

What Was Done to Check Stalin?

By WILLIAM Z. FOSTER

WORKERS EVERYWHERE agree that Stalin's cult of one-man leadership was a harmful development; but in this general connection they ask insistently for an answer to one key question. They want to know what the present leadership, for the most part, who worked side-by-side with Stalin for many years, did to prevent the growth of Stalin's cult of the personality or to combat it as it manifested itself in the Party practice.



The workers, of course, have every right to information on this matter. As for the bourgeoisie and its corps of professional red-baiters and Soviet-haters, they utilize the situation to pour out a stream of slander and accusation against the new leaders, attacking them in the same violent tone that they do Stalin. They cunningly understand the need for them, if they can, to discredit these leaders upon the basis of a distortion and misrepresentation of this entire matter.

So far, in the revaluation of Stalin that is now taking place, there has been little or nothing made public in answer to the above specific question. But we may rest assured that it will eventually get its full explanation. The men who have boldly and courageously gone ahead with the exposure of Stalin's weaknesses will not stop short. Meanwhile, Communists in other countries with such material as they have at hand, will undertake to give answers to this question, which is being asked by the workers. This is as it must be. But the most thoroughgoing answer must come from the present top leadership of the

CPSU, for they alone are in possession of the most decisive facts. This will surely be forthcoming in due time.

IN TRYING to arrive at a preliminary estimate of this whole matter, there are two basic facts to bear in mind—which are now quite obvious and which must be given elementary consideration. The first of these facts is that the present leaders are not only highly developed Marxist-Leninists, but they are also veterans of a thousand hard fights in the course of the epic Russian Revolution.

We can be sure, therefore, that they did what they considered the best under the circumstances. The second fact is that the situation presented by Stalin's cult of one-man leadership presented an extremely difficult problem; one requiring great courage and political adroitness on the part of those who may have seen or sensed real danger in Stalin's suppression of collective leadership. These are facts which should be noted carefully by those who are now so clamorous to know, "Where were you while Stalin was doing all this?"

LET US LOOK a little more closely at the problem presented by Stalin's departure from correct Leninist practices. Stalin was very powerful, with a vast and loyal support in the Party and among the broad masses of the people; he was also a resolute fighter, with an extensive experience in fighting against opposition movements.

Consequently any group of leaders who might have considered Stalin's course dangerous enough to require an open fight to change it would have had to take the above elementary facts very much into consideration.

An organized movement against Stalin would have had to confront the prospect of a split in the Party. And such a

split at any time during the past 25 years could have brought a fatal disaster to the Soviet Union, with the country struggling almost desperately to industrialize itself, to defeat various inner-Party oppositions, to beat back rising world fascism, to carry through World War II, and to resist the militant war drive of American imperialism during the years of the cold war.

THE PROMPTNESS with which the new leaders of the CPSU raised the question of Stalin's cult of the personality—which they did in an editorial in Pravda only three months after Stalin's death—indicated that these leaders had been aware much earlier of the danger in Stalin's course. To what extent, if any, they allowed the above-indicated possibility of a disastrous Party split to enter their calculations remains to be seen—only they can state authoritatively. But obviously it was inherent in the circumstances.

In this situation the most important thing to be noted is the strength of the new collective leadership which the bourgeoisie and its lickspittles are seeking so hard to discredit. Since Stalin's death, the Soviet Union, without even a hesitation, has scored repeated victories, not only in the increased pace of industrialization, but also in combating the war danger and in helping to bring the world safely into a period of the peaceful co-existence of all states regardless of their international regimes.

Those reactionaries who have been hoping that the "USSR was coming to real trouble over the Stalin affair are due for a rude awakening. Chatter about a "new revolution in Russia" is journalistic rubbish. In reality, the Soviet Union following Gennya is now entering into a new period of advance on all fronts, economic, political and cultural