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## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### PARTY CONGRESSES IN THE BALTIC REPUBLICS

The congresses of the republic communist parties that preceded the 23rd Congress of the CPSU, were, indeed, yawning affairs. The proceedings were so similar as to reaffirm that the republic congress is nothing more than a forum in which the center explains to the provincial leaders policies already determined. Not a note of genuine discussion, original idea, or criticism can be found. Despite the attempts of the soviet regime to encourage greater grass-roots initiative, the centralist aspect of party organization continues to make republic congresses formal affairs.

#### *Reports of the First Secretaries*

Of some interest are the reports of the First Secretaries of the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian Communist Parties, for they do reveal at least some of the outstanding problems of the regime.

Typical is the report of Ivan Kabin, First Secretary of the Estonian CP. First of all, Kabin attempted to explain the shortcomings of industry. The mechanization of production processes was extremely limited and most of the workers were still manual laborers. Insufficient modernization was the reason why the increase in the productivity of labor, called for by the Seven Year Plan, had not been attained in Estonia. Also contributing to this was the irregular supply of raw materials to enterprises, which led to irregular working pace. Mr. Kabin was generally pleased with farming, although the 1965 plan for milk deliveries had not been fulfilled. He also admitted that wages paid to the peasants were still insufficient on many collective farms.

As regards literature and the arts, however, Mr. Kabin had serious complaints. He noted that frequently "ideologically weak" books are published. The writers often exhibited a worthless formalistic foolishness. Mr. Kabin stressed further that the party could not remain apathetic toward the ideological attitude of the younger generation of the creative intelligentsia. The young people would have to be trained, wisely and in a comradely spirit, to hue to the party line in arts and literature. "We expect from masters of the arts works which mirror the revolutionary struggle of our people, the building of Communism and the transformation of our society", said Mr. Kabin. He demanded and told the union of "creative forces", i.e., the organizations of writers, artist, and composers, that party members in these unions were responsible for the implementation of party policy in these organizations and were to see the eradication of aestheticism and subjectivism which still exist among the writers and artists. This means that the party was facing significant revolt of its creative intelligentsia against the stifling prescriptions of socialist realism.

The creative intelligentsia is not the only "strata" of society that is dissatisfied with the regime. The entire population, ideologically, is suspect. Mr. Kabin demanded that the people should be educated in a spirit of loyalty to Communism and pointed out that "at present there is a violent struggle between the Socialist and the capitalist systems. The international reactionary forces are resorting to knavish tricks in order to influence the attitude of the Soviet people, to engender distrust and to shake their belief in the justice of our cause. Our enemies are exploiting to this end remnants of the past to resurrect individualist and nationalist trends among people... Our youth must be alerted against the tricks of the enemy. It must be educated in a spirit of class struggle, capable of combating energetically bourgeois ideology. It is extremely important to educate youth in a spirit of friendship between nations and of love towards their Socialist Fatherland."

The First Secretary of the Latvian Communist Party Arvids Pelše, who after the 23rd Congress of the CPSU was promoted to the Politbureau in the Kremlin, emphasized similar problems in his republic. While there were some shortcomings in the industrial and agricultural sectors, still graver defects were seen in educational activities and the press, as well as in the ideological attitudes of the writers. Mr. Pelše criticized severely all fields of intellectual life.

The education and training given to young people in the elementary and higher schools was not in accord with the realities of life. Young people were insufficiently prepared for independent work and received no training for participation in the building of Communism. Young people graduated from the schools without any durable ideological convictions, they were frequently poisoned by nihilism and negativism.

Newspapers and magazines often mirrored the irresponsibility of their editors. Mr. Pelše mentioned, as an example of the shaky ideological attitude of the editors, the "equivocal and ideologically unclear verse" published in several magazines,

although such verse was harmful to communist endeavors. The newspaper *Literatura un Mokslo* (Literature and Art), the organ of writers and artists, had no views of its own on the development of literature and art. It published frequently items which might deviate "creative forces" from the straight and narrow ideological path.

Writers, too, were sharply criticized. The writers' congress shortly before the party congress showed that several writers nurtured "unhealthy" and "reactionary" views. Mr. Pelše warned: "We will not tolerate that some young literateurs and artists devote themselves exclusively to criticism. They are entertained by describing the shortcomings and difficulties which still occur now and then in our life. They say it is courage. As a matter of fact it is only petty-bourgeois vulgarity." What Mr. Pelše is saying here is that some critics dared to criticize openly the soviet system itself. Taking a clue from the Moscow trials, Mr. Pelše is applying the same strictures on his own writers and artists.

The Latvian Party Secretary concluded his report with an appeal to combat bourgeois nationalism: "Nationalism has no social basis in our country. Its remnants have not been completely eradicated yet, however. Bourgeois nationalists make use of every opportunity to spread their reactionary ideas. Their objective is to shatter the unity of the Soviet nationalities. The leaders of the Latvian emigres, tossed into the scrapheap of history long ago, are still being used by imperialist propagandists for their dirty purposes."

The report of Antanas Sniečkus, the First Secretary of the Communist Party of Lithuania since the 1930's, was probably the mildest of his career. He viewed the economic development with satisfaction and only minor problems were noted. Sniečkus was equally satisfied with the non-economic areas of life. He noted some misgivings among the party members to work more closely and directly with the masses, evidently reflecting the smug attitude of the privileged new class toward ordinary work. Sniečkus was especially kind toward the creative intelligentsia, even defending the acceptance of the former non-marxist, leftist intelligentsia into the ranks of the party. In effect he was advocating a rapprochement between the party and the intelligentsia. In this his report was different from his colleagues in Latvia and Estonia. But, like his colleagues, Sniečkus was concerned with the internationalist education of the masses, in propagating "proletarian internationalism", and in countering international developments with effective explanatory campaigns to prevent mass acceptance of Western policies.

Reading between the lines of the reports of the first secretaries of the Baltic communist parties, it is clear that in two decades the regime has not progressed significantly in eradicating national consciousness. The intelligentsia is thirsty for freedom of expression and conscious of its national identity and interests. The conclusion to be drawn is that despite enormous effort, the Baltic peoples are fiercely resisting assimilation in the larger conglomeration of nations, which the CPSU, as declared in its Program, is seeking.

#### *Some Characteristics of the Provincial Party Elite*

There were no surprises in the make-up of the central organs of the Baltic parties. The same people continued in the political bureaus, with greater turnover on the central committee level. It appears that the changes in Kremlin leadership so far have not produced significant changes on the republic level. Long-term tendencies are probably better reflected in the composition of the leading cadres of the party, which are more or less represented by the delegates to party congresses.

It is fair to assume that the delegates to the republic congress do represent a cross-section of party leadership in society, and play key and leading roles in the execution of party policies. The mandate commission reports to the congresses do provide occasionally, a number of interesting facts about this provincial ruling group. The most complete mandate commission report was provided in the 15th Congress of the Communist Party of Lithuania (CPL). The data given will be compared with similar data of the 1964 and 1960 Congresses of the CPL, to discern tendencies, if any, in the nature of this elite.

#### Age Distribution of Delegates, with Voting Rights, Congresses of the Communist Party of Lithuania, in %

Age Category	XII Congress 1960	XIV Congress 1964	XV Congress 1966
Up to 30	16.5	15.2	8.3
31 - 40	41.6	49.8	47.1
41 - 50	28.3	22.3	29.6
51 - 60	13.6	9.8	11.6
60 and over		2.6	3.4

#### Length of Party Membership of Delegates With Voting Rights, in %

Date of Admission Into Party	XII Congress 1960	XIV Congress 1964	XV Congress 1966
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Up to 1918	.8	.5	.2
1918 - 1930	5.8	2.3	2.2
1931 - 1940	13.5	6.1	5.0
1941 - 1951	39.9	31.3	31.4
1952 - 1959	39.6	35.0	34.0
since 1960		24.8	26.8

#### Nationality Distribution of Delegates, in %

<i>Nationality</i>	<i>XI Congress 1959</i>	<i>XIV Congress 1964,</i>	<i>XV Congress 1966</i>
Lithuanians	77.1	67.0	70.6
Russians	16.1	20.8	17.1
Ukrainians	2.3	3.5	4.5
Belorussians	1.6	2.9	2.2
Poles	1.0	5.5	2.8
Others	1.6		2.4

#### Educational Level of Delegates and Candidates, in %

<i>Level of Education</i>	<i>XII Congress 1960*</i>	<i>XIV Congress 1964</i>	<i>XV Congress 1966</i>
Higher	48.5	46.8	51.6
Incomplete Higher	14.5	5.6	19.0
Middle	15.0	7.3	19.0
Incomplete			
Middle - Primary	22.0	40.3	20.8

\* Delegates Only

#### Political Experience of Delegates and Candidates in %

<i>Type of Experience</i>	<i>XII Congress 1960</i>	<i>XIV Congress 196i</i>	<i>XV Congress 1966</i>
Participation in World War II**	34.3	27.4	29.1
Pre-War Revolutionaries	12.3	4.7	6.9
Post-War Communists	53.4	67.9	64.0

\*\* Red Army and Red Partisans

The meaning of the data is obvious. The CPL has a fairly young leading strata, most of the leading personnel are post-Stalin communists, the technological and bureaucratic intelligentsia. The data reveals that despite the pressures of a complex technological society for promotion on basis of expertise, political criteria in selecting leading party cadres still plays a prominent role. The less educated participants of World War II, in the Red Army or Red Partisan groups, who comprise approximately 5 to 10 per cent of the entire membership, on leadership level their' strength is still impressive, amounting to 36% of the delegates to the 1966 Congress. The higher up the leadership ladder, the more important is this element of pre-war and wartime communists. This strongly suggests that influence to a great extent is still a function of political reliability, as measured by past political experiences. Through the years this politically reliable group has consistently declined and in the near future, as a result of attrition by death, skill requirements, and competition, will probably show an even greater decline.

The data indicates a number of gradual tendencies. The educational level of leading strata is rising significantly, especially if compared with educational attainment of the leading cadres ten years ago. The Party in the last decade was rapidly absorbing into its ranks young technicians. Great majority of the leading cadres is up to 40 years old. The latest data suggests that in the near future the age of the leading personnel will tend to increase as the soviet regime has produced sufficient number of educated technicians to fill top positions. Career mobility appears to be leveling off, as the younger technicians will have greater competition from the already existing cadres and as entrance into the party appears to be destined toward restriction.

