

# Czech Foreign Chief, Now at U. N., Said to Face Inquiry on 'Deviation'

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PARIS, Oct. 23 — Czechoslovakia's Foreign Minister, Vladimir Clementis, who is now in New York as chief of his country's United Nations delegation, is scheduled to be interrogated on charges of "deviationism" when he returns to Prague, according to diplomatic advices received here.

It is understood that Communist Information Bureau authorities, who have been tightening up party discipline in several Eastern European states in an effort to eliminate all traces of "Titoist" heresy, have not yet quite decided what to do about Dr. Clementis, who is considered somewhat too independent minded.

It is reported that one body of Communist opinion is ready to "purge" Dr. Clementis from all positions of party or governmental power and possibly, in the future, bring him to court for public trial

similar to the Rajk process that recently terminated in Budapest.

However, it is understood that another party faction believes Dr. Clementis is far too valuable an individual to be sacrificed at this juncture for the sake of over-all party discipline. This group is said to have suggested that Dr. Clementis should be removed as Foreign Minister and then should be sent to Moscow as Czechoslovak Ambassador, with the implication he would be "re-educated" and "reindoctrinated" during such a new assignment.

This faction, it is said, would like to keep publicly silent about Dr. Clementis' "heresy" in the hopes that, after a period of reindoctrination, he could be again of signal value to his country. It may be recalled that in Poland

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Wladyslaw Gomulka, former Deputy Premier, was charged with "Titoism" but nevertheless was not obliterated physically in the fashion now prevailing in Hungary, Bulgaria and Albania.

At present, in addition to the drive against the Roman Catholic clergy, an extensive "purge" is under way in Czechoslovakia. Revolutionary screws are being twisted tighter. Private enterprise, already drastically curtailed, is being virtually eliminated and thousands suspected of bourgeois taints are being rounded up.

Simultaneously, a party "purification" is under way. Czechoslovakia has the largest Communist party of any European nation in the Soviet bloc with the result that it is considered rather unwieldy and amorphous by its Moscow tutors. It is being reduced in size and tightened in discipline.

This purge has not yet reached its zenith, and it is predicted such will not be the case until after Dr. Clementis' return. Already several of his personal supporters, including men he named to Foreign Office appointments, have disappeared. Among these is Eugene Klinger, a former Trotskyist, who until his arrest a few weeks ago was the Foreign Office's press liaison man.

## Splits Within Party

Since early this year a three-way split has existed in the Czechoslovak party. Rudolf Slansky, the party's secretary general, and Bedrich Geminder, contact man between Moscow and the Czechoslovak party, have represented the faction 100 per cent loyal to the Kremlin.

Dr. Clementis and President Klement Gottwald have been considered "national" Communists, wishing to retain certain ties with the West and clinging to the idea that Czechoslovakia could be an "honest broker" between the East and the West.

Deputy Premier Antonin Zapotocky is considered the leader of a central faction, consisting primarily of labor, whose attitude lies somewhere between the other points of view.

Because President Gottwald is personally linked with Dr. Clementis in this cleavage, the Foreign Minister's position is somewhat stronger in the party conflict than it might be otherwise. This gives additional weight to the view that Dr. Clementis will avoid any "purge" before the public.

Furthermore, Czechoslovakia is short on qualified personnel for international dealings, and Dr. Clementis' permanent loss would be a considerable blow. It is predicted that if he is sent to Moscow Vice Premier Zdenek Fierlinger will replace him as Foreign Minister.

Dr. Clementis' attitude in intra-party discussions is said to have become increasingly unpopular with the Cominform. When M. Slansky agreed with Moscow that large numbers of Sudeten Germans should be returned to Czechoslovakia to work in the Jachymov uranium mines, Dr. Clementis opposed the project vigorously and his opinion seems to have prevailed thus far.

He has been advocating the expansion of East-West trade and has continually opposed any efforts to strengthen Germany, fearing a Soviet-German combination as deeply as many a Westerner. The establishment of the new East German state is said to have alarmed the Clementis faction.

As a Slovak nationalist, furthermore, he has had many personal arguments with the Czech faction headed by M. Slansky.

## Service in France

Dr. Clementis was born of a bourgeois family in Tisovec forty-seven years ago, was educated as a lawyer and speaks several languages. He became a Communist in the early Nineteen Thirties and in 1938 was sent on a special mission to France the nature of which is not yet known.

He joined the tiny Czechoslovak Army in exile while the Soviet Union was still on friendly terms with Germany—before 1941—and fled to England when France collapsed. He was interrogated by the British counter-intelligence service on the suspicion of having played a role in a minor Communist mutiny staged in the emigre Czechoslovak Army but was soon released.

It is said Dr. Clementis' dossier, now being studied in Prague, voices the suspicion that he cleared himself too swiftly and easily with the British at that time. Dr. Clementis joined the Benes Government in exile and quarreled with



Dr. Vladimir Clementis  
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several other Communist emigrés. A lengthy correspondence between him and Eduard Benes, including many statements today regarded as embarrassing to an orthodox Communist, has come into the hands of his opponents.

While in London he published a book predicting that the Soviet Union would encourage full independence among all nations. It is stated this work, now being re-examined, has been found packed with "Titoism."

## Clementis Shuns Comment

Dr. Clementis, through his secretary, said last night that he was "not interested" in the report that he was in disfavor in Prague.