

## Nixon's Fall Panics Soviets

August 17 (IPS)— With Richard Nixon's resignation, the world closed in a little tighter around the frightened bureaucrats in the Kremlin. The extent of their terror can be measured by the shrillness of their insistence that everything is just **fine**.

The past six months have been characterized by a steady erosion of detente, with the fall of West German Chancellor Willy Brandt, the virtual ouster of the Soviets from the Middle East, the outbreak of war in Cyprus, and the provocation over the West Berlin "environmental agency." Refusing to look this process head-on, Soviet party chief Leonid Brezhnev until last week still pointed proudly to his relation with Nixon, ignoring the accelerating push in the American press over Watergate. Industrious TASS correspondents rummaged through the back pages of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* searching for statements — by anybody in favor of detente — to clip out and send back to Moscow for triumphant publication.

By mid-July of this year, however, it became apparent even to the Soviet bureaucrats that Nixon actually might be dumped. But since Nixon had just been in the Soviet Union with much fanfare, it was considered too sudden to let the word out. Because of this grace period, it was not until the very day of Nixon's resignation that *Izvestia* finally explained to its confused readership the meaning of the English word "impeachment"!

### Panic Set In

Panic set in. Nixon was done for, and Brezhnev's crew began to extricate itself from explicitly close association with him. A battery of articles appeared in the press praising detente and the summit meeting as part of an "objective process." The Czechoslovak Party paper helped out by saying that detente "was not born in the White House...it is not a matter of personalities." Nixon's name disappeared.

When Nixon resigned, there was a brief moment of public uncertainty in which Radio Moscow pondered: "It is not known whether Nixon's successor has the same attitude [toward detente] as his predecessor." In less than 24 hours the hysterical Oblomovist line emerged clearly once again: detent *will* continue--Ford says so! Why else would he keep Kissinger?

### An Escape Hatch

The crucial question of the vice presidency--who really is going to govern for Gerald "Chewing Gum" Ford--was barely touched in the Russian papers. *L'Unita*, however, the newspaper of the Italian Communist Party (PCI), presented a scenario of "liberal progressive" Rockefeller wrestling for the vice presidency with reactionaries like Goldwater and Reagan. The French Communist Party's *L'Humanite* got no further than to remark that Rockefeller will be too old [72] in 1980 to run for President then.

While the European Communist Party press looked at the American situation from this "friends versus enemies of detente" standpoint, the Soviets cut themselves a backdoor escape hatch. As if to wave off the serious strain of the Berlin "environmental agency" incident, *Pravda* and *Izvestia* went overboard with front page celebration of the Fourth anniversary of the original Ostpolitik treaty between the USSR and West Germany, a cornerstone of detente. If difficulties should arise in relations with the new U.S. administration, Brezhnev expects to be able to lean back on European allies. With such allies as Chancellor Schmidt and Foreign Minister Genscher — West German Eurotraitors — this is like Gargantua leaning on the Tower of Pisa.

In Yugoslavia, where NATO's demolition of non-aligned Cyprus has been viewed very seriously, there are fewer illusions about detente. The Zagreb paper *Vjesnik* wrote that Kissinger's formal stay in the State Department does not preclude changes in foreign policy. Belgrade's *Borba* wryly pointed to the prospect of a "continuous" American policy of Vietnams, Chiles, and Cypruses.

The Soviet bloc countries of Eastern Europe, on the other hand, closely echoed Moscow on Nixon's demise, with only the Hungarians warning that it may herald a return to a policy of confrontation.

Swallowing the CIA Watergate hoax, the bloc press describes Watergate as an internal American affair, a usurpation of executive power caused by an American social and moral crisis. Czechoslovakia's *Zemedelske Noviny* writes: "Watergate has opened the Americans' eyes to the weakness of their system. And now it is exclusively up to them to what extent they will learn from this dismal symptom of crisis."

This kind of plodding self-satisfaction demonstrates that the Soviets and their allies have learned nothing at all.

### **Moscow Hegemony As Shaky As Detente**

With Moscow blundering in this fashion, Communist Party leaders in Europe who know the Labor Committees' United Front organizing have an anxious sense of how dreadfully inadequate they themselves are to the present task of revolutionary leadership. This growing sense sent a reporter from the West German Communist Party (DKP) newspaper *Unsere Zeit* to the Labor Committee press briefing in Bonn last week, where he scribbled copious notes on the details of the Labor Committees' analysis of Rockefeller's Watergate and post-Watergate moves. He dashed out before the question period, probably to transmit his intelligence to

DKP leader Herbert Mies, on vacation in Moscow for talks with the Central Committee Secretary for non-ruling Communist Parties, Boris Ponomarev. *Unsere Zeit*, while keeping hands off the Rockefeller question, wrote that Nixon was sacked because his presidency no longer served the interests of "a small clique of multimillionaires" who dominate the economy. After the Labor Committee press conference, *Unsere Zeit* followed up with an editorial on Ford as a political weakling. Although *Unsere Zeit* tried to cover its tracks with an article on the dead Communist Party as a political force in the USA, the message came through: even in the eyes of Moscow's hacks, the Labor Committees are wresting intellectual hegemony--the authority to lead the socialist movement--from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

## **Radio Moscow Puffs CPUSA**

August 15 (IPS) — The USSR is giving air time to a story on the Communist Party USA's attempt to get itself included in Gerald Ford's domestic summit conference on inflation — continuing its effort to prove that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union still has a functioning franchise in the United States.

Radio Moscow reported August 15 that Gus Hall, decrepit chairman of the bedraggled Communist Party USA, has sent a telegram to Ford begging to be included in the government's inflation whitewash conference on the grounds that Americans who "do not support monopoly capitalism" deserve to be represented. But as

the Soviet Union well knows (although it wishes otherwise), the Communist Party USA represents no one except the police agents and tired oldsters in the party itself. With Nixon's resignation, it has even lost its only political position — namely, "Impeach Nixon."

This latest piece comes on the heels of a lengthy article in a Russian Communist Party theoretical journal on the current 'activities' of the geriatric American Communists. The article devoted several paragraphs to slanders against the National Caucus of Labor Committees.