

KHRUSHCHEV AND STALIN

A year ago today there took place one of the most dramatic political events of our time. In Moscow, behind locked doors which barred even the most eminent non-Communists, Nikita S. Khrushchev exposed some of Stalin's crimes before the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist party. While Stalin lived, Khrushchev and his colleagues had endlessly extolled Stalin as the greatest genius of all times and all lands, as the wisest and kindest of men. But in the speech he delivered a year ago Khrushchev painted a picture of Stalin the monster, the egomaniacal and cowardly paranoid who almost destroyed his country while inflicting death and injustice on a mass scale comparable only with Hitler's crimes.

In his speech Khrushchev warned against making his revelations public. To this day his speech is still not freely available to Soviet citizens. Time has proved Khrushchev right in his forebodings about the political dynamite he had set off. The attempted revolution in Tiflis, Georgia, last March, the Poznan demonstrations last June, the October revolutions in Poland and Hungary, the weakening of the Communist movement throughout the free world this past year, all these are attributable directly to that speech and its consequences.

The events of the last few months have proved that it was the Soviet system, not Stalin alone, that Khrushchev really indicted. The bloody Soviet crushing of the Hungarian revolution was pure Stalinism, the result of factors similar to those which induced Stalin to carry out the great purges. These last few weeks Khrushchev himself has in effect been revising Soviet history again, rehabilitating Stalin and praising him as a great Communist and a great military leader. Such retreats were inevitable because Khrushchev has never meant to end the Soviet dictatorship or to end Soviet dominance over Eastern Europe. But the shape of the Communist world as it existed before Khrushchev's speech cannot be restored.

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