

SPECIAL REPORT

Grid Of Press Response To Brezhnev Speech

Feb. 28 (IPS)— The following is a selected grid of U.S. and Western European press response to the Feb. 24 speech by Soviet Communist Party Chairman Leonid Brezhnev at the 25th CPSU Congress:

UNITED STATES

New York Times - Feb. 25

"Brezhnev Declares Detente Aids Soviet Growth," - "Mr. Brezhnev painted a bright picture of rising Communist fortunes in the world arena that he contrasted with the West's economic difficulties. While Communists are far from predicting capitalism's collapse, he said, its recent troubles 'forcefully confirm that capitalism is a society without a future.'"

New York Times - Feb. 26

(Editorial) - "Mr. Brezhnev declares sonorously that he is for detente...disarmament,...Soviet-American cooperation and trade... But he professes to see no conflict between these laudable ends and the heavy Soviet participation in the Communist conquests of South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia and in the Cuban conquest of Angola. Detente, as Mr. Brezhnev sees it, does not 'in the slightest abolish the laws of the class struggle.' Inevitably, therefore, many Americans will see detente as merely a convenient setting for the Soviet Union and its allies to apply 'salami tactics' to destroy the non-Communist world, nation by nation... Such little surprise as there was in the Brezhnev report came in the...candid discussion of the last five-year plan's failure to meet its goals for agricultural products and consumer goods... The causes of the Soviet failures...lie ultimately in the top priority that the military enjoys to comander the Soviet Union's best human and material resources... The standard of living remains disgracefully low in the country that may be militarily the most powerful in the world."

Washington Post - Feb. 25

"(Brezhnev's emphasis on raising the technical-scientific level of industry) appears to assure that the Kremlin will go on seeking expanded trade with the West, which has already risen more than 170 per cent in the last five years. He mentioned, apparently for the first time, agreements with Western firms for handling raw materials and partially processed raw materials. He also suggested that Moscow acquire Western partners in processing such materials. 'Economic and trade ties with capitalist states,' Brezhnev declared, 'strengthen and expand' the policy of 'peaceful coexistence'." "... (Brezhnev) without naming them, delivered a tough rebuke to Western CP's such as those of France and Italy..." "There can be no question of compromise on matters of principle, of reconciliation with ties and actions contrary to the Communist ideology."

Baltimore Sun - Feb. 25

"Brezhnev Extols Detente" - "The Soviet leader laid down a firm ideological line. Internationally, he warned the world's Communists that 'compromise on matters of principle...is ruled out,' and reminded them of their 'sacred duty' of 'proletarian internationalism,' meaning adherence to the common party line as enunciated in Moscow. Domestically

he called for vigilance against 'hostile ideological diversions,' and praised the Soviet secret police, the KGB. His summary of Soviet policy in foreign affairs, by contrast, was moderate almost to the point of blandness."

Chicago Sun-Times - Feb. 26

"Gaps in the Marxist Cloud" (editorial) - "The speech in short contained a few bright gaps in a dark cloud of Marxist orthodoxy. It is in the interest of the U.S. and world peace that these gaps be examined and widened."

Detroit News - Feb. 26

"As Brezhnev said: the USSR uses detente to its own advantage."

WESTERN EUROPE

GREAT BRITAIN

London Times - Feb. 25

(editorial) - "One of the most significant passages in Mr. Brezhnev's speech yesterday was when he said that practically every weekly meeting the politburo discussed foreign affairs and that there was now no corner of the world which in one way or another was not taken into account in formulating Soviet foreign policy. In other words, the Soviet Union is now a super power with world wide concerns and interests, just like the United States ... What matters ... is that it has served notice in both words and actions of its intentions of promoting its interests in all parts of the globe ... American hopes of linking commercial and strategic agreements with restraint in this field will be respected only to the extent that the Soviet Union will avoid military confrontations in areas judged essential to American interests."

Financial Times - Feb. 25

"In other words (Brezhnev said) that detente is ideologically motivated and the war of ideas must continue ... this should clear the air, though it will not necessarily make detente easier."

ITALY

La Stampa Feb. 25

"Brezhnev Cautious on Detente, Criticizes Soviet Economy" - "Brezhnev broke up his interminable speech ... over five hours ... 140 page text ... into three parts. First, international policy ... second, internal economic policies ... third, internal policy and ideology ... The most important passages ... China ... Detente with the West..."

Corriere della Sera - Feb. 25

"Brezhnev: We Are the Strongest and Capitalism Is In Ruin" - "Five years ago ... the international situation was still a determining factor in the internal development of the USSR. Today, the Soviet power is one of the fundamental determining factors in the international situation. This, in sum, was the leading theme of Brezhnev's speech ... 'Our party will not remain passive in the face of this change, we are ready to confront the U.S. in any part of the world ... capitalism is in collapse ... and the Soviet Union is adapting to the new situation being created in the world' ... All who were at the Congress had no illusions that capitalism could get out of its crisis ... The strong presentation of foreign policy led Brezhnev to denounce internal productive shortages. The Soviet Union does not renounce the perspectives of

major trade with Western capitalists. But only on the condition that they are aware the Soviet Union is not a weak beggar, but ... an equal partner."

WEST GERMANY

Die Welt - Feb. 24 (on the opening of the Congress)

"The Old Gentlemen's Invitation to a Spectacle" — "(The old age of the CPSU leadership) results on the one hand (in) 'conservatism' ... an outright panicky fear in face of domestic and economic experiments ... The Party cannot get itself to touch the 'Kolcho system' — those production communes whose failures have been obvious for decades ... The foreign policy dynamic ... is in a certain sense a consequence of the internal confusion at the head of the Soviet government. The leadership ... become glowing revolutionaries ... believe that the victory of communism over capitalism on a world scale would also sweep aside all of the internal problems of Moscow and the Eastern Bloc ... Thus today and in the coming days, we will see how the generation of grandfathers in Moscow during the congress deliver youthful pronouncements on the revolution and changing of the power relations on a world scale."

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung - Feb. 27

The paper ran a full page of "objective" coverage including a ten inch section entitled, "The Holy Duty of Communists-Proletarian Internationalism," featuring quotations from the speech.

FRANCE

Le Monde - Feb. 27

"On Wednesday, as in Mr. Brezhnev's address, congress delegates heard the leaders of several foreign delegations attack the Communist Parties of the West. One of them ... criticized those parties who want to 'cut Marxism-Leninism into national slices'".

L'Humanite (Communist) - Feb. 27

"Although the PCF has not been cited once since the beginning of the congress, numerous commentators claim that it is the target of a few orators who rise against opportunism, revisionism and nationalism. The PCF feels in no way concerned by the statements. Fully conscious of its national and international responsibilities, it has just defined at its 22nd congress a policy which aims at opening an original democratic way to socialism to build a socialism in the colors of France ..."