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Soviets On White Communism

by Rachel Berthoff

Jan. 27 (IPS) — Concurrent articles in the Communist Party press of the Soviet Union and its allies this week — all attacking nationalism and the fragmentation of the international communist movement — have triggered widespread speculation that the Soviet leadership is debating whether to split openly with the leaderships of the Western Europe's pro-U.S. "White Communist" parties. While several European papers have mooted a split, a meeting in Warsaw of the socialist countries' party secretaries assigned to "communist movement relations" ended yesterday with a statement on Eastern European affairs only. Significantly, the statement failed to mention the long-planned Berlin conference of East and West European Communist Parties.

The press articles, all written as theoretical discussion pieces, mostly confined the attack to the white communists' anti-Sovietism. Reflecting a **yet unresolved** factionalization and confusion over world communist movement policy, the writers concur on one thing: anti-Sovietism must be stopped. This limited hard line coexists with the clear centrist message: let the white communists make policy as they please and don't recognize the Labor Committees' leadership.

Writing in Pravda Jan. 24, leading Soviet commentator Vitalii Korionov asserted that communists must proceed from common international interests, rather than narrow national ones. Quickly reprinted in the German Democratic Republic's daily Neues Deutschland, and just as quickly and boisterously rebutted by Gian Carlo Pajetta, a NATO agent in the Italian Communist Party (PCI), Korionov's article externally presented a paradigm for the East vs. West split of the movement. Internal evidence of the article reveals the hard line-centrist mix. The first "communist leader" Korionov cited was the CPUSA's notoriously duped General Secretary, Gus Hall: a unique signal in the communist movement for disassociation from Labor Committee views. Then, after routinely quoting recent tough statements on anti-Sovietism from the Czech and Hungarian press, Korionov concluded that it is, after all, necessary to "listen to the opinion of the fraternal parties" — unless those opinions are anti-Soviet.

The Eastern European hard-liners have also given no sign of understanding the other, crucial aspects of white communist policy, above all its **criminal commitment to inflict austerity on the working class on behalf of the imperialists.** A

Polish specialist, Jerzy Pawlowicz, for example, concluded a blistering polemic in favor of internationalism with endorsement of the pro-austerity, essentially fascist PCI leadership! In his party's paper, Trybuna Ludu, Jan. 24, Pawlowicz warned with insight that imperialism is using "refined methods" against communists, like offering them a spot in the government in order to "achieve total integration of the communist parties into the political system of capitalism." But the communists, "the PCI, for example," said Pawlowicz, will not be fooled and will push for progressive policies when in the government.

Similarly, Pravda's own coverage of the current Italian government crisis has portrayed the PCI as the party with "a concrete plan of action to liquidate the economic difficulties." Readers of the PCI press would recognize that this "concrete plan" is no more than support for Atlanticist agent Gianni Agnelli's austerity policy.

Real Potential

Despite its broad ignorance of political reality, even the limited "anti-Soviet" hard line has important potential if it moves to open or recognized de facto break with the white communists. Such a break would de-legitimize the white communists in the eyes of the European working class, actually moralize the now isolated clusters of pro-Soviet cadre in the Western parties, and fuel recruitment to the European Labor Committees and European Labor Party.

Such developments would also be welcomed by significant members of the left (hard line) factions in the Eastern parties, who — like the Czech writer who reminded readers Jan. 22 that revolutionary policy is needed throughout the movement — are not satisfied that anti-Sovietism by itself is a viable policy.

The bourgeois press response to the Korionov and simultaneous articles has expressed fear of a break, for precisely the above reasons. The West German daily Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung today clearly linked the threat of an open split by Moscow from the white communists with caution-dominated overall Soviet policy — Moscow's "striving for a more limited version of detente..." Thus the white communists should be supported, said the paper. But a companion piece warned that the white communists are not fully dependable: despite what the leadership of parties may do and say, there is the unpredictable "pro-Soviet base," the working class.