

On the Steps taken by the CPSU against Stalin

**An open letter to Comrade Khrushchev and
other comrades abroad**

*This is an evaluation of Comrade Stalin
after Khrushchev had usurped the leadership
of the Soviet Party and the state and had
denigrated Stalin in the name of fighting out
the cult of personality.*

To
Comrade Khrushchev¹ And Other Comrades Abroad

Dear Comrades,

The Twentieth Congress of the CPSU under the leadership of Comrade Khrushchev decided to make an assessment of the role of Stalin, considered infallible and above criticism by almost all the communists throughout the world before that decision of the Twentieth Congress. The beginning then made has found its culmination in the decisions of the Twentysecond Congress of the CPSU on this score. These decisions express themselves in various measures adopted in the USSR since then — all of which are intended, more or less, to erase Stalin from public memory. Publication of his writings has been prohibited. Quotations from his works are scrupulously avoided. Towns and villages, parks and streets, collective farms and so many other institutions that are associated with him and bear his name are being renamed. His portraits and statues are being pulled down. His body has been removed from the Lenin-Stalin Mausoleum, now renamed Lenin Mausoleum. The measures mentioned above and similar other measures are directed, in

the opinion of the present leaders of the CPSU, at counterblasting and finally eradicating the anti-communist tendencies and practices allegedly indulged in by Stalin. These are mainly the practice of the cult of the individual in general and of Stalin-cult in particular. The other charges levelled at Stalin are violation of inner-party democracy, growth and establishment of bureaucracy in party-life and administration and, lastly, abuse of power resulting in loss of lives of many innocent persons.

Differences in communist world

That there are major differences between different communist parties over the relative appreciation of values of Stalin as made by the CPSU under the leadership of Khrushchev as also over the above-mentioned measures as means to fight out the cult of the individual cannot be denied. These differences have already manifested themselves in diverse forms and expressions. Several communist parties, in toeing the line advanced by Khrushchev, are at work in their respective countries to completely black out Stalin or to level him, at best, with communists of ordinary rank. It is reminiscent of the mechanical support given at the time of Stalin to whatever would come from the CPSU. Some other communist parties, on the contrary, because of their blind allegiance to Stalin, have developed an anti-Khrushchev bias and gone to the other extreme. The more rabid of the latter group have gone so far as to burn the effigy of Khrushchev in denunciation of whatever he has said or done with regard to Stalin. There are still others who, though in general agreement with the line of Khrushchev, are finding it extremely difficult to reconcile the past with the changed situation of the present. In utter ideological confusion they have raised the demand that henceforth the centre of leadership for guiding the communist movement should not be located in any single country and that there should be more than one such centre. All these signs and expressions bear

testimony to the unchallengeable fact that the world communist movement is confronted today with a serious ideological crisis — a crisis of such a magnitude that it has led to an open breach of diplomatic relations between Albania, on the one hand, and several other socialist states, including the USSR, on the other, all belonging to the great camp of peace and socialism. It is our apprehension that the serious ideological confusion prevailing at present in the communist movement, if not rightly resolved in time, may, in the long run bring about a new phenomenon in world history, when people would witness that communists of different countries, instead of further cementing the unity between them and making rapid strides for the establishment of world communist society, are at loggerheads with each other and hinder the march for the realization of the cherished ideal of world communist society. This apprehension of ours cannot be altogether ruled out in the context of the recent breach of diplomatic relations between Albania and some other socialist countries and unfortunate events resulting therefrom; rather they are indicative of the possibility of such a situation. The gravity of the matter, in the circumstances, can hardly be over-emphasized.

Necessity of open polemical discussion

In our considered view, it is definitely harmful for the communist movement to deny the differences between different communist parties over the question of relative appreciation of values of Stalin and the measures adopted by the CPSU with regard to him. An ostrich-like policy of self-delusion will worsen the situation. A thorough critical examination of all the questions connected with the issue should be made. It should, preferably, take the form of an open polemical discussion by different communist parties and masses of peoples. Because, only by such an open polemical discussion can the ideological differences between different communist parties be brought out in sharp relief and then

correctly resolved. This is the Leninist way of educating the class and then the masses; it is the way of learning from the class and the masses also. In matters ideological there should never be any glossing over the differences, no finding of *via media* as means to bypass the differences. Only a resolute struggle can dispel the mist of ideological confusion and bring the communist movement back to the correct path and thereby strengthen it. Hence, in this particular respect which involves principle, the policy of *hush hush* should not at all be encouraged. It is true that some comrades apprehend that an open polemical discussion on the policy adopted by the CPSU under the leadership of Khrushchev with regard to Stalin and the various reactions thereto in the communist world will lead to the weakening of unity between different communist parties which may, in the long run, bring about open rupture. This apprehension seems to us to be influenced by commonplace idea about communist unity. The unity between different communist parties is not so weak and loose that it will fall like a pack of cards as soon as the Leninist principle of criticism and self-criticism is objectively practised in the form of an open polemical discussion on the question of Khrushchev's policy with regard to Stalin and various reactions thereto among the communists. And if, in fact, such brittle is the unity then it is anything but communist unity, and the sooner it is replaced by real communist unity based on the correct understanding of the nature and character of unity between different communist parties the better. The entire life of Lenin teaches us that, let alone the weakening of unity and rupture, open, frank and free polemical discussions and uncompromising ideological struggles conducted by him had always the salutary effect of consolidating and strengthening the unity between different communist parties. The practice in the post-Lenin period of keeping all controversial matters limited within the four walls of closed door meetings of different communist parties and the policy of *hush hush* pursued are in no small measure responsible for

the lack of proper understanding of mutual relationship between different communist parties. For the healthy growth and development of proper understanding, the old policy and practice must be discarded.

Why this open letter

As an integral part of the world communist force, the Socialist Unity Centre of India cannot remain an idle spectator to the serious ideological crisis that confronts the world communist movement today centring round the relative appreciation of values of Stalin and the measures adopted by the CPSU under the guidance of Khrushchev to fight out the cult of the individual in general and Stalin-cult in particular. In this respect, our party does not think it correct to support the one and oppose the other of the views mentioned earlier. A formalistic, dogmatic and mechanical approach to the problem will not mend matters; hence a critical analysis is essentially needed. In response to that pressing necessity and actuated by the revolutionary urge of contributing our mite to the struggle for solving the serious ideological crisis which the communist movement faces now, we feel it our bounden duty to place before all the fraternal communist parties in general, and Comrade Khrushchev, in particular, our say in the matter. Hence this open letter. We hope and trust that this will receive from the comrades the attention it deserves.

There should not be any bias

Before entering into the main topic, it is our fervent appeal not to consider the problem from anti-Khrushchev or anti-Stalin bias. There is not an iota of doubt that a correct appraisal of what had happened during the period of Stalin's leadership is to be made, not for the purpose of either unnecessarily glorifying or sullyng Stalin but for ridding the communist movement of its defects and shortcomings and strengthening it; we are concerned with the uphill task as to how we, the communists, can remove the root cause that gave

birth to and nurtured the cult of the individual in general and Stalin-cult in particular — an obnoxious idea and practice which has landed the communist movement in the present ideological confusion and crisis. The proper approach to the problem should, therefore, be not from the point of view of fighting Stalin the man, but with the avowed aim of eradicating the root cause of the cult of the individual from the communist movement.

So-called explanations for growth and development of cult of individual

It goes without saying that the cult of the individual is alien to the Marxist-Leninist concept of collective leadership. It is also admitted that in the later part of Stalin's life this non-Marxist cult grew, developed and dominated in the party-life. It is equally true that it has done incalculable harm to the communist movement. There can be no disagreement with Khrushchev and other leaders of the CPSU in so far as these points are concerned; but at the same time, we cannot but say that no serious attempt from any quarter has yet been made to bring to light the root cause of the cult of the individual and fathom the pernicious effects of it on the communist movement. Up till now we have come across three explanations of it which in our opinion are erroneous. Let us examine them. In analysing the cause of the cult of the individual, some comrades hold that the 'negative qualities of Stalin' are solely responsible for the growth and development of the cult. This sort of analysis is absolutely unscientific, inasmuch as it overemphasizes the role of an individual in history and considers individual traits and qualities absolutely independent of material conditions and the objective process. Besides, in every individual there are negative qualities, there may be difference in degree but they are there in every man. But the mere existence of the negative qualities in an individual does not in all cases lead to defects. It is only under suitable conditions that the negative qualities

can become the dominating feature of character. In the absence of these suitable conditions conducive to the growth and development of the cult of the individual in a communist party of CPSU's standing, Stalin, in spite of his strong personality, would have utterly failed to practise and involve others in the practice of the cult of the individual. To probe the conditions under which the 'negative qualities of Stalin' could become the dominating feature of his character, it is necessary to examine the role of his colleagues in the leading body of the CPSU and that of leaders of different communist parties in their relation with the CPSU *vis-à-vis* the individual role of Stalin. Furthermore, those traits of Stalin's character which are being branded by the present leaders of the CPSU as his negative qualities require scientific examination on the basis of correct understanding of communist moral values, distinctly different from bourgeois humanist moral values, before they are accepted as such. Unfortunately, no light has been thrown by any of the present leaders of the CPSU on this score. There are some other comrades who in their zeal to defend Stalin and whatever he had done, argue that the peculiar conditions in which Stalin had to work in order to protect the first socialist state in the world from internal danger and external aggression were such that there could be no escape from the practice of the cult of the individual and other concomitant evils under the circumstances. No serious Marxist can accept this logic. It is no Marxism; it is vulgar materialism born of the absurd concept of economic determinism which the renegades of all ages had tried to pass off as Marxism. Under the same condition, a party may move correctly or commit mistakes. But to explain the activities of a party just as the outcome of objective conditions obtaining at a given time, is to negate the subjective role, practice tailism, economic determinism and sink into the concept of fatalistic inevitability. There are still some others who attribute the growth and development of the cult of the individual to socio-economic conditions in the country. These

persons may be divided into two categories. One section consists of communists no doubt; but because of their low level of consciousness they overemphasize the objective conditions, minimize the subjective role and unknowingly chew the cud of economic determinism to the detriment of communist movement. In the other section fall the social democrats who, inspired by their invidious motive of undermining the socialist system, have taken up the issue as a means to carry on a slanderous propaganda against the USSR and other socialist states in particular and communism in general. Thus, comrades, none of the above three analyses can correctly explain the root cause of the growth and development of the cult of the individual. But the fact is that unless the root cause is correctly found out and determinedly fought out, the cult of the individual cannot be extirpated. And what is the root cause ?

Root cause of cult of individual

We have been, all through, noticing that despite tremendous growth, development and success, the communist movement during Stalin's time was as a whole contaminated with and consequently suffered from serious defects and shortcomings. In our opinion the root cause of the growth and development of the cult of the individual lies precisely in these defects and ideological shortcomings. What are these ? *It is our study that during the period of Stalin's leadership the Marxist-Leninist understanding of the sense of authority was confused with authoritarianism. This confusion has implanted the seed of the cult of the individual in the ideological sphere.* There is no doubt that in Marxism-Leninism also the sense of authority works. But this sense of authority has nothing in common with authoritarianism which precludes struggles with the authority, is based on blind acceptance of authority, considers the authority as infallible and above criticism and ultimately deifies it. Such a blind sense of authority is incompatible with the dialectical understanding of the sense

of authority, which does not preclude rather presupposes struggles, not of antagonistic nature, with the authority precisely with the object of uniting with and strengthening it. This confusion was instrumental in replacing the dialectical relationship by formal relationship between different communist parties, resulting in the degeneration of democratically centralized world communist organization into a mechanically centralized world body. It has its internal reaction on the individual communist parties as well; the struggle between the leader of the collective whole and the rest of the party completely disappeared. In short, struggles of ideas virtually ceased to exist in party life. In the absence of struggles and 'discussion in dialogue' in party bodies, democratic centralism is bound to degenerate objectively into practice of centralism based on formal democracy, which in its wake gives birth to a bureaucratic leadership at the top, isolated from the rank and file at the bottom; the dialectical process of thinking is replaced by a mechanical process of thinking and the dialectical relation between the leaders and the rank and file is replaced by a mechanical relation when the former, playing the role of Prime-Mover, issue directives for the latter to carry these out blindly and mechanically. And even when a discussion takes place between the leaders and the rank and file, it is done not as a means to ensure 'discussion in dialogue' in party bodies but to explain the point of view of the leaders. The presence of a powerful personality in the party under these circumstances fosters the growth and the development of the cult of the individual centring round that personality, while the absence of any such personality leads to the formation of groups inside the party ; but all the same, bureaucracy exists and operates from the top in both the cases. Where groups exist, the leadership of the party takes shape through adjustments and compromises between different groups and formal party unity is maintained there by the humanistic appeal of anti-imperialist, democratic and socialist movements to the rank and file for maintenance

of the unity. The leadership thus formed and functioning is, needless to mention, contrary to the Marxist-Leninist concept of collective leadership. *In our view, mechanical understanding of the sense of authority coupled with the presence of the powerful personality of Stalin was responsible for the growth and development of the cult of the individual in general and Stalin-cult in particular.*

Collective leadership is not just committee decision

In the discussion by some responsible comrades on the cult of the individual, words like “inner-party democracy” and “collective leadership” etc. are being used in such a manner as to indicate that there is some defect in their understanding. The ideas of inner-party democracy and collective leadership are inseparably linked up with the concept of democratic centralism, the Leninist principle of party organization. Democratic centralism is the fusion of centralism with proletarian democracy. It must always be borne in mind that proletarian democracy is not formal democracy which is only a reflection of bourgeois social order. Proletarian democracy is based on proletarian world outlook. So, not even the most formally democratic Constitution with the most liberal provisions can achieve democratic centralism in a party. *Its success depends mainly on the necessary ideological standard of the members of the party so as to ensure ‘discussion in dialogue’ in the party body and on the conscious proletarian revolutionary role of the members of the party.* With authoritarianism having full sway and in the absence of actual struggles and interaction of ideas in the party, “discussion and decision on major problems in party bodies”, however indispensable these may be for collective leadership, don’t *ipso facto* establish collective leadership. In bourgeois parties also “discussion and decision on major problems in party bodies” take place. But no sensible man will, on this ground, say that collective leadership operates in bourgeois parties. Same is the case with a working class party

where democratic centralism has degenerated into practice of centralism based on formal democracy. "Discussion and decision on major problems" in such parties at best amount to a committee decision. *Collective leadership is not just a committee decision. Social consciousness in the form of collective knowledge of the members of the party is collective leadership.*

Sense of ultra-democracy working

In the discussions by some responsible comrades referred to earlier, a very wrong tendency is often noticed. The blind sense of authority of the past is yielding place to the opposite sense — the tendency of discarding the sense of authority itself. This is pure and simple bourgeois way of reacting to things. This tendency, if not fought right now, is apt to develop among a section of the communists with low level of consciousness the anarchist idea of ultra-democracy which is not only fundamentally opposed to Marxism-Leninism but also a subtle means to establish the most rotten type of authority, namely, individual dictatorship under cover of anti-authority phrase-mongering in party life. Leadership means real and concrete leadership. Those who speak of collective leadership in general terms instead of real and concrete leadership, try to reduce the party to the position of a motley crowd. *Collective leadership always signifies leadership in a concrete form.*

Tendency to negate leading role of leader

Carried away by the extreme tendency of disowning authority itself, some communists are even refusing to recognize the leading role of the leader. Khrushchev in his Report to the Twentysecond Congress of the CPSU has said : "The Soviet people, led by the Party, have by their labour and heroic struggle made great progress in socialist construction. They triumphed in the Great Patriotic War against fascism. But you will remember that at the time of

the cult of the individual, all the achievements and victories of the Party and the people were attributed to one man”, meaning Stalin. It is perfectly true that unnecessary glorification of the leader must be discouraged at all costs; deification of the leader is to be done away with from communist practice. But the emphasis with which the leader, on the one hand, and the party and the people, on the other, are being counterpoised, is, according to us, fraught with the danger that it may make immature members of the party minimize the leading role of the leader. Let not the wrong practice of the past, i.e. the habit of unnecessary glorification to the absurd extent of even deification of Stalin, push the communists now to the other extreme. Let not the ‘hurrah making’ propensity of the time of the Stalin-cult be replaced by an equally wrong tendency of rejection of the sense of authority itself and non-recognition of the leading role of the leader. It must be borne in mind that the role of the individual has not yet been exhausted in our society. In society as well as in the party, individuals do play significant roles. It is incorrect to assume that in a communist party all the members are of equal standard and calibre. So long as difference in the standard of members exists, there is bound to remain difference between the leader and the rest of the collective whole. This difference is the basis of the leading role of the leader. To forget this distinction between the leader and other members of the party is tantamount to self-deception. It means keeping one’s eyes shut to the immensity of the task of raising the ordinary members to the advanced level of the leader. It means shirking responsibility to carry out this task. It means holding brief for the anarchist idea of ultra-democracy, a subtle way to ensure one’s own position as the leader of the party. Moreover, the party is not just the conglomeration of its members. It is not merely the sum of the party organizations. The party, at the same time, represents a single system of these organizations, their amalgamation into a single organic whole. The leader in the

party occupies the same position as is occupied by the centre of nerves in a human body. To refuse to recognize the leading role of the leader is to equate the centre of nerves with the rest of the human body. It goes without saying that even in the lowest party unit, namely a cell of three members, all are not of the same position. The mere existence of three members in the cell does not make it a party body. It becomes a party body only when one of the three members becomes the leader and the remaining two his followers. The collective knowledge of the members of the cell expresses itself through its leader. Without this expression of concrete leadership, a body does not become a party body. This principle of party organization works from the cell, the lowest unit, to the Central Committee, the highest unit of the party. The tendency to abjure the leading role of the leader and abhor the sense of authority, as distinct from authoritarianism, is to reduce the communist parties organizationally into social-democratic parties, incapable of conducting revolutionary battles of the proletariat and leading the masses to power.

Method of appreciating values

In this connection, another point needs to be clarified. Does the attribution of achievements and victories of the party and the people to Stalin mean negation of the role of the CPSU, the Red Army and the Soviet people and usurpation of their credit by Stalin, an insinuation implied in the words of Khrushchev quoted hereinbefore ? To a communist it should not mean so because the leading role of the leader can operate only when the party, the class and the masses are in action. So it is not correct to counterpoise their roles. When it is said, as the present leaders of the CPSU also are saying, that Lenin founded the first socialist state in the world, does it mean that he did it alone ? Does this attribution of achievements and victories of the party and the people to Lenin mean negation of the heroic role of the Bolshevik

Party ? Does it even amount to usurpation by Lenin of all the credit of the party and the people ? To a communist it means none of these. It is just a simple expression of recognizing the leading role of Lenin as the leader of the Bolshevik Party, the architect of the October Revolution. It is the way of appreciating the values of a superior comrade without which a communist can never raise his ideological standard and lead the struggle for emancipation. The attribution of credit to Stalin for the great progress in socialist construction and victories in the Great Patriotic War achieved by the CPSU, the Red Army and the Soviet people is to be understood in this light.

Real means to eradicate cult of individual

So, the danger of the cult of the individual lies not in offering praise to the leader, nor even in the magnitude of the praise. Sense of authority even is not responsible for it. *It is precisely the blind sense of authority, i.e. authoritarianism, the absence of dialectical relation between the leader of the collective whole and the rest of the collective whole, between the leadership as a whole and the rest of the party and the degeneration of democratic centralism into practice of centralism based on formal democracy that create conditions favourable for the growth and development of the cult of the individual.* If the blind sense of authority remains, the dialectical relation between the leaders and the rest of the members in party bodies is conspicuous by its absence and practice of centralism based on formal democracy in place of democratic centralism continues, then notwithstanding “discussion and decision of major problems in party bodies”, the conditions that give birth to the cult of the individual will remain in force and, the conditions remaining in force, the obnoxious cult is sure to exist, maybe not in the old form but definitely in some form or other. It should be realized that the problem of the cult of the individual is not one of individuals. The cult of the individual can very well be practised in a much

subtler form under conditions of authoritarianism by a committee as well as it can be practised by an individual. *Hence, the only means to root out the cult of the individual and eliminate its baneful effects is to banish for good the mechanical understanding of the sense of authority and replace it with the dialectical understanding of the sense of authority, shun the practice of centralism based on formal democracy and establish, in actuality, the principles of democratic centralism in the party by raising the ideological standard of comrades to such an extent as can ensure 'discussion in dialogue'.* Unfortunately, in place of removing the conditions that conduced to the growth and development of the cult of the individual, Khrushchev and other leaders of the CPSU are endeavouring to fight Stalin the man. In the case of a living personality it may be necessary to fight the individual in order to restrict him from creating further complications. In the present case that question does not arise, because the man accused of practising the cult of the individual is long dead and only the cult and the conditions that engendered it remain. Stalin was a great revolutionary. His clarion call to root out bureaucracy and red tapism from administrative and party apparatus, his biting sarcasm against windbags who were past masters in the art of demonstrating their loyalty to Stalin and the party and his determination to clear the party of idle chatterers — all these embodied in his Report to the Seventeenth Congress of the CPSU — still ring in our ears. What a sad end that the head of such a tried revolutionary was turned ! What a downfall ! Stalin's life once again demonstrates the correctness of the Marxist dictum that it is neither honesty nor sincerity alone but the process that in the final analysis determines the course of events. A wrong process — honesty and sincerity notwithstanding — is sure to bog us down. Stalin's life once again proves that by our blind allegiance and support to the leader we bring downfall not only to ourselves but also to the leader whom we deify.

Confusion about leading communist party

The blind sense of authority has had disastrous effects on the international communist movement also. The dialectical process necessary for guiding the world communist movement was completely neglected at the time of emphasizing the role of the leading communist party in the world communist movement. The position occupied by Stalin in the party-life of the CPSU served as prototype of the relationship between the CPSU and other communist parties. The same blind sense of authority worked here also in place of dialectical sense of authority. As a result, the same mechanical concept of Prime Mover guided the mutual relationship between communist parties. It was the CPSU that would decide on every question; the business of all other communist parties was to give blind support to the stand of the CPSU. This idea of the leading communist party is alien to Marxism-Leninism. *The idea of the leading communist party in the world communist movement does not presuppose an unchangeable permanent leadership of the leading party on every question; nor does it signify blind obedience to the leading party and blind acceptance of whatever it decides.* It presupposes, on the contrary, struggles which are not antagonistic in nature and interaction of ideas with the leading communist party and which help objectively to realize the dialectical process indispensable for collective leadership. It is even comprehended that on any particular question the correct line may be advanced by any party other than the leading party, in which case the line of that particular party, as it expresses the collective leadership on that specific question, is accepted by all. This, of course, does not alter the position of the leading communist party as such and make the other particular party the leading party because its position as the leading communist party is dependent on so many other factors. There is no doubt that as the founder of the first socialist state in the world, as the possessor of rich experience

of socialist construction in its own country, as the head of the world socialist camp with huge scientific, technological and other resources at its disposal, the CPSU occupies the position of the leading communist party in the international communist movement — a position it will continue to enjoy for long.² But this undisputed fact does not signify that it is the CPSU that is to decide on all questions and formulate the lines, and other communist parties are to lend blind support to these. Unfortunately, this very thing happened at the time of Stalin's leadership and reduced most of the communist parties to the position of vassals of the CPSU. It not only jeopardized the dialectical process of thinking, necessary for the growth of collective leadership, but also developed the unhealthy trend of branding any and every difference with the CPSU as an anti-Soviet stand and a renunciation of proletarian internationalism. Nothing can be more incorrect than this. Guided by the fundamental tenets of Marxism-Leninism and the spirit of proletarian internationalism, any communist party can definitely differ with any other communist party and, for that matter, even with the CPSU. In such a case, the difference cannot by any stretch of imagination be characterized as an anti-Soviet stand and anti-proletarian internationalism. Unfortunately, the old trend still persists in the communist world; otherwise, how can disagreement with the decisions of and measures adopted by the Twentysecond Congress of the CPSU with regard to Stalin, which are definitely not decisions and measures of the world communist forum, be branded as anti-Sovietism, anti-proletarian internationalism in the case of the Albanian Party of Labour ? Only those who suffer from formalism and lack of proper understanding of the complex dialectical process involved in maintenance of unity between different communist parties will take any difference with any decision of the CPSU to be anti-Sovietism, anti-proletarian internationalism. They confuse difference with antagonism and forget that collective leadership grows and operates through the dialectical process

of struggle and interaction of ideas and not through renunciation of struggle. It must be realized that the unity between different communist parties is not based on formalistic mechanical relation, nor the difference between them is of antagonistic nature. *The relationship between different communist parties is governed by the dialectical principle of “unity-struggle-unity” on the basis of new understanding of values of life fundamentally different from bourgeois humanist moral values and cemented by the common aims and objectives of world proletarian revolution and establishment of world communist society.* But the tragedy is that the international communist leadership headed by Stalin, though basically correct on almost all major questions then confronting the communist movement, was not free from formalistic process of thinking. We find the same non-dialectical and formalistic process of thinking, the same methodology still being followed. So the danger of fundamental deviations from Marxism-Leninism still remains.

Soviet foreign policy *vis-à-vis* programme of world proletarian revolution

Due to formalistic process of thinking, there prevails a confusion in the matter of understanding the relation of the foreign policy of the USSR directed from the state plane with the programme of international proletarian revolution. Most of the communist parties consider the two as one and the same. This is grossly erroneous. There is no denying that the foreign policy of the USSR and the programme of international proletarian revolution supplement each other and are in the common interest of establishing world socialist order, yet there is a contradiction between the two. The aim of the Soviet foreign policy is to consolidate the forces of socialism, create further and deeper antagonism among the imperialist-capitalists, isolate the less adventurous in the imperialist war camp from the more adventurous, defend and maintain world peace and thereby create objective conditions

for the growth, development and success of world proletarian revolution. The aim of the programme of world proletarian revolution is to provide the general guidelines for successful revolution in different countries. The duty of the communist parties in colonies, semi-colonies and capitalist countries is to apply creatively this general line in their respective countries. It is none of their business to make parrot-like repetition of the measures adopted for the foreign policy of the USSR or of the general line of the international communist forum blindly. Dialectics teaches us to study the contradiction of the particular with the general. Every serious communist knows that the general policy of the international communist forum gives the general guiding principle which is to be applied differently in different countries. The concrete analysis of concrete conditions which differs from country to country and the concrete application of the general guiding principle in different countries with different objective conditions constitute the living soul of Marxism. Without these, Marxism would become a dogma. It is because of the difference in conditions in different countries that there exists a contradiction between the general programme of international proletarian revolution and the particular programme of revolution in a given country. Anyone who loses sight of this contradiction between the general and the particular commits the error of formalism. This being the relation between the general programme of world proletarian revolution adopted by the international communist forum and the particular programme of revolution of a communist party in a given country, it is only scientific to conclude that there are contradictions of non-antagonistic nature between the foreign policy of the USSR and the programme of revolution of a communist party in a given country. Lack of understanding of the contradiction between the general and the particular and that between the foreign policy of the USSR and the programme of revolution in their respective countries had, at the time of Stalin's leadership, reduced most of the

communist parties to robots. The position has not improved much since then. Whatever may be the strength of a robot, it can never apply the general policy of world revolution creatively in its own country and lead the masses to revolution and power. The history of the Communist Party of India is the history of such robot-like activities. The international communist leadership cannot be absolved of the defects responsible for this state of affairs. It has been our experience that whenever we tried to bring the defects of the communist movement to the notice of different communist parties abroad, our say had fallen on deaf ears simply because we were critical of the Communist Party of India, the history of which is the history of an unending series of fundamental deviations from Marxism-Leninism, the latest being its national chauvinistic stand in support of Pandit Nehru, head of the Indian capitalist state on the question of Sino-Indian border dispute. Even if it is assumed that we are non-communists (a completely incorrect assumption born of formalistic understanding of the relationship between different communist parties and strengthened by the vile propaganda of the Communist Party of India), what harm can there be if our say is given consideration ? Did not Lenin give hearing even to his class enemies ? To our sorrow, we find that the Leninist quality of learning is wanting to a great degree now. In this connection, we like to add further that contrary to the living spirit of Marxism-Leninism, *communists also have developed the peculiarly bourgeois habit of judging the merit of a case not on the basis of correctness and justness of the stand but on consideration of the organizational strength at the back of the case.* Had such a stand been encouraged by Lenin, the Spartacus Group in Germany would not have received the unstinted support it got from him against the powerful Social Democratic Party of Germany. To eradicate the cult of the individual from the world communist movement, the role of the CPSU as the leading communist party should not be understood to mean

that the leadership of the world communist movement on all issues must invariably lie with the CPSU; the formalistic conclusion that to differ with the CPSU is to renunciate internationalism must be replaced by the dialectical understanding of the relationship between different communist parties based on the dialectical principle of “unity-struggle-unity” which presupposes struggle and interaction of ideas with the CPSU expressly for the purpose of strengthening the collective leadership of the international communist forum. Frankly speaking, we do not find any sign of this dialectical approach.

Same wrong process, same blindness still prevail

As in the past Stalin was blindly raised to the level of ‘demi-god’, so also, at present, he is blindly depicted as a ‘Satan’ responsible personally for all the ills from which the communist movement suffered in his time. As in the past the international communist leadership, headed by the CPSU and Stalin, was considered infallible and above criticism and any and every difference with the decision of the CPSU was condemned as anti-communism, anti-proletarian internationalism, so also, at present, the leadership of Khrushchev is considered infallible and above criticism, and to differ with the decisions of the CPSU under the leadership of Khrushchev is being branded as anti-Sovietism, anti-proletarian internationalism. Where then is the difference in approach, outlook and process of thinking? The same blind sense of authority, the same non-dialectical methodology in the process of thinking and process of movement, the same formalistic understanding of the relationship between different communist parties which were responsible during the period of Stalin’s leadership for the growth and development of the cult of the individual in general and Stalin-cult in particular, are still at work. Our appeal to the present international communist leadership is that these defects and shortcomings of Stalin’s time have to be

overcome. Let a correct process be adopted towards that end. In the absence of that process and without removing the root cause of and the conditions that gave birth to the cult of the individual, it is naive to expect to re-establish the Leninist principle and practice of collective leadership. All other attempts are sure to install in place of Stalin cult another no less obnoxious cult, may be the Central Committee cult, or the leading communist party cult or even Khrushchev cult. No serious communist can remain indifferent to this possible danger.

Cause of mistakes — lowering of ideological standard

But what, after all, led to these mistakes ? What made different communist parties confuse the dialectical understanding of the sense of authority with authoritarianism ? Why could they not detect the practice of centralism based on formal democracy in place of democratic centralism ? How could they give up the dialectical principle of “unity-struggle-unity” and accept, instead, the formal understanding of unity between different communist parties ? Why did they confuse the idea of leading communist party with the idea of an unchangeable permanent leadership of the leading communist party on each and every issue ? In our opinion, all these mistakes were the result of considerable lowering of the general standard of consciousness of the communists at large. It is true that in the post-Lenin period the communist movements in colonies, semi-colonies and capitalist countries had tremendously developed organizationally. But this development by itself does not prove that the level of ideological consciousness of the communists had also risen at a rate commensurate with the organizational development of the communist movement. In fact it did not rise; the above mentioned mistakes are definite proofs of it. That such lowering of ideological level can take place in spite of organizational development of communist movement is no new phenomenon. Lenin himself had to stress

this phenomenon in his lifetime. The lowering of the general standard of consciousness of the communists was, according to us, mainly due to two factors. Firstly, the philosophical development of Marxism-Leninism which ought to have been made in the face of multiplicity of newer problems of life and class struggles and in keeping with the spectacular progress of natural sciences that marked the post-Lenin period, was not made. There might be so many reasons for this deficiency, but it is, no doubt, a fact the truth of which can be proved by a simple example. Nobody would, perhaps, deny that at present the phenomenon of individualism and the bourgeois sense of liberty are in the ideological sphere stiff obstacles in the path of development of class struggles in advanced countries. The situation calls for a critical discussion of the sense of humanist moral values *vis-a-vis* proletarian moral values. But not a single work that can claim to have dealt with the problem authoritatively and comprehensively has come out in the post-Lenin period. Secondly, like the proverbial one-eyed deer, the communist leaders in general, to a very large extent, neglected the important task of conducting ideological struggles inside the party to raise the ideological standard of thousands and thousands of young communists who were drawn into the vortex of communist movements and kept themselves busy mostly in organizational activities. Complacent at the rapid and enormous growth and development of the communist movement, the leaders of the Communist Party of India even developed an antipathy to theory. All that they demanded of the rank and file were loyalty to the party and blind discharge of practical duties. We have no direct knowledge of conditions that prevail in other countries; but from what we have seen in India, and in analysing the cause of the mistakes mentioned before, we feel that the same sense of complacency at the organizational development of the communist movement and the same tendency of deprecating critical attitude to theory and of giving unilateral stress on loyalty of the members of

the party and to their practical work were at work in every country. As a result of this neglect of ideological struggles, the lowering of standard of consciousness has been so great in our country that even the standard of Lenin's time is hardly to be found, not to speak of the standard of consciousness necessary to cope with the multiplicity of newer and newer problems that confront life and the environment today. It should better be admitted that the present-day communist movement owes much of its growth and development to the decay of imperialism obtaining at present, to the humanistic appeal to common men of anti-imperialist struggles in colonies and semi-colonies, to the liberal sentiment against capitalist exploitation of peoples in advanced countries and to the superiority of the socialist system over capitalism. Of the people all over the world joining the communist movement and strengthening it now, all are not attracted and attached to it by their conscious communist conviction; indeed very few of them are steeled in communist education. Such a condition prevailing, there is little chance of uplifting the general ideological standard of the communists. The call of the hour, therefore, is to relentlessly wage thorough ideological struggles covering all problems of life, thought and organization.

Revisionist tendency

Enrichment of Marxism-Leninism is, of course, called for in the light of newer problems confronting life, thought and organization. But it can be only on the basis of a correct understanding of the fundamentals of Leninism and appreciation of the services and contributions of Stalin to it and the communist movement, without which there is every possibility of sinking into revisionism. We are constrained to say, and, on behalf of a fraternal party, we feel it our bounden duty to point out, that the tendency which is being revealed in the evaluation of the existing international situation as made by the present leaders of the CPSU in their talks on the

question of war and peace, in their concept of the general law of revolution, in their approach to the application of the policy of peaceful co-existence of the two systems, in the steps taken by them against the Albanian Party of Labour and the Socialist State of Albania and, lastly, in the measures adopted by them with regard to Stalin, which is tantamount to de-Stalinization, *is fraught with the danger of sinking into revisionism*. Comrades, there is no denying that the present international situation offers unprecedented opportunities for successful overthrow of imperialism-capitalism. We are, so to say, on the threshold of world proletarian revolution. The need of the hour is to seize these opportunities and utilize these as best as we can for the cause of world proletarian revolution. But it is indeed a pity that when the situation is such, we, the communists, are groping in ideological confusion instead of sharpening our consciousness, weakening our unity instead of cementing it more and making rapid strides towards the establishment of world communist society, allowing the communist parties in capitalist countries to suffer from parliamentary illusions instead of helping them dispel such illusions and behaving in such a manner as to gradually reduce the communist parties in the capitalist countries to parliamentary parties. The sooner this state of affairs is overcome the better. Let all of us put our heart and soul in that task.

Facts relating to “abuse of power” to be placed before international communist forum

Apart from the charge of the practice of the cult of the individual and consequent violation of inner-party democracy levelled at him, Stalin has been held guilty of abuse of power resulting in loss of lives of a large number of innocent persons. Khrushchev in his Report to the Twentysecond Congress has alluded to some of these unfortunate incidents. Referring to these, he has said in his concluding speech : “This is what the cult of the individual means”. This, in our

view, is an over-simplified statement. Because, the loss of lives of innocent persons, however shocking, does not by itself constitute the cult of the individual which can very well be practised without the killing of innocent persons. The cult of the individual is of much deeper origin; we have already discussed it. That many an innocent person had to lose his life on suspicion of anti-state activities during Stalin's time is undisputed. Even Stalin himself admitted it in his Report to the Eighteenth Congress of the CPSU. In his Report to the said Eighteenth Congress, we find the following words : "It cannot be said that the purge was not accompanied by grave mistakes. There were unfortunately more mistakes than might have been expected. Undoubtedly, we shall have no further need of resorting to the method of mass purges. Nevertheless, the purge of 1933-36 was unavoidable and its results, on the whole, were beneficial". So it cannot be said that there was concealment of those unfortunate incidents from the party; on the contrary, Stalin placed everything before the Party Congress including the mistakes committed in this respect, convinced the party of the reasonableness of the actions taken and made his position perfectly clear. There was, no doubt, grave miscarriage of justice in more cases than might have been expected. But how far was Stalin personally responsible for that and to what extent the bureaucracy that was entrenched in power was guilty of the excesses are yet to be determined. But without doing that, Stalin is being held personally guilty of committing the massacres. It is one thing to say that Stalin, as the leader of the party and head of the administrative apparatus, ought to have taken notice of the mistakes beforehand and checked them; he failed to do that and hence, to that extent, he was guilty of dereliction of duty and responsible for the loss of lives of so many innocent persons. But it is altogether a different thing to accuse him of personal vendetta. If there is any proof substantiated by facts that Stalin deliberately abused power, knowing full well that he was abusing power, then those facts should be placed

before the international communist forum not only to verify the authenticity of those facts but also to arrive at a correct reading of them. Facts are, no doubt, very important but reading of facts is more important. It is from the same set of facts that the imperialist-capitalists and the communists reach different conclusions, because of different readings of the same facts. In India the hirelings of the Indian bourgeoisie are creating a row that “in the USSR there is nothing which can be scientifically called history. The communists everywhere have little faith in facts; they distort history and rewrite it in such a way as suits their purposes. When Stalin was in power, he ordered the historians of the USSR to write history in his interest. Now that Stalin is gone and Khrushchev is in power, a different history is being written”. These true sons of the gentry, some of whom are lecturers and professors of history in colleges and universities and not historians in the proper sense of the term, confuse history with a chronicle. History is not merely a collection of facts; it, at the same time, is a scientific study of those facts. And in the matter of this reading of facts, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat stand poles apart. To give rebuff to the slanderous campaign of the bourgeois hirelings against the communists in general and the USSR in particular, as well as to verify the authenticity and arrive at a correct and uniform reading, it is necessary to have all facts relating to the ‘cases of abuse of power by Stalin’ examined by the international communist forum. We are constrained to say that from the facts placed by Khrushchev at the Twentieth Congress, we arrive at conclusions different from his. We shall deal with these later on. If the reading of facts differs among communists, it is all the more imperative that these should be placed before the international communist forum for verification of their authenticity and a correct reading of these. Besides, Stalin was not the leader of the CPSU only ; he was the teacher and leader of the world communist movement. So, any question connected with the evaluation of Stalin can never become the sole concern of the

CPSU. It is of equal concern to other communist parties. The measures adopted by the Twentysecond Congress of the CPSU with regard to Stalin have assumed greater importance because of the fact that firstly, *it may have the effect of de-Stalinization which in its wake will challenge the very understanding of Marxism-Leninism obtaining at present which is, so to say, Stalin's contribution as distinct from Trotskyism-Titoism*, and secondly, Khrushchev does not intend to limit the measures within the four corners of the USSR but is determined to have them carried out in other countries with the help of respective communist parties. It is wrong to expect of the communist parties that before knowing the facts about the 'excesses committed by Stalin', verifying their authenticity and arriving at a correct reading of these, they should support the measures adopted by the CPSU blindly. Blindness to Stalin was responsible for the cult of the individual ; the same blindness cannot, hence, be allowed to persist.

Communism begins where humanism ends

The proper assessment of the role of an individual requires not only a correct appraisal of his defects and shortcomings but also a due appreciation of his services and contributions. But strangely enough, though Khrushchev in his Report to the Twentysecond Congress has stated : "Stalin must be credited with great services to the Party and the communist movement and we give him his due", yet the proceedings of the Congress show no reference to the great services of Stalin ; rather we get accounts of his 'negative qualities'. *The qualities of Stalin which have been characterized as his negative qualities are yet to be established beyond doubt as such on the basis of proper understanding of communist ethics*. It is our impression that this has not been done. Because, so far as we could gather from reports from various sources, it is our feeling that the way the cases of the 'excesses committed by Stalin' were

placed, the way the Congress reacted to the ‘revelation’ (it is not a revelation inasmuch as Stalin himself referred to this in the Eighteenth Congress of the party), and the psychological make-up exhibited thereby are enough indications that very few of the delegates to the Twentieth Congress were steeled in communist ethics. They were mostly guided by humanist moral values. This may sound somewhat strange but nevertheless it is a fact. Comrades, *communist morals are fundamentally different from humanist moral values both in content and character. In the annals of human society, humanism is not the last word. It is undoubtedly the most lively air that the oppressive bourgeois thinking is capable of producing. But the march of progress of society does not stop there and hence, the sense of moral values does not find its zenith in humanism. Communism begins where humanism ends. Only on the ashes of humanist moral values can communist moral values grow and prosper. Only with proper understanding of communist ethics can many of the traits of Stalin’s character be correctly appreciated, which, judged by the yardstick of humanist moral values, would appear as negative qualities of character.* Stalin might have committed many mistakes ; but mistakes do not by themselves establish prevalence of negative qualities of character in Stalin. That is why we are in favour of placing the whole matter before the international communist forum for determining all the questions connected with the matter. Even if it is assumed for the present that towards the later part of his life Stalin concentrated enormous power in his hands and in many cases abused it which resulted in the loss of lives of many innocent persons, it only touches a fringe of his activities as the leader of the CPSU, not to speak of his activities as the leader of the world communist movement.

Stalin — a giant communist leader

Who can deny that just as Lenin in his struggle against the revisionists and the centrists safeguarded the Marxist

theory of state and the dictatorship of the proletariat from distortion and effacement, and by generalizing upon the historical experience of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, made brilliant contribution to Marxism, so also Stalin in his struggle against the Trotskyites and the Bukharinites safeguarded Marxism-Leninism from distortion and effacement and by generalizing upon the historical experience of the period of general crisis of capitalism and further disintegration of world capitalist market, enriched Marxism-Leninism. Stalin's works on problems of Leninism, his contributions to the national question, to the question of linguistics, to the problems of socialism in the USSR and to revolutionary military science, in particular, are treasures of revolutionary science. To minimize the leading role of Stalin as a great communist leader which the present leaders of CPSU are objectively doing by their refusal to publish his works, is to withhold due appreciation of his values. *In fact, the present understanding of Leninism, as distinct from social-democracy and Trotskyism, is due to Stalin.* Trotsky claimed to be a Leninist, though he had fundamental differences with Stalin in the understanding of Leninism. The followers of Trotsky call themselves Leninists. They accept Lenin as an authority ; what they differ with is Stalin's interpretation of Leninism. The social-democrats and the Trotskyites are not considered as communists because of their non-acceptance of the understanding of Marxism-Leninism as interpreted by Stalin. *Stalin's understanding of Leninism is the correct understanding of Marxism-Leninism. This understanding has brought the communist movement to its present stature.* It will, of course, be further enriched in the light of experience of newer problems and developments ; but nevertheless, the basic understanding of Marxism-Leninism as established by Stalin will remain and guide the communists in the course of its further development and progress. Indeed, like his precursors Marx, Engels and Lenin, Stalin also is an authority on Marxism-Leninism. To black

out Stalin would have the inevitable result of disowning his authority and consequently of rejecting his interpretation of Leninism, which is the present-day understanding of Marxism-Leninism. To the future generations, the chapter of relentless struggle waged by Stalin against the Trotskyites and the Bukharinites to safeguard the revolutionary spirit of Marxism-Leninism would remain dark and black and they would be deprived of the opportunity of being ideologically steered. It would mean invitation to all sorts of counter-revolutionary ideas to pass for Marxism-Leninism and the ideological foundation of the communist movement would suffer a setback. *In short, it would objectively uncrown Lenin himself.*

Stalin — architect of theory of peaceful co-existence

Not only as a theoretician of outstanding calibre but also as an able practical organizer of the communist movement Stalin should be remembered along with Marx, Engels and Lenin. If Lenin founded the first socialist state in the world, it was Stalin who consolidated it as the citadel of peace and socialism. If Lenin had established the Third International, Stalin's leadership was responsible for giving that infant organization a mighty shape. Furthermore, it was the leadership of Stalin that guided the struggles for the establishment of the People's Democracies. The credit for the unprecedented growth, development and success of the communist movement in colonies, semi-colonies and capitalist countries — serious defects, shortcomings and consequent setbacks notwithstanding, lies with his leadership. It is, no doubt, Lenin who sowed the seed of the theory of peaceful co-existence of capitalist and socialist systems. *But it was Stalin who gave structure to this seed as a theory and made this the pivot round which the Soviet foreign policy moves even now.* It is Stalin and not Lenin who is accused by the camp-followers of Trotsky as a counter-revolutionary class-collaborationist for establishing the idea of peaceful co-

existence of the two systems as a theory and applying it in practice in Soviet foreign policy. But it is astounding that not only Stalin's role as the founder of theory and practice of peaceful co-existence is being denied but also a campaign is being conducted very subtly to create the impression that it is Khrushchev who is the architect of the theory of peaceful co-existence of two systems and who is waging battles against the followers of Stalin who are non-believers in the theory and practice of peaceful co-existence and insist on adoption of war-paths. Stalin's analysis of the present world situation, his elaborations on the theory of peaceful co-existence of two systems, the Soviet foreign policy deduced by him on the basis of this theory and so many other contributions of him are being reproduced, followed and reiterated even now by the present leaders of the CPSU but without any acknowledgement to Stalin. This attitude appears to us to be inconsistent with communist ethics. Recognition of the superiority of a colleague, let alone of the leader, in some matter does not lower one who acknowledges the superiority; on the contrary, appreciation of a superior quality in another helps a man to develop himself as a communist. A man who suffers from a sense of inflated ego becomes vain and conceited and falls victim to the cult of the individual. Similarly, one who willfully minimizes the historical role played by another, also practises the cult of the individual from the reverse direction. Practically this is being practised by withholding due appreciation of the great services of Stalin to the party and the communist movement. May we ask the present leaders of the CPSU a few questions about Stalin? Was Stalin just one of the other leaders of the CPSU or was he head and shoulder above his colleagues? Was the role played by him in the communist movement on a par with those of other contemporary communist leaders or did he play a distinct role of the leader of all other leaders of the communist movement of his time? He had, no doubt, his shortcomings. But it is one thing to point out these

shortcomings and caution the communists against these, but it is altogether a different thing to depict him as an ordinary communist. What reason can there be other than bias for the effort to show Stalin as a communist of ordinary calibre, which is neither real nor serves any revolutionary purpose. May we ask who other than Stalin with his shortcomings, among the living or dead leaders of the CPSU, is nearer to Lenin ? The activities of a communist should always be actuated by revolutionary necessity. What revolutionary necessity is being served by blacking out Stalin ? What all genuine communists want is that the root cause of the cult of the individual must be removed, the legacies of that anti-communist practice done away with, effective steps taken so that it may not pollute the communist movement in future and ordinary communists become good communists like Stalin minus his shortcomings, through proper education. Is it necessary to black out Stalin to do these, or is it imperative that communists should cultivate the positive qualities of the character of Stalin more and more ?

Time for correct appreciation of values of Stalin has come

In defence of complete blackout of Stalin's services to the communist movement, some argue that since in the past his services had been widely acknowledged and referred to, it is not necessary to mention these at present. We have here in mind Comrade Mikoyan³ who, when he was in India a few years back, was reported by the local press to have advanced this logic. The argument is hardly tenable because it does not touch the issue at hand. The point is not whether Stalin's services should be referred to as frequently as they used to be in the past ; the point is that due appreciation of his values should be made. In spite of frequent references to Stalin and his services, a correct appreciation of his values could not be made, nor was it possible under the then atmosphere of all-pervading influence of the cult of the individual in general

and especially Stalin-cult. All assessments of his values then made were blurred by blind allegiance to Stalin. It is only now when the atmosphere has been freed of this blindness that a correct appreciation of his services to the communist movement can be made. So it should be done now. Besides, a point worth noting in this context is that a very bad tendency is expressed in measures to blackout Stalin. The tendency is of obeying a leader and teacher so long as any of his shortcomings is not noticed, but as soon as any shortcoming comes to light, he is denounced. In this tendency is inherent the idea that a leader is without shortcomings, a very dangerous idea that engenders blindness to the leader and paves the way for the practice of the cult of the individual.

Personally Stalin or administrative bureaucracy responsible

Now about the cases cited by Khrushchev as examples of ‘abuse of power by Stalin’. Everyone of us knows what constitutes the difference between an error and a crime. In the absence of any definite proof, it can never be contended that the ‘abuse of power by Stalin’ which was responsible for the death of many innocent persons, was actuated by criminal motive. The Twentieth Congress has not furnished any such material. In the circumstance, it is impossible to conclude like Khrushchev that “That was no simple error. It was a calculated, criminal, adventurist policy”. The cases referred to by Khrushchev may have other probable explanations than what Khrushchev has tried to establish. It is accepted on all hands that at the time of Stalin, bureaucracy entrenched itself in the administrative apparatus. However much he might have disliked it (proof of his dislike is to be found in his condemnation of bureaucracy in the Report to the Seventeenth Congress), he became circumscribed by the bureaucracy and had to depend on it for carrying on day-to-day administration. The loss of lives of the innocent persons might have been due to this bureaucracy. Stalin might have

given it the seal of his approval in the formal way as head of the administration. This reading of the situation is corroborated by facts stated by Khrushchev in his concluding speech to the Twentysecond Congress. Take the case of Yakir, Svanidze and others referred to by Khrushchev. They were, even according to Khrushchev, very loyal to the party and to Stalin. One of them was a near relation of Stalin and all were his close comrades. The loyalty to Stalin was so great that when shot at, Yakir shouted : “Long live the Party ; Long live Stalin”. Their loyalty to him was known to Stalin himself. Had Stalin been actuated by personal consideration, he would not have ordered to shoot down his faithful comrades; he could have easily saved their lives. But he not only approved the punishment but also did not even feel sorry when the news of their death was brought to him. Khrushchev has used this fact as an additional weapon to prove the cruelty of Stalin. How to account for this seemingly strange conduct of Stalin — approving capital punishment of his close and loyal comrades and not feeling at all sorry for their death. Stalin was completely satisfied on the basis of the report of the administrative apparatus that they were guilty of treason and in a truly revolutionary spirit he had done his duty. A humanist will fail to appreciate the character expressed in such acts. *To a revolutionary, revolutionary necessity stands supreme; all other things like love, affection, personal relationship, friendship etc., which to a humanist are so important and precious and make life worth living are subordinated to it. If revolutionary necessity calls for the execution of the closest comrade, a revolutionary does it with supreme satisfaction.* It does not occur to Khrushchev but it may be a fact that Stalin approved the capital punishment of Yakir, Svanidze and his other close comrades-in-arms on consideration of revolutionary necessity. It may be that his judgement was vitiated by incorrect information received about them from administrative bureaucracy. In that case it becomes an error and not a crime. This appears to us to be the only probable

explanation; otherwise no explanation can be offered as to why Stalin should order for and feel happy over capital punishment of comrades loyal and faithful to him.

Consideration of time factor

We have already explained as to why the shortcomings cannot be brushed aside on the ground of difficult objective conditions then prevailing within and outside the USSR. It would be incorrect also to completely ignore the time factor. There was the secret intelligence service document showing that the German General Staff had some agents in the Red Army — a document, now proved a forged one, was not considered so at that time. The fascists and the imperialists were planning to launch an attack on the Soviet Union. The counter-revolutionaries within the country were trying to raise their heads. Careerists and even directly hostile elements had infiltrated into the party, some of whom even managed to occupy high positions in the party. At such a critical time, strong and quick measures had to be taken to weed out the enemy. In such a situation, along with a large number of guilty persons, quite a good number of innocent persons lost their lives. The leaders of the CPSU, especially Stalin, ought to have exercised more caution. But it now transpires that necessary caution was then lacking. Lack of necessary caution cannot be defended but it cannot but be admitted that at critical times, it is not uncommon also. In any case, subjective evaluation of an incident, however shocking, without taking into consideration the time factor, is not desirable inasmuch as it leads us to wrong conclusion. Suppose, another leader of the CPSU after a lapse of say, twenty years of further progress and consolidation of socialism comes up and holds Khrushchev personally guilty of killing a large number of innocent persons at the time of suppressing the counter-revolution in Hungary. Will he be correct in holding Khrushchev personally guilty of cruel acts ? We emphatically say — no. At critical times when the revolution is at stake,

force has to be applied to smash the counter-revolutionaries along with whom many innocent persons may be killed. It may be that the acts of punishing the persons who were later on proved to be innocent were actuated by Stalin's deep concern to defend, consolidate and strengthen socialism in the USSR. In that case, for wrong judgment, he cannot be characterized as a criminal — it is a *bona fide* error.

Role of Stalin's colleagues

Lastly, we like to mention another point. A communist is never afraid of admitting mistakes. But is the Leninist principle of criticism and self-criticism being correctly followed? If Stalin acted arbitrarily, violated inner-party democracy, practised the cult of the individual and abused power, what were his comrades, his colleagues doing then to bring the matter to the notice of the party and put him in a straitjacket? Did Khrushchev, Mikoyan and other colleagues of Stalin then play their part correctly and courageously? None of the present leaders of the CPSU was at the time of Stalin an ordinary member, too weak to have his voice heard by the party. Most of them were members of the Central Committee. They could have corrected Stalin, if they so desired and seriously attempted. If they dared not oppose him (an unthinkable bad trait of character in case of a revolutionary is cowardice), they could at least refrain from fanning his ego. But they, on the contrary, joined in the chorus to deify Stalin. This was, in no small measure, responsible for turning the head of even a tried revolutionary like Stalin. The argument that concentration of enormous power in the hands of Stalin prevented the present leaders of the CPSU from acting rightly and courageously is unacceptable. Because, after all, it is the party which gave power to Stalin. If the party so decided, it could strip him of all powers. Why was no attempt made to bring the situation to the notice of the party? The bourgeois press published a report in this connection. It is reported that a delegate was heard to put a question to

Khrushchev when the latter was describing the cases of ‘abuse of power by Stalin’. “What were you people doing then ?”—asked the delegate, unobserved. Khrushchev could not identify the voice. He wanted to know the name of the comrade who put the question. The delegate dared not rise and tell Khrushchev his name. He, in keeping with the dictum that ‘discretion is the better part of valour’, decided to remain unobserved. After a few minutes of dramatic pause and silence, Khrushchev answered, “We did exactly what the comrade who has raised this question is doing now”. So goes the report. We do not know how far it is true. If it is true, then it is a sad commentary on the standard of delegates to the Congress. Besides, however enjoyable the repartee of Khrushchev is, it is no reply to the question. We feel that it is high time that the whole question of ‘abuse of power by Stalin’ were re-examined on the basis of available facts and the roles of not only Stalin but also other colleagues of him in the matter investigated.

Lead communist movement to new victories

Before we conclude we appeal again to the leaders of the international communist movement, especially to Comrade Khrushchev, to consider this study of ours as a piece of criticism of a fraternal communist party belonging to the socialist camp headed by the USSR. We cannot but feel deep concern at the magnitude of confusion that confronts the communist movement in the ideological sphere on the question of relative appreciation of values of Stalin. In the interest of getting over the confusion and strengthening the unity between different communist parties, it is necessary to have a correct evaluation of Stalin. Freeing the communist movement of the root cause of the cult of the individual, removing the legacies of Stalin-cult, achieving closer unity between different communist parties on the basis of dialectical understanding of the mutual relationship between them, steeling comrades in communist education and thereby

consolidating and strengthening the communist movement are important tasks of today. The world situation now offers unprecedentedly favourable scope for accelerating the course of world proletarian revolution. We have full confidence in the international communist leadership and hope that it will rise to the occasion, successfully carry on the ideological struggle, remove the ideological confusion and guide the communist movement to new and newer victories.

Comradely yours,
Shibdas Ghosh
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NOTES

1. Subsequently turned out to be a renegade.
- 2.. It has already been stated that the leadership of the CPSU was later on usurped by the revisionists.
- 3 Subsequently turned out to be a renegade.