

THE MEANING
of the
XXth CONGRESS
of the
COMMUNIST PARTY
of the
SOVIET UNION

**REPORT TO THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE
OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, U.S.A.**

By Max Weiss

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

THIS PAMPHLET contains the complete text of the report delivered by Max Weiss, Educational Director of the Communist Party, to the enlarged meeting of its National Committee, held in New York City, April 28-May 1, 1956.

Mr. Weiss' report, dealing with the significance of the recent XXth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, taken together with the main report by Eugene Dennis, the Party's General Secretary, on the general problems and tasks confronting the American people and the Party, and the report by Claude Lightfoot, Chairman of the Illinois State Communist Party, on the coming 1956 elections, constitute the position presented by the Communist Party on key issues of the day for discussion by its membership.

In setting forth this point of view, the National Committee of the Communist Party solicits comment, suggestions and criticism from members of the Party as well as the general public. Such communications should be addressed to: Discussion Committee, P. O. Box 87, Cooper Station, New York 3, N. Y.

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I. NEW FEATURES OF THE PRESENT ERA

The 20th Congress of the CPSU was one of the most significant international events of the past period. The policies which it projected have reverberated through every land on earth. For the first time in history, the proceedings of a Congress of the CPSU were discussed on the floor of the United States Congress, debated in a Senate Committee, and printed by a government department for official study. In one form or another, aspects of this historic Congress have been discussed by millions of Americans.

The proceedings of the 20th Congress were permeated with the spirit of confident struggle for peace based on a fundamental and long range policy of peaceful coexistence between countries with different social systems. It was this, above all, which struck a deep and responsive chord among the American people who want to see the relations between our country and the Soviet Union based on friendship and cooperation. The appeal of the 20th Congress for an end to the cold war was welcomed by all sections of the American people.

The spirit of hopefulness which arose after the Summit Conference was given a new impetus by the declarations of the 20th Congress that the forces of peace had become so strong in the present era that the outbreak of a new world war need no longer be considered a fatal inevitability. For, together with millions of people in the main capitalist countries who strive to maintain the peace, there has come into existence for the first time in history a vast zone of peace which girdles the entire globe. It embraces the socialist countries of the world, as well as the non-socialist neutral countries, including the countries which have in the last decade broken the chains of colonial bondage. In this zone of peace live the overwhelming majority of the people on earth. And the governments of these countries, truly reflecting the will of their peoples, stand athwart the path of those forces who would like to plunge the world into war.

CHANGES BEHIND THE NEW SITUATION

This knowledge has begun to sink deeply into the national consciousness. It has stimulated the insistent demand of the American people that the cold war policies of our government be ended, that renewed efforts be made to find the basis for agreement on all unresolved differences which still inflame relations between our country and the Soviet Union. This has already forced our government to begin the re-examination and reappraisal of its policies which has long been demanded by the people.

What are the main changes which account for this new situation?

One of the most important contributions of the 20th Congress was the estimate made in Khrushchev's report* that "the emergence of socialism from within the bounds of a single country and its transformation into a world system is the main feature of our era."

This means that two periods of world history in the last 40 years may be distinguished. The first was ushered in by the great October Revolution which brought into being the first socialist state, the USSR. The second was ushered in by the events of the last decade in which a number of other countries took the path to socialist development. As we know, the whole history of mankind since 1917 was decisively influenced by the emergence of the USSR, by its struggle to build socialism in a single country, by its role in international affairs.

Today the Soviet Union is no longer the only socialist country. Socialist governments rule China, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Bulgaria, Roumania, Yugoslavia, Albania, Hungary, East Germany, North Korea and North Viet Nam. All told, there are within the world system of socialism some 900,000,000 people whose countries cover about one third of the surface of the earth.

The 20th Congress revealed that the rate of increase of production in the socialist world, especially in the Soviet Union, continues to grow more rapidly than in the capitalist world. In the last quarter of a century, production in our

* *Report of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. to the XXth Congress*, by N. S. Khrushchev, New Century Publishers, N. Y. 75 cents.

country slightly less than doubled. By contrast, socialist production in the USSR increased by more than twenty times in this same period. The accelerated rates of production envisaged in the next Five Year Plan will still further widen this gap. The day is not far off when the Soviet Union will out-produce the United States, heretofore the workshop for the world. Already, London circles estimate that by 1965 the Soviet Union will exceed three-quarters of U.S. production. Then, it will be but a stone's throw, as history is measured, before the Soviet Union exceeds the United States also in production per capita.

At that time it will no longer be a matter for speculation as to what benefits might accrue to the American people under socialism in terms of living standards, culture, recreation. For there will be a country of equivalent production per capita, the USSR, which will demonstrate in practice what such vast productive power in the hands of the people can do in terms of wages, hours, working conditions, vacations, social insurance, culture, health, education and the general welfare. And we must remember that the USSR is moving steadily to that point. Every intervening month and year brings such an ultimate and unconditional contrast between capitalism and socialism ever closer. The days when the capitalists of our country could inhibit the growth of socialist ideas among the American people by reference to our high standard of living are numbered.

As far as the capitalists of our country are concerned, they are no longer the doubting Thomases they made out to be in the past. Even Secretary of State Dulles, who was described by Kennan as living in an unreal world, no longer has the effrontery to insist that the Soviet Union is "leading from weakness." A new mood of uncertainty, and even pessimism, is beginning to take hold of leading capitalist circles as they contemplate the facts of life which they, for so long, attempted wishfully to ignore. As these capitalist circles face up to the prospect of peaceful competition with the world system of socialism, they are beset with serious doubts about its ultimate outcome. These were aptly summed up by *N. Y. Times* correspondent Harrison Salisbury who declared that we may

well have reached a point in history which is the "global watershed." What Salisbury implies is that the world is moving onto new terrain in which the streams and rivers of social development begin to run in an opposite direction and to a different sea.

DISINTEGRATION OF THE COLONIAL SYSTEM

The 20th Congress of the CPSU pointed up another important feature of the present era—the steady and accelerated disintegration of the colonial system. In the past decade more than one billion, two hundred million people—almost half the population of the entire globe—have freed themselves of imperialist domination. This includes People's China with the largest population in the world, India with the second largest population in the world, Burma, Indonesia, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, the Sudan. We see the same irresistible development in Morocco, Algeria and other colonies. Especially to be noted are the rising liberation movements in various parts of the great African continent—Kenya, the Gold Coast. New winds are blowing in the colonial and dependent countries of Central and South America, in Puerto Rico, Brazil, Chile. The total abolition of the imperialist colonial system is today—even before the advent of world socialism—on the order of the day.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of this historic development. For one thing, countries which in the past were merely agrarian and raw material hinterlands and spheres of exploitation by the major imperialist powers are now for the first time entering the world arena as sovereign nations and influencing the course of world history. Today not a single international question which affects the vast continent of Asia can be decided without People's China and India.

Furthermore, the liberation of the colonies in an era whose main feature is the existence of socialism as a world system influences decisively the course of their social and political development. In the past, when such nations won their freedom from imperialist rule, it was a foregone conclusion that they would develop along capitalist lines and under the concealed economic domination of the big powers. But today,

they need not look to the big imperialist powers as the only source for the capital or technicians they need to develop their national economy. Today they can build an economic foundation for their political independence by getting assistance, without strings, from the socialist countries. This will enable them to develop their economic and social systems along self-determined lines rather than those dictated by the National City Bank. Hence we are bound to see, even in those liberated colonies which do not immediately embark on socialist lines of development, new forms of mixed economic and social structure which will be different from the path of capitalist development characteristic of the past.

Thus the 20th Congress unfolded in its full significance a vast and inspiring panorama of the march of the world's peoples to peace, national liberation and socialism, a perspective which exhilarates and quickens the pulse of all who cherish these great ideals.

II. THE 20TH CONGRESS AND A CREATIVE APPROACH TO MARXIST-LENINIST THEORY

The 20th Congress of the CPSU made an historic contribution to the creative development of Marxist-Leninist theory.

The first theoretical question from which the 20th Congress swept away the cramping influence of dogma concerns the inevitability of war under imperialism. As is well known, Lenin developed this thesis as a result of his profound analysis of imperialism. This analysis showed that the entire world had already been divided among the chief imperialist powers in respect to colonies, sources of raw materials, spheres of investment for surplus capital. In this situation, the law of the uneven development of capitalism made it inevitable that there would be a periodic effort by one or another imperialist power to bring about a redivision of the world on a new basis. Since no imperialist power could be expected to yield its areas of control voluntarily, such a redivision of the world could only be accomplished by war.

IMPERIALIST WAR NOT A FATAL INEVITABILITY

But war does not occur as a result of such economic contradictions in the same way, for example, as economic crises break out as a result of the internal contradictions of capitalism. Economic crises break out without any decision being made by the capitalist class to that effect. In fact, they break out despite the most frantic efforts of the capitalists to prevent them. In this respect the outbreak of war is quite different. In order for imperialist war to break out, a decision must be made by governments. And, as is well known, governments are subject to pressure by the people who can influence their actions in accordance with their strength.

Prior to and for a long time after World War I, the forces of the people in the various imperialist countries were too weak to stay the hands of their governments. But today the situation is vastly different. Today a whole zone of peace exists, in which the overwhelming majority of the people of the world live, whose governments can and are actively intervening in world affairs to prevent war. In addition, in the chief imperialist countries there are vast numbers of people who are actively fighting in diverse ways to prevent the outbreak of war. Thus a new relationship of forces has come into existence, sufficiently strong, if united, vigilant, and active, to prevent the imperialist governments from launching war.

Hence the 20th Congress of the CPSU boldly and creatively revised one of the most fundamental tenets of Marxist-Leninist theory by declaring that while imperialism continues, as in the past, to breed the danger of war, the actual outbreak of imperialist war can no longer be considered a fatal inevitability.

This helps eliminate much theoretical unclarity in the fight for peace. From the beginning of our struggle against the danger of a new war, it was the position of our Party that despite the war orientation of American imperialism a third world war was not inevitable. But in actual fact, this position collided with the tenets of Marxist-Leninist theory on this question. In part we attempted to resolve this contradiction by declaring that the specific war which then threatened of a united capitalist world against the socialist world was

not inevitable. But we did not rule out the possibility that perhaps a different kind of war might be inevitable. Such a war might be one in which the contradictions between the imperialists would only prevent a united capitalist onslaught against the socialist world; or perhaps a war between different imperialist groups if Germany or Japan should succeed in rearming themselves.

By boldly taking into account the new relation of forces which has become dominant since Lenin's day and creatively revising the Leninist conception of the inevitability of war, the 20th Congress helps remove all ambiguities from a correct theoretical approach to this question.

ON THE TRANSITION TO SOCIALISM

The second theoretical question which the 20th Congress of the CPSU formulated in a fresh, creative manner relates to the most fundamental of all questions of Marxist-Leninist theory—the transition to socialism.

The Congress generalized the experiences of the last decade in which a number of countries abolished capitalist rule and established socialist governments. It declared that these experiences confirmed the Leninist thesis that each country would approach the transition to socialism in its own way, in accordance with the concrete peculiarities of the historic period in which the change is made, and in accordance with the specific context of historical background and the actual situation prevailing at a given moment.

It re-affirmed the historic truth which our own Party has constantly asserted that Communists are not, as our enemies charge, the advocates on principle of force and violence. It re-affirmed also what our own party has likewise constantly asserted over the years, namely, that there is no Marxist-Leninist principle which makes it inevitable for the working class to come to power only by armed insurrection or civil war. The only thing which is certain and inevitable, as our Party has repeatedly declared, is that the working class must everywhere, as the leader of the majority of the people, come to power. But how and in what form it comes to power depends on the situation which prevails in a given historic

period and, even within that period, on the situation which prevails in a given country.

In 1917, under Lenin's leadership, the Bolsheviks eagerly sought out the possibility which existed at a given moment to carry through the socialist revolution peacefully. Such an historic moment actually existed in the course of the turbulent days between March and October 1917. If, in the end, the Bolsheviks decided upon an armed uprising it was because all possibility for a peaceful transition to socialism had disappeared.

But the 20th Congress declared, as our own Party in the United States has repeatedly stressed, that it was not at all inevitable that the working class of all countries should follow the path which events imposed on the Bolsheviks in 1917. It assessed the new features of the world situation as well as the situation developing within various countries in such a way as to declare that possibilities had arisen today in contrast with 1917, for the working class of a number of countries to come to power peacefully.

In the present international situation, with socialism existing in a system of states, the achievements and successes of these countries facilitate the understanding of the ideas of socialism by millions in contrast with the past when there was no such example in life from which the workers of all countries could learn. Together with this, the internal situation in various capitalist countries is such as to facilitate the working class rallying round itself the vast majority of the people including the farmers and city middle classes. Under such conditions, parliamentary bodies may play a different role than in the past. For it is possible under such conditions, based on and backed up by the active political struggles of the masses, for the working class to win a stable majority in such parliamentary bodies and convert them into genuine organs of the popular will for the transition to socialism.

It is clear as we study the report of Khrushchev that what the 20th Congress actually did was to sum up and generalize the conclusions which had already been reached independently, and prior to the Congress, by the Communist Parties of a number of capitalist countries including our own.

AMERICAN COMMUNISTS AND THE U.S. ROAD TO SOCIALISM

It would be useful to glance at the history of this question in our own Party.

As we all know, the 7th World Congress in 1935* provoked much thought in our party on the relation of the Peoples Front to the transition to socialism. One result of this was a renewed and even more basic repudiation by our Party of charges which had been made against it that it advocated the use of force and violence. This repudiation of the advocacy of force and violence was incorporated in the Constitution of our Party at its Tenth Convention in 1938.

During the war in Spain, initial and tentative discussions were under way in our Party about the new possibilities for a peaceful path to socialism in that country. It was clear to us that, could it but put down this armed insurrection and intervention, the working class of Spain would find realistic possibilities for its peaceful advance to socialism within the framework of the People's Front government.

The defeat of the Republican government of Spain, followed shortly thereafter by the outbreak of the second world war, put these theoretical questions into the background. Even so, as far back as 1941, in a pamphlet written by comrade Foster, the possibility was advanced of a peaceful transition to socialism in the United States through the new situation that could be opened by a people's front government in this country.

In 1946, generalizing the experiences of the People's Democracies in Eastern Europe, our Party drew the conclusion that in each of these countries the working class had found its own road to socialism which differed from the path that had been taken by the Russian proletariat in 1917. Comrades Foster and Dennis, replying to a series of questions put by two New York newspapers,** declared that our Party was

* *The United Front Against War and Fascism*, by George Dimitrov, New Century Publishers, N. Y. 35 cents.

** *N. Y. Herald-Tribune's 23 Questions About the Communist Party*, answered by William Z. Foster, and *Is Communism Un-American?* by Eugene Dennis. New Century. Prices 10 cents and 5 cents.

convinced that the American people would likewise find its own special path to socialism in accordance with the special situation existing in our country, its historic background and traditions.

In 1948, the Party turned its attention to this matter again because of the Smith Act charges brought against the National Committee. As a result of prolonged discussion, the National Committee finally elaborated its fundamental policy on this basic issue. This was set forth in the well known pamphlet by comrade Foster, *In Defense Of The Communist Party and The Indicted Leaders*.* In that pamphlet, which was endorsed by the National Committee, our Party developed the basic political and theoretical reasons for the possibility of a peaceful path to socialism in the United States. This policy of our Party was later incorporated in its official Program adopted in 1954,** a Program which was distributed in close to a million copies.

In their very first speeches following the end of their parole restrictions in January, comrades Dennis and Gates repeated the Party's advocacy of a peaceful, constitutional road to socialism in our country.***

Writing on this question again just prior to the 20th Congress, comrade Foster developed afresh the theoretical foundation for our Party's advocacy of a peaceful transition to socialism in the United States. This was published in the April-May, 1956 issues of *Political Affairs*.

This sketchy historical exposition of the development of our Party's advocacy of a peaceful and constitutional path to socialism shows that it began to take shape almost twenty years ago and, in its final shape, is the result of a very basic and extended discussion of the international experiences of the working class as they apply to the problems we confront in our own country.

It is only natural, therefore, that we should welcome most

* New Century Publishers, N. Y. 15 cents.

** *The American Way to Jobs, Peace, Equal Rights and Democracy*. New Century Publishers, N. Y. 5 cents.

*** *What America Needs*, by Eugene Dennis and John Gates. New Century, N. Y. 10c.

warmly a similar analysis of the possibilities for the peaceful transition to socialism in a number of countries as made by the Marxists of the Soviet Union in the report of Krushchev to the 20th Congress.

PEACEFUL CONSTITUTIONAL PATH UPHELD

Some comrades interpret a section of Khrushchev's analysis as excluding the possibility of peaceful transition in a country like the United States where the capitalist class is strong and the forces of repression at its disposal are powerful. We think it fruitless to speculate about this or that formulation. The important thing is to analyze the political questions that are involved.

If it is said that the bourgeoisie is strong and its forces of repression are powerful, we quite agree. That is very true *today*. But no one in his right mind advocates the transition to socialism *today*. We advocate the transition to socialism only when a majority of the people led by the working class will support a program for the socialist reorganization of our country. Hence the question at issue is: how strong will the monopolists and their repressive powers be *then*?

Titanic economic and political struggles will intervene in our country before a majority of our people adopt a program for socialism. Can it be maintained that these struggles will have no effect in curbing the repressive powers of the monopolists? To think so is to live in a dream world. Take such a struggle as that which is being waged by the Negro people in the South. Victory in this struggle will still leave us very far indeed from the period of transition to socialism. But can it be denied that such a victory will result in seriously curbing the repressive powers of the monopolists? Multiply struggles of such scope a thousand fold and we begin only slightly to envisage what is involved in winning a majority of the American people for socialism. And simultaneously we will begin to grasp the fact that the bourgeoisie cannot emerge from such struggles as strong as it is today in its ability to repress the popular will.

We talk about a stable socialist majority in Congress. That means 250-300 socialist congressmen in Washington, to

say nothing about what will be taking place simultaneously in state legislatures, city councils, etc. When that point is reached in our country, we may be sure the old gray mare won't be what she used to be. That is why we have no hesitation in declaring that the possibility does exist for a peaceful, constitutional path to socialism in our country. And since such a possibility exists, that is what we advocate and fight for.

END DOCTRINAIRE STUDY OF MARXISM-LENINISM

Apart from the content of the specific questions which were so creatively developed by the 20th Congress, the great lesson which this historic gathering served to emphasize afresh is that Marxism-Leninism is not a dogma to be learned by rote or a collection of doctrines to be memorized in a lifeless and formal manner. It is incumbent upon the Marxists of all countries, including American Marxists, to develop and carry forward the science of Marxism-Leninism. To do this we must wage determined and relentless war on all vestiges of dogmatism and doctrinairism. Particularly now, with a whole new world situation developing as a result of the emergence of socialism from the confines of a single state and its transformation into a world system, many theoretical propositions and tactical approaches valid for a past period will have to be revised. And many dogmas which were not even valid for our country in the past will have to be quickly and completely cast overboard. Creative Marxism is impossible without ceaseless re-examination of dogma and doctrine in the light of ever changing reality.

We must put an end to the doctrinaire study of Marxism-Leninism which is carried on without regard for the realities of life in our own country. Usually we talk about studying Marxism-Leninism but we rarely talk about studying America, and yet without this the study of Marxism-Leninism is merely an academic exercise. Our task is to study America, the realities of life in our country, the lessons of the history of our country and the labor and people's movement. Marxism-Leninism is the scientific theory which enables us to study these realities. Marxism-Leninism is a compass—that is certainly true; but what kind of a sailor would he be who knew

much about a compass but very little about the sea?

Marxism-Leninism is a universal science, the generalization of the experience of the working class of all countries. But precisely because it is such a generalization, it is incumbent upon us to combine it with the particularity of the struggle in our country.

DOCTRINAIRE ERRORS CITED

Our doctrinaire approach to economic analysis has been responsible for a series of incorrect estimates in the whole period since the end of World War II. We accepted the general Marxist theory of economic crisis as a dogma which, once adhered to, absolved us of the responsibility of making a concrete analysis of the exact form in which the economic contradictions of capitalism were manifesting themselves in our country. Everything was very simple: war production would cease, unemployment would set in, the workers would soon use up their savings, and then the crisis would break out. But the actual unfolding of economic development, the new relationships between economics and politics which did not prevail in Marx's day, soon exposed the fallacy of such dogmatic and doctrinaire thinking. Bitter as the realization might be to mentally lazy dogmatists we must do the same thing that Marx did in his day—we must study the facts. And about these facts, we must say there are more available to us today in one year's output of the various economic research agencies in our country than were available to Marx in the whole historically accumulated store of records in the British Museum.

Our doctrinaire approach to the theory of the state has been the cause of considerable sterility in our approach to political action. We can all repeat by heart everything that Marxism-Leninism teaches about the bourgeois state—that it is an organ of class domination, that it is the executive committee of the ruling class, etc. But we know very little about and study even less the exact structure and form of government of our own country even though it is quite different from those in the bourgeois-democratic countries of Europe. These differences have played a most important role in in-

fluencing such things as the fight for democratic rights, the special character of the development of independent political action by labor in this country, the difficulty of bringing about a political realignment in the two major parties, the peculiar features of coalition politics in our country, the disproportionate role played in our country's political life by the rural areas as against the industrial urban areas.

We have converted into dogma the Marxist-Leninist theory of the national question by our characterization of the Negro question in the United States. Correctly taking into account many features of the Negro question in the Black Belt which were analagous to the situation of other oppressed nations, we attempted to fit American reality into a universal formula including the slogan of the right of self-determination. In the meantime, the liberation movement of the Negro people has been developing under a slogan which is the exact opposite of self-determination, namely, integration. Has this not contributed to, even though it does not fully explain, our Party's isolation from the stormily developing Negro people's movement?

We have converted into dogma the Marxist-Leninist theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat as it relates to a Communist approach to the question of civil liberties under socialism. It might appear that the right of dissent under socialism is a theoretical question which could safely be left for the future. But our failure so far to answer this question has had a negative effect on the relations between the Communist Party and important forces with whom we are striving for joint action in the fight for democratic rights. The fact that our Party has not yet formulated its position on this important question indicates that we are still influenced by a doctrinaire interpretation of the Marxist-Leninist theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat as it relates to the right of dissent. Our thinking is influenced by an interpretation which converts into dogma that particular solution of this question in other socialist countries which historical circumstances dictated in the past. But we are obligated to draw our own concrete conclusions from a detailed examination of the implications of the possibility of a peaceful, constitutional American road to socialism.

AMERICAN MARXIST-LENINISTS MUST RE-DISCOVER AMERICA

Dogmatism and doctrinairism—these are the twin enemies against which we must struggle if we are to succeed in combining the universal science of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete realities of the struggle in our country. We need to encourage greater confidence in our ability to develop the science of Marxism-Leninism in the United States. For, after all, who knows our country better than we do?

The doctrinaire influences in our Party are in considerable measure responsible for our failure to win acceptance by the masses for what we really are, a truly American party, indigenous to our country and rooted in its political soil. One result of this has been to make it easy for the monopolists and their spokesmen to smear us with the false and slanderous foreign agent charge. Although this libelous accusation is hurled at the Communist Party of every capitalist country by the bourgeoisie, in no other important capitalist country has it met with the success it has in the United States.

There is only one way to put an end to this situation. We must discard everything that smacks of a doctrinaire approach and begin to study the realities of life and the struggle in America in all their rich and manifold forms, forms which are vastly different in many fields from anything to be found in any other capitalist country. On this basis we must make policy in consultation with the masses, with an ear for the sentiments and moods and opinions of the masses. In doing so we will also recover for ourselves once again what we have tended to lose sight of in recent years—the American tradition of struggle for democracy and socialism whose continuity links us Communists of today with the best that is in America back to its founding days.

In 1919, American Marxists discovered Leninism. Today we Marxist-Leninists must re-discover America.

III. THE SELF-CRITICISM AND SELF-CORRECTION OF THE XXTH CONGRESS

It is well known that the Central Committee of the CPSU has been engaged ever since the death of Stalin in the criticism and correction of mistakes made under Stalin's leadership.

To begin with, almost immediately following Stalin's death, the Central Committee of the CPSU intervened to scotch the frame-up against the Jewish doctors. In June, 1953, less than three months after Stalin's death, the Central Committee, through a leading editorial in *Pravda*, opened its campaign against the cult of the individual. This was followed up a month later with its well known theses on the 50th Anniversary of the Communist Party* in which Stalin's role in the formation of the Communist Party was put in terms of historical accuracy and not hero-worship. Together with this, the theses developed further the ideological struggle against the cult of the individual.

At about this time, the Central Committee took decisive action to end a situation in which the organs of internal security placed themselves above the Communist Party and the Soviet government. It was as a result of this struggle that Beria was arrested and executed. Throughout the remainder of 1953 a whole series of measures were enacted to correct distortions of socialist legality, including an amnesty decree as well as the establishment of a commission to review the penal code of the USSR.

The Central Committee of the CPSU took action to loosen up the self-imposed isolation which had been imposed on the Soviet Union under Stalin by relaxing travel restrictions both for Soviet citizens leaving the country and for foreigners desiring to travel within it. One immediate result of this was the tour of the Soviet Union made by a delegation of small town editors from the United States.

Finally, we are well aware of the restoration of normal relations with Yugoslavia which occurred in the summer of 1955 at which time Khrushchev, speaking for the Central Commit-

tee of the CPSU, publicly admitted that the break in relations had taken place as a result of errors made by the CPSU.

STALIN AND THE CULT OF THE INDIVIDUAL

This process of criticism and correction of errors which the Central Committee of the CPSU had been carrying on for almost three years was carried to new and profound heights at the 20th Congress. Here, for the first time, the Central Committee concretized its three year old struggle against the cult of the individual by making clear that in the first place this meant the cult of Stalin. In addition, in special session, the Central Committee presented to the delegates a self-critical examination of the mistakes which the Party under Stalin's leadership had made over a twenty year period.

The disclosure that mistakes of such magnitude had been made came as deep shock to us. This was, in itself, a reflection of how profoundly we had been affected by the cult of Stalin's infallibility. It had led us to a position where we had well-nigh ruled out the possibility of Stalin making any mistakes, or at any rate any serious ones. Hence, we had also ruled out the possibility of the CPSU making such mistakes since we identified the CPSU with Stalin.

Yet it is an elementary Marxist-Leninist proposition that mistakes, whether by individuals or parties, are inevitable, be they in the fight against a ruling capitalist class, or in the struggle to build socialism where the workers already rule. That is why self-criticism is a principle of Communist Parties—because even decisions which are made by collective bodies may be wrong and need to be made subject to criticism after they have been made.

This general truth takes on added significance when we consider that the CPSU is a Party which leads the working people of the first socialist country in the world. The problems which confronted this party had never been solved before in any concrete form. Every step along the way was an uncharted one.

Could socialism be built for the first time in history without mistakes being made? Of course not; it was inevitable that

* *The 50th Anniversary of the CPSU: 1903-1953*. New Century. 15 cents.

mistakes would be made. But we lost sight of all this in our long addiction to the cult of the individual, in our non-Marxist assumption that Stalin was so brilliant a Marxist that he was well-nigh infallible. That is why the disclosure of these mistakes produced a reaction quite different from that which accompanies the disclosures of mistakes by our own Party, or by other Communist Parties. We expect them in these cases. We did not expect them in the Soviet Union.

What was the central mistake made by the leadership of the CPSU?

It lay in developing the cult of the individual, specifically the cult of Stalin, in permitting the development of Stalin's one-man leadership of the Party. By ascribing to Stalin almost superhuman genius, the CPSU violated the cardinal teachings of Marxism-Leninism on the relation of the individual leader to the Party and the masses. In effect, it succumbed to the pernicious theory that history is made by great heroes. This false theory led to minimizing or neglecting altogether the role of the Soviet masses, the role of the CPSU, the role of the C. C. of the CPSU. All these became simply the instrumentalities for effectuating the policies formulated by the hero-individual, Stalin.

As a result, Stalin became immune from criticism. Methods of collective leadership of the Party were abandoned since they had become superfluous. Stalin's ability to lead the Party single-handedly was accepted without question. Inner-party democracy disappeared.

Under these conditions, the political weaknesses of the individual, Stalin, became the political weaknesses of the CPSU. Collective leadership is necessary for the very reason that the thinking of individuals, no matter how brilliant, tends inevitably to one-sidedness. Collectivity and criticism correct such one-sidedness. Where they are absent, the one-sidedness, or the crass mistakes of the individual, are given full scope. And in this case Stalin's one-sidedness and mistakes became the one-sidedness and mistakes of the Party as a whole.

Hence, while it is inevitable that even with collective leadership parties will make mistakes, the particular mistakes

which the CPSU made were not inevitable. Many, if not most of them, could undoubtedly have been avoided had there been collective leadership instead of one-man leadership, had there been criticism and self-criticism instead of blind adulation of Stalin, had there been true inner-party democracy instead of bureaucratic domination of the Party by Stalin.

By resolutely putting an end to the cult of Stalin, the Central Committee of the CPSU could for the first time bring its past mistakes into the open. For in view of Stalin's one-man leadership of the CPSU, no criticism could be made of the Party's mistakes without simultaneously criticising Stalin. How could the CPSU, for example, criticise the thesis that the class struggle in the Soviet Union would inevitably sharpen even after Socialism had been fully established in the Soviet Union, without thereby, criticising Stalin who was the well-known author of this thesis?

To correct the mistakes of the past, as well as to prevent any recurrence of these mistakes in the future, the Central Committee of the CPSU had to utterly demolish the cult of the individual and in so doing it had to make a completely new evaluation of Stalin's place in history. This was done at the 20th Congress of the CPSU.

NEW EVALUATION OF STALIN'S ROLE

What is this new evaluation of Stalin's role?

There has been much discussion in our Party about this. At the beginning of our discussions on the 20th Congress, there were some comrades who refused altogether to change their views about Stalin's role. They felt called upon to defend Stalin against those whom they considered to be his detractors. They considered the criticism of Stalin to be an unworthy effort to "pass the buck." Obviously these comrades are wrong. They refuse to face up to reality. On the other hand, there were other comrades who considered that these mistakes were so enormous that they cancelled out whatever contributions Stalin had made in the past. They were prepared to obliterate Stalin's name from the history of the working class movement. These comrades likewise are wrong.

Finally there are some comrades who, while admitting that Stalin made many mistakes, insist that there is no need to make such sharp criticism of these mistakes because, after all, Stalin did many good things too.

In assessing the role of individuals we must encompass the totality of their work. Even in the case of Plekhanov, who in his last years betrayed the socialist movement, we do not reject that which he contributed of lasting merit to the Marxist movement. How much more is this the case with Stalin who despite his serious mistakes stood to the end on the correct general line of the CPSU with results that we all know insofar as the construction of Socialism is concerned.

In historical perspective we must assess Stalin as one who made important contributions to the building of Socialism in the USSR, but who departed from certain important Leninist concepts in his later years, and as a result was responsible for mistakes which did great harm to the cause of socialism in the Soviet Union as well as in the rest of the world. This is the only judgment that can be made on the basis of the facts as we know them today.

As for our own Party, we know only too well how such a development can take place. We had our own special experience with it during the years of Browder revisionism. At that time, under the spell of important successes in the development of the Party's line and mass work, a situation was allowed to exist in our Party in which one individual replaced the collective leadership, a bureaucratic system of leadership was permitted to develop, self-criticism virtually disappeared from our Party, and the creative initiative of the Party membership was sapped. No decision was made by our Party to bring this state about. It crept upon us, in an almost unnoticed fashion, step by step without our really being aware at any given moment of the process which was unfolding until it reached its culminating point in 1944-45 when our Party made its basic mistakes in estimating the role of American imperialism.

The lessons we drew from our own experience at that time resulted in a big upsurge of criticism and self-criticism in our Party, in a big expansion and development of inner Party

democracy. But then we relapsed into old habits and methods. We must constantly remind ourselves of this fundamental lesson of our Party's history in order to guarantee that today, as well, we will subject to the most searching criticism and self-criticism the work and policies of our Party and its leadership. This must be a constant feature of our work. It is all the more important today because of the abnormal conditions under which the collective bodies of our Party have been compelled to function over the past 6 or 7 years as a result of arrests, geographical confinement of leading comrades because of bail conditions, etc.

We would make a serious mistake if we thought our experience with Browder had put an end to the influence of the cult of the individual. The fact that our Party considered Stalin virtually infallible indicates that we had not drawn the full conclusions from our experience with Browder. In our Party, at the present time, such conclusions do not require any change in our attitude to any particular leader of our Party. There is no Party leader today who is worshipped, around whom a cult is developing, who is considered infallible.

IMPROVE OUR OWN COLLECTIVE WORK AND INNER-PARTY DEMOCRACY

But the guarantees against the practice of one-man leadership developing in the future lie in vastly improving the collectivity of our work and expanding the processes of inner-party democracy.

What are some of the most important questions to which we must address ourselves?

First, there is the imperative need to open new channels which will facilitate membership participation in policy decisions. This is one aspect of a far wider need, namely, to consult with the masses in formulating policy. As things stand today, we usually find that Party policies are formulated in top bodies after extended periods of debate, sometimes of the sharpest and most protracted character. But the membership never hears of such debates. It gets only the finished prod-

uct, the end result of the discussion. The varied aspects of the questions under discussion which, on top levels, precipitate lively differences, are never communicated to the membership. Hence, the membership is rarely aware of the process by which policies are hammered out on top levels. They never learn which contrary views were considered and rejected or why. Not only does this militate against the education of the membership. It also deprives the leadership of the opinions and views of the membership which are indispensable for the correct, collective formulation of Party policy. By the time some discussion which has taken place in a top body reaches the membership, it is a cut and dried end product with all the life giving juices drained out. To add insult to injury, in many cases free discussion of the policy in question is choked off in Party branches by the top leadership under cover of "fighting for the line." We thus have the anomalous situation where a difference of opinion in a top body is considered as "debate and discussion" but a difference of opinion in a branch is considered "opposition to the line."

We need to develop forms and methods which will enable the membership to carry on, within the framework of democratic centralism, continuous discussion on important aspects of Party policy even between conventions. This needs to be done, and can be done, without impairing the unity of our Party in struggle, without converting our Party into an impotent debating society.

A concomitant of this is to make a big change in attitudes to members who express differences with one or another policy of the Party. We must put an end to the harsh methods which have been used in dealing with differences which emerge in the course of debating one or another phase of Party policy. We must not tolerate tendencies toward "head-chopping" in dealing with comrades who express such differences. Once we put an end to this, we will also put an end to "secessionist" moves by members who are handled in such an officious and arbitrary manner.

Finally, under this general heading, this National Committee meeting must, and I am sure will, make a decision to schedule a national convention of our Party which has been

delayed for so many years because of the situation in which the Party found itself. The holding of regular conventions is one of the fundamentals of inner-party democracy. This is necessary not only for membership participation in formulating the fundamental long range policies of the Party. It is necessary in order to put an end to the method of cooption of leadership which, necessary under certain conditions, has by this time created an abnormal situation in the Party.

Secondly, while there is no cult of the individual in our Party in the sense in which it was discussed by the CPSU, it is indisputable that there are many impermissible practices of one-man leadership which are rife in all leadership bodies of the Party. For example, there is the institution of "the summary." What usually happens is that a report is made to a leadership body, or even to a branch. Then there is a lively discussion in which many different viewpoints are advanced including alternative courses of action. Instead of placing these differences before the committee for democratic vote and decision, the reporter usually makes "the summary of the discussion." This "summary," which in most cases, is the individual opinion of the reporter is then accepted as the policy of that particular body. But why? What right does one individual have to make a decision on differences? Why should the collective body not decide these questions by voting on these differences? It should and it must.

VIOLATIONS OF SOCIALIST DEMOCRACY

The disclosure and correction of its mistake on the cult of the individual made it possible for the Central Committee of the CPSU, after Stalin's death, to throw the search-light of criticism and self-criticism on a whole series of mistakes which had been made under Stalin's leadership over a twenty year period.

Some of these mistakes were dealt with in the published documents of the Congress. Others have come to light in materials published in various forms after the conclusion of the Congress.

What are some of the most important of these mistakes?

First of all, there were a whole series of violations of the principles of socialist democracy and legality. These stemmed from the thesis advanced by Stalin that the class struggle must inevitably sharpen even after the complete victory of socialism. A companion theory to this held that opportunists must inevitably degenerate into enemies of the Party and the socialist state.

This led to widespread and endless measures of repression against innocent people, including arrests, jailings and executions of those who disagreed with one or another aspect of the policy of the Party under Stalin. Under cover of these violations of socialist democracy and legality the organs of internal security placed themselves above the Party and the state and were responsible for crass and repulsive crimes against the principles of socialist justice.

Simultaneously, wrong concepts of socialist jurisprudence developed. Impermissible standards of evidence and proof were developed. In particular, the practice was developed of accepting confessions in court as proof of guilt without the courts searching for the absolute truth about the facts involved. This opened the way for conviction on the basis of rigged evidence, or as we call it in our country, frame-up.

These wrong theories and violations of the cardinal principles of socialist democracy and legality which developed under Stalin's leadership resulted in tragic injustices against innocent victims which are shocking in their implications. Tens of thousands of innocent people were arrested and jailed, with many of them executed. Included among these victims were old Bolsheviks like Kossior who had fought by Lenin's side in the Civil War, Bela Kun, leader of the first Hungarian Soviet, outstanding officers of the Red Army, prominent cultural leaders of the Jewish community, and many others. In the people's democracies the same violations of socialist democracy and legality took place as in the Soviet Union, resulting in the well-known trial and execution of Rajk in Hungary, of Kostov in Bulgaria and the imprisonment of many thousands of others.

In both the Soviet Union and the Peoples Democracies, the uncovering of these mistakes has been accompanied by sweep-

ing measures for the correction of injustices committed and the establishment of guarantees against their future recurrence. These range from mass amnesties of innocent victims to serious revision of the standards of socialist law. They include the establishment of special committees to supervise the work of the organs of internal security and other investigative bodies as well as to check on the work of the prosecutor's offices.

The self-criticism which the leaderships of the Communist Parties of the Socialist countries are making on this question is not something we can watch as objective observers. On many occasions, the mistakes made by the Soviet Party under Stalin's leadership became public issues in the labor and people's movement of our own country. Our Party, interpreting the policies of Stalin on these questions as necessary features of the dictatorship of the proletariat surrounded by a hostile capitalist encirclement, defended actions which are now revealed to have been tragic mistakes. As a result we compromised the name of our Party in the eyes of friendly circles in the labor and people's movement, complicating the relations between our Party and the masses.

There can be no question that these mistakes brought grist to the mill of the reactionaries. They helped feed the false charges of totalitarianism and police state which were hurled against the socialist countries. But likewise, there can be no question that the uncovering of these mistakes and the steps taken to correct them as well as to prevent their recurrence will lead to a new flourishing of socialist democracy in the socialist countries. The moral authority of the socialist world, which Stalin's policies helped to weaken and discredit, will rise to new heights of influence in the period ahead.

DEVIATION FROM LENIN ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION

The second mistake analyzed by the 20th Congress, as is revealed by materials published since then, was a serious Great Russian deviation from the Leninist policy on the national question. The most dangerous consequence of this deviation was the rupture in relations between the Soviet Union

and Yugoslavia. This represented an attempt, under Stalin's leadership, to impose the will of a large socialist country upon a small one. It represented, further, a denial by Stalin of Lenin's teachings that each country must advance to socialism in accordance with the concrete conditions in which the transition is made. Regardless of the mistakes made in Yugoslavia under Tito's leadership on many questions, such as the liquidation of the Communist Party and its merger in the Peoples Front, Stalin's policy of breaking relations with Yugoslavia represented nothing but crude pressure against a sovereign socialist country and gross interference in its internal affairs.

In addition to everything else, this mistake served to increase international tensions and fan the flames of the cold war. This mistake had its repercussions in our own country where, as is well known, there is a very large and active Yugoslav mass movement, seriously impairing the relations between Communists and the Yugoslav mass organizations throughout the entire country.

Another serious consequence of Stalin's Great Russian deviation from a Leninist line on the national question was manifested in the policies developed by the Soviet Party toward the institutions of Jewish culture. These policies resulted in halting the development of Jewish socialist culture, ending the publication of Jewish literature, closing down various institutions of Jewish culture. Essentially, this policy, developed under Stalin's leadership, represented a Great Russian policy of forced assimilation of minorities under cover of a vague campaign against cosmopolitanism. It was a crass departure from a Leninist policy on the national question.

Here again, apart from its consequence in the Soviet Union, this indefensible policy had direct and serious repercussions in our own country, in which the Jewish population is the largest in the world. By defending this policy on the ground that the process of assimilation under socialism had undermined the need for continued existence of Jewish cultural forms in the Soviet Union, Communists came into serious collision with masses of Jewish-Americans who became alienated from us and in many cases outrightly hostile. For this reason, the full lessons which must yet be drawn from the mistakes

made in the Soviet Union under Stalin's leadership on the Jewish question are of the most profound concern to us in order to deepen our own understanding of the Communist policy on the Jewish question.

STALIN AND HITLER'S ATTACK

The third important mistake, according to materials which have appeared in the Soviet press, was Stalin's failure to anticipate Hitler's attack against the Soviet Union and, hence, to make adequate military and industrial preparations for such an attack. Of all the mistakes made under Stalin's leadership surely this is unequalled in terms of the needless and unspeakably tragic price paid by the Soviet people. For as a result of this unpreparedness millions of Soviet people unnecessarily paid with their lives, Socialist cities and industrial regions in the western areas of the USSR were unnecessarily destroyed, heavy military defeats were suffered.

It is not yet possible for us to draw all the conclusions from this mistake, for these would include the political conceptions which made it possible. Undoubtedly additional material which will be forthcoming from the discussions of the Soviet Party will throw further light on this question.

IV. THE DISCUSSION IN OUR PARTY

The disclosure of mistakes made under Stalin's leadership came as a stunning surprise to our Party leadership and members. We had not been prepared for this despite the attention paid to all the political preparations for the 20th Congress. Neither did we grasp the full extent of the mistakes made even when Khrushchev's report was made available.

Instead, we were compelled to rely on certain speeches to the 20th Congress by Mikoyan, Shepilov and Suslov as well as fragmentary news dispatches about speeches made by Communist leaders of other countries following the 20th Congress, such as Ulbricht in Germany, Togliatti in Italy, Duclos in France.

ROLE OF THE NATIONAL BOARD

As a responsible Party leadership, the National Board withheld public comment or evaluation in full expectation that the leadership of the Soviet Party would make public its authoritative estimate of the questions which had apparently been discussed at a closed session of the 20th Congress. But it became clear that, for reasons not yet disclosed, the Central Committee of the CPSU had decided to conduct the discussion of these questions in an internal manner.

It would be wholly unrealistic to expect that such events would not provoke the widest interest and discussion among our members and leaders as well as among broad non-Party circles. Therefore, even though it could not yet make an authoritative analysis based on authenticated facts, the National Board had a preliminary discussion at an early stage in the period following the 20th Congress. This was followed up by reporting the results of this discussion to meetings of eastern and midwestern District organizers. Somewhat later, a member of the National Staff reported the results of the discussion to the California leadership.

The *Daily Worker* correctly took the initiative to open its pages to a discussion of various questions posed by the 20th Congress. It should be commended for its boldness and political courage in attempting to give leadership to the discussion at a moment of great unclarity in the ranks of the Party. The freewheeling discussion in its pages met with wide response and had a stimulating effect on its readership.

Nevertheless, we must record that despite various articles by Foster and the questions and answers by Dennis,* there has so far been no real direct guidance by the National Board in the form of an established collective opinion of our Party on these developments around which a guided discussion could take place. There was justification for the National Board not rushing to make public a collective evaluation in the early stages of the discussion. Before a responsible leadership speaks, it must ascertain the facts. And there were no

* *Political Affairs*, April 1956. New Century Publishers, N. Y.

facts forthcoming from the only source capable of authoritatively issuing them—the CPSU.

But we must recognize self-critically that after a certain point, the failure of the National Board to make a collective evaluation for publication resulted in the discussion taking on a one-sided character. The responsibility for this must be taken by the National Board. Questions dealing with the mistakes made by the CPSU began completely to obscure the historic significance of the 20th Congress in respect to such burning issues of the moment as the new world role of the socialist system of states, the fight for peaceful coexistence, the new theoretical questions in relation to the non-inevitability of war and the peaceful transition to socialism, new prospects for healing the split in the ranks of the working class, etc.

We propose therefore to end this situation by issuing material to guide the discussion on the basis of a collective evaluation by the National Committee.

QUESTIONS RAISED BY "DAILY WORKER" EDITORIALS

We must say something about the questions provoked by the editorials in the *DW* on the Rajk case as well as on the fate of the Soviet Jewish leaders. These editorials have been attacked on the ground that they made a sharp criticism of the miscarriage of justice in socialist countries, on the ground that it is incorrect for American Communists to take up a critical attitude to such violations of socialist democracy, justice and legality.

What are the political questions involved here? Essentially they revolve around the attitude of Communists to socialist countries and the relations between Communist Parties.

As we know, our attitude to the Soviet Union, and now as well to Peoples China and the Peoples Democracies of Eastern Europe, flows from our knowledge that they are socialist countries. The working class and farmers of these countries are working with might and main, at the cost of terrible sacrifice and privation, to realize their goal of building a new kind of life in which class exploitation has been abolished. These countries, and particularly the Soviet Union, inspire the workers and farmers of all lands. They are visible proof that the old

world of capitalist exploitation, fascism, war, national oppression, race discrimination is on the way out. Each of these socialist countries has moved, or is moving toward the building of socialism, in its own way. The Soviet Union, in which the workers and farmers abolished capitalist rule for the first time in history, and in which a full socialist economy already has been built, occupies a place of special honor in this brightly colored spectrum of socialist nations.

The big business interests of our country are doing their utmost to vilify these socialist countries, to incite the hostility of the people toward them. For they know very well that with every new achievement of these socialist countries, faith in the ability of the working class of our own country to reorganize society along socialist lines begins to develop among wider strata of workers. If the workers of other countries can get along without capitalists, the workers of our country can do the same—this is the thought which takes root in the minds of ever larger sections of workers. Hence, there is no lie or slander or fabrication that the big business interests will hesitate to use if only it serves to discredit these socialist countries and to undermine the faith of American workers in their own ability to bring about a socialist reorganization of society in our own country.

That is why it is in the interests of the struggle for socialism in our own country to nail every lie, to expose every slander, to set right every distortion of the actual situation in the various socialist countries. Over the years we have been doing just that and we intend to continue doing so.

Furthermore, basing ourselves on the defense of the true national interests of our country, we fight for a policy of friendship and cooperation between our country and the socialist countries. This, among other things, calls for a determined and relentless struggle against all efforts, no matter from what direction, to inculcate unfriendly attitudes among the American people toward the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. This likewise we have been doing and intend to continue doing.

Finally, the foundation of our approach to all questions involving the socialist countries rests on the bed-rock of pro-

letarian internationalism. The tradition of international solidarity of the American working class with the working class of all countries is a proud one. We are the continuers of this tradition and consider it our badge of honor.

ERRORS IN OUR VIEW OF SOCIALIST STATES

But we do need to take stock of certain mistakes we have been making in fulfilling our responsibility to the working class of our country. For one thing, we have tended for a long time to oversimplify the situation in the socialist countries. We glossed over weaknesses and shortcomings which, as a matter of fact, even the Communist Parties of the countries involved themselves discussed. This is true, for example, of the agriculture situation in the Soviet Union, the unsatisfactory situation in the field of Soviet literature, movies, art; or the problem of juvenile delinquency. This tended to give our portrayal of socialist construction an unreal, idealized character. But why should we shy away from discussing these matters? To admit that there are weaknesses and shortcomings, unsolved problems in the socialist countries will not detract from the grandeur of socialist achievements in these lands.

Likewise, we have often hesitated to discuss certain developments in the socialist countries because such discussion might lead to differences of opinion between the Marxists of our country and those of the socialist countries. But on many occasions these developments have been the subject of vital concern to considerable sections of the people of our country. They have sometimes seriously and adversely affected the attitude of friendly masses to our Party. Such matters have arisen in various fields—culture, science, aesthetics, history, economics, law, politics, the national question.

But we have no right to shy away from these questions. The Marxists of our country must make a serious study of all these matters whenever they become issues which affect the relations between our Party and the masses. We must attempt to ascertain all the facts involved and discuss them from an objective, Marxist-Leninist viewpoint as they affect the situa-

tion of our Party in this country. This is necessary even if such examination should, in one or another case, lead to a critical position to the theory or practice of the Marxists of the socialist countries on one or another question.

As a responsible Marxist party of the working class of our country, it is incumbent upon us to define our attitude to these questions not in order to pass judgement on the Marxists of other countries, but so that we may maintain proper and correct ties with the masses in our country.

INDEPENDENT, RESPONSIBLE JUDGEMENT

It is important to note that each of the mistakes made under Stalin's leadership over the past twenty years has brought our party into collision with one or another section of the mass movement. Just as these mistakes did great harm to the building of Socialism in the Soviet Union, our Party's defense of these mistakes did great harm to the struggle for socialism in our country, by bringing us into collision with friendly masses. It is time we drew some conclusions from our long experience with such questions. At least one such conclusion is quite evident: whenever the theory or practice of the Marxists of other countries become issues which threaten to affect adversely the relation between our Party and friendly masses, we must subject these questions to the most careful study in order to define, so far as we can, a correct attitude to such theory or practice.

This may, at one or another moment, convince us that important questions of principle are involved. In such cases we must defend these principles even though it brings about, temporarily, the deterioration of relations between our Party and sections of the working class. For we do not idealize the working class. We understand that, owing to its lack of consciousness, it is deeply infected with bourgeois and chauvinist prejudices which the Right wing social-democrats and labor reformists assiduously cultivate.

But it is also true that a careful and responsible study of other questions may at times convince us of the need to take up a critical position in relation to some aspect of the theory

or practice of the Marxists of the socialist countries. In such cases, we are obligated by our responsibilities to the American working class to make such criticism.

In respect to this main question the *DW* made an important contribution. In the process of doing so, however, as is almost always the case in making a break-through to new and unfamiliar ground, some mistakes were made. A number of wrong and harmful formulations were included, as in the *Rajk* editorial, which caused great confusion. In clearing up any such confusion, and in guarding against such mistakes in the future, let us not cancel out the main thing which these editorials achieved, for that would be like throwing out the baby with the bath-water.

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The *Daily Worker* editorials were fully correct in taking up a critical attitude to the mistakes in the *Rajk* case and in the case of the Jewish cultural leaders. Both mistakes, as well as our defense of them at the time they were made, seriously impaired the relations between our Party and friendly masses. In respect to this main question, the *DW* made an important contribution. In the process of doing so, however, as is almost always the case in making a break-through to new and unfamiliar ground, some mistakes were made. A number of wrong and harmful formulations were included, as in the *Rajk* editorial, which caused great confusion. In clearing up any such confusion, and in guarding against such mistakes in the future, let us not cancel out the main thing which these editorials achieved, for that would be like throwing out the baby with the bath-water.

V. POLITICAL UNITY OF THE WORKING CLASS

The 20th Congress of the CPSU helped influence favorably all trends toward healing the political split in the working class between Socialists and Communists. Since the Congress, important progress has been made in a number of countries which will undoubtedly lead to greater Communist-Socialist unity.

This process is stimulated in the first place by the demonstrably greater influence in world affairs of the system of Socialist states. Furthermore, the area of political difference between Socialists and Communists has been narrowed on a number of basic questions. These include the theory of the inevitability of war, as well as the possibility of peaceful, parliamentary transition to socialism. The correction by the CPSU of mistakes made during the Stalin era on questions of socialist democracy and legality, as well as on the national question, have had a most positive effect on important Socialist circles.

Despite the negative attitude of the Executive Committee of the Second International, the process of Socialist-Communist rapprochement is developing. That is the significance of the statement made by Daniel Mayer, leader of the French Socialists, that the 20th Congress would help bring East and West closer together and help achieve greater understanding between various working class movements. It is in this same sense that we must interpret the declaration of Camille Huysmans, veteran Belgian leader of the Second International, that: "I want to do everything in my power to help restore working class unity in Europe. This must be done quickly if we want to have democracy throughout the world. The time has come again to unite all trends in the working class. This is no dream. It can be achieved quickly."

Most recently, the well known British Socialist leader, G. D. H. Cole, echoed similar sentiments when he declared

that the time had come for Socialists and Communists to begin talking with the long term view of building "a basis for reuniting the world working class movement."

In our own country, this process takes on special forms owing to the absence of any mass Socialist movement comparable to those which exist in Europe. Even prior to the 20th Congress, instances began to multiply of Socialist minded groups and individuals participating actively in the struggle against Smith Act persecution of Communists as well as against other attempts to deprive Communists of their civil liberties. New positions are being taken up by Socialist minded groups in the fight to reorient our country toward a democratic foreign policy based on a long range outlook for peaceful coexistence. Without formal agreements of any kind such developments tend to stimulate parallel action on many issues between Socialist and Communist forces in our political life.

A most important new factor is the growing resurgence of publicly articulated Socialist opinion in many sections of the labor movement. The Debs Memorial observances, for example, became an occasion on which for the first time in many years, prominent trade union leaders associated themselves with the Socialist aspirations of the working class in the form of a tribute to that famous American Socialist. In addition, new Marxist-oriented political currents outside of the organized Socialist or Communist movements have begun to take shape. For the most part, as yet, these express themselves through publications without any corresponding organization. But they are representative of the growing tendency for a new renaissance of Socialist thought in our country.

The Communist Party greets and welcomes this important new development. It appreciates fully that the obligation of taking a second look does not rest solely on these Socialist minded forces. The Communist Party itself is obligated to take a new look at certain dogmatic and outdated conceptions of its relations with such Socialist organizations, groups and currents. The period ahead will no doubt see an increase in friendly discussion, debate and united action between the Communist Party and these Socialist oriented groups. Such

a development will help create the conditions for achieving in the future the great goal which is treasured by all who aspire to a socialist reorganization of society—the ultimate establishment in our country of a united party of socialism capable of leading the American working class to the realization of its historic goal.

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