

# STALIN CRITICISM A SHOCK TO REDS

## Communist Leaders Outside Soviet Embarrassed by Attacks on Ex-Ruler

By HARRY SCHWARTZ

News of Nikita S. Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin appears to have shocked rank-and-file Communists in Western Europe and the United States and embarrassed their leaders.

Communist party newspapers in Paris, Vienna and Rome yesterday broke the news about the Khrushchev speech to their readers for the first time, trying, however, to soften the blow.

In Rome, the Italian Communist paper L'Unita printed a Moscow dispatch that Mr. Khrushchev gave a secret report Feb. 25 on "The Cult of Personality and its Consequences." It declared this speech had given a "detailed analysis of Stalin's activity with his merits and his errors." The paper added that for the time being the Khrushchev speech was being considered an "internal matter of the Communist party of the Soviet Union."

In Vienna, the Communist newspaper Die Volksstimme attacked what it called the "wildly fantastic and lying" account in The New York Times of the Khrushchev speech. At the same time, it printed excerpts from an article by Palmiro Togliatti in which the Italian Communist leader pointedly attacked Stalin's doctrine that class war must be continued in a Communist-ruled country even after capitalism has been destroyed.

### Problem Posed for Reds

Reports indicate that the non-Communist press of Western Europe is widely publicizing available unofficial accounts of Mr. Khrushchev's criticisms of Stalin. This created a problem for Communist leaders who would prefer to disillusion their followers gradually.

William Z. Foster, United States Communist leader, acknowledged the difficulty when he wrote last Friday in the Daily Worker here that "at this time, the leadership of other [non-Soviet] Communist parties, including our own, are being questioned for not having criticized Stalin's errors, which are only now being made public."

An editorial in today's Daily Worker denies that the Stalin repudiation has caused a "split" or "crisis" among United States Communists. It announces the paper's columns are being opened for a free discussion about the twentieth Soviet Communist party Congress at which Stalin was repudiated.

Yesterday's Daily Worker contained a letter by Ring Lardner Jr., former Hollywood writer, confessing he was "embarrassed" by the Moscow developments and calling on "American Marxists to face up to their own participation in, and lack of critical attitude" toward the "errors" revealed in Moscow.

### Stalin-like Figures

Making the problem more difficult for Communist leaders is the fact that each party has tended to have its own Stalin-like figure at the head, Harry Pollitt in Britain, Signor Togliatti in Italy, Maurice Thorez in France, and Mr. Foster in the United States.

Mr. Lardner's letter to The Daily Worker hinted at this problem by attacking American Communists' "cloying panegyrics" on Stalin's seventieth birthday in 1949. He added: "I wonder if some of the rather maudlin testaments to William Z. Foster on his recent birthday are really the most mature and effective way of acknowledging the respect due [to him]."

Many of the present Communist leaders were in effect named for their posts by Stalin himself. A quarter of a century ago, for example, Stalin decided in favor of Mr. Foster's faction in the United States Communist party against the group headed by Jay Lovestone. At the end of World War II, the expulsion of Earl Browder as Communist leader and the reinstatement of Mr. Foster followed an attack on the former by Jacques Duclos, French Communist, after Mr. Duclos had returned to France from Moscow.

Thus the criticism of Stalin by Mr. Khrushchev gives dissident elements in each national Communist party an opportunity to attack the present leaders as "Stalin's tools."

A dispatch from Rome says that Italian Communists may lose votes in elections next May as a result of the Moscow revelations. The left-wing Socialist party of Pietro Nenni is expected to be the chief beneficiary of any defections.

### Communists Unprepared

In Britain, Communists were unprepared for the relatively mild attack on Stalin made public at the party congress in Moscow last month. The London Daily Worker received and printed letters attacking the anti-Stalinist trend and defending the dead dictator.

Both in Eastern and Western Europe, the initial Communist line had been to try to present a "more balanced" picture of Stalin than theretofore. This gave Stalin credit for accomplishments in collectivizing Soviet agriculture and building up Soviet industry but indicted him for errors as a "one-man leader" of the Soviet state.

But this relatively moderate reassessment of Stalin fell far short of Mr. Khrushchev's reported criticism. Only Walter Ulbricht, East German Communist leader, gave a clue to the intensity of Mr. Khrushchev's criticism by publicly rejecting Stalin as one of the classic figures of Marxism. In a speech yesterday Herr Ulbricht said Stalin did not deserve credit for the Soviet victory over Germany in World War II.

Another East German Communist leader, Hermann Ma-

tern, has conceded that the criticism of Stalin has shocked East German Communists. The Polish Communist organ, Trybuna Ludu, said Stalin's errors prepared the ground for the "crimes" of the late Lavrenti P. Beria, Soviet Minister of Interior executed on treason charges.

In Czechoslovakia representatives of the party's Central Committee have revealed the new party line on Stalin to the lower ranks. Stalin has been praised as having "defended Leninism when he strongly repulsed attempts of enemies who tried to destroy the party and the Soviet state."

Presumably this reference is to Stalin's struggle against the followers of Leon Trotsky and Nikolai Bukharin, both of whom were excoriated by Mr. Khrushchev in his opening speech at the party congress last month.

Diplomatic sources reported that through the end of last week only in Rumania and Bulgaria were Communists not yet being informed of Stalin's new status.

In Yugoslavia, the anti-Stalin course in the Soviet Union is being hailed with delight. The Yugoslav Communist organ Borba said Mr. Khrushchev's speech sought "to remove from the social life all the old which has caused so much trouble," the Associated Press said.

Borba termed the Khrushchev speech "a solid guarantee against a return to the old." It added: "Efforts of the Soviet Communist party are concentrated on removing the remnants of Stalinist rule in all fields of Soviet life."

Another Yugoslav newspaper, Politika, hailed "the courage with which the Soviet leaders are breaking into pieces Stalin's myth."