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BULGANIN-KHRUSHCHEV VISIT
TO BRITAIN

Bulganin and Khrushchev appear to be surprised and frustrated by the cool reception they have been receiving, both in their public appearances in Britain and in private conferences with British leaders. Official British fears that the visit would appear like a triumphant tour have proved to be groundless, as for the most part crowds have greeted the Soviet leaders in silence or with more jeers than cheers.

Khrushchev has shown his irritation by intemperate and even threatening remarks which appear to have been spontaneous rather than deliberate and which have in turn increased the coolness of the British reception. These remarks are in contrast with the carefully prepared statements read by Khrushchev and Bulganin.

Labor Party Reaction

The dinner with top Labor Party leaders on 23 April was a fiasco from the Soviet point of view which may undermine the Soviet program to establish ties with West European Socialists and to promote the popular front concept. Khrushchev antagonized the Labor leaders by repeating the charges he made in India that Britain and France had urged Hitler to attack the USSR, and by defending the Stalin-Hitler pact. He further angered them by warning that if the West persisted in re-arming West Germany, the USSR would have no alternative but to seek an alliance with those forces in West Germany who desire an alliance. He added the threat that the USSR had

"plenty of space to experiment with the hydrogen bomb."

The British Labor leaders replied with a plea for the release of Social Democrats and trade unionists in the USSR and the Satellites, which Khrushchev angrily rejected. Khrushchev was overheard to say that he found it "much easier to talk to the Conservatives than to the British Labor Party." His surprise and anger at the Laborites' attitude was matched by their disgust at his performance, and one described him privately as a "simple-minded" man who would be capable of holding only a secondary position in a British trade union.

Germany and Disarmament

In the talks with British officials on 19 April, Khrushchev's comments on German reunification were completely negative. He simply reiterated the Soviet position at the Geneva foreign ministers' conference, contending that there is no connection between German unification and European security and that unification was a matter for negotiation by the two German states.

In the private discussions of the disarmament problem, the Soviet leaders have so far made no new proposals for the resolution of differences between the Soviet and Western approaches in the UN Disarmament Subcommittee in London. The British representative on the subcommittee, Anthony Nutting, told his Western colleagues on 23 April that

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the Russians appear to be "fed up" with the subcommittee and are very suspicious of the Western position. Khrushchev took the lead in attacking the American aerial inspection proposal, charging that it was designed solely to take photographs of the USSR for target and espionage purposes.

The Soviet leaders repeated Gromyko's explanation to the subcommittee that nuclear disarmament provisions had been omitted from the USSR's 27 March proposals because previous negotiations had proved it was impossible to solve nuclear and conventional problems simultaneously. They showed no interest in any Western ideas for a partial approach to disarmament and insisted that the Western powers had made any agreement

more difficult by retreating from their earlier positions.

Soviet Propaganda Treatment

Soviet propaganda organs have viewed the visit through rose-colored glasses, reporting thousands of cheering Britains welcoming Bulganin and Khrushchev in their public appearances. The voluminous propaganda coverage has admitted that they have been greeted with "occasional hostile shouts" and some anti-Soviet posters carried by "hooligans," and has attributed this hostility to "certain press organs." Nothing has been reported in Moscow about the Labor Party dinner. Although Khrushchev's Birmingham speech has received heavy play in Soviet organs, his reference to a missile with a hydrogen warhead has been deleted from the Soviet version.

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