

WHY THE CULT OF THE INDIVIDUAL IS ALIEN TO
THE SPIRIT OF MARXISM - LENINISM

The 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which drew up a majestic programme for the further advance of our country towards communism, gave a penetrating Marxist-Leninist analysis of the decisive role in socialist construction of the masses of the people led by the party, and of the harm of the cult of the individual. The congress resolutely condemned the cult of the individual as being alien to the spirit of Marxism - Leninism. The resolution of the 20th Party Congress on the report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union says :

"Thorough explanation of the Marxist-Leninist conception of the role of the individual in history was of great importance for increasing the activity of party members and the working people generally. The congress considers that the Central Committee was absolutely right in combating the cult of the individual, which tended to disparage the role of the party and the masses, to belittle the role of collective leadership in the party, and not infrequently resulted in grave errors in its activities. The congress instructs the Central Committee not to relax the struggle against the survivals of the cult of the individual, and in all its activities to proceed from the conception that the real makers of the new life are the masses of the people, led by the Communist Party."

This decision of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has met with the unanimous approval of the entire party, of all the Soviet people.

Why has our party launched a vigorous struggle against the cult of the individual and its consequences? It is because the cult of the individual signifies an inordinate exaltation of individuals, attributing to them supernatural features and qualities, making them almost miracle workers, and worshipping them. Such incorrect conceptions of man, which are alien to the spirit of Marxism-Leninism, and precisely concerning J. V. Stalin, emerged and were cultivated here over many years.

It is irrefutable that J. V. Stalin performed great services to our party, the working class and to the international labour movement. Universally known is his role in the preparation for and the making of Socialist revolution, in the civil war, in the struggle to build socialism. Holding the important post of general secretary of the Central Committee of the Party, J. V. Stalin emerged among the leaders of the party and the Soviet Union Government. He fought actively, especially in the first years after Lenin's death, together with the other members of the Central Committee, for Leninism, against the people who distorted Lenin's teaching and against its enemies. Stalin was one of the strongest Marxists, his works, his logic and will exerted a great influence on the cadres, in the work of the party.

Guided by the teaching of the great Lenin, the party, headed by the Central Committee, launched great activities for the industrialisation of the country, the collectivisation of agriculture and a cultural revolution, and gained historic victories which are known to all.

These victories were gained by the party in irreconcilable ideological struggle against different political trends hostile to Leninism - The Trotskyites, Zinovieves, right-wing opportunists, bourgeois-nationalists, all those who tried to divert the part from the only correct Leninist path. At that time Stalin earned popularity in the party, its sympathy and support, and became known to the people. However, those features and qualities in Stalin's practice of leadership which later developed into the cult of the individual, gradually began to come to the fore. The cult of the individual arose and developed against the background of the majestic, historic achievements of Marxism-Leninism, the enormous successes of the Soviet people and the Communist Party in building socialism, the victorious conclusion of the patriotic War, the further strengthening of our social and political system and the growth of its international prestige. These gigantic successes in building a new society, achieved by the Soviet people under the leadership of the Communist Party on the basis of the historical laws discovered by Marxism-Leninism, did not receive the necessary correct Marxist-Leninist interpretation and were incorrectly attributed to the merits of one man - Stalin - and explained by some special merits as a leader inherent in him. Not possessing personal modesty, far from cutting short those exaltations and praises addressed to him, he supported and encouraged them in every way. As time went on this cult of the individual assumed ever more monstrous forms and seriously prejudiced the cause.

It stands to reason that such a practice on the part of J. V. Stalin meant the violation of the Leninist principles of leadership and was contrary to the spirit of Marxism-Leninism.

Any manifestation of the cult of the individual was deeply alien and repugnant to Marx, Engels, and Lenin, the founders of Marxism-Leninism; they nipped in the bud each and every attempt at their personal exaltation, no matter whence these efforts emanated. *Tod yism*, Marx said, made his gorge rise most of all.

Marx and Engels scathingly criticised and ridiculed ambition and the conceited bragging of certain politicians. Thus, they bitingly derided the petty-bourgeois traits of Lassalle, that "self-lauding braggadocio," and his desire "to imagine himself incredibly important", and strongly opposed the intention of the Lassallists to establish a "flattering cult of Lassalle".

In a letter to Wilhelm Blos, a German political leader, Marx wrote: "... owing to my aversion to any cult of the individual during the existence of the International, I never allowed the publication of the numerous messages recognising my services post-ering me from different countries. I never even answered them, indeed, if only to chide their authors for them now and again. Engels and my own initiation into secret society of communists was made pursuant to the condition that everything contributing to the superstitious genuflection before authorities would be crossed out from the charter (Lassalle subsequently did exactly the reverse)." (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Works, First Russian Ed., Vol. 24, pp. 487-488).

Engels, in reply to a proposal to arrange on his 71st birthday a musical celebration in his honour, replied to the sponsors: "Both Marx and I have always opposed any public manifestations with regard to individuals, the only exception being in those cases which had an important purpose; and most strongly we have opposed such manifestations which during our lifetime referred to us personally." (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Works, Russian Ed., Vol. 28, pp. 385).

V. I. Lenin's speech which he made at a meeting arranged by the Moscow party committee on the occasion of his 50th birthday is well known. In this speech Vladimir Illyich requested that he be delivered from listening to jubilee speeches, "to deliver us in the future generally from such jubilee celebrations." Lenin spoke of the stupid, disgraceful and ridiculous position of any conciliated person, and warned lest the splendid victories and successes place our party "in a very dangerous position - to wit, in the position of a man who has become conciliated". (V.I.Lenin, Works, Russian Ed., Vol. 30, pp. 493). Vladimir Illyich's great modesty and simplicity are universally known. Maxim Gorky quotes the words of a Sormovo worker, who, to his question as to what was V. I. Lenin's most characteristic feature, replied: "Plainness, simplicity, Simple, like the truth." Simplicity is the quality which Marx, too, according to his own words appreciated above anything else in people.

It cannot be said that there are no passages in J. V. Stalin's works condemning the unjustified praise of individuals and the disparaging of the role of the masses. These passages, as a rule, did not transcend the boundaries of general vague considerations, while in fact, no resistance was put up to the ever-growing practice of personal exaltation which he himself encouraged in every way, sometimes even resorting to self-glorification.

Marx, Engels and Lenin, who were most exacting towards themselves, modest as regards their merits, tirelessly exposed all attempts by bourgeois ideologists to provide a theoretical basis for the cult of individualism. Against the idealistic theories of "Hero and Crowd" they put forward the materialist conception of history, according to which only the people, the masses of the working people are the real and genuine makers of history.

Marxism, working out the foundations of scientific communism, explaining and giving the basis for the epoch-making role of the working class as the builders of communist society, waged an irreconcilable struggle against the incorrect views that history is allegedly made by outstanding personalities.

Against these incorrect views on history Marxism-Leninism put forward the teaching that the people are the genuine makers of history and that the deeper and wider the social transformations, the more numerous are the masses of the people taking part in them. The Great October Socialist Revolution, which has exerted an enormous influence on all subsequent world history, was accomplished by the working class of our country, in alliance with the poorest peasantry and with the support of the middle peasantry, under the leadership of the Communist Party. It was accomplished by the majority of the people and therefore it was a people's revolution. Such a people's revolution was the great Chinese revolution, the revolutionary socialist transformation in all the people's democracies.

Developing the materialist understanding of history discovered by Marx and Engels, V. I. Lenin throughout his life waged an irreconcilable struggle against the anti-Marxist views of the Narodniks, and later of the Socialist-Revolutionaries about the "Almighty Heroes" and the grey, impersonal and passive "Crowd".

"Marxism," Lenin writes, "differs from all other socialist theories in that it represents a remarkable combination of complete scientific soundness in the analysis of the objective conditions of things and of the objective course of evolution and the very definite recognition of the significance of the revolutionary initiative of the masses, and also, of course, of individuals, groups, organisations and parties which are able to discover and establish contact with these classes". (Works, Russian Ed., Vol. 13, pp. 21-22).

G. V. Plekhanov, one of the outstanding Marxists, has done much for a correct understanding of the role of the individual and the role of the masses in history; in his opinion it would be incorrect to believe that history is made by outstanding personalities who arbitrarily instil this conception among the unenlightened obedient mass; history, he said is made by the people.

Marxism does not deny the role of outstanding persons in history, the role of the leaders of the working people in directing the revolutionary liberation movement, in building a new society. V. I. Lenin stressed with the utmost energy the role of revolutionary leaders as organisers of the masses. The materialist conception of history worked out by the classics of Marxism-Leninism, the recognition of the fact that the working masses, the people, are the makers of the new society, makes it possible correctly to understand and assess the role of the leaders, organisers, initiators and heroes who are created and prompted by the people themselves. Outstanding personalities, thanks to their distinguishing features which make them the most capable of serving the public interests, can play an important role in society as organisers of the masses, understanding events more profoundly and seeing farther than others.

Exposing the petty-bourgeois, anarchistic radical intellectuals, who came out against the organising role and the authority of the party, Lenin said:

"The working class, waging throughout the world a hard and persistent struggle for full emancipation, needs authorities—but, of course, only in the sense in which the young worker needs the experience of the veteran fighters against oppression and exploitation, fighters who have led many strikes and who have taken part in a number of revolutions, who have been made wise by revolutionary traditions and have a broad political outlook. The authority of the worldwide struggle of the proletariat is needed by the proletarians in each country... The collective of the progressive, conscious workers in each country, who are waging a direct struggle, will always be the highest authority on all such questions". (Works, Russian Ed., Vol. 11, pp. 374-375).

The leader and organiser of the Soviet people in their struggle for the new society is the Communist Party, consisting of the foremost section of the working class, the labouring peasantry and intellectuals, and the collective leadership of the party, guarding and interpreting its principles, is the central committee, elected from among the finest forces of the party, uniting in one body all its many-sided experience.

The Communist Party and the Soviet people are rightly proud of the great fruits of their selfless labour, their creative endeavour, in all spheres of state development, economy and culture. The internal situation and foreign position of the Soviet Union, our social and state system are now firm and immutable as never before.

The great strength of the Soviet system, the gigantic advantages of the socialist system, have enabled the party, the state and the people to set themselves new tasks, the grandeur of which has amazed the whole world, in the development of the national economy in the period of the Sixth Five-Year Plan and to set about accomplishing these tasks.

The alliance of the working class and the peasantry, the fraternal friendship of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., the undying love of the people for their socialist homeland, the invincible moral and political unity of the entire Soviet Society represent the granite foundation of the Soviet system, its might and prosperity. The wise leadership of our glorious Communist Party, confidently leading the country along the Leninist road, has been, is and will be, the source of the strength and firmness of Soviet society, which is steadily progressing towards its great aim - communism.

The founder and leader of the Communist Party and the Soviet State, V. I. Lenin, always attached special significance to the role of the party in guiding the Soviet state and the whole process of socialist construction. Pointing to the great responsibility of the Communist Party as the ruling party in the country, Lenin himself strictly adhered to, and demanded of all communists, observance of the standards of party life and principles of leadership which the party had worked out, drawing on vast experience. Paramount among these principles is collective leadership, emanating from the very nature of the party, built upon the basis of democratic centralism which combines the activity, initiative and enterprise of the members of the party with iron discipline. Lenin said that the revolution would bring to the fore "collective organising talent, without which the armies of proletarians, many millions strong, cannot win their victory". (Works, Russian Ed., Vol. 29, p. 75).

The cult of the individual and the practice of leadership which developed under the influence of J. V. Stalin in the last period of his life and activities did much harm. Stalin's disregard of the standards of party life and of the principle of collective party leadership, the frequent personal decisions on questions taken by him, led to the distortion of party principles and party democracy, the violation of revolutionary law, to unfounded repressions.

Such a hardened agent of imperialism as Beria, and his accomplices, could worm their way into leading positions in the party and the state only as a result of the cult of the individual and the violations of the standards of party life connected with it. The exposure and crushing of the contemptible, traitorous gang of Beria by the central Committee made it possible to do away with the violations of socialist law and to restore fully the Leninist standards of party life, the standards and principles of socialist law.

The resolute stand taken by the central committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the 20th Congress against the cult of the individual, the consistent wide explanation of the harm done by this cult are of tremendous theoretical and practical importance.

The regular holding of party congresses and conferences and of plenary sessions of the central committee, the systematic work of other higher organs of the party and its local organizations, the extensive discussion and elaboration of collective decisions are an immutable rule of our party, which bears the responsibility for the destinies of a great state and people, for the building of communism in our country,

"The masses," Lenin taught us, "must have the right to elect their responsible leaders. The masses must have the right to change them, the masses must have the right to know and check each, even the smallest, step in their activities."

The masses must have the right to promote all working members and masses, without exception, to managing positions. But this does not at all mean that the process of collective labour could be left without definite leadership, without precise establishment of the responsibility of the leader, without strict order created by the unity of the will of the leader". (Works, Russian Ed., Vol. 27, p. 186).

In combating the cult of the individual one should remember that the petty-bourgeois anarchist views denying the role of the leaders and organisers of the masses are alien to Marxism-Leninism. The extremely rich experience of the socialist construction teaches us that the principles of collective leadership, and the broad development of socialist democracy do not by any means deny the role and responsibility of the individual leader for the work entrusted to him. It is also well known that the Communist Party has upheld and continues to uphold the principle of one-man management at industrial enterprises and of one-man leadership in military affairs.

The central committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has taken resolute measures to re-establish the Leninist standards of party life, to re-establish the principle of collective leadership in all links of the party, from top to bottom, to develop self-criticism and criticism of shortcomings, to have collective discussion and decision on all important questions.

Life shows that the re-establishment of the Leninist principles of collective leadership and the struggle against the cult of the individual have aroused an unprecedented upsurge in the activity and creative initiative of the broad masses of the working people. This is having a favourable effect in our entire economic and cultural development.

The cult of the individual helped to spread the method detrimental in party leadership and economic management - and instilled contempt and disregard for initiative from below. Thus, serious mistakes were made in the direction of agriculture, for instance, which brought about backwardness in a number of its important branches. The Central Committee, as is known, revealed these mistakes and took measures for a rapid advance of agriculture which have already produced favourable results.

The cult of the individual led to the development of such monstrous phenomena as the covering up of shortcomings, the varnishing of reality, and the creation of illusion. We still have quite a few lickspittles and sycophants, people who are used to making speeches written by others, brought up in civility and subservience. To eradicate and overcome all these most harmful survivals of the cult of the individual is our urgent task.

The cult of the individual has also done much harm in ideological work. If we take works on philosophy, political economy, history and other social sciences, written under the influence of the cult of the individual, we see that many of them represent a collection of quotations from works by J.V. Stalin and glorification of him. One of the striking manifestations of the cult of the individual is the "Short Biography" of J.V. Stalin, edited with his direct participation. The "History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) - Short Course" is also in many respects permeated with the cult of the individual. Dogmatism and talmudism are the direct result of the flourishing of the cult of the individual, under which it was considered that only one man - Stalin - could develop and advance theory, say something

original and new, while all others must popularise his thoughts, set out his formulations. All this hampered the development of Marxist-Leninist theory. Given such a state of affairs the role of the collective thought of the Party, with its advanced theory, was ignored, and Party decisions which were the embodiment of the great historical experience of the Party and its wisdom were relegated to the background and not studied profoundly.

The cult of the individual has also left its imprint on a number of works of art and literature. Many of our historical, and especially wartime, films, works of literature and paintings, are in the main dedicated to the exaltation and glorification of Stalin. Wartime films and works of literature and art, for instance, do not yet correctly throw light on the role of the Communist Party and the Soviet government, our army and people in the great patriotic war who rendered epoch-making services in defending our homeland and saving all mankind from the threat of fascist enslavement.

The eradication of the survivals of the cult of the individual from theoretical and practical activities is one of the important tasks of the party and all its organisations, in order to preclude any possibility of a revival of the cult of the individual in one or another form.

In eliminating the vestiges and survivals of the cult of the individual from our life, it is necessary to develop on a wide scale an explanatory campaign. The party teaches us that in this big difficult job there is no place for hurry and haste. It would be wrong to imagine that it is enough to take some administrative measures to put an end to the cult of the individual for ever. Haste is also out of place in solving big theoretical problems. Such an approach to ideological questions can only cause harm. The overcoming of the prestiges of the cult of the individual requires a wide range and improvement of propaganda and agitation of our entire ideological and theoretical work.

The great inspiring and directing activities of the Communist Party, led by the Leninist central committee, and the devoted labour of the Soviet people - therein lies the cause and well-spring of all our successes and victories. And it would be an absurdity bordering on superstition to imagine that all historic victories are the fruit of leadership by one man alone, as was done in the period of flourishing of the cult of the individual. All these victories are the result of the enormous activities of the people and the party, a vivid manifestation of the triumph of the great ideas of Marxism-Leninism.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, reared on the teaching of Marxism-Leninism having half a century of experience of work, steeled in the crucible of revolutionary struggle, has inexhaustible latent creative forces. Paying tribute to the services of J. V. Stalin, soberly assessing the big contribution which he made to the cause of the revolution, to the cause of building socialism, the party at the same time has resolutely raised the question of eliminating the cult of Stalin so as fully to establish the Leninist principles and standards of party life and state activities and thus to create the best conditions for our entire great creative endeavour in communist construction.

The fact that the party directly, frankly and vigorously has raised the question of principle of the cult of the individual, which is alien to the spirit of Marxism-Leninism, demonstrates its great moral and political strength, the inviolability of its Leninist principles and its close ties with the people.

The entire historical experience of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union conclusively proves that the policy of our party is true and unshakable, that it has been the wellspring of the greatest victories of the Soviet people, that it corresponds to the fundamental vital interests of the working people, that it points to the only right road towards communism, that it sets an inspiring example to the entire international communist and labour movement.

The 20th congress of the Communist Party has demonstrated with renewed vigour the unbreakable unity of the party, its solidarity with the Leninist central committee, and the unanimous support for the party's policy by the entire Soviet people.

It is now the main task of the party and all its organisations broadly to explain and put into effect the decisions of the 20th congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, carry out the majestic programme of building communism, outlined by the congress.

Armed with the historic decisions of the 20th Congress, the Communist Party confidently leads our people to new victories in the building of Communism.

TOGLIATTI ON

STALIN AND COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP

(Extracts from Togliatti's speech to the Central Committee of the Italian Communist Party on the Twentieth Congress of C.P.S.U.)

The 20th Congress gave great prominence to internal questions of the Party. I have already referred to some of these. What was given especial prominence was the question of collective leadership of the Party. The Leninist principle that the Party must be led by collective organs, which must function regularly and fraternally, was strongly reaffirmed. It is not possible that one man or group of men should put themselves above this collective function of the leading bodies of the Party, or that they should limit it, or interfere with it.

It was openly said that this principle had been forgotten for a long time in the life of the Soviet Communist Party, and it was said how, immediately after the death of Stalin, the task which faced the leaders of the Party was that of re-establishing a collective leadership and internal Party democracy, starting from the highest organs of this Party.

You will remember the situation in which the Soviet Communist Party found itself after the death of Stalin. The hopes of the enemy were great. The enemy put all his cards on the prospect that there would be a bitter struggle for the supremacy by one or other of the leaders of the Party and the Party itself would be divided and the fate of the Socialist State would be compromised. Our Soviet comrades have brilliantly and very successfully overcome this situation. This is another of the great things which the Congress has shown which instils new confidence in the leadership of the Soviet Party and in the whole C.P.S.U. The principle of collective leadership has been restored and is respected, eliminating those who opposed it and worked to break the unity of the leading organs and the Party, or tried to make it a personal instrument. In this way a fraternal leadership has been realised, in which matters are discussed, in which all statements pass through the sieve of criticism, self-criticism, and collective debate, and from which decisions emerge which are the expression of the will of the whole Party united round its own leadership.

The Negative Consequences of the Cult of the Individual

You have seen that it has been openly criticised that, contrary to our principles and damaging to our work, the cult of a single personality was installed in the Soviet Communist Party and also outside it, for a long period of time. And to this linked the judgment which is given of the work of Comrade Stalin. The question is grave, difficult, and must be examined by us with the most profound sense of responsibility, not only because of what Stalin has represented in the working class and international Socialist movement, and because of the fact that the criticisms touched feelings that are still living, but because it is in no one's interest that these criticisms should become the "battle-horse" of tried champions of anti-Communism like Silone ...

To avoid this there is no other method than that which is taught in our doctrine, that is, to look at the question in an open and just manner without taking refuge from criticism and self-criticism when it is necessary.

None of us believe that it is possible to cancel Stalin from history. None of us believe it is possible to annul, to destroy, what he was in the Russian Revolution and in the international movement, what he represented in the life and fate of the Soviet State. If we did this we would make ourselves guilty of what we are trying to avoid, that is, the desire to distort reality and history. Stalin was, and remains a great figure of our movement for what he gave to the creation of the Bolshevik Party and to the elaboration of its doctrine already before the Revolution, for the contribution that he gave to the victorious revolution of 1917, for what he gave to the victory and consolidation of the Republic of the Soviets and of the Soviet State.

Stalin was a great Marxist thinker. In his writings are often joined such a unity of deep analysis and a clarity of exposition which not many are able to equal. This does not mean, however, that all that Stalin wrote and formulated should be accepted as something true and definitive, as something just in all its aspects. We can find in him, in his works and in his actions, positions which, under a more attentive examination, seem incorrect, unacceptable, incomplete. For example what seems evidently incorrect, because of erroneous formulation and by exaggeration, is the thesis which was put forward at a given moment by Stalin about the development of the class struggle in a socialist regime after the dispossession of the capitalists and the annihilation of the exploiting classes. According to this thesis, there would inevitably have taken place in these conditions a continual aggravation of the class struggle and a fatal increase in the enemies of the socialist state both external and within the state. This thesis is exaggerated, false. Enemies there were and still are, and for a part of these today the greatest capitalist state in the world has in its budget an enormous sum openly assigned to organise acts of provocation and sabotage. We must be vigilant and struggle against these enemies, unmask them, uncover them, defeat them. The position of Stalin, however, generalised in an unjustified manner a single aspect and a single moment of reality. In particular it forgot the educative force and capacity of attraction that socialism exercises also on non-proletarian men and groups both within and without the socialist state. From this false position can be derived in substance an almost desperate prospect of reciprocal persecution without end of one part of society by another, even within the organisation of the working class.

A leader of the Party and a head of state who in good faith - I repeat, in perfectly good faith - had accepted this doctrine, would inevitably come to general and continuous distrust, to suspicion in all directions, and in all conditions, even after the victory of the Five-Year Plans, even after the military triumph over the fascists in the Second World War. In this way a sense of reality was lost, and the gravest consequence was that one lost the notion and practice of respect of revolutionary legality. It will be remembered that Lenin in 1920, even before he had initiated the great socialist transformations of society, before the triumph of heavy socialist industry, before the triumph of collectivisation, in an instruction given to Dzerzhinsky, who was the head of the Security Services, affirmed that once the capitalists and great landlords were expropriated, the method of extraordinary repressive measures should be completely abandoned. This position was abandoned and the situation could not but become more grave because the enemy, aware of this fatal error, did not hesitate to make use of its men, like Beria, and others, to increase still further the distrust and suspicion, to spread unfounded accusations and calumnies, and to provoke unjust measures of repression.

The contribution of Stalin to the victories of the Soviet Union and his Error:

Thus it could happen for example, that the intense struggle of factions and of groups which tortured the life of the Polish Communist Party between the two wars and especially after Pilsudski's coup d'etat, could be interpreted as policework, and the whole Party seemed nothing but a group of provocateurs, with the result that the decision was taken to disband the Party, a decision which we have now recognised as wrong, but which had deep and grievous repercussions on the development of the working class movement in Poland. Like this, other unjustified measures of repression could take place. In this way too, socialist legality could be violated, accepting for example as a general method of proof confessions alone and not factual material, which is contrary to the principles of socialist legality and which lends itself to any evil action of enemies who have wormed themselves into the security apparatus. In this field were committed grave mistakes which have to be exposed and repaired.

Comrade Stalin played a great role, a positive role in the struggle which took place after the death of Lenin to defend the Leninist patrimony against Trotskyists, Rights, bourgeois nationalists, and to defeat these trends and to take a correct path of socialist construction. If this battle had not been conducted and had not been won, the Soviet Union would not have succeeded in winning the successes it did, and perhaps today in the Soviet Union there would not exist a socialist economy and society. In the course of this struggle, Stalin won prestige and authority. Moreover, the very way in which the struggle was conducted by the enemies helped to give particular importance to his person and to unite around him the faithful disciples of Lenin.

Stalin's successive error was to put himself, little by little above the leading organs of the Party and the Party itself, substituting for a collective leadership a personal leadership. Thus came to be created that cult of the individual which is contrary to the spirit of the Party and which could not but cause it damage.

The line of the Party was correct before the war, during the war and after the war. New important victories were won, but they were won perhaps at a higher price than was necessary and were accompanied by an accumulation of negative elements which could not but be a very heavy burden for the whole Party, for the state, and for the socialist society. The leading organs of the Party were not convened regularly any more, a tendency was shown to substitute for steady and collective elaboration of problems and for collective Party decisions, individual decisions, with the danger naturally of superficiality, on-sidedness and mistakes. This took place before, during and after the war.

It is not superfluous to remind you here that even in the hardest periods of the struggles against foreign intervention, Lenin regularly convened the Party Congresses, even at short intervals one after the other, to discuss the serious questions of the moment. But in recent times the Congress of the Party, and even its Central Committee, were not convened regularly. From this, I repeat, flowed defects, errors, mistakes, which had a negative influence on the economic development, which caused the recognised delay in facing questions of agriculture, which probably had consequences even for the conduct of operations of the war, including not foreseeing in time the surprise attack of the Hitlerians, and also the conduct of individual operations.

There were also bad consequences in relation to the ideological development of history, of culture etc. The cult of the individual, in fact, tended to attribute to one alone the task of elaborating ideological problems, thus to a certain drying-up of

live debate on themes of our theory, for which ^{were} substituted writings full only of quotations and phrases. In place of criticism and self-criticism and of the initiative of the workers of the Party and the State, on the basis of the cult of the individual there became widely spread adulation and even careerism and bureaucratisation of the apparatus of the state and of the Party. This even came to the point of presenting determined facts of history in a manner not corresponding to reality but to a scheme of personal exaltation which had become almost obligatory.

The example of courage given by the leaders of the C.P.S.U.

The situation became even worse if you take into account that at the same time there was manifested the tendency to violate revolutionary legality, to which I referred above.

This complex of errors demanded a criticism, and an open criticism. If this criticism had not taken place there would have remained a gap; it would have been impossible to re-establish respect for the normal function of the Party and of the state apparatus, to turn back to the respect of Soviet legality.

The leading Comrades of the Soviet Party have given us in this field an example. They did what had to be done, and they did it at the Congress after having achieved, by the correction of past errors, substantial results, thanks to which they presented themselves as a leadership that had authority, collectivity, unity, around which the whole Party, was united in confidence. We heard that their criticism contained the necessary self-criticism. We could not but appreciate the sense of responsibility of which the Soviet Comrades have given proof and the manner in which they have worked in the 3 years following Stalin's death. We could not but appreciate the success that they had won, restoring a collective leadership at the head of the Party and in bringing about decisive steps for improving the whole atmosphere of the Party.

With an equal sense of responsibility we must give proof that we know how to conduct ourselves. The easiest thing - but also the worst - would be to join up with that campaign of discredit to which the enemy is inviting us and to which he sometimes openly invites us. This we will not do. The criticism of the defects and of the errors of Stalin is today a problem of history, a problem of deepening the history of our movement and the revolution, and we know what history this was. We know how difficult were the years of the First Five Year Plan, and those which followed. We know how bitter were the attacks of the enemy. We know in what conditions the work had to be done. It is the duty of the Soviet Comrades to continue to make the criticisms more precise, with a renewed study of the development of the revolution, the Party, and of Socialist Society, with new profound analysis of their experiences. Let us give our contribution seriously and without panic, above all, making use of the criticisms and of our better knowledge of facts to develop our capacity both in the theoretical field and in the field of practical leadership of the Movement.

HARRY POLITT ON THE ROLE OF STALIN:

The most exhaustive discussions are taking place in the Soviet Union about the historic decisions adopted by the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

These discussions are taking place against the background of the great successes achieved in the Soviet Union since the 19th. Congress in 1952, and the even greater objectives set by the 20th. Congress.

These successes will make a vital contribution to the victory of Socialism throughout the world in peaceful competition with capitalism.

A thorough examination of the policies and activities of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union during the past 20 years is now taking place, and with it there is a serious reassessment of Stalin's role and

...../contribution

contribution during that period.

It is natural that this should be arousing world-wide interest and a great deal of discussion in our own country. Facts are now being brought to light in connection with Stalin's leadership which are new to all of us.

They have lead in the Soviet Union to the vigorous combatting of what is called the "cult of the individual", and to the re-establishment of the vital Communist principle of collective leadership.

Measures have been taken which will make impossible any repetition of past mistakes. The criticism and public exposure of Stalin's mistakes have caused deep concern not only to the Soviet people, but also to members of the working class and Communist movement all over the world. This is bound to be the case because of what Stalin has stood for in the past in the minds of all associated with the International Socialist Movement.

In the critical days after Lenin's death and when the Soviet Union was isolated in a Capitalist world, Stalin as a Marxist thinker made a contribution to the Communist leadership of the Soviet Union which will stand in history. Stalin carried on a great fight for the industrialisation of the Soviet Union and for the collectivisation of agriculture. He combated the policy of the Trotskyists and Bukharinites, who stood for the slowing down of industrialisation and thus would have left the Soviet Union an easy prey to its enemies.

Stalin also lead the fight for the carrying through of the First Five Year Plans, and thus contributed to laying the basis of the great victory over Fascism in the Second Worldwar, when the sacrifices and heroism of the Soviet people and the Red Army saved all humanity from Hitlerism. Without these successes there would be no Soviet Union today. But they would have been achieved more quickly and at less cost but for certain defects and abuses associated with Stalin's personal leadership in the last 20 years.

These were the difficult years of the rise of Fascism and war, with all the problems involved. It was on this background that the denial of collective leadership developed and hardened into a system of personal power which lies at the root of all the mistakes. In these years Stalin established, bit by bit methods of personal leadership, and did not make provision as Lenin always did (and especially at times of crisis), for proper functioning consultation and collective leadership within the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

More and more Stalin based himself on the theory of the intensification of the class struggle within the Socialist State, even after the complete victory over the capitalists and landlords had been established. To accept this theory as a guide was bound to lead to an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion, and an exaggerated role being assigned to the security services which placed them above the Soviet Government and above the Party. The result was that the security organisations were enabled to make false charges against comrades and violate the Soviet Constitution and Soviet laws.

The enemies of the working class, in particular Beria, took full advantage of the position they occupied to do all the damage they could, especially in trying to destroy any possibility of collective leadership either in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union or the Soviet Government.

On the basis of his violation of the principle of collective leadership, Stalin also made serious mistakes in connection with agricultural policies ignored warnings about Hitler's invasion plans, and later adopted wrong policies in relation to Yugoslavia.

The fact that these criticisms are now being openly and publicly made and discussed is the indication of how seriously the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. is facing up to its responsibilities. The real test of self-

criticism is whether it leads to the putting right of past errors. It is precisely this that the leaders and members of the C.P.S.U. are doing today.

After Stalin's death the British Capitalist press was certain that a new battle for personal power would commence in the Soviet Union. Instead there has been the restoration of collective leadership and the security organisations have been placed under the firm collective control of the Soviet Government. The authority of Soviet law has been fully established so as to safeguard the legal rights of every Soviet citizen and make impossible a repetition of past events.

It cannot have been easy for the leaders of the C.P.S.U. to decide on the steps which have been taken. But they firmly made up their minds that if past wrongs were to be righted and mistakes avoided in the future, the truth about the past period must be publicly stated. However bitter it is to have to recognise past errors and abuses, frank and honest exposure of them is the only way to ensure that deep political lessons are learnt and similar problems not allowed to develop in future.

Judged by the test of results, the restoration of collective leadership has, during the past 3 years, already had great effects. The brilliant Peace initiatives of the Soviet Union, the healing of the breach with Yugoslavia and the visits of Soviet Leaders abroad which do so much to strengthen the bonds of peace and friendship between the nations - these have all helped toward the relaxation of international tension and have been welcomed by all throughout the world who want peace.

Within the Soviet Union the measures taken to overcome the weaknesses in agriculture, and the magnificent prospects opened out by the 6th. Five Year Plan also testified to the correct policy of the collective leadership of the C.P.S.U.

In considering how the past difficulties could have arisen and why the period they covered was so long, we constantly have to keep in mind the character of the whole world situation, the rise of Fascism and the war danger. This does not excuse what happened, but it helps to explain how it could have happened.

The capitalist press are engaging in a vicious campaign to try to discredit the Soviet Union and our Party. But they are not worrying about Stalin's memory. They are carrying about the new power and strength which the collective leadership of the C.P.S.U. is bringing to the Soviet people as they go forward to the triumphant fulfilment of the Sixth Five Year Plan by the end of 1960.

If such magnificent prospects now open up before the Soviet people, is it not time that there was more discussion throughout the labour movement as to where, in view of Britain's economic difficulties and the bankruptcy of its foreign and colonial policies, we in this country will be in 1960?

Despite past mistakes and problems, the supreme historic contribution of the Soviet people and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is that they have built Socialism, proved before all mankind that it is superior to capitalism, and that by their efforts and sacrifices helped to make socialism the world system that it is today. Because of this we have confidence in the Soviet Union and its people, in their ability to build on the great achievements already to the credit, overcome errors and obstacles and advance to Communism.

The challenge to us is to examine our own work, build our own Party, and in line with the perspective advanced in our programme: "The British Road to Socialism", rally the British people for a united struggle against the Tories and for a genuine Socialist policy.

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This is the task before our 24th. National Congress to the success of which every member of our Party can contribute by their thoughts, words and deeds in the days ahead.

SUMMARY OF AN EDITORIAL FROM 'PEKING PEOPLE'S DAILY' BASED ON DISCUSSION OF THE POLITICAL BUREAU OF THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY:

After Lenin's death, Stalin, as the chief leader of the Party and the State, creatively applied and developed Marxian-Leninism. But later, he had won prestige at home and abroad by his correct policy, he indulged in inordinate exaltation of his own role and posed his individual authority against collective leadership.

Leaders of Communist Parties and Socialist States have the duty to their utmost to reduce errors, avoid certain serious ones, and endeavour to learn lessons from particular errors. They should also prevent small errors developing into big and long lasting ones. To do this, every leader must be most modest and circumspect, keep close to the masses, consult them in all matters, go into realities over and over again, and make constant criticism and self-criticism.

Because of his failure to do precisely this, Stalin made certain mistakes in his work, in the latter part of his life, as a top leader of the Party and the State. He became conceited and not circumspect. His thinking was subjective and one-sided, and he made erroneous decisions on certain important questions, bringing about serious, harmful consequences.

The paper listed Soviet achievements - the October Revolution, Socialist Industrialisation, collectivisation of agriculture, the development of backward nationalities in the Soviet Union.

During the second world war the Soviet Union was the main force in defeating the Fascists, saved European civilisation, and helped the people of the east to defeat Japanese militarism. The Soviet Union encouraged and supported the construction of all other Socialist countries. It inspired the world Socialist Movement, the anti-colonialist Movements and all the movements for the progress of mankind. The man who showed the Soviet people and the Communist Party the way to those great achievements was Lenin.

In the struggle to carry out Lenin's principles, achievements have been made under the vigorous leadership of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party, and among these are the indelible achievements of Stalin. But, during the latter part of his life Stalin more and more indulged in the cult of the individual, a pitiful carry-over from the long history of mankind. As a result he made some important mistakes like the following:-

- Carried the problem of ^{of} eliminating counter-revolutionaries to excess;
- Showed lack of the necessary vigilance on the eve of the anti-fascist war;
- Failed to pay proper attention to the further development of agriculture and the material welfare of the peasantry;
- Advocated certain erroneous lines in the internationalist Communist Movement, especially on the question of Yugoslavia.

Warning of the strength of the tendency toward the cult of the individual, the paper pointed out that it is recognised that paternalism is a product of small-producer economy. Even when small producer economy as well as exploiting economies have been replaced by socialism, certain rotten, poisonous ideological remnants from the old Society may still remain in the minds of the people for a very long period. The cult of the individual is also a force of habit of millions and tens of millions. Since this force of habit still exists in society it can influence many government functionaries, even such a leader as Stalin was no exception.

Speaking of conditions in China: over some years we have made some advances in research, in philosophy, economics, history and literary criticisms, but generally speaking there are many unhealthy phenomena. Many of our research workers, still have the dogmatic habit of thinking by rote, lacking independence of mind and the spirit of creating, and in certain respects are influenced by the individual worship of Stalin.

It should be pointed out that the works of Stalin will still, as hitherto, be studied seriously. All that is of benefit in his Works, especially much of his writing in defence of Leninism and in correctly summarising Soviet experience in construction, we should take as an important historical legacy. To do otherwise would be a mistake. But there are two methods of studying them, the Marxist method and the method of dogmatism. Some people treat the works of Stalin dogmatically so that they cannot analyse what is correct and what is incorrect, and even what is correct they take as a panacea and apply indiscriminately. Inevitably they make mistakes.

For instance, Stalin presented a formula that in different revolutionary periods the direction of the main blow was to isolate the middle-of-the-road social and political forces of the period. We must examine this formula of Stalin's according to circumstances from a critical Marxist-Leninist point of view. In certain circumstances, it can be correct to isolate the middle-of-the-road forces, but it is not always correct to isolate them in all circumstances. According to our experience, the direction of the main blow in the revolution should be towards the major enemy and his isolation. To the middle-of-the-road forces we should adopt the policy both of uniting with them and struggling against them, at least to neutralise them, making efforts, when circumstances permit, to change them from a position of neutrality to one of active support in order to help the development of the revolution.

But there was a period (the ten years of civil war from 1927 to 1936) in which some of our comrades crudely applied this formula of Stalin's to China's revolution by directing the main blow at the middle-of-the-road forces, describing them as the most dangerous enemy. The result was that instead of isolating the real enemy we isolated ourselves and inflicted losses on ourselves while benefiting the real enemy.

The fact is always that dogmatism is valued only by those who are mentally lazy. So far from being any use, it does incalculable harm to the revolution, to the people and to Marxism-Leninism. In the matter of raising the consciousness of the mass of the people, inspiring in them a vigorous spirit of initiative and bringing about the rapid development of practical and theoretical work, it is now still necessary to destroy the superstitious belief in dogmatism.

Communists should adopt an analytical attitude to errors in the Communist movement. Some people consider that Stalin was wrong in everything. This was a grave misunderstanding. Stalin was a great Marxist-Leninist, yet at the same time a Marxist-Leninist who committed several gross errors without recognising them for what they were. We should view Stalin from the historical standpoint, make an all round, appropriate analysis of his rights and wrongs and draw beneficial lessons from it.

The international Communist movement is only a little over 100 years old and it is only 39 years since the victory of the October Revolution; experience in such revolutionary work is inadequate. We have our great achievements, but also our defects and errors. As the emergence of one achievement is followed by the creation of another, so the overcoming of one defect or mistake may be followed by a new one which must in turn be overcome.

Good leadership consists not in making no mistakes but in treating mistakes seriously. There has never been anyone in the world who made no mistakes.

RESOLUTION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF
FRENCH COMMUNIST PARTY

Certain of Stalin's works contain several erroneous or excessive theories- for example, on the symptoms of the general crisis of capitalism, on the problem of trade in the present stage of Soviet development, and on the development of the class struggle after the victorious construction of Socialism.

These theories led to false political conclusions.

The violation of Leninist principles of collective government by Stalin, and his personal methods, had weakened the Soviet Communist Party. These had consequences harmful to the Party and to Socialism. Serious blows had been dealt to Party democracy and to Soviet legality itself.

The frank criticism of the 20th Congress on this subject by no means denies, but puts in their true place, the role and the merits of Stalin as theorist and leader in the training of workers and Communist Parties, in the struggle against all enemies of the October Revolution (Trotskyists, Bukharinists and bourgeois nationalists), in the building of Socialism, and the destruction of German fascism.

The Central Committee recommended a wider study of the experience of the French Communist Party, of its struggle on behalf of the working class and of its own contribution to the ideas of Marxism.

The struggle of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union against the cult of personality and against all violations of the principle of collective leadership should urge us to develop for ourselves, in the Central Committee, in district committees and branches, in each group the collective character of leadership, free and profound discussion of the questions on the agenda, the encouragement of fruitful criticism of faults and shortcomings.

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