

Togliatti's Historic Interview

DEMOCRACY AND SOCIALISM are inseparable, Palmiro Togliatti, leader of the Italian Communist Party declared last weekend, and he called upon the Soviet Communist leaders to explain "why Soviet society could and did stray so far from the democratic path." In an interview published by Unita, paper of the Italian Communist Party last

weekend, the spokesman for the largest Communist Party in the capitalist world, stressed however there should be no lessening in reciprocal confidence and solidarity between various parts of the world Communist movement.

The interview of 11,000 words dealt with the questions raised by the recently published speech of Nikita Khrushchev, secretary of the Soviet Communist Party, on Stalin, which was delivered at the 20th Congress of the Party in Moscow last February.

Togliatti said that since the present Soviet leaders knew Stalin

The Worker presents the most complete account of the historic Togliatti article yet published in this country.

better than anyone outside Russia "we ought therefore to believe them when they describe him as they do."

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"WE CAN only think to ourselves that, seeing how things stood, and apart from the impossibility of making a change in time, they (the Soviet leaders) could at least have been more prudent in that public and solemn exaltation of the qualities of this man to which they had accustomed us.

"It is true that today they criticize themselves, and it is their great merit but in this criticism there is no doubt that some of their prestige has fallen."

"But apart from all this, as long as they limit themselves in substance to denouncing the personal defects of Stalin, the problem remains within the framework of the 'cult of personality.'"

"At one time, all that was good was due to the superhuman, positive qualities of one man; now, all that is bad is attributed to the equally exceptional and even staggering defects of the same man."

"Both in one case and in the other we are outside the criterion of judgment which is proper to Marxism."

"The real problems escape notice, such as the method by which and the reason why Soviet society

French Party, London DW, Want Reasons Why . .

THE COMMUNIST PARTY of France and the London Daily Worker last week joined Italy's Palmiro Togliatti in insisting on an explanation from Soviet Communist leaders of why they permitted democracy to be smothered in the Soviet Union under Stalin.

Monday's Daily Worker of London also front-paged an article with extensive excerpts from Howard Fast's N.Y. Daily Worker column in which the noted novelist wrote:

"The Soviet Union is a Socialist land, and for that reason I have been proud to defend it publicly.

"But I must say that if Russia has in me a friend, it has also a severe and implacable critic.

"Never again will I remain silent when I can recognize injustice."

A statement by the Political Bureau of the French Communist Party declared:

"The explanations given up to now on the faults of Stalin, their origin, the conditions in which they were produced, are not satisfactory. A careful Marxist analysis is indispensable to determine the combination of circumstances in which Stalin came to exercise personal power."

The French statement also criticized the manner in which Khrushchev's report on Stalin had become known, through the capitalist press rather than from the Soviet leaders themselves.

An editorial in the Daily Worker here stated on Wednesday:

"Everywhere Communists are stressing an old but often forgotten aspect of Marxism—that there are many paths to socialism and that the cause of socialism requires completely independent working class parties."

could and did stray so far from the democratic path and from the legality which it had traced out for itself, arriving as far as degeneration.

"An examination must be made by following the various phases of the development of this society, and first to make it must be our Soviet comrades.

"They know more than we, who might err because of partial or erroneous knowledge of the facts."

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AFTER DISCUSSING the "suffocation" of Soviet democracy under Stalin, Signor Togliatti said what had happened had led to the need and desire for even greater independence of judgment, and the Soviet model could no longer be obligatory for other Communist countries.

The interview was given to a periodical edited by the Italian novelist Alberto Moravia, though

it was also published by Unita, a few days before the appearance of Moravia's periodical.

Togliatti says:

"We must recognize openly and without hesitation that, while the 20th Congress has made an enormous contribution to the exposure and solution of many serious and new problems of the Democratic and Socialist movement, we cannot consider satisfactory the position adopted by the Congress, which is now being amply developed by the Soviet Press, in regard to the errors of Stalin and the causes and conditions which made them possible."

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HE SAID Stalin's growth into a tyrant was probably gradual and it was difficult at any time in the past 20 years for the other Soviet leaders to get rid of him.

He added: "I exclude the explanation that it was impossible to

The DW editorial noted that for some time this newspaper has "called upon Communist leaders in socialist countries to explain the real origins of injustices that arose and threatened the existence of socialism there."

"We have differed in this regard," the DW said, "with some readers and prominent contributors to our paper. We are strengthened in our conviction that only such an independent position helps the cause of labor and socialism by the way the big business press is fearful of the new Communist attitudes.

"A relationship of equality and of free and critical attitudes among workingclass parties and among socialist countries is bound to strengthen the bonds of internationalism. This was what the Soviet Communists stressed when they healed the breach with Tito. This is part of the historic significance of the 20th Congress."

Meanwhile the correction of various violations of legality and of democracy continues in all the socialist countries but at different tempo. In Poland there has been a great blossoming of freedom in almost every phase of life. But in Czechoslovakia the pace is very cautious. The contrast is so obvious that a London Daily Worker report on the recent National Conference of the Czechoslovak CP was headlined: "Czech Communists Lack Bold Criticism."

The Czech CP secretary Novotny told that Conference that in the Slansky trial of 1952 the Americans Herman and Noel Field had been falsely accused as conspirators. But he insisted that Slansky was still guilty even though Slansky was charged with conspiring with the Fields. Slansky was executed.

make a change because of a machine of terror which controlled the situation through military and police means.

"It seems to me far more accurate to acknowledge that, despite the errors that he committed, Stalin had the support of a very great part of the country, and, particularly, of his ruling cadres and of the masses."

He added: "Of the facts that are disclosed today we had and could have had no notion."

Calling for an examination of how Soviet society "strayed from the democratic path," Signor Togliatti said that one of the questions to be answered was how such tremendous successes had been achieved by the Soviet system while such great errors were present in its mechanism.

"It is the Soviet leaders who must give us the answer, understanding that this is today one of

the problems which assails sincere militants of the international workingclass movement."

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WHAT WAS most important now was an accurate reply to the question of how the errors crept into the development of a Socialist society and whether "errors of a general order against which the whole world of Socialism should be put on guard did not arise."

He said the major fact to emerge from the 20th Congress was that the Stalin regime suffocated democracy in Russia, and that the efforts of all Communist Parties must be directed to ensuring proper democracy within their own frameworks.

He did not believe all that had happened should lead to a lessening in the reciprocal confidence and solidarity between the various parts of the world Communist movement.

"But there is no doubt that it leads not only to the need but to the desire for ever greater independence of judgment, and that cannot but do good to our movement."

"The international political structure of the world Communist movement is changed today."

"What the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has done remains as the first great model for the building of a Socialist society, to which the way was opened by a profound, decisive, revolutionary fracture."

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"TODAY THE front of Socialist construction in the countries where the Communists form the ruling party is so vast, comprising a third of humanity, that for them the Soviet model cannot, and must not, any longer be obligatory."

"In the rest of the world there are countries where it is hoped to achieve Socialism without the Communists necessarily being the ruling party."

"In other countries again the march toward Socialism is an objective which draws various movements together, movements which have not yet reached any mutual agreement or even understanding."

"One cannot talk of a single guide, but rather of a method of progress achieved by following different paths," Togliatti concluded.