

## The ‘Cult of the Individual’

On 14 February 1956 Nikita Khrushchev,<sup>1</sup> then First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, publicly, but obliquely, attacked Stalin at the 20th Congress of the Party:

“It is of paramount importance to re-establish and to strengthen in every way the Leninist principle of collective leadership....

“The Central Committee... vigorously condemns the cult of the individual as being alien to the spirit of Marxism-Leninism.” (N. S. Khrushchev: *Report to the Central Committee, 20th Congress of the CPSU*, February 1956; London; 1956; p. 80-81.)

In his ‘secret speech’ to the same Congress on 25 February (leaked to the US State Department but not published within the Soviet Union) Khrushchev attacked Stalin more directly, asserting that

“... the cult of the individual acquired such monstrous size chiefly because Stalin himself, using all conceivable methods, supported the glorification of his own person.” (Russian Institute, Columbia University (Ed.): *The Anti-Stalin Campaign and International Communism*; New York; 1956; p. 69.)

Yet many witnesses testify to Stalin’s simplicity and modesty.

The French writer Henri Barbusse<sup>2</sup> describes the simplicity of Stalin’s life-style:

“One goes up to the first floor, where white curtains hang over three of the windows. These three windows are Stalin’s home. In the tiny hall a long military cloak hangs on a peg beneath a cap. In addition to this hall there are three bedrooms and a dining-room. The bedrooms are as simply furnished as those of a respectable, second-class hotel.... The eldest son, Jasheka, sleeps at night in the dining room, on a divan which is converted into a bed; the younger sleeps in a tiny recess, a sort of alcove opening out of it....

“Each month he earns the five hundred roubles which constitute the meagre maximum salary of the officials of the Communist Party

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<sup>1</sup> Nikita Khrushchev, Soviet revisionist politician (1894-1971); First Secretary of Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1953-64); Premier (1958-64).

<sup>2</sup> Henri Barbusse, French writer (1873-1935).

(amounting to between £20 and £25 in English money)....

“This frank and brilliant man is... a simple man.... He does not employ thirty-two secretaries, like Mr. Lloyd George; he has only one....

“Stalin systematically gives credit for all progress made to Lenin, whereas the credit has been in very large measure his own.” (H. Barbusse: *Stalin: A New World Seen through One Man*; London; 1935; p. vii, viii, 291, 294.)

True, Stalin has the use of a *dacha*, or country cottage, but here too his life was equally simple, as his daughter Svetlana<sup>3</sup> relates:

“It was the same with the *dacha* at Kuntsevo....

“My father lived on the ground floor. He lived in one room and made it do for everything. He slept on the sofa, made up at night as a bed.” (S. Alliluyeva: *Letters to a Friend*; London; 1967; p. 28.)

The Albanian leader Enver Hoxha<sup>4</sup> describes Stalin as ‘modest’ and ‘considerate’:

“Stalin was no tyrant, no despot. He was a man of principle; he was just, modest and very kindly and considerate towards people, the cadres and his colleagues.” (E. Hoxha: *With Stalin: Memoirs*; Tirana; 1979; p. 14-15.)

The British Fabians Sidney<sup>5</sup> and Beatrice Webb,<sup>6</sup> in their monumental work *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation*, emphatically reject the notion that Stalin exercised dictatorial power:

“Sometimes it is asserted that... the whole state is governed by the will of a single person, Josef Stalin.

“First let it be noted that, unlike Mussolini, Hitler and other modern dictators, Stalin is not invested by law with any authority over his fellow-citizens. He has not even the extensive power which... the American Constitution entrusts for four years to every successive president.... Stalin is not, and never has been... the Presi-

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<sup>3</sup> Svetlana Alliluyeva, Stalin’s daughter (1926- ).

<sup>4</sup> Enver Hoxha, Albanian Marxist-Leninist politician (1908-85); leader of the Communist Party of Albania (later the Party of Labour of Albania) (1941-85); Prime Minister (1944-54); Minister of Foreign Affairs (1946-54).

<sup>5</sup> Sidney Webb, British economist (1859-1947).

<sup>6</sup> Beatrice Webb, British economist and sociologist (1858-1943).

dent of the USSR.... He is not even a People's Commissar, or member of the Cabinet.... He is... the General Secretary of the Party....

“We do not think that the Party is governed by the will of a single person, or that Stalin is the sort of person to claim or desire such a position. He has himself very explicitly denied any such personal dictatorship in terms which... certainly accord with our own impression of the facts.

“The Communist Party in the USSR has adopted for its own organisation the pattern which we have described.... In this pattern individual dictatorship has no place. Personal decisions are distrusted, and elaborately guarded against. In order to avoid the mistakes due to bias, anger, jealousy, vanity and other distempers... it is desirable that the individual will should always be controlled by the necessity of gaining the assent of colleagues of equal grade, who have candidly discussed the matter and who have to make themselves jointly responsible for the decision....

“Stalin... has... frequently pointed out that he does no more than carry out the decisions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party....

“The plain truth is that, surveying the administration of the USSR during the past decade under the alleged dictatorship of Stalin, the principal decisions have manifested neither the promptitude nor the timeliness, nor yet the fearless obstinacy that have often been claimed as the merits of a dictatorship. On the contrary, the action of the Party has frequently been taken after consideration so prolonged, and as the outcome of discussion sometimes so heated and embittered, as to bear upon their formulation the marks of hesitancy and lack of assurance.... These policies have borne... the stigmata of committee control.” (S. & B. Webb: *Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation*; London; 1935; p. 431, 432, 433, 435.)

Perhaps Barbusse, Hoxha and the Webbs may be considered biased witnesses. Yet observers who are highly critical of Stalin agree with the testimony of the former.

The American diplomat Joseph Davies<sup>7</sup> remarks on Stalin's simple, kindly manner:

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<sup>7</sup> Joseph Davies, American lawyer and diplomat (1876-1958); Chairman (1915-16) and Vice-Chairman (1916-18) of Federal Trade Commission; Ambassador to Moscow (1936-38), to Belgium (1938-39).

“I was startled to see the door... open and Mr. Stalin come into the room alone.... His demeanour is kindly, his manner almost depreciatingly simple....

“He greeted me cordially with a smile and with great simplicity, but also with a real dignity.... His brown eye is exceedingly kindly and gentle. A child would like to sit in his lap and a dog would sidle up to him.” (J. E. Davies: *Mission to Moscow*; London; 1940; p. 222, 230.)

Issac Don Levine<sup>8</sup> writes in his hostile biography of Stalin:

“Stalin does not seek honours. He loathes pomp. He is averse to public displays. He could have all the nominal regalia in the chest of a great state. But he prefers the background.” (I. D. Levine: *Stalin: A Biography*; London; 1931; p. 248-49.)

Another hostile critic, Louis Fischer,<sup>9</sup> testifies to Stalin’s ‘capacity to listen’:

“Stalin... inspires the Party with his will-power and calm. Individuals in contact with him admire his capacity to listen and his skill in improving on the suggestions and drafts of highly intelligent subordinates.” (L. Fischer: Article in: *The Nation*, Volume 137 (9 August 1933); p. 154.)

Eugene Lyons,<sup>10</sup> in his biography entitled *Stalin: Czar of All the Russias*, describes Stalin’s simple way of life:

“Stalin lives in a modest apartment of three rooms.... In his everyday life his tastes remained simple almost to the point of crudeness.... Even those who hated him with a desperate hate and blamed him for sadistic cruelties never accused him of excesses in his private life....

“Those who measure ‘success’ by millions of dollars, yachts and mistresses find it hard to understand power relished in austerity....

“There was nothing remotely ogre-like in his looks or conduct, nothing theatrical in his manner. A pleasant, earnest, ageing man – evidently willing to be friendly to the first foreigner whom, he had admitted to his presence in years. ‘He’s a thoroughly likeable per-

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<sup>8</sup> Issac Don Levine, Russian-born American newspaper correspondent (1892-1981).

<sup>9</sup> Louis Fischer, American writer (1896-1970).

<sup>10</sup> Eugene Lyons, Russian-born American writer (1898-1985).

son', I remember thinking as we sat there, and thinking it in astonishment." (E. Lyons: *Stalin: Czar of All the Russias*; Philadelphia; 1940; p. 196, 200.)

Lyons asked Stalin "Are you a dictator?"

"Stalin smiled, implying that the question was on the preposterous side.

"'No', he said slowly, 'I am no dictator. Those who use the word do not understand the Soviet system of government and the methods of the Communist Party. No one man or group of men can dictate. Decisions are made by the Party and acted upon by its organs, the Central Committee and the Politburo.'" (E. Lyons: *ibid.*; p. 203.)

The Finnish revisionist Arvo Tuominen<sup>11</sup> – strongly hostile to Stalin, comments in his book *The Bells of the Kremlin* on Stalin's personal self-effacement:

"In his speeches and writings Stalin always withdrew into the background, speaking only of communism, the Soviet power and the Party, and stressing that he was really a representative of the idea and the organisation, nothing more....

"I never noticed any signs of vainglory in Stalin." (A. Tuominen: *The Bells of the Kremlin*; Hanover (New Hampshire, USA); 1983; p. 155, 163.)

and expresses surprise at the contrast between the real Stalin and the propaganda picture spread of him:

"During my many years in Moscow I never stopped marvelling at the contrast between the man and the colossal likenesses that had been made of him. That medium-sized, slightly pock-marked Caucasian with a moustache was as far removed as could be from that stereotype of a dictator. But at the same time the propaganda was proclaiming his superhuman abilities." (A. Tuominen: *ibid.*; p. 155.)

The Soviet marshal Georgy Zhukov<sup>12</sup> speaks of Stalin's 'lack of affectation':

"Free of affectation and mannerisms, he (Stalin – Ed.) won the heart of everyone he talked with." (G. K. Zhukov: *The Memoirs of Marshal Zhukov*; London; 1971; p. 283.)

<sup>11</sup> Arvo Tuominen, Finnish revisionist politician (1894-1981).

<sup>12</sup> Georgy Zhukov, Soviet military officer (1896-1974); Chief of Staff (1941); Marshal (1943); Minister of Defence (1955-57).

Stalin's daughter Svetlana Alliluyeva is gullible enough to accept almost every slander circulated about her father, but even she dismisses the charge that he himself engineered the 'cult' of his personality. She describes a train trip with Stalin from the Crimea to Moscow in 1948:

"As we pulled in at the various stations we'd go for a stroll along the platform. My father walked as far as the engine, giving greetings to the railway workers as he went. You couldn't see a single passenger. It was a special train and no one was allowed on the platform.... Who ever thought such a thing up? Who had contrived all these stratagems? Not he. It was the system of which he himself was a prisoner and in which he suffered from loneliness, emptiness and lack of human companionship....

"Nowadays when I read or hear somewhere that my father used to consider himself practically a god, it amazes me that people who knew him well can even say such a thing....

"He never thought of himself as a god." (S. Alliluyeva: *Letters to a Friend*; London; 1968; p. 202-03, 213.)

She describes the grief of the servants at the *dacha* when Stalin died:

"These men and women who were servants of my father loved him. In little things he wasn't hard to please. On the contrary, he was courteous, unassuming and direct with those who waited on him....

"Men, women, everyone, started crying all over again....

"No one was making a show of loyalty or grief. All of them had known one another for years....

"No one in this room looked on him as a god or a superman, a genius or a demon. They loved and respected him for the most ordinary human qualities, those qualities of which servants are the best judges of all." (S. Alliluyeva: *ibid.*; p. 20, 22.)

Furthermore, the facts show that **on numerous occasions Stalin himself denounced and ridiculed the 'cult of the individual' as contrary to Marxism-Leninism.** For example,

June 1926:

"I must say in all conscience, comrades, that I do not deserve a good half of the flattering things that have been said here about me. I am, it appears, a hero of the October Revolution, the leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the leader of the Communist International, a legendary warrior-knight and all the rest of it. This

is absurd, comrades, and quite unnecessary exaggeration. It is the sort of thing that is usually said at the graveside of a departed revolutionary. But I have no intention of dying yet....

“I really was, and still am, one of the pupils of the advanced workers of the Tiflis railway workshops.” (J. V. Stalin: *Works*, Volume 8; Moscow; 1954; p. 182.)

October 1927:

“And what is Stalin? Stalin is only a minor figure.” (J. V. Stalin: *Works*, Volume 10; Moscow; 1954; p. 177.)

December 1929:

“Your congratulations and greetings I place to the credit of the great Party of the working class which bore me and reared me in its own image and likeness. And just because I place them to the credit of our glorious Leninist Party, I make bold to tender you my Bolshevik thanks.” (J. V. Stalin: *Works*, Volume 12; Moscow; 1955; p. 146.)

April 1930:

“There are some who think that the article ‘Dizzy with Success’ was the result of Stalin’s personal initiative. That, of course, is nonsense. It is not in order that personal initiative in a matter like this be taken by anyone, whoever he might be, that we have a Central Committee.” (J. V. Stalin: *Works, ibid.*; p. 218.)

August 1930:

“You speak of your ‘devotion’ to me.... I would advise you to discard the ‘principle’ of devotion to persons. It is not the Bolshevik way. Be devoted to the working class, its Party, its state. That is a fine and useful thing. But do not confuse it with devotion to persons, this vain and useless bauble of weak-minded intellectuals.” (J. V. Stalin: *Works*, Volume 13; Moscow; 1955; p. 20.)

December 1931:

“As for myself, I am just a pupil of Lenin’s, and the aim of my life is to be a worthy pupil of his....

“Marxism does not deny at all the role played by outstanding individuals or that history is made by people. But... great people are worth anything at all only to the extent that they are able correctly to understand these conditions, to understand how to change them. If they fail to understand these conditions and want to alter them according to the promptings of their imagination, they will find themselves in the situation of Don Quixote....

“Individual persons cannot decide. Decisions of individuals are always, or nearly always, one-sided decisions.... In every collective body, there are people whose opinion must be reckoned with.... From the experience of three revolutions we know that out of every 100 decisions taken by individual persons without being tested and corrected collectively, approximately 90 are one-sided....

“Never under any circumstances would our workers now tolerate power in the hands of one person. With us personages of the greatest authority are reduced to nonentities, become mere ciphers, as soon as the masses of the workers lose confidence in them.” (J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 107-08, 109, 113.)

February 1933:

“I have received your letter ceding me your second Order as a reward for my work.

“I thank you very much for your warm words and comradely present. I know what you are depriving yourself of in my favour and appreciate your sentiments.

“Nevertheless, I cannot accept your second Order. I cannot and must not accept it, not only because it can only belong to you, as you alone have earned it, but also because I have been amply rewarded as it is by the attention and respect of comrades and, consequently, have no right to rob you.

“Orders were instituted not for those who are well known as it is, but mainly for heroic people who are little known and who need to be made known to all.

“Besides, I must tell you that I already have two Orders. That is more than one needs, I assure you.” (J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 241.)

May 1933:

“Robins: I consider it a great honour to have an opportunity of paying you a visit.

“Stalin: There is nothing particular in that. You are exaggerating.

“Robins: What is most interesting to me is that throughout Russia I have found the names Lenin-Stalin, Lenin-Stalin, Lenin-Stalin, linked together.

“Stalin: That, too, is an exaggeration. How can I be compared to Lenin?” (J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 267)

February 1938:

“I am absolutely against the publication of ‘Stories of the Childhood of Stalin’.



“The book abounds with a mass of inexactitudes of fact, of alterations, of exaggerations and of unmerited praise....

“But... the important thing resides in the fact that the book has a tendency to engrave on the minds of Soviet children (and people in general) the personality cult of leaders, of infallible heroes. This is dangerous and detrimental. The theory of ‘heroes’ and the ‘crowd’ is not a Bolshevik, but a Social-Revolutionary<sup>13</sup> theory....

“I suggest we burn this book.” (J. V. Stalin: *ibid.*; p. 327.)

**Thus, the ‘cult of the individual’ as built up around Stalin was contrary to Marxism-Leninism and its practice was contrary to the expressed wishes of Stalin.**

This raises an important question.

When I expressed at a previous meeting of the Stalin Society the view that the Marxist-Leninists were in a minority in the Soviet leadership from the late 1920s, there were loud murmurs of dissent from some members.

But we have seen that, **although Stalin expressed strong opposition to the ‘cult of personality’, the ‘cult of personality’ continued.**

It therefore follows irrefutably that

1) **either Stalin was unable to stop it,**  
 2) **or he did not want to stop it and so was a petty-minded, lying, non-Marxist-Leninist, hypocrite.**

### **The Initiators of the ‘Cult’**

But if the ‘cult of personality’ around Stalin was not built up by Stalin, but against his wishes, **by whom was it built up?**

The facts show that **the most fervent exponents of the ‘cult of personality’ around Stalin were revisionists and concealed revisionists** like Karl Radek,<sup>14</sup> Nikita Khrushchev and Anastas Mikoyan.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Anarchist.

<sup>14</sup> Karl Radek, Soviet revisionist politician (1885-1939); pleaded guilty at his public trial to terrorism and treason (1937); murdered in prison by fellow-prisoner (1939).

<sup>15</sup> Anastas Mikoyan, Soviet revisionist politician (1895-1978); Politburo member (1935-78); People’s Commissar for Trade (1926-31), for Supply (1931-34), for Food Industry (1934-38), for Foreign Trade (1938-49); Deputy Premier (1946-64); President (1964-65).

Roy Medvedev<sup>16</sup> points out that

“The first issue of ‘Pravda’ for 1934 carried a huge two-page article by Radek, heaping orgiastic praise on Stalin. The former Trotskyite, who had led the opposition to Stalin for many years, now called him ‘Lenin’s best pupil, the model of the Leninist Party, bone of its bone, blood of its blood’.... He ‘is as far-sighted as Lenin’, and so on and on. This seems to have been the first large article in the press specifically devoted to the adulation of Stalin, and it was quickly reissued as a pamphlet in 225,000 copies, an enormous figure for the time.” (R. A. Medvedev: *Let History Judge: The Origins and Consequences of Stalinism*; London; 1972; p. 148.)

At his public trial in January 1937 Radek admitted to terrorism and treason:

“Vyshinsky: What did Mrachovsky<sup>17</sup> reply?

“Radek: He replied quite definitely that the struggle had entered the terrorist phase....

“In April 1933 Mrachovsky asked me whether I would mention any Trotskyite in Leningrad who would undertake the organisation of a terrorist group there.

“Vyshinsky: Against whom?

“Radek: Against Kirov,<sup>18</sup> of course....

“Vyshinsky: In 1934-35 your position was that of organised, systematic perpetration of terrorist acts?

“Radek: Yes....

“We would inevitably have to bring the social structure of the USSR into line with the victorious fascist countries... – a pseudonym for the restoration of capitalism....

“It was clear to us that this meant fascism... serving foreign finance capital....

“It was planned to surrender the Ukraine to Germany and the Maritime province and the Amur region to Japan.” (*Report of Court*

<sup>16</sup> Roy Medvedev, Soviet revisionist historian (1925- ).

<sup>17</sup> Sergei Mrachovsky, Soviet Trotskyist politician (1883-1936); pleaded guilty to terrorism and treason at his public trial in August 1936 and was sentenced to death.

<sup>18</sup> Sergei Kirov, Soviet Marxist-Leninist politician (1886-1934); Secretary of CPSU in Azerbaijan (1921-26), in Leningrad (1926-34); Member of Politburo (1930-34); assassinated by terrorist (1934).

*Proceedings in the Case of the Anti-Soviet Trotskyite Centre*; Moscow; 1937; p. 88, 90, 103, 115.)

It was Khrushchev who introduced the term ‘vozhd’ (‘leader’, corresponding to the German word ‘Führer’). At the Moscow Party Conference in January 1932, Khrushchev finished his speech by saying:

“The Moscow Bolsheviks, rallied around the Leninist Central Committee as never before, and around the ‘vozhd’ of our Party, Comrade Stalin, are cheerfully and confidently marching toward new victories in the battles for socialism, for world proletarian revolution.” (*Rabochaya Moskva*, 26 January 1932, cited in: L. Pistrak: *The Grand Tactician: Khrushchev’s Rise to Power*; London; 1961; p. 159.)

At the 17th Party Conference in January 1934 it was Khrushchev, and Khrushchev alone, who called Stalin

“...‘vozhd’ of genius.” (*XVII S’ezd Vsesoiuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B.)*); p. 145, cited in: L. Pistrak: *ibid.*; p. 160.)

In August 1936, during the treason trial of Lev Kamenev<sup>19</sup> and Grigory Zinoviev,<sup>20</sup> Khrushchev, in his capacity as Moscow Party Secretary, said:

“Miserable pygmies! They lifted their hands against the greatest of all men,... our wise ‘vozhd’, Comrade Stalin!... Thou, Comrade Stalin, hast raised the great banner of Marxism-Leninism high over the entire world and carried it forward. We assure thee, Comrade Stalin, that the Moscow Bolshevik organisation – the faithful supporter of the Stalinist Central Committee – will increase Stalinist vigilance still more, will extirpate the Trotskyite-Zinovievite remnants, and close the ranks of the Party and non-Party Bolsheviks even more around the Stalinist Central Committee and the great Stalin.” (*Pravda*, 23 August 1936, cited in: L. Pistrak: *ibid.*; p. 162.)

At the Eighth All-Union Congress of Soviets in November 1936 it was again Khrushchev who proposed that the new Soviet

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<sup>19</sup> Lev Kamenev, Soviet Trotskyist politician (1883-1936); admitted to treason at his public trial (1936); sentenced to death and executed (1936).

<sup>20</sup> Grigory Zinoviev, Soviet Trotskyist politician (1883-1936); President of Communist International (1919-26); admitted to treason at his public trial (1936); sentenced to death and executed (1936).

Constitution, which was before the Congress for approval, should be called the 'Stalinist Constitution' because

"...it was written from beginning to end by Comrade Stalin himself." (*Pravda*, 30 November 1936, cited in: L. Pistrak: *ibid.*; p. 161.)

It has to be noted that Vyacheslav Molotov,<sup>21</sup> then Prime Minister, and Andrey Zhdanov,<sup>22</sup> then Party Secretary in Leningrad, did not mention any special role by Stalin in the drafting of the Constitution.

In the same speech Khrushchev coined the term 'Stalinism':

"Our Constitution is the Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism that has conquered one sixth of the globe." (*Ibid.*)

Khrushchev's speech in Moscow to an audience of 200,000 at the time of the treason trial of Grigory Pyatakov<sup>23</sup> and Karl Radek in January 1937 was in a similar vein:

"By lifting their hands against comrade Stalin they lifted them against all the best that humanity possesses. For Stalin is hope; he is expectation; he is the beacon that guides all progressive mankind. Stalin is our banner! Stalin is our will! Stalin is our victory!" (*Pravda*, 31 January 1937), cited in: L. Pistrak: *ibid.*; p. 162).

Stalin was described by Khrushchev in March 1939 as

"...our great genius, our beloved Stalin," (*Visti VTsVK*, 3 March 1939, cited in: L. Pistrak: *ibid.*; p. 164).

at the 18th Congress of the Party in March 1939 as

"...the greatest genius of humanity, teacher and 'vozhd', who leads us towards Communism, our very own Stalin" (*XVIII S'ezd Vsesoiuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii (B.)*, p. 174, cited in: L. Pistrak: *ibid.*; p. 164.)

<sup>21</sup> Vyacheslav Molotov, Soviet Marxist-Leninist politician (1890-1986); Member of Politburo (1926-53); Prime Minister (1930-41); Deputy Prime Minister (1941-57); Minister of Foreign Affairs (1939-49, 1953-56); Ambassador to Mongolia (1957-60).

<sup>22</sup> Andrey Zhdanov, Soviet Marxist-Leninist politician (1896-1948); Member of Politburo (1935-48).

<sup>23</sup> Grigory Pyatakov, Soviet Trotskyist politician (1890-1937); Assistant People's Commissar for Heavy Industry (1931-37); admitted to treason at his public trial (1937); sentenced to death and executed (1937).

and in May 1945 as

“...great Marshal of the Victory.” (*Pravda Ukrainy*, 13 May 1945, cited in: L. Pistrak: *ibid.*; p. 164.)

On the occasion of the celebration of Stalin’s fiftieth birthday in December 1929, Anastas Mikoyan accompanied his congratulations with the demand

“...that we, meeting the rightful demand of the masses, begin finally to work on his biography and make it available to the Party and to all working people in our country.” (*Izvestia*, 21 December 1929, cited in: L. Pistrak: *ibid.*; p. 164.)

Ten years later, on the occasion of Stalin’s sixtieth birthday in December 1939, Mikoyan was still urging the creation of a

“...scientific biography” (*Pravda*, 21 December 1939, cited in: L. Pistrak: *ibid.*; p. 158.)

of Stalin.

The biography was eventually published in 1947, compiled by

“...G. F. Alexandrov, M. R. Galaktionov, V. S. Kruzhkov, M. B. Mitin, V. D. Mochalov and P. N. Pospelov.” (*Joseph Stalin: A Short Biography*; Moscow; 1947.)

However, in his ‘secret speech’ to the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956, basing himself on the ‘cult of the individual’ which he and his colleagues had built up around Stalin, Khrushchev attributed the authorship of the book to Stalin himself:

“One of the most characteristic examples of Stalin’s self-glorification and of his lack of even elementary modesty is the edition of his *Short Biography*....

“This book is an example of the most dissolute flattery.” (Russian Institute, Columbia University (Ed.): *op. cit.*; p. 69.)

### **The Motives for Building up the ‘Cult of the Individual’**

Of course, many Soviet citizens admired Stalin and expressed this admiration. But clearly, the ‘cult of the individual’ around Stalin was built up mainly by the concealed revisionists, against Stalin’s wishes, in order

**firstly, to disguise the fact that the Party and the Communist International were dominated by concealed revisionists and to present the fiction that these were dominated personally by Stalin; thus blame for breaches of socialist legality and for deviations from Marxist-Leninist principles on their part could later be laid on Stalin;**

**secondly, to provide a pretext for attacking Stalin at a later date (under the guise of carrying out a program of `democratisation`, which was in fact a programme of dismantling socialism).**

That Stalin himself was not unaware of the fact that concealed revisionists were the main force behind the `cult of personality` was reported by the Finnish revisionist Tuominen in 1935, who describes how, when he was informed that busts of him had been given prominent places in Moscow's leading art gallery, the Tretyakov, Stalin exclaimed:

“That’s downright sabotage!” (A. Tuominen: *op. cit.*; p. 164.)

The German writer Leon Feuchtwanger<sup>24</sup> in 1936 confirms that Stalin suspected that the `cult of personality` was being fostered by `wreckers` with the aim of discrediting him:

“It is manifestly irksome to Stalin to be worshipped as he is, and from time to time he makes fun of it....

“Of all the men I know who have power, Stalin is the most unpretentious. I spoke frankly to him about the vulgar and excessive cult made of him, and he replied with equal candour....

“He thinks it is possible even that `wreckers` may be behind it in an attempt to discredit him.” (L. Feuchtwanger: *Moscow 1937*; London; 1937; p. 93, 94-95.)

**To conclude, the attack made by the revisionists on the `cult of personality` in the Soviet Union was an attack not only upon Stalin personally as a leading Marxist-Leninist, a leading defender of socialism, but as the first stage in an attack upon Marxism-Leninism and the socialist system in the Soviet Union.**

Perhaps the best comment on it is the sarcastic toast which the Finnish revisionist Tuominen records as having been proposed by Stalin at a New Year Party in 1935:

“Comrades! I want to propose a toast to our patriarch, life and sun, liberator of nations, architect of socialism (he rattled off all the appellations applied to him in those days), Josef Vissarionovich Stalin, and I hope this is the first and last speech made to that genius this evening.” (A. Tuominen: *op. cit.*; p. 162.)

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<sup>24</sup> Leon Feuchtwanger, German writer (1884-1958).