Introduction

The following portions of the report by Vulko Chervenkov on the phenomenon of Traicho Kostovism constitutes formidable evidence of the bitter struggle between Marxism and Titoism which took place in Bulgaria in the late 1940s and early 1950s. But there is also specific information on the role of Dimitrov in confronting the menace of Titoist ideology which had secured important footholds in the party and the state. Chervenkov cites two important extracts of Dimitrov’s report to the XVI plenum of the Bulgarian Workers’ Party which was held in July 1948 shortly after the correspondence of Stalin and Molotov with Tito and Kardelj and the 1948 resolution of the Information Bureau which adverted to the serious shortcomings of the Yugoslav leadership on political and economic questions. They reveal the lessons drawn by Dimitrov from the negative impact of the activities of the Yugoslav leaders on the policies of the Bulgarian communists with regard to the Fatherland Front and the state apparatus. This material substantiates further the criticism made by Dimitrov in December 1948 of the Tito group at the Fifth Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party for its striving for hegemony in the Balkans while claiming to uphold the project of Lenin and the Comintern to construct a Balkan Federation.[1] These materials provide further proof that the Yugoslav contention that Dimitrov gave succour to them in their battle against the CPSU(b) and the USSR is without any basis. Shortly after the death of Stalin the CPSU and the CPC re-established fraternal relations with the Yugoslav revisionists. [2] It was to be the harbinger of the rapid introduction of the Yugoslav-style nationalism and ‘market socialism’, which had been built up by Tito in Yugoslavia in a systemic manner from 1948-49, into the economic relations of society in the Soviet Union and People’s China after the 20th Congress of the CPSU and the 8th Congress of the CPC in 1956. In the new political dispensation and as part of the policy of the removal of communists from positions of authority in the Soviet Union and the people’s democracies Vulko Chervenkov was compelled to abandon the post of party secretaryship in February 1954 which was then taken up by the rank revisionist Todor Zhivkov. The writings of Dimitrov were now re-edited to correspond to the requirements of modern revisionism. The critical remarks of Dimitrov at the XVI plenum regarding Titoism were omitted from the ‘authoritative’ collection of his writings which was published in Bulgaria. [3] Later editions of the writings of Dimitrov did not carry this speech at all. [4] It is apparent that the bulk of the writings of Dimitrov published after 1953 which are circulating internationally and have been consulted by two generations of the communist movement can neither be considered to be representative selections of the corpus of his written work nor may they be treated as textually reliable expressions of his actual writings.

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References:


Nationalism and nationalistic manifestations must be rooted out wherever they are encountered, as a hostile, fascist ideology, as the greatest evil.

Nationalism reveals itself in hostility to the Soviet Union, in the disparaging of its successes, in the refusal to recognise and in the denial of the universal historic experience of the Great October Socialist Revolution as an example and model for all workers and toilers in the whole world, in the underestimation of one’s own strength and successes, in the underestimation of the strength and successes of others, in the denial of international proletarian solidarity. Nationalism is the ideology of treachery to the camp of peace, democracy and socialism, of departure from this camp and transference to the camp of imperialism, of the restoration, of Bonapartist counter-revolution.

Nationalism means the perverting of the Party into a bourgeois, counter-revolutionary party. Nationalism means the
turning of Bulgaria into an imperialist colony. Nationalism is a death blow to patriotism, to true love of the native land. Without unsparing struggle to death against nationalism, there can be no communist party.

Traichokostovism is Bulgarian nationalism, the betrayal of socialism, of Bulgaria. We must smash to pieces the vile and dangerous conception of some peculiar Bulgarian path towards socialism, of the superiority of our Bulgarian path toward socialism over the Soviet path, of the possibility of the smoothing over of the class struggle in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism. We must frankly confess that we paid tribute to this conception under the influence of the Titoists in the period when we still considered them honest folk. That harmful influence was reflected in some attitudes at the time of the reorganisation of the Fatherland Front, in the work of some Ministers. On how rotten and treacherous a plank we then tried to set our feet, is now clearer than ever. We took measures in time, but in this respect we must thank comrade Stalin, the Central Committee of the CPSU(b), the resolution of the Cominform-bureau of June 1948.

Still further with all our might must we strengthen, broaden and guard as the apple of our eye Bulgarian-Soviet friendship, and train the Party in the spirit of proletarian internationalism, which in our time has its clearest and best expression in friendship with the Soviet Union – the mighty citadel of victorious socialism, of international revolution – in loyalty and devotion to the Soviet Union, the CPSU(b) and comrade Stalin. Not in word, but in deed let us still more energetically train and prepare the Party to be faithful and loyal to proletarian internationalism, to the Soviet Union, the CPSU(b), to the great and beloved teacher and guide comrade Stalin – to the end and in all circumstances.

We must be true to the legacy of comrade Georgi Dimitrov.

In his speech to the XVI Plenum of the Central Committee comrade Georgi Dimitrov declared:

‘We frequently lose sight of the fact that although the Communist international does not exist, the communist parties form one single international communist front under the leadership of the mightiest, experienced in the fight against capitalism and in the construction of socialism, party of Lenin and Stalin: that all the communist parties have one single scientific theory as their guide to action – Marxism-Leninism, and that they all have one general universally recognised guide and teacher – comrade Stalin – the leader of the glorious Bolshevik party and the great land of socialism.

‘The Yugoslav example sufficiently clearly shows that those who stand at the head of the collective leadership of their parties, whoever they may be, must sense the control of the Party. They must never forget that leaders of the Party can change, but the Party remains, and will remain. It is not the Party that should depend on the leaders, but the leaders on the Party and they will be true party leaders to the extent that they remain loyal to the invincible Marxist-Leninist teaching and fulfill the sound collective will of the Party.

‘If we, the leaders of the Party, remain to the end faithful pupils of Lenin and Stalin, if like Bolsheviks we instantly discover, admit and quickly correct our mistakes and weaknesses, the danger for our party of a crisis such as the Yugoslav crisis will be completely ruled out.

‘But we in fact have decided to remain faithful to death to Marxism-Leninism, to international communist solidarity, to our genial teachers – Lenin and Stalin, and also to learn from them constantly, tirelessly, always more enthusiastically and proficiently.’

At the Fifth Congress of our Party comrade Georgi Dimitrov declared:

‘Our party has before it the example of the great Bolshevik party, from whose experiences it learns, and whose Central Committee and its genial leader, comrade Stalin have more than once given us invaluable aid with their advice and directions. Our party, which takes an active part in the Information bureau of communist and workers’ parties, is proud to find itself in the great family of the whole world, headed by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the genial leader of the whole of progressive mankind – Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin.’

This legacy of comrade Georgi Dimitrov we must fulfil without contradiction and to the end....

For over a year or more we have been fighting to overcome the shortcomings and weaknesses in our work. We are already having remarkable successes, particularly since the discovery of the Traichokostovist gang, after the June Plenum of the Central Committee. Yet in this respect an enormous amount of work lies ahead of us. We have finally to overcome the principal weaknesses and shortcomings in our work. For that reason and in order to bring out clearly why
we did not discover Traichokostovism earlier, in my report I drew the greatest attention to our shortcomings, weaknesses and errors as they existed on the eve of the discovery and destruction of Traichokostovism.

The present plenum, drawing lessons from the fight against Traichokostovism, will arm us for the fresh struggle to overcome successfully our own shortcomings.

Second. We must beware of incorrect generalisations when we speak of the shortcomings in our work. Such incorrect generalisations would lead us to incorrect and dangerous conclusions. One or two comrades who have spoken mixed their colours too thickly, and I fear lest they should paint too black a picture, lest the whole of our work in the period up to the V Congress should appear to be almost entirely mistaken. That is incorrect. That is absolutely incorrect, comrades.

The general line of our party was and is correct. The Traichokostov blackguards prepared their conspiracy, they wished to oust comrade Georgi Dimitrov precisely because the general policy and work of our party was correct.

The letters of the Central Committee of the CPSU (b) to the Central Committee of the Yugoslav Communist Party were and are of remarkably valuable assistance to the Communist parties. You know how these letters were received by the present day ‘leaders’ of Yugoslavia. But among us, the leadership of our party headed by comrade Georgi Dimitrov; it was quite the reverse. With all our might we undertook to implement the advice and recommendations contained in those letters and, in the light of sustained, just and penetrating criticism of the Titoists, to review our work, to remove admitted errors, and to beware of false steps.

What is evident from this fact? This fact bears evidence that our political line was and is correct, that thanks to it we achieved several important positive results. But that does not mean that we did not admit errors, that we were without serious weaknesses. This fact shows that our shortcomings and weakness were not organic, insuperable shortcomings. They can be overcome. In a short time we can overcome them, and we will overcome them if only we seriously wish to do so. I think that the present plenum of the Central Committee wishes to do precisely this.

That is how the matter stands. For that reason when criticising our shortcomings we must not fall into extremes. The criticism and self-criticism which we should develop and instil into the party by every means, must raise and increasingly strengthen the authority of the Central Committee and of the whole party as a Bolshevik party. I am deeply convinced that as a result of the sustained implementation of the decisions of our plenum the authority of the Central Committee and of the whole party will increase.

Third. Some comrades ask who is personally responsible for our earlier adoption of negative Yugoslav experience.

The question is very simple. At the time of the civil war in the Ukraine, as comrade Stalin has stated, the revolutionary workers and sailors who were pursuing the White bandits not far from Odessa were saying: let’s only get to Odessa, arrest the Entente and then that will be the end of all our suffering and hardship.

On the question of personal responsibility for our adoption of negative Yugoslav experience before the Cominformbureau resolution, some comrades are seeking to ‘arrest the Entente.’

The task is more complicated unfortunately. Up to the beginning of 1948 all of us in the leadership of the party were insufficiently vigilant, were uncritical and blindly trustful of the Titoists. That circumstance enabled the envoys of the present-day fascist henchmen of imperialism from Belgrade to spy upon us, to study us thoroughly, to establish nests of conspirators in our country with the aid of their fellow-spies in Traicho Kostov’s gang.

On this point comrade Georgi Dimitrov in his report to the Central Committee at the XVI Plenum declared:

‘... as the nearest neighbours of Yugoslavia, bound in closest collaboration with the Yugoslav Communists, we did not display the necessary vigilance towards these leaders, we had an uncritical attitude towards them although some of them clearly gave us cause for adopting a critical attitude. We did not follow closely the policy and activity of the Yugoslav leaders, with whom we proposed to establish a federation of South Slavs. It is precisely the absence of careful and close study of the policies pursued by the Yugoslav leaders, and our blind trust in them, which explains a certain harmful influence which their policy had upon our party also. That harmful influence is reflected especially in the reorganisation of the Fatherland Front and the State apparatus. The transfer of party cadres into the state apparatus and the Fatherland Front took place in such a manner that it produced a certain undisputed weakening of the party leadership – at the centre and in other places.’

The blame for our adoption of negative Yugoslav experience falls upon us all, upon the whole party leadership. The letters of the Central Committee of the CPSU(B) to the Central Committee of Yugoslav Communist Party saved us from grave disaster.
Fourth. Comrade Krustyu Stoychev finds that we criticise him because he carried out the decisions on the Macedonian question taken at the X Plenum of the Central Committee.

Is that why we criticise comrade Krustyu Stoychev? If that is the case, why should we criticise comrade Krustyu Stoychev alone? If that is the case we should first of all criticise ourselves.

Comrade Krustyu Stoychev is making a diversion. The decisions of the X Plenum of the Central Committee on the Macedonian question were the party line during the period up to the betrayal of the Titoists, up to the Cominformbureau resolution.

What is the point at issue, Comrade Kr. Stoychev? For what should you answer? For upholding the party line in that period? No! As if a party worker could be brought to account... for upholding the party line!

Comrade Stoychev, the point at issue is quite a different one. The point is this. Was the Central Committee of our party circumvented by the then District Committee of the party in the Pirin region when it entered into relations with the Kolishevists? Were meetings with them arranged without the knowledge of the Central Committee? Was comrade Georgi Dimitrov discredited in the Pirin region, were his portraits taken down? To whom did certain groups of Septemvriiche take the oath – to comrade Georgi Dimitrov or to Tito? At that time was there an agreement between you and the Titoists behind the back of the Central Committee of our party?

That is the point at issue. That is why we are asking: Are you in any way to blame in this matter? Did you know of such occurrences? Did you warn the Central Committee of them? Did some member of the Central Committee direct you to act behind the back of the Central Committee – who, where, when? We ask you to reply on these points and not on the other.

Comrade Krustyu Stoychev says nothing about it. In my opinion, he has taken a step backwards from his own self-criticism on this question at the XVI Plenum of the Central Committee and has made a diversion....


http://www.revolutionarydemocracy.org/rdv9n2/dimitrov.htm