

Soviet Article Outlines Proposals for New History of Party

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AN ARTICLE of fundamental importance for the study of the history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has been published in the authoritative journal "Voprosy Istorii" (Questions of History.)

"The cult of the individual was particularly strongly manifested in literature on Party history in the last 20 years," the article says. Beginning with the early 'thirties the importance of Stalin's practical and theoretical work—great as it was—was exaggerated in every way. Many writers explained away all the Soviet Union's achievements as being due to the particular merits of one man. Each word he said was proclaimed a scientific discovery, an incontestable truth. The cult of Stalin led to outright distortion of historical truth."

Noting that for 17 years the "Short Course" was the foundation of all propaganda in Party history, the article goes on to state that the final chapters of this book clearly belittle the role of the Party and of the people and picture the road

traversed by the Party after the establishment of Soviet power as a "walk-over."

"The task facing Soviet historians is to stamp out vestiges of the cult of the individual in their teaching and scientific work, truthfully depict events, and re-establish and creatively develop Leninist concepts and evaluations."

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INSTEAD of characterising Menshivism an anti-Marxist trend inside the labour movement, some historians picture the Mensheviks as abettors of tsarist autocracy. They do not take into consideration the fact that though the most consistent, the Bolsheviks were not the only force in the camp of revolutionary democracy. "A correct understanding of Bolshevik tactics is of great importance for an elaboration of the present-day tactics of the Communist and Workers' Parties abroad and for overcoming the elements of sectarianism within them."

Works on 1917 show but weakly V. I. Lenin's role as the inspirer and organiser of the socialist revolution.

The "Short Course," the "His-

tory of the Civil War in the USSR" and other publications push into the foreground the figure of Stalin, minimize or keep silent about the activities of many eminent Party workers and heroes of October, and reveal but weakly the importance of the work of the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee as the direct organiser of the uprising.

The article says that "historians are summoned to restore the truth and show the leading role of the Communist Party and its Central Committee, the heroism of the broad masses of working people in the fight against the interventionists and white-guards and the services rendered by outstanding Red Army commanders and political workers (and not only by Stalin alone)."

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THE WORKS of Soviet historians weakly reflect the heroic struggle waged by the Party and the working masses to build a socialist society, says the article. The struggle for the triumph of socialism is depicted as an ostentatious triumphal march from victory to victory.

The article calls on historians to give a truthful account of the history of the war and not to cover up the mistakes, hardships and defeats of the Soviet armies in 1941-42. To ascribe the reasons for victory exclusively to Stalin's leadership is to make a grave mistake. "Actually, the victory was won by the Party and the whole people, by the glorious Soviet Army led by talented soldiers, raised by the Party and the people."

While historians should reflect truthfully the work done by the Party after the war in rehabilitating the country's economy, note should be made of the "gross blunders revealed by the CC of the CPSU in the guidance of the Party and the country after the war (the flourishing of the cult of the individual, the violation of inner Party and Soviet democracy and socialist law, the departures in the implementations of the Leninist national policy, the backlog in the technological development of a number of industries, the state of neglect in agriculture, etc.)."

THE ARTICLE asserts that CPSU history cannot be studied without a thorough examination

of Party documents. An authentically scientific investigation of Party history is unthinkable without a profound study of archival material. Many important materials have in the past been withheld from investigators. "At the present time, favourable conditions are being created for delving into archives, and historians should take full advantages of these conditions."

"We believe it our duty" conclude the editors of "Voprosy Istorii" "to analyse the errors and defects in available works on Party history, and launch serious businesslike, honest criticism and self-criticism, which would be conducive to a correct evaluation of the past . . . Soviet historians are reshaping their work in the light of the historic Decisions of the XX CPSU Congress. This does not imply a dash from one extreme to another; eradication of the cult of the individual does not consist of deleting quotations and erasing names. The point is to obtain a truthful Marxist exposition of the historical process and the part played by separate individuals."