

Yugoslav-Soviet Relations Deteriorate

A sharp increase in anti-Soviet polemics in recent weeks from Yugoslav press and official spokesmen signals a grave deterioration in bilateral relations. Moreover, it contributes dangerously to an international climate forcing the Soviet Union into a hard-line "rejectionist" mode, as evidenced by the virtual deadlock at the Belgrade Conference on European Security and Cooperation this week.

An unidentified Yugoslav political editor interviewed at the conference by the *Baltimore Sun* Feb. 16 welcomed what the *Sun* called an "erosion of cohesion" within the East bloc delegations. Maybe this "erosion" of the bloc mentality has been too rapid for the Soviets to accept, the Yugoslav source admitted.

Coming at a time of considerable instability in Eastern Europe, already a source of great concern to the Soviets, such statements only serve to heighten Soviet paranoia. To the Soviets these remarks signal that circles in the Yugoslav leadership who have favored good relations with the Soviets are being eclipsed by others who verge on a Maoist hysteria towards the "superpowers," and the USSR in particular.

Yugoslav League of Communists (LCY) Presidium Executive Committee member Todo Kurtovic attacked what he called the "revival of Cominformist ideas" in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria, and called on the Yugoslav press to mobilize worldwide public opinion against it, in a speech printed in the daily *Borba* Jan. 11. "Cominformism," in Yugoslav jargon, refers to Soviet efforts to dictate the policies of other Communist Parties, dating back to the 1948 Cominform attack on Yugoslavia which precipitated the Tito-Stalin split.

Another Presidium Executive Committee member, Dobrivoje Vidic, made the surprising charge that the cause of the Vietnam-Cambodia conflict is "existing tendencies toward hegemony" and the "theory of limited sovereignty," in *Borba* Jan. 13. The implication is that Vietnam — a Soviet ally — is responsible for the conflict.

Struggling Against 'Superpower Technology'

The episode of the Soviet Cosmos-954 satellite triggered a flood of "antisuperpower" hysteria in the Yugoslav press, which perceived a plot by the U.S. and USSR to keep the rest of the world in the dark about the "dangers" of high technology. The daily *Politika* commented Feb. 5 that the "two superpowers do not want to ponder much over what is involved here, even less to inform us better about this. Believe it or not — they like to protect one another in certain of their secret activities...they have suddenly begun, according to some strange 'gentlemen's agreement,' to sympathize and to

defend each other....The competition over who will be a greater gentleman in the 'nuclear club' defies the law of logic..."

The paper *Ljubljana Delo* satirized the superpowers' alleged response: "Citizens of the world, disperse peacefully. Do not be too curious and do not be frightened. Everything is under control...."

'Deflecting the Needle'

That this rhetoric has had an impact is clear from Yugoslavia's foreign trade statistics for 1977, which showed an unexpected decline in exchanges with the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Comecon) countries over the previous year, whereas trade with the western countries and the developing sector rose. Exports to the Comecon nations fell 6 percent, leading Radio Free Europe to suggest Feb. 2 that "some sort of political magnet is perhaps deflecting the needle."

Yugoslavia has been conducting intense negotiations with the European Economic Community in an effort to improve its economic situation with Western Europe, but continuing difficulties have blocked progress. *Borba* reported Jan. 26 that the present situation is "intolerable" due to Yugoslavia's \$2.5 billion foreign trade deficit with the EEC: "Representatives of this community, too, know this but the necessary measures to solve the existing problems are not being taken. Quite a few statements have been made to the effect that the economic exchange must be adjusted in our favor, but when the time comes to do something concrete, then difficulties appear." Yugoslav negotiator Janko Smole called the EEC's proposal unacceptable, since it merely calls for Yugoslavia to wait until an overall restructuring of the funds of the European Economic Bank is completed.

Yugoslavia Brings The 'Skinner Box' Into The Factory

Since the beginning of 1978, the Yugoslav economy has undergone radical changes in its system of determining workers' wages. The present plan — a "Yugo-box" version of B.F. Skinner's "token economy" methods of rewarding desired behavior — is a vicious assault on what remains of rational economic deliberation in Yugoslavia, and on the cognitive powers of the country's labor force.

The new system abolishes fixed salaries and institutes a complex "brownie-point" system which varies from