the Spanish party, the Portuguese CP had earlier opposed the interventionist line of the Warsaw Letter.

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