

Belgian pro-Chinese split

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The Belgian pro-Mao Communist party -- itself a splinter group--ing from the somewhat larger pro-Khrushchev Communist party -- recently expelled its No. 2 leader, Maurice Massoz, without offering any public explanation.

Massoz is supported by the majority of the "Liège Federation" of the pro-Mao Communist party, but this is a small local, having at the most two dozen members.

Both the party leadership and Massoz are now vying in casting insulting epithets at each other in public. The party leadership dubs Massoz a "provocateur" in the service of imperialism. Massoz labels the party leaders "instruments and lackeys of the imperialist government."

A notable feature of this edifying prose -- which fills column after column in the party's weekly newspaper La Voix du Peuple and the mimeographed leaflets that Massoz distributes -- is that it contains not an iota of any accusations that could be described as political.

It is hard to determine the real reasons for the split. Probably some of the rank and file brought charges against Massoz because of excessively bureaucratic practices. Since he was No. 2 in the leadership, it was not easy for the Grippa group to give him the ax without injuring themselves. In the end they probably decided there was no other way of satisfying the demands of the membership.

Massoz was a member of the central committee and the political bureau. During the election campaign last May, he was one of the four leaders of the pro-Mao Communist party whose portraits were pasted up on walls and posts in virtually every town in Belgium.