

it will end. There are so many conflicting forces at work. As for the Russians, it seems to me that they are not yet even thinking about where it will end. Movement is all; and in a country where there has been no movement to speak of for two or three decades, this is understandable. Certainly the Russians are not going to transform themselves into a Parliamentary democracy. No less certainly the famous Leninist revival is for the time being concerned far more with providing the current leadership with a moral authority beyond and above itself—which otherwise it totally lacks—than with any new revolutionary zeal.

*Edward Crankshaw*

## BENEATH THE PARTY LINE

COMMUNIST attacks on Stalin's reputation began immediately after his death and have recently increased notably in intensity. They have been accompanied by some degree of concession to the Soviet peoples. Those who infer "profound and wide-reaching shifts in social and political life in Russia" opening up "long-range perspectives" of a "more peaceful, more liberal Russia" should read, or re-read, the six Conclusions of the Party's basic orientation course in Communism. True, the *Short Course in the History of the CPSU* is due for revision. It has stood unchanged for seventeen years, but the philosophy of each of its chief Conclusions is older than the Revolution.

The revision that has been promised can be expected to diminish Stalin's rôle, well known to have been exaggerated, and, particularly if it comes soon, to emphasise collective leadership as opposed to the cult of the individual. After all, the latter is not in accordance with the doctrines of historical materialism, and so violates one aspect of Communist theory. There is no reason to hope, however, that the six chief Conclusions which are drawn from the historical path traversed by the Bolshevik Party will be

altered, for there is not the slightest indication that Stalin as a theoretician is held to have sinned against any of the six. In fact, our limited knowledge of what has really happened seems to uphold Stalin in his contributions to Party theory and doctrine.

The third Conclusion states the historical necessity of the one-party system, and the fourth says that the Party, which in Russia therefore is Government and the State, cannot function without the internal purge. Although we do not have the full text of Khrushchev's long speech of sensational condemnation, such evidence as we have does not condemn the Party purge as an institution, but rather the manner in which Stalin went about it and the judgment exercised in some cases. There is no reason to believe that the Party will abandon a feature which has contributed so much towards its monolithic character and its discipline. Lenin has thoroughly taught the Bolsheviks not to tolerate dissidents within their ranks. He has also taught them intolerance towards non-Bolshevik political activity. There is no room for political power outside the Party, and in Russia all power and influence have political overtones.

The second Conclusion is that the Party cannot orient itself, cannot understand what is happening, or plan the course of Government and State without the continual guidance of the "science" of Marxism-Leninism, which is defined as not a dogma, but a continually developing and self-perfecting guide to action. This, in so many words, was Lenin's guiding star.

The outbursts against Stalin are in strict accord with the fifth Conclusion, which states that the Party should never become self-satisfied, but should learn by its mistakes through the processes of criticism and self-criticism. The sixth Conclusion is that the Party should always remain in close and sympathetic contact with the masses. Here the extremity of some of Stalin's methods may be held to have been at fault, but not his political aims, and it is not likely that any revision of the basic text will omit his vivid comparison of the Party's strength with that

of Antæus, which was maintained only by contact with the earth that gave him birth. To deny the desirability of this would be like repudiating mother.

SO FAR, all of these Conclusions are guides to action for maintaining the strength and power of the Party. The remaining Conclusion, which is presented as essential to the Party's well-being, is the one that most vitally concerns the West. It is well worth memorising:

*The history of the Party teaches us, first of all, that the victory of the proletarian revolution, the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, is impossible without a revolutionary party of the proletariat, a party free from opportunism, irreconcilable towards compromisers and capitulators, and revolutionary in its attitude towards the bourgeoisie and its state powers.*

Here, in the Communist-led, over-simplified class struggle, is the real source of the difficulties between East and West. It is made clear elsewhere that revolution does not mean evolution but means just what it says, and opportunists, compromisers, and capitulators are those who believe in anything other than temporary, tactical adjustments with us, who are, in one form or another, the bourgeoisie, and with our state power, which is necessary to our freedoms and our way of life.

In comparison with the force of this orientation, the extent to which others than Stalin are responsible for what is now laid at his door, the questions of whether or not there is a hidden struggle for power in the Party or concessions to the Soviet peoples and a lessening of internal oppression are almost beside the point in their effect on the West, except for human sympathy for the long-suffering subjects of Communist rule—the tolling of John Donne's bell—and in so far as the result is a weakening or strengthening of the Party (which is the State) that maintains such an orientation.

These six Conclusions are not Stalinist

divergences, but are good Marxist-Leninist theory. They are not the Party line, but the very essence of Communism and the sources from which the Party line, with all its opportunist shifts and turns, is drawn. From the Party's viewpoint they make sense, and they have put it and the Soviet Union where it is today. It is not likely that it will, in its own eyes, commit suicide by voluntarily relinquishing them, nor can it well do so and still remain Communist. Nor would relinquishment be as easy as changes in the Party line, for except for those items which affect only the Party itself, there is so deep a commitment by massive indoctrination of the Soviet peoples for so long, that the corresponding rewriting of history and of Marxism-Leninism would strain the ingenuity of even those who are so experienced in that dubious art. This commitment goes beyond the subtleties of doctrine, and may be said to involve the very heart of Communism.

It is obvious that we are co-existing with the Soviet Union when we are not engaged in a hot war with it. Neither side prefers a military solution. Although in my opinion the Party fears war even more than does the West, it would be the gravest folly for us to make a victorious war easy for our self-proclaimed enemies. It follows that the co-existence which seems to face us as long as the Communist Party remains Communist is far from a condition of peace. We can expect nothing other than that they, who say plainly that they are irreconcilable, will, with varying tempo, pursue their dynamic revolutionary attitude towards us and our state power wherever and whenever we are weak or let down our guard. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that the current tempo is a sign that the Communist world is first of all trying to consolidate and build up its strength, at home as well as in the neutral or so-called colonial world, and secondly, making cautious but persistent efforts to lead us to substitute trust in an enemy for strength and steadfastness.

When the chief Conclusions of the Party history are revised in such a way as to recognise clearly the bourgeois Western "capital-

ist" or "imperialist" world as other than an enemy, and when such a revision is used for indoctrination as widely and as intensively as the present version, the Western countries will have won the cold war. Khrushchev himself is authority for the fact that the Communist Party considers that that will be when shrimps have learned to whistle.

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### GRASPING THE INITIATIVE

SINCE my knowledge of Russian Communism is limited to book-reading and I have never even visited the Soviet Union, it would be silly for me to pontificate about events since the death of Stalin, and even sillier to predict what is going to happen in Russia as the result of the Twentieth Congress. But there is one question to which it is the duty of British Socialists to find an answer. What should be the attitude of the Western Labour Movements to the new men in the Kremlin and the peace initiative they have launched with such spectacular success?

Some of my colleagues are suggesting that it is too early to formulate a new policy. If their advice is taken, we shall once again remain inactive and irresolute until the moment for decision has passed. Those who advise us to wait developments in Russia are not, as they imagine, postponing a decision, but making a bad decision. They are deciding to adopt the kind of neutral, wait-and-see policy which has so often in the past left the initiative to the Russians.

The one clear, indisputable fact about the year 1956 is that it provides the opportunity for new initiatives to those who will seize them. For ten years we have been waging political trench-warfare, in which the chances of manœuvre by either side were strictly limited. Now, as the result of the nuclear stalemate and the death of Stalin, the cold-war battlefield has been transformed into a field of diplomatic manœuvre. Here victory will go to those who decide their policies

without waiting to see what the other side will do.

A Western initiative, however, must be based on *some* assumptions about the Communist bloc. Here are the assumptions I believe that Socialists should make. (1) If nuclear war is successfully avoided for the next twenty-five years, the balance of power will continue to shift—as it has been shifting since 1945—towards the Soviet Union and the Chinese People's Republic. (2) Nothing except general war could preserve to the North Atlantic nations the virtual monopoly of power they have enjoyed since the Industrial Revolution—and have wasted on internecine wars. Now that, for reasons of self-preservation, general war has been excluded from Western policy, we must recognise that we shall never again be able to "negotiate from strength," i.e. to achieve our political ends by the diplomatic use of military superiority. (3) Because the new men in the Kremlin are aware of this shift of the balance of power and rightly credit it to Communist technological achievement, they are much more confident than the old Bolsheviks ever were that the future belongs to Communism. (4) Stalinism, by the brutality of its external policies and the insanity of its internal purges, weakened the Communist challenge. By forcing the world into competitive rearmament, it made the task of "containing" Communism relatively simple. Any liberalisation, therefore, which takes place inside the Communist states will increase both their internal strength and their chances of success if the cold war is resumed.

These assumptions will seem gloomy to anyone who believes that world peace can only be achieved by "defeating" or by "containing" Communism. I have never understood how a Socialist with any historical perspective can believe either. Communism, which began as a heresy inside the Labour Movements of the highly industrialised North Atlantic nations, has achieved power among the backward, non-European peoples and provided their small, educated élites with a ruthless method of telescoping into a generation the industrial development which