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Phone :  
FREMANTLE  
8421/2

Telegrams :  
SOVNEWS SOUTHKENS  
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Cablegrams :  
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3 ROSARY GARDENS,  
LONDON, S.W.7

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## Why the Cult of the Individual is Alien to the Spirit of Marxism-Leninism

Editorial article from 'Pravda'

THE 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, which drew up a majestic programme for the further advance of our country towards communism, gave a penetrating Marxist-Leninist analysis of the decisive role in socialist construction of the masses of the people led by the party, and of the harm of the cult of the individual. The congress resolutely condemned the cult of the individual as being alien to the spirit of Marxism-Leninism. The resolution of the 20th Party Congress on the report of the central committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union says:

"Thorough explanation of the Marxist-Leninist conception of the role of the individual in history was of great importance for increasing the activity of party members and the working people generally. The congress considers that the central committee was absolutely right in combating the cult of the individual, which tended to disparage the role of the party and the masses, to belittle the role of collective leadership in the party, and not infrequently resulted in grave errors in its activities. The congress instructs the central committee not to relax the struggle against the survivals of the cult of the individual, and in all its activities to proceed from the conception that the real makers of the new life are the masses of the people, led by the Communist Party."

This decision of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has met with the unanimous approval of the entire party, of all the Soviet people.

Why has our party launched a vigorous struggle against the cult of the individual and its consequences? It is because the cult of the individual signifies an inordinate exaltation of individuals, attributing to them supernatural features and qualities, making them almost miracle workers, and worshipping them. Such incorrect conceptions of man, which are alien to the spirit of Marxism-Leninism, and precisely concerning J. V. Stalin, emerged and were cultivated here over many years.

It is irrefutable that J. V. Stalin performed great services to our party, the working class and to the international labour movement. Universally known is his role in the preparation for and the making of the socialist revolution, in the Civil War, in the struggle to build socialism. Holding the important post of general secretary of the central committee of the party, J. V. Stalin emerged among the leaders of the party and the Soviet government. He fought actively, especially in the first years after Lenin's death, together with the other members of the central committee, for Leninism, against the people who distorted Lenin's teaching and against its enemies. Stalin was one of the strongest Marxists, his works, his logic and will exerted a great influence on the cadres, in the work of the party.

Guided by the teaching of the great Lenin, the party, headed by the central committee, launched great activities for the industrialisation of the country, the collectivisation of agriculture and a cultural revolution, and gained historic victories which are known to all. These victories were gained by the party in irreconcilable ideological struggle against different political trends hostile to Leninism—the Trotskyites, Zinovievites, right-wing opportunists, bourgeois-nationalists, all those who tried to divert the party from the only correct Leninist path. At that time Stalin earned popularity in the party, its sympathy and support, and became known to the people. However, those features and qualities in Stalin's practice of leadership which

later developed into the cult of the individual, gradually began to come to the fore. The cult of the individual arose and developed against the background of the majestic, historic achievements of Marxism-Leninism, the enormous successes of the Soviet people and the Communist Party in building socialism, the victorious conclusion of the Patriotic War, the further strengthening of our social and political system and the growth of its international prestige. These gigantic successes in building a new society, achieved by the Soviet people under the leadership of the Communist Party on the basis of the historical laws discovered by Marxism-Leninism, did not receive the necessary correct Marxist-Leninist interpretation and were incorrectly attributed to the merits of one man—Stalin—and explained by some special merits as a leader inherent in him. Not possessing personal modesty, far from cutting short those exaltations and praises addressed to him, he supported and encouraged them in every way. As time went on this cult of the individual assumed ever more monstrous forms and seriously prejudiced the cause.

It stands to reason that such a practice on the part of J. V. Stalin meant the violation of the Leninist principles of leadership and was contrary to the spirit of Marxism-Leninism.

Any manifestation of the cult of the individual was deeply alien and repugnant to Marx, Engels, and Lenin, the founders of Marxism-Leninism: they nipped in the bud each and every attempt at their personal exaltation, no matter whence these efforts emanated. Todayism, Marx said, made his gorge rise most of all.

Marx and Engels scathingly criticised and ridiculed ambition and the conceited bragging of certain politicians. Thus, they bitterly derided the petty-bourgeois traits of Lassalle, that "self-lauding braggadocio," and his desire "to imagine himself incredibly important," and strongly opposed the intention of the Lassallists to establish a "flattering cult of Lassalle."

In a letter to Wilhelm Blos, a German political leader, Marx wrote: "... owing to my aversion to any cult of the individual during the existence of the International, I never allowed the publication of the numerous messages recognising my services pestered me from different countries. I never even answered them, indeed, if only to hide their authors for them now and again. Engels and my own initiation into the secret society of communists was made pursuant to the condition that everything contributing to the superstitious genuflection before authorities would be crossed out from the charter (Lassalle subsequently did exactly the reverse)." (*Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Works, First Russian Ed., Vol. 24, pp. 487-488*).

Engels, in reply to a proposal to arrange on his 71st birthday a musical celebration in his honour, replied to the sponsors: "Both Marx and I have always opposed any public manifestations with regard to individuals, the only exception being in those cases which had an important purpose; and most strongly we have opposed such manifestations which during our lifetime referred to us personally." (*Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Works, Russian Ed., Vol. 28, pp. 385*).

V. I. Lenin's speech which he made at a meeting arranged by the Moscow party committee on the occasion of his 50th birthday is well known. In this speech Vladimir Ilyich requested that he be delivered from listening to jubilee speeches, "to deliver us in the future generally from such jubilee celebrations." Lenin spoke of the stupid, disgraceful and ridiculous position of any conceited person, and warned lest the splendid victories