

torture, mass deportations, and the destruction of inner-party democracy, among many other crimes.

What was China's reaction?

It is a popular misconception that the Chinese leadership immediately opened an offensive against Khrushchev's revisionism or denounced his report to the 20th Congress.

It is true that at the time of the CIA release of the report, the bewilderment in the movement caused many to turn to those in the international communist movement who had attained a preeminent position and prestige as a result of their revolutionary struggle. Invariably those who felt that Khrushchev's report was not merely an effort to put Stalin's role in its proper place in history, but was in reality a far-flung and sweeping effort to shift to the right, turned towards the Chinese leadership, which more than any other would seem to have the capability to challenge Khrushchev.

Of course much, in fact most, of what Khrushchev had reported on had long been known in the West and certainly in the Soviet Union. But the 20th Congress offered an opportunity to reevaluate the entire previous historic epoch in the international communist movement, and in the USSR in particular, which had been under the political domination and leadership of Stalin ever since Lenin's death.

The Chinese CP leaders had three choices. They could avoid the issue entirely and say nothing about it, which in itself, of course, would be saying a lot. They could approve the 20th Congress report on Stalin. Or, they could open a truly classic, revolutionary, Marxist-Leninist polemic against Khrushchev revisionism and at the same time utilize the opportunity to reevaluate the entire Stalin era from the vantage point of Leninist principles.

This would not have been an intrusion into the internal affairs of the USSR. The question of Stalin obviously was, and still is, an international question affecting all working class and Marxist-Leninist parties. The Chinese CP leadership, without opening a sudden assault, could have called for the establishment of a commission of fraternal parties to investigate, not only the validity of the report, its contents, and its factual material, but also its significance for the international movement. (Did not the

Comintern set up a commission to investigate the defeat of the Chinese Revolution in the late 1920s?)

What did the Chinese CP leadership in fact do at that great historical moment in 1956?

It approved the 20th Congress report.

This is a matter of record and cannot be denied. During the month of June, after the CIA release of the report, practically all the leading CPs in the world were in turmoil, forced in one way or another into taking a position. The French, the Italians, the U.S., others—did so, and so did China.

CCP endorsed the report

The organ of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, Jen Min Jih Pao, in an editorial "On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," said:

"The CPSU, following Lenin's behest, treats seriously some of the grave errors made by Stalin in directing socialist construction and the consequences they have provoked. Because of the gravity of these consequences the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, while admitting the great services of J.V. Stalin, is faced with the necessity to reveal with all sharpness the essence of the mistakes Stalin made. . . . *We communists of China profoundly believe that after the sharp criticism which developed at the XXth Communist Party of the Soviet Union Congress all those active factors which were strongly restrained in the past because of certain political mistakes undoubtedly will be set in motion everywhere, that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet people will be united and made one as never before in the struggle for the building of a great Communist society never yet seen in history, in the struggle for a stable peace in the entire world.*" (Our emphasis.)

As anyone can see, the CCP not only approved the report but also made a prognosis that the CPSU "will be reunited and made one as never before in the building of a great Communist society," a prognosis which proved utterly false. Rather than challenging Khrushchev, the approval of the Chinese leadership strengthened his hand and strengthened revisionism at the moment when revisionism needed it most.

Printed Togliatti's assessment

The impact of Khrushchev's report was to push all of the world CPs far to the right, particularly those in Western Europe and the