

REDS' CRITICISMS OF SOVIET SIFTED

One School Sees Reaction to Stalin Expose as Planned, the Other as Genuine

By HARRY SCHWARTZ

Is the sharp reaction of Western Communist parties to Nikita S. Khrushchev's attack on Stalin a real assertion of independence or a carefully arranged maneuver carried out with Moscow's blessing?

Students of Communist affairs seem agreed on one point: The Soviet leaders cannot ignore the Western Communist parties' demand for fuller explanation of how Stalinist misrule came to be. Fuller explanation may clarify whether the present turmoil in world communism is real or contrived.

One group of observers sees the Western Communists' demands for explanations as a Macchiavellian maneuver designed to pave the way for a cherished united front with the Socialists by giving the impression of new independence.

The contrary view is that a loosening of the ties is taking place among the Communist parties of the world. Such a loosening was implicit, it is held, in Moscow's decision to accept Yugoslav President Tito, the former heretic, back into the Communist fold.

Many facts bearing on this debate are clear, as are the arguments on both sides.

Factors for Skepticism

Those who distrust the Communist avowals of independence base their skepticism on these factors:

¶The Communist parties have a long history of subservience to Moscow. It seems inconceivable that Moscow would not have reckoned with the likelihood that the Khrushchev speech would reach the West and made the arrangements beforehand for the present reaction. The goal, it is believed, is to end the heavy liability that foreign Communist parties have suffered as tools of Soviet policy.

¶The reactions of Western Communist parties to the Khrushchev speech have been similar. The similarity frequently extends to specific phraseology. All the Communist statements have demanded fuller or "Marxist" explanations of how Stalin's crimes were possible. These similarities are being pointed to as "proof" that this is a coordinated, pre-arranged maneuver.

¶The skeptics doubt that the Western Communist parties first learned the speech's contents from the recent State Department version. When Mr. Khrushchev delivered his speech last February most of the leaders of world communism were in Moscow. Many of the points made in the speech were publicized in the world press last March. President Tito, it is known, got a copy shortly after the speech's delivery. All of this strengthens the skeptics' belief that the world Communist leaders knew what Mr. Khrushchev said two or three months ago and made plans accordingly.

The Opposite School

The opposite school of thought believes that the present situation is one in which traditional Western skepticism of Communist moves is being overdone. It argues its case on these grounds:

¶There have been differences in the reactions of the Communist parties. The French party is said to be more reluctant to accept Mr. Khrushchev's indictment. The United States Communist party statement was the only one to allude to Stalin's

mistreatment of the Jews and of Yiddish culture.

¶Similarities among the Communist reactions were inevitable since each group found itself in the same position. Each party had lauded Stalin as infallible. Each suffered a similar shock. As Marxists, the Communists naturally ask for a Marxist explanation. Moreover Communist jargon has always been the same in all countries.

¶Mr. Khrushchev did not expect the speech to be published in the West. The text of his speech shows that he said it should not be published for fear of giving ammunition to the "enemy." It took the intelligence agencies of the Western world three months or more to get the speech.

¶The Communists' reaction is not a voluntary move on their part. Publication of the speech started a major ferment among the rank-and-file Communists, raising questions to which the leaders had to give answers. The official Communist reactions represent a lagging of Communist leaders in relation to their membership, an effort to save these leaders' power by throwing the onus of responsibility on Moscow.