Khrushchev’s Downfall—
New Stage in the Crisis
of the Soviet Bureaucracy

Statement by the United Secretariat
of the Fourth International

[The following is the text of a declaration issued Oct. 19 by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, the international organization of revolutionary socialists founded in 1938 by Leon Trotsky.]

I

The sudden removal of Khrushchev as head of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union [CPSU] and head of the Soviet government offers fresh and striking proof of the deep contradiction between the progressive character of the economic structure of the Soviet Union and the retrograde political institutions set up by Stalin.

The launching of the spaceship Voskhod was the most tangible evidence of the immense advances achieved by Soviet science and industry. Three days later came the downfall of Khrushchev, offering a completely opposite spectacle of political weakness and confusion.

The new Kremlin chiefs at once hastened to assure the world that the sudden change-over did not signify any alteration at all of a major character in either domestic or foreign policy. They propose to follow substantially the same course as Khrushchev.

Why then did the bureaucracy dump Khrushchev?

If the top bureaucrats display little concern over Khrushchev’s general line, it is because they, like him and Stalin before them, are utter empiricists. They became worried over what they consider to be Khrushchev’s excesses and blunders in applying the line.

The truth is that Khrushchev ended up in blind alleys in various fields, increasing tensions and sharpening contradictions. Seeking a way out, the bureaucracy decided to make a start by offering him up as a scapegoat.

In the field of domestic economic policy, Khrushchev was associated with the grandiose promises about raising the standard of living of the Soviet masses. For nine years, things did improve for Soviet consumers — Khrushchev’s popularity during this period was based on this. But the situation changed radically when, due to the stagnation of agricultural production for five years, he was obliged to increase the price of meat and butter and to import large quantities of grain from the capitalist countries. The long lines in front of bakeries last winter dealt a mortal blow to his popularity. The good harvest this year could not save the situation.
Khrushchev’s “virgin-lands” project likewise ended in failure. Pravda’s sudden allusion to “hare-brained schemes” that disregard the advice of scientific specialists refers to the “virgin-lands” project which was undertaken against the advice of the Academy of Sciences.

The bankruptcy of Khrushchev’s agricultural policy — which the Fourth International has pointed to since 1955 as decisive for Khrushchev’s leadership of the CPSU — is all the more serious in view of the fact that the belated turn toward intensive agriculture cannot give immediate large-scale results; and the creation of a major chemical industry, required as a concomitant, demands time.

The plans for establishing a chemical industry, which were launched with great publicity, have been considerably slowed down due to a general lowering of the rate of industrial growth in the USSR. It was impossible at one and the same time to maintain a rapid improvement in the standard of living for the masses, to keep up with the imperialist powers in an armaments race, grant increasing aid to the colonial bourgeoisie, undertake feverish construction of homes, and increase the volume of investment on the colossal scale needed to maintain a constant high rate of industrial expansion.

Economic Difficulties

It must also be emphasized that the economic reforms introduced by Khrushchev, which succeeded in overcoming the difficulties created by the hyper-centralization and grossly oversize scale of approach in Stalin’s time, began to decline in effectiveness. The present economic discussion in the USSR is symptomatic of this new economic impasse.

Khrushchev was not ready to take the “big leap forward” that would have been possible with the introduction of democratic planning and workers’ self-management.

The bureaucracy sacrificed Khrushchev, holding him responsible for the agricultural and industrial difficulties, hoping in this way to gain time for experimenting with new solutions. However, possible reforms can prove only of limited efficacy. What is needed is a radical transformation of the whole system of management.

Blunders

In the field of foreign policy, Khrushchev became the scapegoat for a series of blunders that gravely lowered Soviet prestige. These included the miscalculation involved in putting rockets in Cuba, the unkept promise of an imminent solution of the problem of West Berlin; the vote in the UN to send the “blue helmets” to the Congo where the operation ended in the murder of Lumumba. It was above all the way in which he handled the Chinese question that aroused the most resentment and opposition.

Was it necessary to carry the dispute between the CPSU and the Chinese Communist party onto the government level? To abruptly halt Soviet aid to China? To grant military aid to Nehru in a war involving the People’s Republic of China? To go back on the agreement to help China in setting up a nuclear industry? Such questions undoubtedly worried a growing number of Soviet leaders. Above all, was it wise to schedule the pre-conference of 26 Communist parties for Dec. 15, 1964, without assurances in advance that a big majority of these parties would accept the invitation and support the Soviet theses?

In truth, the manner in which Khrushchev handled the Sino-Soviet conflict added up to a disastrous balance in the eyes of the Soviet bureaucracy. The unity of the Communist international
movement was destroyed, the authority of the Soviet party brought to a new low everywhere. Its directives were no longer followed even among parties backing the Kremlin against Peking. The conflict set up enormous centrifugal forces, not only among parties, as shown in Italy, but among governments, as shown in Romania. Should East Germany tomorrow protest against the projected rapprochement with Bonn and take the road being followed by Romania, Kremlin control over more than half of the buffer countries would be in a state of disintegration.

Again, by sacrificing Khrushchev, the Soviet bureaucracy sought to halt the steady deterioration in its relations with Peking. The main obstacle to resumption of the dialogue having been eliminated, Peking can in turn make its own concessions without losing face.

If the December pre-conference now takes place, its meaning may be completely altered. The unbridled polemics, the irresponsible acts that have characterized both sides may cease. If reconciliation is not reached, the conflict is at least taken out of the gutter and returned to the green baize tables of the diplomats and "theoreticians."

II

Khrushchev's years in office will become known as the period of "de-Stalinization." Under national and international conditions completely different from those that made it possible for the Soviet bureaucracy to usurp power in the Soviet Union and for Stalin to convert this power into a personal autocracy wielded with increasing arbitrariness, the Soviet masses are no longer willing to endure a ruthless police regime, the complete subordination of their standard of living to spectacular-sounding projects that involve enormous waste.

To avoid an impeding explosion such as occurred in East Germany in 1953 and in Poland and Hungary in 1956, and to save their special privileges and their grip on power, the leaders of the Soviet bureaucracy deliberately sacrificed the Stalin cult and liberalized their regime. In doing so, they also eliminated some of the most arbitrary and obnoxious methods of leadership and administration that Stalin introduced into Soviet economy, government, science and culture and which increasingly blocked progress.

Khrushchev, often pictured as the most typical representative of this "de-Stalinization" was neither its principal initiator nor its most resolute protagonist. Many times, in various fields, younger and more dynamic forces sought to press "de-Stalinization" further. The logic of this would have been the rehabilitation of Leon Trotsky and his generation of Bolsheviks. The advocates of further "de-Stalinization" were called to order
or even silenced. "De-Stalinization" was not Khrushchev’s fundamental orientation nor his personal policy. It was a course of half measures, of doled-out concessions, approved by the immense majority of the bureaucracy which gained from it a higher degree of personal security as well as a popular response from the masses. The objective factors that determined this course will continue to operate after Khrushchev’s downfall.

**Rising Self-Confidence**

The years of progressive improvement in their standard of living lessened the fear that paralyzed wide sectors in Stalin’s time. The Soviet masses, their self-confidence on the rise because of the concessions they won, will never tolerate a return to the regime of misery and terror. Any attempt to return to the methods of Stalin would be met with a violent popular reaction.

It is highly significant that the new leaders hastened to declare, in the first issue of Pravda after Khrushchev’s downfall, that the line of the Twentieth and Twenty-second Congresses of the CPSU will be continued. In this way they promised the masses that whatever else may occur and whatever the appearances in secondary fields, the essential gains of “de-Stalinization” will be maintained. There will be no going back to an all-powerful police, to ferocious repressive laws in the plants, to the low standard of living of Stalin’s time. The effort to raise the standard of living of the masses will be kept up. These concessions to the masses will in the long run only reinforce their self-confidence and further undermine the rule of the bureaucracy.

Just as objective conditions permit no fundamental retrogression in “de-Stalinization,” so they permit no fundamental alteration in the field of foreign policy. The Soviet bureaucracy has never headed toward world war — the opposite contention is simply one of the lying themes of imperialist propaganda. On the other hand it has never deliberately fostered socialist revolution, the only road to a world of enduring peace. Both courses, in quite different ways, involve destruction of bureaucratic rule.

What the men who ousted Khrushchev will do is follow his policy of so-called “peaceful co-existence.” This policy did not originate with Khrushchev: parentage belongs to Stalin. Khrushchev’s policy of “economic competition with the United States” was only the application under new conditions of Stalin’s old thesis about “building socialism in one country.”

The new leaders of the bureaucracy may use stronger language than has been Khrushchev’s habit for the past two years, if only to facilitate resumption of conversations with the Chinese and to camouflage their own uncertainty and lack of assurance until their positions have been consolidated. It is possible that they will modify some of the more scandalous ways in which Khrushchev has lately collaborated with American imperialism, his course, for instance of joining with the Pentagon in arming the Indian bourgeoisie (against the Indian masses as well as the People’s Republic of China) and giving American imperialism a free hand in the Gulf of Tonkin and in the Congo.

Without doubt any spectacular softening of relations between Moscow and Bonn has now been ruled out, a perspective that had caused uneasiness in East Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia, particularly since the West German bourgeoisie refuses to recognize the new borders of Germany and continues to seek nuclear arms within the framework of a NATO
multilateral nuclear force.

As under Khrushchev and Stalin, the Soviet bureaucracy will continue to seek an overall arrangement with Washington based essentially on joint defense of the status quo. It will continue to oppose the dissemination of nuclear arms, faithfully doing its best to keep them from other workers' states, no matter what Washington does in giving countries like Canada stockpiles of nuclear weapons. It will propose slowing down the arms race and advocate disarmament.

**Continued Sell-Outs**

It will continue to seek economic collaboration with the colonial bourgeoisie as an alternative to fostering socialist revolutions in the colonial area which could radically alter the relationship of forces to the disadvantage of bureaucratic rule in the USSR however advantageous it might turn out for the workers' states as a whole. It will continue to do what it can to confine working-class struggles in the imperialist countries within the limits of capitalist rules and regulations, postponing any bids for power there until after per-capita production in the USA has fallen behind that of the USSR.

Under these conditions, any sudden liquidation of the Sino-Soviet conflict through both states and both parties coming to complete agreement on a common line is as improbable as a reversal of "de-Stalinization" and the policy of "peaceful co-existence." The Sino-Soviet dispute is not the product of any "blunders" by Khrushchev. It expresses the deep differences in interests of two bureaucracies differently situated with regard to imperialism, the international revolution and the masses of their own countries.

The success of the first Chinese nuclear test has profoundly affected the international situation of the People's Republic of China. It could accelerate its admission to the United Nations, a possibility already improved by the recognition of China among many African countries following the recognition granted by France. But Johnson will not withdraw the Seventh Fleet from the Far East, give up Taiwan [Formosa] or approve the dissolution of SEATO. So long as Washington maintains its pressure, China faces the possibility of imperialist aggression and suffers a partial economic blockade. This situation has long been sufficient to compel Peking to pursue a course that is quite different from Moscow's.

By continuing to follow the main lines of policy advanced by Stalin and developed by Khrushchev, the new Kremlin chiefs will find themselves caught in the same profound difficulties that led to political disaster for their predecessor.

**III**

The Soviet bureaucracy dumped Khrushchev in hope of finding a temporary solution to the contradictions it faces. It will perhaps have gained time, provided that the new team is accepted by the great majority of the apparatus and the political crisis does not undergo a new sensational turn. But the bureaucracy is incapable of overcoming the contradictions resulting from the very nature of its rule. Far from being able to attenuate the contradictions and difficulties, Khrushchev's successors are more likely to exacerbate them.

To prevent things from becoming highly explosive in the economic field, the plan for agricultural investments must be put through in doublequick order. But Kosygin the technocrat, who is known to have got into a dispute with Khrushchev over the alloca-
tion of investment funds among the different sectors, will certainly not display greater readiness than Khrushchev to sacrifice heavy industry. The very fact that Kosygin was chosen to share top rank with Brezhnev is evidence of the weight of his sector in the bureaucratic caste.

On the other hand, a general slowing down of the rate of industrial growth would certainly not augur well for the chemical-industry plans and for a quantitative improvement in agriculture. In order to get out of the impasse something has to give — either the aspirations of the masses, the predilections of the technocratic sector of the bureaucracy, the demands of the managers of plants and trusts, the appetites of the Kolkhozian peasants, or the interests of several layers at once.

Things are not much better in the field of international politics. The new masters in the Kremlin are anxious to demonstrate their attachment to the cause of “peaceful co-existence” by some spectacular gesture. But how is it possible to win improved relations with Peking and at the same time reassure Washington when the two aims require moves of a diametrically opposite nature?

**International Tensions:**

The same holds true in the international Communist movement. Of course, some improvement in relations with Peking could slow down the Chinese in their drive to set up a new international pro-Chinese Communist movement in competition with Moscow’s “official” movement. But how is it possible to avoid seeing that the sudden downfall of Khrushchev has increased the uneasiness, the worry and the confusion affecting all the Communist parties?

How is it possible to avoid seeing that this ouster and the conditions under which it took place, will inevitably strengthen the already skeptical attitude of foreign Communist militants toward Soviet documents and theses, their tendency to stop lining up mechanically with every turn taken by the Kremlin? Precisely those who ran into the biggest difficulties in explaining “de-Stalinization” and establishing the prestige of the unknown Khrushchev may feel the worst foreboding at the prospect of putting a new god on the pedestal, after the transition of “collective leadership” once again ends in the selection of a new “first secretary” to wear the mantle of power.

**Polycentrism**

Contrary to the intentions of the top bureaucrats, and even the immediate consequences which can prove to be deceptively encouraging to them, the elimination of Khrushchev, instead of arresting the slow disintegration of the Kremlin’s sway over the international Communist movement, can end up by accelerating it. The bureaucracy reproached Khrushchev with having promoted the tendency toward “polycentrism” by his acts. The act of suddenly discarding him can only encourage the growth of this same “polycentrism” in the international Communist movement.

Without a single leader of high caliber, with only bureaucrats screened and doubly screened by Stalin in the days of the purges and the liquidation of every single figure who displayed the slightest capacity for independent thought, the bureaucracy will prove less capable than ever of re-establishing its prestige after this new blow to monolithism. The Soviet bureaucrats will have to accustom themselves to seeing their moves discussed more and more, their switches subjected to increasingly hard criticism in the international Communist movement.

Those parties that have dis-
played tendencies to follow an independent course, whether to the right as in Italy or to the left as in Venezuela, will now be all the more inclined to give free rein to this inclination. And those parties that managed up to now to present themselves as models in subservience, as in France, may suddenly display a quite new look. "Polycentrism" will tend increasingly to reveal that it has a logic of its own.

The same logic applies to the workers' states. For them, too, the downfall of Khrushchev is both an outcome of a crisis profoundly affecting the whole system of workers' states and a new element tending to deepen that crisis. All of them are well aware of the coincidence, if not causal relation, between the explosion of the first Chinese atom bomb and the downfall of Khrushchev. The abrupt removal of the head of the Soviet Union contributes to a radical modification in the relationship between the USSR and the other workers' states.

Situation Changing

These states have changed considerably since the days of absolute subordination under Stalin. First they saw the Yugoslav revolt, then the appearance of China as an independent power. The feeling of revolt grew high, flaring in the uprisings in East Germany, Poland and Hungary. The Kremlin regained its grip at the cost of some loosening of control. Years followed of steady erosion of the authority of the Soviet bureaucracy under pressure of the masses as well as the indirect consequences of "de-Stalinization." The collapse of Khrushchev dealt this authority another very hard blow. The result will be fresh impetus to "polycentrism" on this level, too.

And what will be the ultimate consequences in Soviet society of Khrushchev's downfall? The masses are ripe for a radical change in the political regime. After the shock of surprise at the abrupt disappearance of Khrushchev from the political scene, the masses will feel inclined for many reasons to demand of the new Kremlin chiefs that they carry out the promises repeatedly made by Khrushchev.

The list of these promises is a long one, ranging from erecting a statue to commemorate the victims of Stalin's terror to assuring a standard of living within a few years equal to that of the workers in the United States. New demands, suggested by the nature of the change-over itself, will be added.

The downfall of Khrushchev will give new and powerful impulsion to critical thought among the masses of the Soviet Union and therefore new and powerful impulsion to further dislocations in the bureaucratic regime.

After the liquidation of the cult of Stalin, after the sudden removal of Khrushchev, the Communists in the Soviet Union, in the workers' states and throughout the world can better appreciate the historic scale of the crisis shaking the rule of the bureaucracy in the Soviet Union. They can better understand that far from constituting a threat to the stability of the Soviet state and the "socialist camp," the establishment of the norms of proletarian democracy is a primary condition for achieving stability. Trotsky's analysis is being proved to the hilt.

The main lesson to be drawn from the downfall of Khrushchev is the need for a thoroughgoing change in the political structure of the Soviet Union.

Khrushchev was ousted by a decision of strange nature. Neither
the Soviet Communists in their vast majority nor the members of the international Communist movement know who made it, who carried it out, the reasons for it, the arguments advanced. They do not know the views of the victim nor his defense against the secret accusations. Clearly genuine socialist democracy, proletarian democracy, does not exist in the Soviet Union.

Official Propaganda

The official propaganda assures us that a communist society is being constructed; that is, a society in which the state and all forms of constraint associated with the state have disappeared. The official propaganda assures us that “the entire people” holds power (the new program adopted by the CPSU at the Twenty-second Congress solemnly baptized the Soviet state as the “state of the entire people” and the Communist Party as the “party of the entire people”).

The people, supposedly in power, saw the government abruptly changed without even knowing what members of the Central Committee were present at the Oct. 14 meeting that made the decision, how they voted, or what the motions were they voted on. It does not know in what respect the program of the new government differs from that of the old. The state belongs to the “entire people” but the “entire people” remain in ignorance of the state’s business.

Government power in the Soviet Union is exercised by a force much broader than a single man, even one as dictatorial as Stalin. But clearly it is not the “entire people” nor the proletariat. What is this force?

Is it the “Communist Party of the Soviet Union” wielding power in the name of the people? The millions of party members heard the news for the first time over the radio Oct. 15 or read it in Pravda the next day. What about the “Central Committee” of the CPSU? This body displayed its real social base when it assembled hundreds of top bureaucrats from all over the country in 1957 to give Khrushchev his mandate. Whether the meeting that deposed Khrushchev was of this character or much smaller, it, too, represented only the bureaucratic caste which has monopolized political power in the Soviet Union for more than 35 years.

In his “testament” — which unquestionably played a role in the downfall of Khrushchev — Palmiro Togliatti declared that the Soviet Union has not yet returned to Leninist norms and has not yet established freedom of opinion and discussion in political questions. This is correct, if but a pale reflection of the truth. The way in which Khrushchev was replaced shows how distant the Soviet Union is from the norms established in Lenin’s time when the USSR was much poorer, weaker and under far greater imperialist pressure than today.

The norms of Soviet democracy call for workers’ and peasants’ councils (soviets), within which all groupings and persons who respect the country’s constitution are guaranteed freedom of expression. Under these norms, a congress of all the councils (congress of soviets) designates the head of the government on the basis of a stated program and after full public discussion.

In the Communist Party, Lenin’s concept of democratic centralism meant full discussion among the ranks before decisions were taken by leading bodies, it meant freedom to form tendencies on the basis of publicly declared platforms and with full right to debate the issues before the membership, delegates to decision-
making bodies being elected on the basis of such documents and after a democratic discussion throughout the party. Under the conditions of today a system of multiple working-class parties to strengthen the process of proletarian democracy would be quite feasible.

The re-establishment of proletarian democracy in the Soviet Union would greatly strengthen the unity of the proletariat and the peasantry. It would make possible the establishment of popular confidence in the government such as has not existed since the days of Lenin. One of its enormous advantages would be the establishment of an orderly institutional mechanism for the normal changes in leadership.

Abroad, especially in the imperialist countries, the attractiveness of the Soviet Union to the laboring masses would be greatly enhanced. The advantages of Soviet democracy for the workers both individually and as a whole would be proved in life.

It is for the establishment of norms of proletarian democracy along such lines — even broader and more effective than in Lenin’s time — that the Fourth International has long battled.

Workers Democracy

The bourgeois journalists and politicians contrast “Western democracy” with the practices that became established under Stalin. Capitalist democracy, however, never extended into productive relations, and in the political sphere it has suffered vast erosion, giving way at times to fascism. The norms of proletarian democracy extend right into the factories and farms and throughout the whole structure of society. Proletarian democracy is qualitatively superior to the best ever developed under the bourgeoisie.

The introduction of socialist democracy in the Soviet Union requires a political revolution to break the monopoly of power now held by the bureaucrats and to return it to the mass of workers in the cities and countryside. The downfall of Khrushchev and the manner in which it was brought about show both how necessary this revolution remains and how its approach is being hastened.

Monolith Cracks

When the Stalin cult was dealt its death blow in the Soviet Union at the Twentieth Congress in 1956, the international Communist movement was shaken to the bottom. In the United States, for instance, it finished the Communist Party as an effective organization. Elsewhere it gave rise to big discussions, to changes in leadership and to splits.

The Sino-Soviet conflict has had similar impact, the repercussions going far beyond the ranks of the membership. The success of the Cuban Revolution, which brought to the fore a new revolutionary leadership originating outside the Communist movement, added further to the ferment.

Khrushchev’s downfall now brings a new dynamic ingredient in this gigantic process which at bottom involves the break-up of fossilized structures and the construction of a new revolutionary-socialist leadership on a world scale.

Communist militants therefore have a deep interest in drawing all the lessons from this latest event. They should press for full and free discussion of every single issue involved in the ouster of Khrushchev. One of the first requisites is to hear Khrushchev’s own defense of his course. The stenographic record of the sessions that ended with Khrushchev in a minority should be made available at once and Khrushchev should be
granted space in the Soviet press and an opportunity to appear on television and the radio to explain his side. All working-class tendencies, including the Trotskyists, should be granted the right to participate in the discussion.

In their own parties, Communist militants everywhere should draw one very big obvious lesson; that is, the danger of relying on Moscow for leadership. The disastrous nature of Stalin's guidance was revealed for the blind to see at the Twentieth Congress. Now fresh revelations are on the agenda concerning the consequences of Moscow's leadership since Stalin's death.

The Communist parties must learn to work out their own revolutionary Marxist policies independently in the light of the needs of the revolutionary process in their own countries. The end result of this will be to enormously strengthen the camp of the workers' states by hastening the end of capitalism.

The downfall of Khrushchev underscores once again the fact that the major problem facing the international working class is the crisis in leadership. This crisis can be resolved only through the construction of a new leadership genuinely capable of carrying out the program of revolutionary socialism on an international scale — in the imperialist countries, the colonial world and the sectors that have already won their revolutions and achieved the status of workers states. This is what the Fourth International has fought for since its inception.

New Deepening of the Sino-Soviet Rift?

By Joseph Hansen

[On Dec. 12 Pravda announced that a commission would meet in Moscow on March 1 to plan a world conference of Communist parties. It was Khrushchev's plan to hold such a preparatory meeting on Dec. 15, which the editorial in the Chinese Communist Party's official organ Red Flag, discussed below, branded as one of the deposed Soviet leader's crimes.]

* * *

On Nov. 20 Peking radio told the world to stand by for an important statement. This proved to be an editorial in Red Flag, the official journal of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. The editorial, entitled "Why Khrushchev Fell," was a harsh attack against the former Soviet premier.

The tone of the attack and the arguments advanced have been met with glee in Western circles, particularly Washington. It has generally been interpreted as a warning to Khrushchev's heirs that they must accept unconditional surrender. The Nov. 21 New York Times, for instance, voiced the
editorial opinion that the Kremlin can hardly avoid answering the attack and yet will find it highly embarrassing to do so. The Times therefore concluded, "This is nothing less than the beginning of Chinese political warfare against the new Soviet leadership. In large measure what Peking now assails as the Khrushchev line is precisely what has been unveiled this month as the Brezhnev-Kosygin line."

The gloating in imperialist circles arises from the conclusion that Chou En-lai's trip to Moscow ended in failure, that the attempt to patch up the Sino-Soviet differences proved futile, and that the rift will now become deeper. The sigh of relief in these quarters is quite audible, for they had earlier taken an opposite view. With Khrushchev gone, it appeared to them, the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union might well find a way to compose their differences, at least on the state level, and succeed in presenting a common front against the Western powers.

Warning

It is true that the editorial is aimed at the Brezhnev-Kosygin team although the stick is ostensibly wielded on a dead horse. The editorial even obliquely attacks those who hope for the continuation of "Khrushchevism without Khrushchev"; and this gives substance to the elation of the Western experts. Nevertheless their conclusions appear rather simplistic, if not hasty, and are evidently affected by wishful thinking. Peking knows its Moscow and the editorial may have double aims. It does serve warning on Brezhnev-Kosygin; but it is premature to conclude that Mao has already written off Khrushchev's heirs and has decided to try to sweep them into the same waste-basket in which their patron ended up.

Twelve main charges are levellled against Khrushchev. These are as follows:

1) Under pretext of combating the cult of the personality Khrushchev attacked Stalin, using the foulest language. By doing this, he opposed Marxism-Leninism.

2) He sought general co-operation with American imperialism. He sent rockets to Cuba and then docilely withdrew them on the orders of the American pirates. He tried to sell Cuba's sovereignty by agreeing to the United Nations inspection of the island.

3) He bowed to American nuclear blackmail and sought to prevent China from building its own nuclear force. He injured the defense of the Soviet Union and signed a partial test-ban treaty.

4) He sought in all ways to obstruct revolutionary movements in the capitalist countries, advising them to take the legal parliamentary road to socialism.

5) He sought to oppose the national liberation movement and sabotaged it. When the U.S. cooked up the Tonkin Gulf incident, Khrushchev tried to cover it up under the banner of peaceful co-existence.

6) He supported Tito, attempting to reverse the 1960 condemnation of the "clique of the renegade Tito."

7) He did everything he could to inure and undermine Albania.

8) He spread innumerable rumors and slanders about the Chinese Communist Party and Mao Tse-tung.

9) He took as his models the Common Market and the capitalist bloc, reducing the industries of the "brother Communist countries" to "mere subsidiaries."

10) He used the congresses of his and other parties to launch sweeping attacks against parties that remained faithful to Marxism-Leninism.

11) He played the role of a patriarch, deciding to convolve an
illegal meeting of the international Communist parties to split the movement.

12) He followed a series of revisionist policies leading toward capitalism; his blind direction of Soviet agriculture and industry provoking chaos in the national economy and causing great difficulties for the Soviet people.

Not Pro-Maoists

There is no doubt that the Western experts are correct in concluding that the publication of these charges runs directly counter to the explanations offered by Brezhnev-Kosygin for the ouster of Khrushchev. They are also correct in concluding that Mao regards Brezhnev-Kosygin as Khrushchevists and not Maoists. One point at least would thus seem to be settled — the superficial speculation that Khrushchev was ousted by a pro-Peking grouping has proved to be dead wrong.

Noteworthy in this respect is the fact that the editorial lists "de-Stalinization" as No. 1 in the crimes of Khrushchev. In the peculiar language of the Sino-Soviet conflict, "de-Stalinization" and "Khrushchevism" are synonymous, and praise of Stalin — from Peking's viewpoint — is only next to praise of Mao himself.

Careful examination of the charges in the editorial indicates that the authors have other people in mind besides Brezhnev-Kosygin. The editorial is designed to reassure those who have rallied to Peking's banners. The firmness of tone tells them that Chou En-lai's negotiations do not mean a "sell-out" is contemplated, whatever agreement or partial agreement Peking may eventually gain. The inclusion of the point about Albania is significant in this respect. The references to Cuba and to the "brother Communist countries" are to be taken in the same light. All those inclined to back Peking, or to assert independent views, are assured that Peking will not make any deal at their expense. This heartening news, of course, helps maintain the pressure, a prime requisite if hard bargaining is contemplated.

If this is what is aimed at, then the warning itself seems more proportionate. Instead of the "beginning of Chinese political warfare against the new Soviet leadership," it can be read as a firm notice to Khrushchev's heirs that unlike Khrushchev they must recognize the growing weight and standing of the People's Republic of China. If Brezhnev and Kosygin imagined that Peking can be fobbed off with little more than a scapegoat, even one as plump as Khrushchev, they can dispense with Mao's scalp. He also wants something more substantial. Peking requires, and feels entitled to, big economic aid from the USSR and on much more favorable terms than were granted in the past. Otherwise — —
What the Chinese leaders have done is to present Brezhnev-Kosygin with the same dilemma faced by Khrushchev. They have added a request for an early reply. Khrushchev's heirs have thus found the breathing space they sought through the ouster of their patron and collaborator rather short, at least insofar as the Sino-Soviet conflict is concerned. Mao has nothing to gain by waiting. He is forcing the new team in the Kremlin to face up immediately to the dilemma which they won by taking over.

**Kremlin's Dilemma**

The problem is how to appease both Peking and Washington with the relatively limited resources at the disposal of the Soviet bureaucracy. To provide China with aid on the scale demanded (and required) would — in the absence of cutting down the overhead cost of bureaucratic parasitism — mean immense sacrifices by the Soviet people, sacrifices on the scale of the Stalin era. This is what Mao appears to be insisting on with his emphasis on the "glories" of Stalin's time and the "contributions" of the late paranoid dictator.

But if Brezhnev-Kosygin decide they cannot meet Mao's price, then they are threatened with continuation of the attack in the area where they, like Khrushchev, are most vulnerable—ideology, where they have clearly revised Marxism. To outflank Peking in this field requires carrying "de-Stalinization" to its final conclusion, the revival of genuine Leninism. This would signify the rehabilitation of Trotsky, the establishment of proletarian democracy and the resumption of the world-wide revolutionary program that guided Soviet foreign policy in the time of Lenin. The bureaucratic caste cannot do this without destroying itself, something few of its members are willing to contemplate.

Moreover, it would mean a worsening of relations with imperialist America. But immense pressure from this quarter bears down on the Soviet Union. Due to their social base and social ties, the characteristic response of the Soviet bureaucrats to imperialist pressure — and they were trained in this personally by Stalin — is not to mount a counter-offensive but to bend and to concede, if bending and conceding is at all possible.

Thus the Peking editorial, even if it is not a signal of renewed political war but simply a signal that Brezhnev-Kosygin are in for hard bargaining, can cause perturbation in the Kremlin. If it is followed up before they have succeeded in consolidating their victory over Khrushchev, a new crisis in the top circles of the Soviet bureaucracy and further convulsions in the international Communist movement can be expected.

**Where White House Comes In**

However, there is still another element that should not be lost sight of. American imperialism is very much involved in this situation. Not so strangely, expressions of regret over the downfall of Khrushchev were to be found in the American press. Was the shoe-wielding premier the worst figure, after all, to have as ruler of the USSR; that is, from Wall Street's viewpoint? If he was not the worst, could it be said that everything possible was done to give him a hand in his difficulties?

What we are referring to here is a commonplace in international politics. Khrushchev showed his awareness of it by discreetly indicating that as between Johnson and Goldwater he preferred the former in the White House. With Stalin, this was standard procedure, constituting in his politics a substitute for revolutionary program. America's rulers have not
displayed comparable dexterity on their side since the days of Roosevelt, who even went so far as to help whitewash Stalin in the infamous Moscow frame-up trials. (He inspired the notorious Hollywood film Mission to Moscow.)

Johnson's Policy

Now that Johnson has been settled in the White House with the biggest majority vote in modern times, he faces the problem of whether to continue in the brinkmanship style of Truman and Dulles or whether, in the tradition of Roosevelt, to attempt a policy of greater sophistication.

By embarrassing Khrushchev’s followers, the editorial in Red Flag gives the State Department and the White House a vigorous shake. What shall the policy of the “Great Society” be in relation to Moscow and Peking? Mere gloating over the discomfiture of Brezhnev and Kosygin? Or shall active measures be undertaken to shore them up as a “lesser evil?”

To operate really effectively in this situation, however, a seemingly very contradictory move is required; namely, U.S. recognition of the People’s Republic of China. Only through contact with both sides can Washington hope to mount a policy of playing them against each other; i.e., favoring now one, now the other, with the aim of weakening both in the process. In the immediate situation, Johnson could relieve the pressure on Brezhnev-Kosygin by himself granting concessions to Peking and dangling the bait of bigger possibilities.

But is Johnson fundamentally strong enough to get away with an abrupt change of this type in U.S. foreign policy despite its being demanded for some time by significant sectors of leading bourgeois circles? Can he follow in the path blazed by de Gaulle? And in the long run will such a policy actually succeed?

True, from the viewpoint of American imperialism, certain aspects of Mao’s propaganda are intriguing. Particularly noticeable are his expressions of admiration for Stalin, his praise of Stalin’s policy of building “socialism in one country,” his repeated assurances of the correctness of Stalin’s war on Trotskyism, the program and movement pre-eminently identified with active development of world revolution. Imperialism can appreciate a genuine Stalinist. American, British, French and German imperialism all found it possible to do profitable business with the original himself. And what other language can Mao resort to in talking across the walls of “fortress America” to the political translators in the State Department?

Bargaining Purposes?

But America’s knowledgeable figures in this field must ask themselves whether it is really Mao’s game to seek a base in the revolutionary struggles of today for bargaining purposes as Stalin did. If not a “mere agrarian reformer,” as he was once pictured to be, is Mao after all a mere Stalinist? And if so, can Mao really be depended upon to deliver the way Stalin did? Is it possible in the world of today for Mao, with the most honorable of intentions, to get away with betraying revolutions the way Stalin did? Hasn’t the element of independent leadership, as exemplified by the Cubans, become so strong that recognition of China would simply strengthen that tendency, not only in the long run but in the immediate future?

Khrushchev’s heirs consequently are not alone in facing a dilemma over China. Kennedy’s heir has also been handed a hot potato. What will he do with it?
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