

SOCIALISM

A COMMONPLACE in any review of the year is to claim that "a turning point" was reached here, there and everywhere. But few people anywhere doubt that 1956 marked a turning point in the Communist movements throughout the world.

This took place in February with the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The particular moment was the speech by Nikita Khrushchev on the errors, sins and crimes of the late Stalin era.

These admissions and revelations had been foreshadowed the previous June when the Soviet leaders made their famous trip to Belgrade, apologized to the Yugoslav government and began to re-new socialist ties between the two countries.

The Stalin revelations set off a discussion within Communist ranks everywhere the like of which had never been seen before. Opinions were vigorously expressed that Khrushchev had done great damage by his speech. On the other hand, the Soviet leaders were challenged to dig deeper into the question and not rest with placing all the blame on the "cult of the in-

dividual."

THOSE who underestimated the far-reaching significance of the Stalin revelations—as well as those who assumed that the 20th Congress automatically straightened out everything that was wrong—were in for a shock a few months later. In October came the upheaval in Poland. This took the form of a mass movement for further democratization and against infringements on Polish sovereignty by the Soviet military forces. The movement was accompanied by an overturn of the Communist Party leadership and the return to top office by Wladyslaw Gomulka who had been imprisoned. Gomulka assumed leadership of the fight for Polish sovereignty and democratization. The result was that a new era was opened up in Polish-Soviet relations and prestige restored to the Polish Communist Party.

But those who thought that this development settled all unsettled questions in Eastern Europe were in for still another shock. A few weeks later occurred the explosion in Hungary. Apart from differences of opinion on the extent of reactionary foreign intervention in Hungary and the wisdom of the various steps by the Soviet military forces, many other issues arose which will be discussed for a long time in Communist ranks: what happened to the Communist Party of Hungary; the nature of socialist democracy, etc.

IN this country, the 20th Congress and the later developments in Eastern Europe inevitably shaped the discussion which had begun somewhat earlier in Communist Party ranks on its policies and practices of the past ten years. The 20th Congress developments turned the discussion toward far-reaching questions going back through the entire history of the Communist Party. New dimensions in preparation for the Party's convention in February, 1957 of relations among the Communist parties, the establishment of party democracy and approaches to the development and application of the Marxist scientific socialism.



GOMULKA