

MOSCOW AND THE SOCIALISTS

"We shall support the Social Democrats like a rope supports a hanging man."--Lenin

PART ONE

Few recent twists and turns of Soviet Russia's "collective" rulers are more significant--or more ominous for the free world--than Moscow's decision to resume the policy of united fronts with parliamentary Socialists.

For close to four decades Communists considered the Social Democrats as their sworn enemies--their Marxist rivals for the soul of the "international proletariat." In Lenin's, Stalin's and Nikita Khrushchev's lexicon a Social Democrat was alternately synonymous with "renegade," "traitor to the working class," "social fascist" and "capitalist lackey." Hundreds of thousands of Socialists in Russia and in the satellite countries perished through the years in Communist prisons and slave labor camps or had to flee into exile. Thousands more were ruthlessly exterminated by the secret police's firing squads.

But, last February, in another twist of Moscow perennial zig-zag policies, Nikita Khrushchev, first secretary of the Soviet Communist party, suddenly held out an olive branch to "Social Democrats who wish to fight actively against the war danger" and for the "unity of the workers' movement." In one of the more revealing passages of his speech to the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet party--the Congress that dethroned Stalinism and reverted to "pure" Leninism--Khrushchev "sincerely" congratulated the Social Democrats and heaped lavish praise on his erstwhile enemies. "We are ready," he said, "to do our utmost to join efforts with them in the noble cause of the defense of peace and in the interests of labor." A resolution adopted by the rubber-stamp Congress urged the "restoration of business-like contacts between the Communist and Socialist parties."

Khrushchev's appeal for a united front was, of course, not the first time that the Communists have sought to seduce

the Social Democrats into cooperation with them. The united front (or "Trojan Horse") strategy in 1922 was resorted to at a time when Lenin's Bolsheviks were still engaged in a desperate struggle for their existence and were looking to the international working class as the main force of world revolution and the only reliable ally of Soviet power abroad. It was discarded as soon as Lenin felt firmly in the saddle. In 1935, the Popular Front "to meet the Nazi threat" had again substantially advanced the cause of the Communists until it foundered on Moscow's betrayal of the struggle against Hitler in August, 1939.

However, never since Lenin created the Communist International (Comintern) in 1919 and declared a relentless war on the "Second" Socialist International has a Communist leader gone as far in wooing the "Social Democratic traitors" as did Khrushchev at the Twentieth Party Congress. In their frantic efforts to gain the confidence of the free world's anti-Communist Left the Soviet rulers now argued, in effect, that the difference between Socialists and Communists consists primarily (or merely) in that Socialists "have different views from ours on the forms of transition to socialism." They even went part of the way toward reducing these differences by conceding the possibility of a democratic-parliamentary road to socialism, without revolution, violence or force.

What prompted the Kremlin oligarchs, who consider themselves fervent Leninists, not only to woo the parliamentary Socialists but also to dare revise, however cautiously, some of Lenin's harsh judgments of them?

The answer is to be found in an analysis of the political trends that today are shaping Europe and the world. In both Europe and Asia Socialist parties are important (in some countries even dominant) political forces, not only in the ranks of industrial labor but also among "white collar" workers (school teachers, civil servants) and professional groups. They head coalition governments in France (intermittently), Holland, Belgium, Norway, Denmark, India, Burma and Israel. They participate in the governments of Italy (Giuseppe Saragat's group), Austria, Luxembourg and Indonesia. They are powerful opposition parties in Britain and West Germany--and are likely to head the governments of these countries in the future.

In theory the Socialists have a broad appeal: they stand for a synthesis of social and economic democracy and political freedom. They are the Communists' most important, if not only, competitors for the political allegiance of the "proletariat." No regime can function in Western Europe unless it has the cooperation or, at least, the tacit acceptance of the social and economic groups that Social Democracy represents.

Moreover, in the countries where the Social Democrats are strong (Britain, West Germany, the Scandinavian countries) the Communists have been reduced to the status of minor splinter groups. As Professor Carlo Schmid, Social Democratic Vice President of the West German Bundestag, told me: "The West should thank its lucky stars that there is in West Germany today a strong independent Socialist Left. For it is we who have reduced the German Communist party to the status of a splinter sect. To the West of us in France, and to the south of us in Italy, the Communists constitute the most powerful political forces on the scene."

The Social Democrats, to be sure, unlike the Communists, do not represent monolithic or homogeneous political groups. Under constant Communist pressure, many of them continue to vacillate between revolution and the traditional Social Democratic concept of evolution. In France and Italy they are in the unenviable position of being at once vocal internationalists and rabid nationalists, champions of the proletariat and strong defenders of the petty bourgeoisie. Even Pietro Nenni, secretary of the pro-Communist Italian "Socialist" party, is now supporting the theory that socialism can be achieved "with the consent of the majority of the people" and by democratic means. All this while he still remains wedded to the "Marxist principles" which for more than a decade have kept him in Moscow's camp.

During World War I, the "Second" Socialist International practically ceased to exist--thus paving the way for Lenin's Third Communist International--because the German Social Democrats supported the Kaiser in the prosecution of the war while the French Socialists emerged as the strongest champions of the glory of La Patrie. Three decades later, when the Yalta agreement delivered most of the Balkans and Eastern Europe into the Soviet "sphere," the Socialists--with some notable exceptions--did not display too much

courage in their resistance to Communism. It is true that the might of the Red Army played a leading role in the Socialist defeat by the Communists who, backed by Russia, used their traditional split-and-absorb tactics. But inherent ideological confusion and weakness in the East European Socialist parties themselves made it easier than it should have been for these tactics to succeed.

Nevertheless, in Asia and in Europe, including the Soviet-dominated satellites, the Social Democrats still command the mass support which the Communists would like to win over for Moscow's objectives. After more than a decade of Communist domination of Eastern Europe, Socialist leaders like Titel Petrescu in Rumania and Anna Kethly in Hungary--who have been recently liberated from prison and forced to sign pro-Communist declarations--still have a far greater appeal to the subjugated workers behind the Iron Curtain than the local Communist chieftains.

So deep-rooted is the Socialist tradition in Europe and so powerful its mystique!

Taking all these vital factors into consideration, it is still true that the Soviet rulers, in their present quest for a rapprochement with the Social Democrats, have introduced new and far-reaching elements into their united-front strategy. In the past they sought to browbeat the perennially frightened Socialists into common action with the Communists by brandishing before them the "imminence of social catastrophe" or the "unfolding of an economic crisis" in the "capitalist world." It was precisely because the Socialists were frightened over the possibility that fascism would engulf Europe that they had agreed in 1935 to the formation of the "Front Populaire" in France and the "Frente Popular" in Spain. Only the Nazi-Fascist threat to the democratic order in Europe could have convinced the late Leon Blum--probably the last great Social Democrat leader--to become the Premier of the French popular front government.

Subsequently Blum realized his error--but it was too late. For the Communists, in violation of their solemn promise not to engage in any underhand practices during the life of the Popular Front, immediately proceeded to create "left wings" in the Socialist parties of France and Spain. Their vast propaganda apparatus inflated the prestige of

such Socialist innocents as Jean Ziromsky in France and Francisco Largo Caballero in Spain for the sole purpose of destroying the character and influence of "bourgeois reformists" as Leon Blum and the Spanish Social Democratic leader, Indalacio Prieto. The Spanish Communists also formed their own army, strengthened by the "International Brigades" and the Soviet secret police which had begun to murder opponents (Calvo Sotelo, Andreas Nin) and thus precipitated a civil war within a civil war.

Leon Blum, to forestall similar developments in France and to save his Socialist party, broke up the united front with the Communists and resigned as Premier.

However, Moscow's current bid for a united front is not being made under the pressure of a "social catastrophe." On the contrary, at the Twentieth Party Congress Khrushchev also departed, nominally at least, from the Marxist-Leninist doctrine about the catastrophic character of the capitalist order. He held out, instead, the prospect of harmonious and "peaceful coexistence" for all--even the United States.

Whatever reasons the Soviet Communist boss may have had for temporarily revising Lenin's views on Social Democracy, one thing seems clear: while they are in the midst of the sixth Five-Year Plan--which they hope will transform Russia into an industrial nation mightier than the United States--the Soviet rulers have no intention of embarking on any large-scale military adventures. With the tempting prospect of extensive international trade with the West, especially with the U.S., before them, their main objective today is to receive Western guarantees that the status quo will be maintained in Europe. They are in desperate need of such a guarantee. For, in addition to the as yet unresolved internal political and economic difficulties, the Russians feel vulnerable in Europe because of the opposition of ninety million East Europeans who look toward the West for their liberation from the Communist yoke.

There is, of course, not the slightest indication that the Kremlin's long-range objectives--isolation of the United States, the destruction of NATO and world conquest--have changed. But, it is their great eagerness to preserve for the immediate future the European status quo that prevents Stalin's uneasy successors from resorting to any bold international experiments, especially with regard to German unity.

It is also the real reason for their courtship of the Socialists and their frantic assurances about the peaceful orientation of the Soviet Union.

That is why, too, Moscow "voluntarily" relinquished Soviet monopoly on revision of Marxism-Leninism to meet changing conditions and proclaimed Marshal Tito to be an equal "Big Brother" in the formulation of "Socialist scientific thought."

The Soviet rulers need the Yugoslav Marshal as a guarantor of the good faith of Moscow's coexistence campaign. His brand of "independent" Marxist-Leninist "socialism" is useful to them as bait to win over to their side such vacillating European Social Democrats as Daniel Mayer, chairman of the French Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee, and Max Busset, Socialist spokesman in the Belgian parliament. They need an "independent" Tito--just as they need an "independent" Pietro Nenni in Italy--to act as watchdog over disgruntled Communist chieftains like Maurice Thorez in France and Italy's Palmiro Togliatti, who find the desanctification of Stalin an especially bitter pill to swallow. Yugoslav embassies in the free world, according to Socialist International sources, now serve as Moscow's contacts with the non-Communist Left. Despite Tito's repeated denials, they are feverishly preparing the ground for the formation of a new "International."

Tito's influence with such non-Marxist "Socialists" as Prime Minister Nehru and President Nasser will also be joined now with Moscow's in the effort to encircle the NATO and SEATO nations with a ring of "neutral" and "uncommitted" countries in Asia and the Middle East. His bold break with the Cominform in 1947 and successful defiance of Stalin has won Tito much respect in the former "colonial sphere." His rapprochement with the Soviet rulers will serve as public testimony that Moscow's change of heart is genuine and that one can cooperate on an equal and mutually advantageous basis with the Soviet Union.

But above all, despite the optimism in some Western capitals about Tito's "independence," the Russians need the Yugoslav Marshal to act as co-policeman with them, during the present critical period at least, in the Balkan and East European satellites.

Stalin, after Yugoslavia's break with the Cominform, used the satellites in his frantic efforts to destroy Tito. Now Khrushchev looks to Yugoslavia to maintain a vigil over disgruntled and restless humanity behind the Iron Curtain.

Under the circumstances, the traditional Marxist-Leninist thesis about a capitalist society "fraught with war danger" had to give way to Khrushchev's assertion that "war is not inevitable"--despite the existence of "war-mongering interests in the Western countries."

As Russia's Communist leaders see it, the "two camps"--capitalist and socialist--remain, but Moscow is now determined to engage in an "active and flexible" foreign policy which, as Anastas Mikoyan put it, "will be noble in principle and calm in tone." The primary aim of this policy is to "liquidate the cold war" (another Soviet plea for the preservation of the European status quo) through economic trade, cultural exchanges and so forth.

This newest look in Soviet affairs is obviously calculated to disarm (or at least neutralize) the NATO and SEATO powers and to cast the United States in the role of Nazi Germany in the 1930's. But its ultimate aim is much broader: while counting on the effect their new "liberalism" will have on the "capitalist governments" in Europe, Khrushchev and company are primarily addressing themselves to the Social Democrats and Socialist-led trade unions in the "imperialist" countries and to the Socialists and nationalists in the "neutral" and "uncommitted" nations in Asia and the Middle East.

For, though Moscow has abandoned, for the present, military action as an instrument of Soviet imperialism and revolution, the Communists have by no means discarded their belief in the imminence of a capitalist economic crisis.

But it is in anticipation of such a crisis--which might enthrone in Europe and Asia their brand of Marxism without violent revolution--that they now seek the "unity" of the "working class movement."

In some respects Russia's present strategy closely parallels the Comintern's united front tactics in the 1920's.

PART TWO\*

How far has Khrushchev succeeded--or is likely to succeed in the near future--in gaining the cooperation of the European Socialists?

Responsible Socialist leaders whom I recently interviewed in Europe have not forgotten the past history of the Communist betrayal of their comrades. The majority of them are aware that every Communist success in establishing a united front has meant a strengthening of the Communist party and a weakening of the Socialist party. Then, too, the Communists addressed themselves to the Social Democrats and their labor unions. But in 1922, their appeal was circumscribed by Lenin's rigid rule that Communists must always proclaim their final aim: Communist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. At the Twentieth Party Congress, Khrushchev officially ruled that there were different methods to achieve socialism. They must not always be violent (to please Nehru); "socialist development can be different in different countries (to please Tito); and, above all, socialism can also triumph by parliamentary means (a bone in the direction of the Western Social Democrats).

Indeed, the substitution in some cases of the "parliamentary method" for "armed insurrection" (so dear to Communist strategists from Lenin and Stalin to Trotsky and Rosa Luxemburg) shows how far the Soviet post-Stalinist "revisionists" are prepared to engage in a fake "ideological liquidation" in order to win once more the confidence and support of international labor.

However naive their economic views may seem to some of us, they understand the fundamental difference between parliamentary Social Democracy and Communist totalitarianism.

This is especially true of the West German SPD and the British Labor Party, which are leading members of the Socialist International. Said James Griffiths, a British Socialist

---

\* Part Two of this report is based on personal talks with many leading and rank-and-file European Socialists and trade unionists including Hugh Gaitskell, Erich Ollenhauer, Guy Mollet, Giuseppe Saragat, Matteo Matteotti, etc.



"firebrand" for over forty years: "The British Socialist movement has not been doctrinaire in its philosophy. Like the labor movement of which it formed a part, it was empirical and tolerant. For this and other reasons it has never taken Marx too seriously." Certain tenets of Marxism undoubtedly took root, "but British Socialism has distrusted rigid systems of thought and too great a reliance on theory."

A similar view was expressed even more forcefully by Hugh Gaitskell. The leader of the British Labor Party told me, that Democratic Socialism is "no half-way house between capitalism and Communism, but a group of ideals and a way of life vastly superior" to both.

Gaitskell is even doubtful whether the British Labor Party will continue to press for further nationalization of industry if (and when) it is returned to power. On the age-old question of a planned economy his feeling is: "as few planning controls as necessary, as much competitive freedom as possible."

"We want economic security and high productivity, a rising output more fairly shared in our community and in the world," Gaitskell said. However, he added: "We work for these aims solely by democratic means. We cherish our free institutions with as much passion as we strive for our socialist ideals. We oppose as utterly alien to our philosophy all forms of totalitarianism--the monopoly of power for a single party; the police state with its slave labor camps and rigged trials; the degrading regimentation of public opinion by mass propaganda and the rule of fear; the contemptuous disregard for the rights of the individual." While, of course, accepting the idea of political and economic coexistence with the Soviet Union on a strictly governmental level, he completely ruled out the idea of any Social Democratic collaboration--or even relations--with the Communist parties, the Soviet party included.

There are in the Labor Party, it is true, "left-wingers" (America-hating Aneurin Bevan, eclectic "intellectuals" like R. H. S. Crossman) who are fuzzily responsive to Moscow's slogans of "neutralism" and "pacifism." Gaitskell's old professor, Socialist "scholar" G. D. H. Cole, even went so far as to suggest that Social Democrats and Communists share a "common belief in the creative function of the working class and in its historic mission to create the conditions requisite for a classless society."

However, although Professor Cole's wishful thinking had some impact on leftist intellectuals and avid readers of the Statesman and Nation, it caused hardly a ripple among the hard-boiled "proletarians" of the Labor Party. Some high-rankers in the Party consider Professor Cole and his ideas a "joke." In Britain, as in West Germany, Austria and in the Scandinavian countries, the vast majority of the Social Democrats are still immune to Moscow's blandishments. As yet, not even Bevan or Crossman want an outright united front with the Communists.

The situation is vastly different and more critical across the channel, in France, where a large section of Social Democratic opinion is being easily taken in by the school of interpretation which represents the turn against Stalin as evidence of a fundamental change of heart in the Communist camp.

When France's Socialist Premier, Guy Mollet, landed in Moscow last May, a group of his Socialist colleagues was just leaving. Mollet went to Russia on an official visit at the invitation of the Soviet government. But the French Socialists had been touring the country as guests of the Soviet Communist party. Before taking leave of Khrushchev they even agreed with their Communist host to ask their respective executives to consult together on subjects of "common interest."

The agreement was vague and subject to different interpretations. But it caused rumblings of discontent in the Socialist International.

Pierre Commin, acting secretary of the French Socialist party and leader of the delegation to Moscow, in a conversation I had with him, subsequently protested that his views were "misinterpreted"--that the French Socialist party still meant to turn a deaf ear to the overtures of the Communists in Russia and in their own country. But he could not stifle the doubts or erase the suspicions the French visit to Moscow aroused among many Social Democrats.

The fact is that, except for the French, Khrushchev had not been able to extract a similar agreement, however vague, from the Norwegian and Swedish Socialist Prime Ministers who had visited Moscow, or from any other responsible Social Democrat.

Erich Ollenhauer, West German Social Democratic leader, was particularly critical of his French "comrades." For months, he told me, he had been resisting pressure from Marshal Tito and from members of his own SPD (Herbert Wehner and his followers) to reach some working agreement with the East German Communists. Despite the extremely friendly relations that have developed between the Yugoslav Communists and the West German Socialists, Ollenhauer merely laughed at Tito's crude efforts to act as an "honest broker" between the SPD and Moscow's East German satellites, Otto Grotewohl and Walter Ulbricht. "But the agreement between the French Socialists and the Russian Communists on a party level," Ollenhauer felt, "will increase the pressure of the vocal "pro-unity" advocates in the SPD and make resistance to contacts with the East German Communists more difficult."

Hugh Gaitskell took a much more philosophic and calmer view. He was convinced that, among other things, Khrushchev's "Stalinist behavior" during his visit to London last April--especially his brusque refusal to consider the case of the Socialists and trade unionists imprisoned in the Soviet bloc--had killed for a long time, even for the French, the possibility of a Socialist-Communist united front. But he, too, was strongly critical of the French.

There is, of course, no reason to doubt the sincerity of Commin's strong denial that the French Socialists are contemplating contacts with the Soviet party, or, for that matter, Christian Pineau's cryptic statement in Washington that he and his Socialist colleagues are "resolutely hostile" to a united front. The delegates who visited Moscow, as a matter of fact, were rudely shocked by the Russians' doctrinal rigidity. They were subjected to long harangues by Khrushchev and Dmitri Shepilov, the new Soviet Foreign Minister, about the superiority of the Communist brand of "democracy" to Social Democracy. ("The same old, elementary and crude stuff to which we have been subjected by Communist propaganda since 1917," Commin said.) Nor were the Socialists convinced of the stability of Khrushchev's rule in the Soviet Communist party. The consensus of the majority was that "the class struggle has finally caught up with the party where Stalinist bureaucrats, entrenched for two decades, are at present engaged in a life-and-death struggle with Khrushchev's men. Commin commented: "A whole generation of Stalinists,

including men like Molotov and Suslov, will have to be purged before the Khrushchev-Bulganin-Mikoyan troika will gain fully ascendancy in the party."

If anything, then, the French were deeply disturbed by their visit to Russia. Moreover, their so-called agreement with Khrushchev to ask their party executives to consult together on subjects of "common interest" was reached without the knowledge or consent of Guy Mollet, the acknowledged leader of French Socialism.

Mollet, like his Foreign Minister, Pineau, is convinced that Moscow is doing a better job than the West of convincing the world of its peaceful and humanitarian intentions, and that the West must immediately adopt new policies to win the trust of the non-Communist peoples. But, as he emphasized to me, the pursuit of peaceful coexistence with Russia by no means implies a willingness to cooperate with the Communists in a united or popular front.

Nevertheless, of all the parties adhering to the Socialist International--with the possible exception of Saragat's small Social Democratic party in Italy--it is the French SFIO which is today at an extremely critical stage in its relations with the Communists. Uneasiness about the French situation arises far less from any fear that they will fall easy victim to Khrushchev's blandishments than from painful awareness of the country's internal pressures.

In the din of partisan quarrels, where so many voices in France resound today with the contrary of what they were proclaiming yesterday--and are likely to say tomorrow--the French SFIO occupies an eminent position. Actually, there are as many Socialist parties in France--groups, tendencies, temporary alliances, long-term politicians and short-term thinkers--as there are members in the SFIO. Nowhere are these mutually exclusive tendencies and contradictions more glaring than in the SFIO's position on Algeria. Guy Mollet became Premier of a government pledged to bring peace to Algeria, but instead which decided to send close to 400,000 men to fight there. Robert Lacoste, a prominent Socialist who once even flirted with the Communists was given the dubious honor of ruthlessly suppressing the Algerian nationalists.

It is this Socialist ambiguity that enables the French Communists--at the most critical stage in their history--to benefit from the growth of discontent, as increasing numbers of conscripts become bogged down in North Africa, without incurring labor's opprobrium for bringing down France's first Socialist-led government since 1947. While voting, however grudgingly, for the government's strong-armed policies in Algeria, the Communists are, at the same time, undermining the Socialists' prestige by bitterly attacking Guy Mollet's handling of the Algerian crisis.

It is, of course, no secret that many rank-and-file members of the SFIO in various regions as well as some leaders of the party are badly split on such vital issues as Euratom, and especially on Algeria. Guy Mollet himself told me that while he expected to defeat what he called the "pro-Muscovites" he was facing a difficult struggle. He was especially bitter in his criticism of Mendes-France who, he said, "is an irresponsible individual, power-drunk and trying to fish among dissident members of the SFIO."

The real test is Algeria. It was not so very long ago that Mollet himself took a different position on the area than the one he now holds. He needed the bitter solitude of power--the opportunity to forget that he is not strictly a party man but also the responsible head of the government--to change his views so drastically.

But even independently of the Algerian drama, the SFIO is undergoing an internal crisis of which we have not yet seen the end. And it is Mendes-France, although he is not a member of the SFIO, who is making trouble. He is not giving up the idea of bursting the SFIO from the center. He has proclaimed himself chief of the Republican Front, and the great drama of his life is that the front has hardly any adherents. To bolster it, he is seeking support of people who are opposed to Mollet's Algerian and pro-European policies. Since these, too, are not numerous (at least for the present) Mendes has also tossed into the air a colorful soap bubble known as French "Travaillisme," which has captured the imagination of many SFIO leaders who are against Guy Mollet. The theory of the "Travaillisme"

is that France needs something akin to the British Labor Party. The whole movement is to be based on the trade unions plus, of course, all other "progressive elements" in France.

Mollet is opposed to the whole business. He understands that Mendes-France is inviting him to commit suicide by persuasion.

In France, unlike any other West European country, local ambitions together with sincere revolutionary impulse of many young Socialists, have prevented many sections of the SFIO from permanently breaking with the Communists. Former Socialist ministers, Daniel Mayer, Edouard Depreux and even Jules Moch, who look wistfully toward some common action with the Communists, may not be influential today in the orientation of French Socialism, but should a crisis arise tomorrow, they are likely to be assigned the sinister roles played by such "Socialists" as Zdenek Fierlenger in Czechoslovakia and Josef Cyrankiewicz in Poland.

Probably the root of the trouble is that the French Socialists--and this is also true of Saragat's Social Democrats in Italy--are not agreed among themselves, or even in their own minds, as to whether or not they are revolutionary Marxists. They are unable to follow the Marxist philosophy to its logical conclusions. But--unlike the British, West German and Scandinavian Social Democrats--they are unwilling to throw overboard the Marxist label and trimmings which are part of their tradition. Like all liberal French politicians, they are always afraid of not being far enough to the Left.

Thus, in their present critical position, the French Socialists may finally have to choose a united front with the Communists rather than receive blows from them which would send them reeling helplessly into the arms of the hated Right.

Despite the danger signals in France, Italy, and to some extent, in Belgium, Khrushchev's united front campaign in West Europe does not have, for the immediate future, an easy road ahead of it. The Dutch Socialists, who recently won an overwhelming electoral victory, are traditionally opposed to any inter-party dealings with the Communists. The same is true of the Socialists in Norway, Denmark and

Sweden. The Scandinavian Socialist Premiers make the usual pilgrimages to Moscow with a great deal of curiosity, but ask only that they be permitted to be neutral one day and tend to their own business without too much interference from the Big Powers.

But it is in Britain and in West Germany that the new Khrushchev-Tito Axis is facing its most formidable obstacles. In the joint Soviet-Yugoslav declaration issued in Moscow, Tito came out more firmly than ever for direct negotiations between East and West Germans on the question of German unity. This is likely to endear him even less to the majority of West German Social Democrats.

SPD chairman, Erich Ollenhauer, is a determined foe of any relations with the Communists on a party level and with the East German Communists on any level--although he intends to make German unity the major issue in Bonn's parliamentary elections in 1957. Reunification with East Germany is a must for the Social Democrats because without these traditional strongholds of socialist strength, they can never hope to win an effective majority in the Bundestag.

Ollenhauer is emerging as one of the shrewdest politicians in West Germany. Having finally liberated himself from the lingering intransigence of his brilliant predecessor, the late Kurt Schumacher, he is beginning to shop for allies in the forthcoming elections. There is little love lost between the Social Democrats and Chancellor Adenauer's ruling Christian Democrats who despise the Socialists' economic program of "welfare statism" and resent their anti-clericalism. But politics follows its own rules: the 1957 elections are likely to usher into power a coalition of Social Democrats and their Christian Democratic enemies. For, like all political parties that stay long in power in a democracy, even Adenauer's Christian Democrats seem to be losing their grip on West Germany. The Social Democrats, on the other hand, destroyed by the Nazis, cold-shouldered by the occupying powers after the war, have spent a generation either in exile or sulking on the Bundestag's opposition benches. They are hungry for power and are convinced that 1957 will be their year.

In the first West German national elections of 1953, the SPD tried to rally West Germans, Socialists and non-Socialists, around the banner of Kurt Schumacher's "democratic" nationalism and against NATO and German rearmament.

At the same time they campaigned as the Marxist party par excellence. The West Germans turned a deaf ear both to their nationalism and Marxism and the SPD learned its lesson.

In preparation for the coming elections, the Social Democrats have jettisoned much of their Marxist baggage, especially in the economic field, and are addressing themselves not only to labor but also to the middle class voters as a "respectable" party to the left of center. Wedded to the theory that capitalism--especially Adenauer's capitalism--is a flop, in practice they try hard to keep West Germany's booming capitalist economy a going concern.

This turn has not come about for entirely opportunist reasons. Men like Ollenhauer and Carlo Schmid are, of course, aware that Marx's "Theories of Surplus Value" are as realistic a program for labor in the age of automation as the horse and buggy is as a means of transportation in the age of the supersonic plane.

All political parties have their folklore and their leaders speak (in public, at any rate) as if there were an unchanging body of doctrine to which they are committed. While occasionally still paying lip service to Marx--as a sop to the traditionalists--German Social Democracy has given up "modifying" or "modernizing" his archaic economic and philosophic theories and has returned the bearded "prophet" to the gallery of greats who have no direct or valid message for the problems Germany is facing today.

To be sure, West German Social Democracy, too, has its "ultra-left-wingers" who look hopefully to unity with the Communists. These have, on occasion, made common cause with the Communists in the trade unions and staged a few political strikes. But the vast majority of the party and the powerful trade unions are as immune to the Reds as they are to Otto Strasser's Neo-Nazi party. The spirit of Mayor Ernst Reuter of West Berlin--who became the very symbol of European anti-Communism during the height of the cold war--is still very much alive in the ranks of German Social Democracy.

While Moscow's courtship of the Social Democrats and their allies does not appear for the present to be too successful, it is not entirely hopeless either. Minorities



of today, as a half century of European history has shown, might become majorities of tomorrow. There is always the possibility of a new schism in Social Democratic ranks, especially in France. There is indeed a grave danger that Socialists in Europe and Asia will allow themselves to be persuaded by Tito, Nehru and other voices which are now telling them that Khrushchev's new line is part of a great moral reformation in the Soviet Union.

As the proceedings of the Twentieth Party Congress and the Khrushchev-Tito accord make it clear, the free world is now entering a period of very much intensified activity on the part of the Communists to establish united fronts with the Socialists. The Soviet "collective" rulers are playing for high stakes. They must win the support of the Social Democrats and their allies in the trade unions if they are to succeed in their efforts to provoke a crisis in the non-Communist nations, isolate the United States and destroy NATO without resorting to a nuclear war. A united front with the Socialists and the social groups they represent would be worth to Khrushchev more than hundreds of divisions in the field. He is aware--even if many Western politicians and statesmen are not--that, despite spectacular Communist successes in some Western countries, Moscow's agents can never win the allegiance of labor without a united front with the Socialists. The same holds true for the satellite countries should the Russians, either through compulsion or in another gesture to the non-Communist Left, decide to withdraw their troops from Eastern Europe. Here, again, the Communists will desperately need the support of the Socialists and the democratic peasant parties, for at no time could they have taken and kept exclusive power in the Balkans and Eastern Europe without the military backing of the Soviet Union.