Summary: The East German Party organ Neues Deutschland has given a carefully edited, although not distorted, coverage to Gomulka's recent election speech. While emphasizing Gomulka's demands for West Germany's recognition of post-war "realities," the paper omitted Gomulka's offer to West German Foreign Minister Brandt concerning negotiations on the Oder-Neisse border.

The Sunday edition of Neues Deutschland devoted approximately 600 words to a speech given by W. Gomulka in his traditional election district of Warsaw-Praga. Political observers believe that the Gomulka report did contain a few new nuances in the Polish approach to the Federal Republic (be it for merely tactical, domestic or foreign-political reasons), particularly in connection with his discussion of the Oder-Neisse line, therefore, it is of interest to review East German reaction to the speech. Lacking at this moment any original East German commentaries, it must suffice to take a close look at the East German selective rendition of Gomulka's remarks.

The title which Neues Deutschland gave to its own version of the speech ("Gomulka: Bonn Must Recognize Realities.") is in itself indicative of the emphasis which the SED wishes to bestow on Gomulka's statements. The so-called "recognition of existing realities" (meaning the recognition of the GDR as well as that of the Oder-Neisse border) has been a long-standing Polish as well as East German demand on the Federal Republic, and therefore does not represent any deviation from previously formulated policies.

* Neues Deutschland, 18 May 1969; the report appeared on the foreign-political inside pages of the paper. Gomulka delivered his speech on 17 May.
Quite obviously the impression which East Germany wanted to create is that Gomulka has not changed his tune, and this tune is in complete agreement with the desires of the GDR.

Having remarked that Gomulka's speech was largely devoted to foreign policy, Neues Deutschland elaborated on his remarks on Bonn's "Ostpolitik," and quoted him as saying:

This course [of the West German government] is in deep contradiction to the interests of the security and peace of all European nations.

Coming to the suggestions concerning the Oder-Neisse border as formulated at the recent SPD Congress in Nurnberg, Neues Deutschland quoted Gomulka as saying:

Contrary to the assurances given by Herr Brandt, the SPD formulations at Nurnberg concerning the recognition of European borders represent potential revisionism; these formulations determine a priori that the final determination of the borders is a question that should be postponed until the peace conference.

Neues Deutschland went on paraphrasing Gomulka as saying that with the help of the Nurnberg formulation, the FRG wishes to avoid being reproached for having questioned the Oder-Neisse border. Gomulka is reported to have emphasized:

We are ready at any time to sign a treaty with the Federal Republic similar to that which we signed with the GDR nineteen years ago on this question... If West Germany wishes peacefully to co-exist with other countries of Europe, if it wishes genuine reconciliation, it must start from the only real premise represented by the present map of Europe. This is also the only possible way towards a true normalization of relations between the Federal Republic and the socialist states. It requires the recognition of the borders..., renunciation of the claim to represent all the German people, i.e., the recognition of the GDR as well as the signing of a treaty for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Conclusions

The above quotations are the most important of Neues Deutschland's rendition of Gomulka's speech. It can be concluded from the title of the report as well as from the excerpts presented that while the paper cannot be accused of outright distortion of Gomulka's speech, it can be reproached for "selectivity" of its reporting. By implication Gomulka did suggest talks with Foreign Minister Brandt on the issue of the Oder-Neisse border. This does not appear from Neues Deutschland's rendition which, quite to the
contrary implied that Brandt had said one thing and that the Nurnberg formulations had maintained another. It would indeed be difficult for the SED to admit that Gomulka did offer negotiations to Brandt, who has for months been under the most violent attack by East Germany (together with other Social Democratic cabinet members of the Federal Republic) for plotting with the CDU reaction, compromising social democratic aims, and being a "rightist social democrat" who, under the cover of a new "Ostpolitik," pursues the aims of reaction and revanchism.

The East German media will most probably avoid printing any commentaries of its own on Gomulka's election speech. Yet, it will be of interest to see their reaction to Brandt's forthcoming reply and to compare that reaction with the Polish one. It can be predicted with a fair degree of accuracy that the GDR will attack Brandt no matter what the latter will have to say. A comparison of the future Polish and East German commentaries might shed further light on any possible change in Gomulka's approach to the Federal Republic as well as on possible differences in this respect between Poland and the GDR.

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