

THE NEW LEADER

THE CRIMES OF THE STALIN ERA

SPECIAL REPORT TO THE 20TH CONGRESS OF
THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION

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In addition, Russian livestock, destroyed by starving peasants, suffered a setback from which, according to Khrushchev, the nation has not yet recovered.

The violence and brutality of what Stalin (and Khrushchev) called "the era of socialist construction" soon repelled many Communist party members previously loyal to Stalin, and by 1934 the dictator no longer had a majority in his own party. Stalin, however, succeeded in having the opposition leader, Sergei Kirov, murdered and thereupon crushed resistance in the Party by mass terror. The Great Purges of 1936-38, known popularly as the *Yezhovshchina* (after NKVD chief Nikolai Yezhov who conducted them), wiped out an entire generation of Communist leaders. Public trials of such Old Bolsheviks as Kamenev, Zinoviev, Bukharin and Rykov were marked by astounding "confessions" of dastardly crimes; behind the scenes, thousands refused to yield to torture and met their deaths in silence. Khrushchev here tells of several who perished with defiance on their lips. Not only Lenin's old comrades in exile and underground fell; so did hundreds of the very leaders who had championed Stalin in the struggles of the Twenties. In the Ukraine, for example, the purge claimed such Stalinist stalwarts as Vlas Chubar, Chairman of the Ukrainian Council of Ministers for a decade, and Pavel Postyshev and Stanislav Kossior, the Ukrainian Party Secretaries through most of the 1930s. Khrushchev succeeded Kossior.

The Communist leaders who emerged from the *Yezhovshchina* unscathed were those who had stood by Stalin throughout the bloodbath. Among them were Andrei Zhdanov and Khrushchev, the only two Party Secretaries to profit from the purge; Georgi Malenkov, Yezhov's chief aid; Nikolai Bulganin, who took over the Red Army after Stalin had purged it of its best officers; and Lazar Kaganovich, who had rewritten the Party statutes to expedite Stalin's purge of the Party majority.

During and after World War II, Zhdanov and Malenkov vied for the role of Stalin's second-in-command. Zhdanov's death in 1948 led to the purge of several of his supporters, including the chief state planner, Nikolai Voznesensky. This purge, known in Russia today as "the Leningrad case," boosted the cause of Malenkov and of MVD chief Lavrenti Beria, who had succeeded Yezhov in 1938. But at the end of 1952 came the affair of the "doctors' plot," which not only shocked the world with its vicious anti-Semitism but seemed clearly aimed at Beria. Several of the latter's associates in the satellite states, notably Czechoslovakia's Rudolf Slansky, had already been executed when Stalin suddenly had a stroke and died on March 5, 1953. Malenkov, Beria and Vyacheslav Molotov were the chief speakers at his funeral.

Amid feverish imprecations against "panic" in the ranks, the new regime took over, with Malenkov as Premier, Khrushchev succeeding him within a month as Party Secretary, and Beria seemingly in the saddle. The latter repudiated the doctors' affair, let the world in on the tortures used to extract

confessions, made all sorts of promises of new "legality," and began colonizing the Party, the Government and the satellites with his supporters. The Czech and German workers' uprisings of June 1953, however, served as pretext for his overthrow and execution. Malenkov lingered on, bolstered by vague promises of more consumer goods, until February 1955, when Khrushchev nominated Bulganin to succeed him as Premier.

Most of the Kremlin's moves since the death of Stalin have been attempts to streamline and rationalize his paranoid tyranny, to make it operate efficiently in a complex political and economic system ruling a third of the world's population. The 20th Party Congress, first under the new regime and only the third such gathering since 1934, was an attempt to legitimize and consolidate the "collective leadership," but it took place against a background of fierce maneuvering among the collective leaders. On the first day of the Moscow Congress, Khrushchev delivered the traditional Secretary's report, an all-day address which contained only two non-committal references to Stalin. Two days later, however, Anastas Mikoyan, First Deputy Premier and veteran trade wizard, rose and denounced Stalin on several counts; he named several Old Bolsheviks who had "wrongly been named" enemies of the people by Stalin. Among the hundreds whom he could have mentioned, he singled out—purposely, it seemed—several from whose deaths Khrushchev personally had profited. A week later, in a dramatic, closed two-day session, Khrushchev delivered the speech which startled humanity. Not its least interesting aspect is Khrushchev's succession of sly references connecting his present associates to Stalin and Beria: Malenkov at Stalin's right hand in the mishandling of the war, Kaganovich and Mikoyan "present" at the initial promotion of Beria, and so on.

Most significant, however, is the paradoxical dualism that runs through Khrushchev's address from start to finish: While Stalin's crimes against his Communist associates are vividly spelled out and deplored, his infinitely greater crimes against the Russian people are applauded in the name of "socialist construction." Khrushchev's "anti-Stalin" speech reaffirms the basic Stalinist policy line explicitly and implicitly, although now it is affirmed in Lenin's name.

This line includes a one-party dictatorship dominated by a self-perpetuating ruling clique at its center, responsible neither to a popular legislature nor to freely-chosen party bodies; an economy concentrated on war industry and the promotion of international Communist power, to the virtual exclusion of citizens' needs for food, clothing and housing; a system of justice still marked by kangaroo courts, forced labor on a vast scale, and secret executions; industry and trade directed from Moscow by Party bureaucrats acting through autocratic managers; a working class shorn of basic rights to the redress of grievances through collective bargaining or strikes, impoverished physically

the position of Secretary General. The delegates declared themselves in favor of retaining Stalin in this post, hoping that he would heed the critical remarks of Vladimir Ilyich and would be able to overcome the defects which caused Lenin serious anxiety.

Comrades! The Party Congress should become acquainted with two new documents, which confirm Stalin's character as already outlined by Vladimir Ilyich Lenin in his "testament." These documents are a letter from Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya to [Leo B.] Kamenev, who was at that time head of the Political Bureau, and a personal letter from Vladimir Ilyich Lenin to Stalin.

I will now read these documents:

"LEV BORISOVICH!"

"Because of a short letter which I had written in words dictated to me by Vladimir Ilyich by permission of the doctors, Stalin allowed himself yesterday an unusually rude outburst directed at me. This is not my first day in the party. During all these 30 years I have never heard from any comrade one

2. This letter has first come to light now. It has never before been mentioned in the literature of this field. It sheds considerable light on Stalin's real relations with Lenin in the last months of the latter's life. It shows that Stalin started baiting Krupskaya, Lenin's wife, immediately after Lenin suffered his second stroke (December 16, 1922) and systematically continued doing so right up to Lenin's death.

Lenin at this time was forbidden by his doctors to concern himself with politics or even to read the newspapers. He refused to abide by this ban, and said that not receiving current Party news disturbed him more than receiving it. The doctors gave in and set up an appropriate reading schedule for Lenin, but Stalin continued to conceal from him important information about those Party matters which most troubled him, specifically the nationalities policy and the preparations for the 13th Party Congress.

Lenin, understanding that such concealment was part of Stalin's campaign to seize power, asked Krupskaya to keep him abreast of everything that was happening. In her attempts to obtain this information, however, Krupskaya often encountered rude and even insulting treatment from Stalin, although the latter knew that his behavior was being reported to Lenin, on whom it made a very painful impression.

To appraise Stalin's motives, one must remember that he possessed extraordinary self-restraint, knew how to conceal his true feelings when necessary, and could skilfully play whatever role he had decided to assume. If, nevertheless, Stalin was rude toward Krupskaya, knowing that this upset Lenin and might bring on another stroke, he did so deliberately.

Since the fall of 1922, before Lenin's second stroke, the latter's relations with Stalin had become so strained that Stalin well knew that Lenin's recovery and return to active work would mean the end of Stalin's high-level political career—something Stalin was not prepared to tolerate. Stalin could have behaved toward Krupskaya the way he did in the period between Lenin's second and third strokes (December 16, 1922 to March 9, 1923) only if he had consciously resolved to employ this method of hastening Lenin's death.

word of rudeness. The business of the party and of Ilyich are not less dear to me than to Stalin. I need at present the maximum of self-control. What one can and what one cannot discuss with Ilyich I know better than any doctor, because I know what makes him nervous and what does not, in any case I know better than Stalin. I am turning to you and to Grigory [E. Zinoviev] as much closer comrades of V. I. and I beg you to protect me from rude interference with my private life and from vile invectives and threats. I have no doubt as to what will be the unanimous decision of the Control Commission, with which Stalin sees fit to threaten me; however, I have neither the strength nor the time to waste on this foolish quarrel. And I am a living person and my nerves are strained to the utmost.

"N. KRUPSKAYA"

Nadezhda Konstantinovna wrote this letter on December 23, 1922. After two and a half months, in March 1923, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin sent Stalin the following letter:

"TO COMRADE STALIN:

"COPIES FOR: KAMENEV AND ZINOVIEV.

"Dear Comrade Stalin!

"You permitted yourself a rude summons of my wife to the telephone and a rude reprimand of her. Despite the fact that she told you that she agreed to forget what was said, nevertheless Zinoviev and Kamenev heard about it from

3. The existence of this letter was known from Trotsky's memoirs, but the full text has never previously been available. Trotsky knew only, since Krupskaya had told Kamenev, that on March 5 Lenin "dictated to a stenographer a letter to Stalin breaking off all relations" (Trotsky's memoirs, Russian edition, vol. 2, p. 223). This was the final stage in the struggle described in Note 2.

The problem which particularly troubled Lenin at that time was the situation in Georgia, where a struggle was in progress between a group of old Georgian Bolsheviks led by Budu Mdivani, F. Makharadze and others, on the one hand, and Stalin, whose policy was being pushed by Sergo Ordzhonikidze, on the other. The first group sought a broadening of the national rights of the Georgian Republic within the framework of the USSR; the second aimed at restricting Georgia's national autonomy. Lenin carefully followed developments in Georgia, wrote several articles on the nationalities problem (which have not yet been published in the Soviet Union, although they were published abroad as early as 1923 in the *Socialist Courier*), and sided completely with Mdivani, Makharadze et al. At the beginning of March 1923, events in Georgia entered a decisive stage: A meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the Transcaucasian Federation was scheduled there for March 15, and on March 12 there was to be a conference of the Georgian Communist party, to which Leo Kamenev, at that time Stalin's ally, traveled from Moscow. The old Georgian Bolsheviks were besieged within the Party; Ordzhonikidze even resorted to personal physical violence against opponents.

The importance of these events in Georgia was all the greater because they formed part of the preparations for the coming Congress of the Communist

her. I have no intention to forget so easily that which is being done against me, and I need not stress here that I consider as directed against me that which is being done against my wife. I ask you, therefore, that you weigh carefully whether you are agreeable to retracting your words and apologizing or whether you prefer the severance of relations between us.

"SINCERELY: LENIN

"MARCH 5, 1923"

(Commotion in the hall.)

Comrades! I will not comment on these documents. They speak eloquently for themselves. Since Stalin could behave in this manner during Lenin's life, could thus behave toward Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya—whom the party knows well and values highly as a loyal friend of Lenin and as an active fighter for the cause of the party since its creation—we can easily imagine how Stalin treated other people. These negative characteristics of his developed steadily and during the last years acquired an absolutely insufferable character.

As later events have proven, Lenin's anxiety was justified: In the first period after Lenin's death, Stalin still paid attention to his advice, but later he began to disregard the serious admonitions of Vladimir Ilyich.

When we analyze the practice of Stalin in regard to the direction of the party and of the country, when we pause to consider everything which Stalin perpetrated, we must be convinced that Lenin's fears were justified. The negative characteristics of Stalin, which, in Lenin's time, were only incipient, transformed themselves during the last years into a grave abuse of power by Stalin, which caused untold harm to our party.

Party of the Soviet Union. This explains the extreme agitation felt by Lenin, who in this period was particularly insistent on receiving all information. However, Stalin announced that he was suffering from an attack of nerves and left Moscow; without him, the Central Committee Secretariat could give out no information. Lenin succeeded in obtaining Stalin's telephone number in the country, but when Krupskaya called him he "berated her in the most brutal fashion and the most extreme language." (The quotation is from S. Dmitriyevski, who during those years was close to Stalin's personal secretariat and therefore gives a generally pro-Stalin version of events, even though he wrote this in emigration, when he had become an avowed fascist.)

Stalin, of course, realized that Krupskaya could not conceal this incident from Lenin. It was under its immediate impact that Lenin wrote the letter to Stalin whose complete text is now published by Khrushchev. Immediately afterward, Lenin dictated a short letter to Trotsky, asking him to assume the defense of "the Georgian cause" in the Party Central Committee, and he told his secretaries that he was "preparing a bombshell for Stalin at the Congress." However, he was never able to explode it; shortly afterward, he fainted, his condition deteriorated during the night, and then came the third stroke. Stalin's calculations had proved correct: The agitation which he had deliberately provoked had incapacitated Lenin and cleared Stalin's path to dictatorship over the Party.

We have to consider seriously and analyze correctly this matter in order that we may preclude any possibility of a repetition in any form whatever of what took place during the life of Stalin, who absolutely did not tolerate collegiality in leadership and in work, and who practiced brutal violence, not only toward everything which opposed him, but also toward that which seemed, to his capricious and despotic character, contrary to his concepts.

Stalin acted not through persuasion, explanation and patient cooperation with people, but by imposing his concepts and demanding absolute submission to his opinion. Whoever opposed this concept or tried to prove his viewpoint and the correctness of his position was doomed to removal from the leading collective and to subsequent moral and physical annihilation. This was especially true during the period following the 17th Party Congress, when many prominent party leaders and rank-and-file party workers, honest and dedicated to the cause of Communism, fell victim to Stalin's despotism.

We must affirm that the party had fought a serious fight against the Trotskyites, rightists and bourgeois nationalists, and that it disarmed ideologically all the enemies of Leninism. This ideological fight was carried on successfully, as a result of which the party became strengthened and tempered. Here Stalin played a positive role.

The party led a great political-ideological struggle against those in its own ranks who proposed anti-Leninist theses, who represented a political line hostile to the party and to the cause of socialism. This was a stubborn and a difficult fight but a necessary one, because the political line of both the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc and of the Bukharinites led actually toward the restoration of capitalism and capitulation to the world bourgeoisie. Let us consider for a moment what would have happened if in 1928-1929 the political line of right deviation had prevailed among us, or orientation toward "cotton-dress industrialization," or toward the kulak, etc. We would not now have a powerful heavy industry, we would not have the *kolkhozes*, we would find ourselves disarmed and weak in a capitalist encirclement.

It was for this reason that the party led an inexorable ideological fight and explained to all party members and to the non-party masses the harm and the danger of the anti-Leninist proposals of the Trotskyite opposition and the rightist opportunists. And this great work of explaining the party line bore fruit; both the Trotskyites and the rightist opportunists were politically isolated; the overwhelming party majority supported the Leninist line and the party was able to awaken and organize the working masses to apply the Leninist party line and to build socialism.

Worth noting is the fact that, even during the progress of the furious ideological fight against the Trotskyites, the Zinovievites, the Bukharinites and others, extreme repressive measures were not used against them. The fight was on ideological grounds. But some years later, when socialism in our country was fundamentally constructed, when the exploiting classes were generally liquidated, when the Soviet social structure had radically changed, when the social basis for political movements and groups hostile to the party had violently contracted, when the ideological opponents of the party were long

since defeated politically—then the repression directed against them began.

It was precisely during this period (1935-1937-1938) that the practice of mass repression through the Government apparatus was born, first against the enemies of Leninism—Trotskyites, Zinovievites, Bukharinites, long since politically defeated by the party—and subsequently also against many honest Communists, against those party cadres who had borne the heavy load of the Civil War and the first and most difficult years of industrialization and collectivization, who actively fought against the Trotskyites and the rightists for the Leninist party line.

Stalin originated the concept "enemy of the people." This term automatically rendered it unnecessary that the ideological errors of a man or men engaged in a controversy be proven; this term made possible the usage of the most cruel repression, violating all norms of revolutionary legality, against anyone who in any way disagreed with Stalin, against those who were only suspected of hostile intent, against those who had bad reputations. This concept "enemy of the people" actually eliminated the possibility of any kind of ideological fight or the making of one's views known on this or that issue, even those of a practical character. In the main, and in actuality, the only proof of guilt used, against all norms of current legal science, was the "confession" of the accused himself; and, as subsequent probing proved, "confessions" were acquired through physical pressures against the accused. This led to glaring violations of revolutionary legality and to the fact that many entirely innocent persons, who in the past had defended the party line, became victims.

We must assert that, in regard to those persons who in their time had opposed the party line, there were often no sufficiently serious reasons for their physical annihilation. The formula "enemy of the people" was specifically introduced for the purpose of physically annihilating such individuals.

It is a fact that many persons who were later annihilated as enemies of the party and people had worked with Lenin during his life. Some of these persons had made errors during Lenin's life, but, despite this, Lenin benefited by their work; he corrected them and he did everything possible to retain them in the ranks of the party; he induced them to follow him.

In this connection the delegates to the Party Congress should familiarize themselves with an unpublished note by V. I. Lenin directed to the Central Committee's Political Bureau in October 1920. Outlining the duties of the Control Commission, Lenin wrote that the commission should be transformed into a real "organ of party and proletarian conscience."

"As a special duty of the Control Commission there is recommended a deep, individualized relationship with, and sometimes even a type of therapy for, the representatives of the so-called opposition—those who have experienced a psychological crisis because of failure in their Soviet or party career. An effort should be made to quiet them, to explain the matter to them in a way used among comrades, to find for them (avoiding the method of issuing orders) a task for which they are psychologically fitted. Advice and rules relating to this matter are to be formulated by the Central Committee's Organizational Bureau, etc."

18 they published in the Menshevik newspaper, *Novaya Zhizn*, a statement declaring that the Bolsheviks were making preparations for an uprising and that they considered it adventuristic. Kamenev and Zinoviev thus disclosed to the enemy the decision of the Central Committee to stage the uprising, and that the uprising had been organized to take place within the very near future.

This was treason against the party and against the Revolution. In this connection, V. I. Lenin wrote: "Kamenev and Zinoviev revealed the decision of the Central Committee of their party on the armed uprising to Rodzyanko⁵ and Kerensky⁶ . . ." He put before the Central Committee the question of Zinoviev's and Kamenev's expulsion from the party.

However, after the Great Socialist Revolution, as is known, Zinoviev and Kamenev were given leading positions. Lenin put them in positions in which they carried out most responsible party tasks and participated actively in the work of the leading party and Soviet organs. It is known that Zinoviev and Kamenev committed a number of other serious errors during Lenin's life. In his "testament" Lenin warned that "Zinoviev's and Kamenev's October episode was of course not an accident." But Lenin did not pose the question of their arrest and certainly not their shooting.

Or, let us take the example of the Trotskyites. At present, after a sufficiently long historical period, we can speak about the fight with the Trotskyites with complete calm and can analyze this matter with sufficient objectivity. After all, around Trotsky were people whose origin cannot by any means be traced to bourgeois society. Part of them belonged to the party intelligentsia and a certain part were recruited from among the workers. We can name many individuals who, in their time, joined the Trotskyites; however, these same individuals took an active part in the workers' movement before the Revolution, during the Socialist October Revolution itself, and also in the consolidation of the victory of this greatest of revolutions. Many of them broke with Trotskyism and returned to Leninist positions. Was it necessary to annihilate such people? We are deeply convinced that, had Lenin lived, such an extreme method would not have been used against any of them.

Committee, at a meeting on October 16, confirmed its decision to stage an insurrection, Kamenev on October 18 published an article in his own and Zinoviev's name in the newspaper *Novaya Zhizn*, in which he argued that an insurrection would be a grave mistake. *Novaya Zhizn* was a daily which appeared in 1917-18 under the editorship of Maxim Gorky and a number of recent leading figures in the Bolshevik party who had disagreed with Lenin's policy of immediate socialist revolution.

5. Mikhail V. Rodzyanko (1859-1924), President of the Third and Fourth Dumas, and a leader in the democratic February Revolution. He played a prominent role in its first days, but later vanished completely from the political scene. Lenin and other Bolsheviks concocted a completely false story that he had inspired behind-the-scenes reactionary forces which influenced the policies of the Provisional Government in 1917.

6. Alexander F. Kerensky (born 1881) was President of the Provisional Government from July to October 1917.

Such are only a few historical facts. But can it be said that Lenin did not decide to use even the most severe means against enemies of the Revolution when this was actually necessary? No; no one can say this. Vladimir Ilyich demanded uncompromising dealings with the enemies of the Revolution and of the working class and when necessary resorted ruthlessly to such methods. You will recall only V. I. Lenin's fight with the Socialist Revolutionary organizers of the anti-Soviet uprising⁷, with the counterrevolutionary kulaks in 1918 and with others, when Lenin without hesitation used the most extreme methods against the enemies. Lenin used such methods, however, only against actual class enemies and not against those who blunder, who err, and whom it was possible to lead through ideological influence and even retain in the leadership. Lenin used severe methods only in the most necessary cases, when the exploiting classes were still in existence and were vigorously opposing the Revolution, when the struggle for survival was decidedly assuming the sharpest forms, even including a civil war.

Stalin, on the other hand, used extreme methods and mass repressions at a time when the Revolution was already victorious, when the Soviet state was strengthened, when the exploiting classes were already liquidated and socialist relations were rooted solidly in all phases of national economy, when our party was politically consolidated and had strengthened itself both numerically and ideologically.

It is clear that here Stalin showed in a whole series of cases his intolerance, his brutality and his abuse of power. Instead of proving his political correctness and mobilizing the masses, he often chose the path of repression and physical annihilation, not only against actual enemies, but also against individuals who had not committed any crimes against the party and the Soviet Government. Here we see no wisdom but only a demonstration of the brutal force which had once so alarmed V. I. Lenin.

Lately, especially after the unmasking of the Beria gang, the Central Committee looked into a series of matters fabricated by this gang⁸. This revealed

7. The Socialist Revolutionary party, formally organized in 1902, represented the populist wing of the Russian socialist movement. It aimed at including in the socialist movement the Russian peasants, among whom the Socialist Revolutionaries had carried on large-scale work from the 1890s on. The Socialist Revolutionaries enjoyed especially great influence among the peasants and those sections of the intelligentsia which were linked with the peasantry (teachers, leaders of cooperatives, doctors, etc.). In the November 1917 elections to the All-Russian Constituent Assembly, the Socialist Revolutionaries obtained a clear majority. After the Bolsheviks had forcibly dissolved the Constituent Assembly and ended the war with Germany, the Socialist Revolutionaries organized a number of popular uprisings against Communist dictatorship starting in the spring of 1918 (in Archangel, on the Volga, in Siberia, and elsewhere).

8. This statement by Khrushchev is not quite true: Investigation of Stalin's terrorist acts in the last period of his life was initiated by Beria. On April 4, 1953, Beria announced the release of all those arrested in the so-called

a very ugly picture of brutal willfulness connected with the incorrect behavior of Stalin. As facts prove, Stalin, using his unlimited power, allowed himself many abuses, acting in the name of the Central Committee, not asking for the opinion of the Committee members nor even of the members of the Central Committee's Political Bureau; often he did not inform them about his personal decisions concerning very important party and government matters.

Considering the question of the cult of an individual, we must first of all show everyone what harm this caused to the interests of our party.

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin had always stressed the party's role and significance in the direction of the socialist government of workers and peasants; he saw in this the chief precondition for a successful building of socialism in our country. Pointing to the great responsibility of the Bolshevik party, as ruling party of the Soviet state, Lenin called for the most meticulous observance of all norms of party life; he called for the realization of the principles of collegiality in the direction of the party and the state.

Collegiality of leadership flows from the very nature of our party, a party built on the principles of democratic centralism. "This means," said Lenin, "that all party matters are accomplished by all party members—directly or through representatives—who, without any exceptions, are subject to the same rules; in addition, all administrative members, all directing collegia, all holders of party positions are elective, they must account for their activities and are recallable."

It is known that Lenin himself offered an example of the most careful observance of these principles. There was no matter so important that Lenin himself decided it without asking for advice and approval of the majority of the Central Committee members or of the members of the Central Committee's Political Bureau. In the most difficult period for our party and our country, Lenin considered it necessary regularly to convoke congresses, party conferences and plenary sessions of the Central Committee at which all the most important questions were discussed and where resolutions, carefully worked out by the collective of leaders, were approved.

We can recall, for an example, the year 1918 when the country was threatened by the attack of the imperialistic interventionists. In this situation the 7th Party Congress was convened in order to discuss a vitally important matter which could not be postponed—the matter of peace. In 1919, while the civil war was raging, the 8th Party Congress convened which adopted a new party program, decided such important matters as the relationship with the peasant masses, the organization of the Red Army, the leading role of the party in the work of the soviets, the correction of the social composition of

"doctors' plot" and the commitment for trial of those who fabricated it, led by Deputy Minister of State Security Ryumin, who was accused of torturing the prisoners (the first time such an accusation had been made openly against functionaries of the MGB). Khrushchev, who now depicts himself as having well-nigh initiated the probe of Stalin's torture chambers, actually tried to block it in the first months after Stalin's death.

the party, and other matters. In 1920 the 9th Party Congress was convened which laid down guiding principles pertaining to the party's work in the sphere of economic construction. In 1921 the 10th Party Congress accepted Lenin's New Economic Policy and the historical resolution called "About Party Unity."

During Lenin's life, party congresses were convened regularly; always, when a radical turn in the development of the party and the country took place, Lenin considered it absolutely necessary that the party discuss at length all the basic matters pertaining to internal and foreign policy and to questions bearing on the development of party and government.

It is very characteristic that Lenin addressed to the Party Congress as the highest party organ his last articles, letters and remarks⁹. During the period between congresses, the Central Committee of the party, acting as the most authoritative leading collective, meticulously observed the principles of the party and carried out its policy.

So it was during Lenin's life. Were our party's holy Leninist principles observed after the death of Vladimir Ilyich?

Whereas, during the first few years after Lenin's death, party congresses and Central Committee plenums took place more or less regularly, later, when Stalin began increasingly to abuse his power, these principles were brutally violated. This was especially evident during the last 15 years of his life. Was it a normal situation when over 13 years elapsed between the 18th and 19th Party Congresses, years during which our party and our country had experienced so many important events? These events demanded categorically that the party should have passed resolutions pertaining to the country's defense during the Patriotic War [World War II] and to peacetime construction after the war. Even after the end of the war a Congress was not convened for over seven years. Central Committee plenums were hardly ever called. It should be sufficient to mention that during all the years of the Patriotic War not a single Central Committee plenum took place.¹⁰ It is true that there was an attempt to call a Central Committee plenum in October 1941, when Central Committee

9. It was, of course, very characteristic of Lenin that he addressed his last articles, letters and notes to the Congress; but it is even more characteristic of the methods employed by the Communist dictatorship that these documents are still unpublished today under Khrushchev.

10. If one were to trust official Soviet sources, this statement by Khrushchev would not be true: According to the collection, *The Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the Resolutions and Decisions of Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums* (published by the Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin Institute of the Party Central Committee in 1954), one Central Committee plenum was held during the war (January 27, 1944), when it was decided to give the various Union Republics the right to have their own foreign ministries and it was also decided to replace the *Internationale* by the new Soviet national anthem. But it is likely that Khrushchev is correct, that there was no Central Committee plenum in 1944 and a fraud was perpetrated: The plenum was announced as having occurred although it never had.

members from the whole country were called to Moscow. They waited two days for the opening of the plenum, but in vain. Stalin did not even want to meet and talk to the Central Committee members. This fact shows how demoralized Stalin was in the first months of the war and how haughtily and disdainfully he treated the Central Committee members.

In practice, Stalin ignored the norms of party life and trampled on the Leninist principle of collective party leadership.

Stalin's willfulness *vis-à-vis* the party and its Central Committee became fully evident after the 17th Party Congress which took place in 1934.

Having at its disposal numerous data showing brutal willfulness toward party cadres, the Central Committee has created a party commission under the control of the Central Committee Presidium; it was charged with investigating what made possible the mass repressions against the majority of the Central Committee members and candidates elected at the 17th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks).

The commission has become acquainted with a large quantity of materials in the NKVD archives and with other documents and has established many facts pertaining to the fabrication of cases against Communists, to false accusations, to glaring abuses of socialist legality, which resulted in the death of innocent people. It became apparent that many party, Soviet and economic activists, who were branded in 1937-1938 as "enemies," were actually never enemies, spies, wreckers, etc., but were always honest Communists; they were only so stigmatized and, often, no longer able to bear barbaric tortures, they charged themselves (at the order of the investigative judges—falsifiers) with all kinds of grave and unlikely crimes.

The commission has presented to the Central Committee Presidium lengthy and documented materials pertaining to mass repressions against the delegates to the 17th Party Congress and against members of the Central Committee elected at that Congress. These materials have been studied by the Presidium of the Central Committee.

It was determined that of the 139 members and candidates of the party's Central Committee who were elected at the 17th Congress, 98 persons, *i.e.*, 70 per cent, were arrested and shot (mostly in 1937-1938). (Indignation in the hall.) What was the composition of the delegates to the 17th Congress? It is known that 80 per cent of the voting participants of the 17th Congress joined the party during the years of conspiracy before the Revolution and during the civil war; this means before 1921. By social origin the basic mass of the delegates to the Congress were workers (60 per cent of the voting members).

For this reason, it was inconceivable that a congress so composed would have elected a Central Committee a majority of whom would prove to be enemies of the party. The only reason why 70 per cent of Central Committee members and candidates elected at the 17th Congress were branded as enemies of the party and of the people was because honest Communists were slandered, accusations against them were fabricated, and revolutionary legality was gravely undermined.

The same fate met not only the Central Committee members but also the majority of the delegates to the 17th Party Congress. Of 1,966 delegates with either voting or advisory rights, 1,108 persons were arrested on charges of anti-revolutionary crimes, *i.e.*, decidedly more than a majority. This very fact shows how absurd, wild and contrary to common sense were the charges of counterrevolutionary crimes made out, as we now see, against a majority of participants at the 17th Party Congress. (Indignation in the hall.)

We should recall that the 17th Party Congress is historically known as the Congress of Victors. Delegates to the Congress were active participants in the building of our socialist state; many of them suffered and fought for party interests during the pre-Revolutionary years in the conspiracy and at the civil-war fronts; they fought their enemies valiantly and often nervelessly looked into the face of death.

How, then, can we believe that such people could prove to be "two-faced" and had joined the camps of the enemies of socialism during the era after the political liquidation of Zinovievites, Trotskyites and rightists and after the great accomplishments of socialist construction? This was the result of the abuse of power by Stalin, who began to use mass terror against the party cadres.

What is the reason that mass repressions against activists increased more and more after the 17th Party Congress? It was because at that time Stalin had so elevated himself above the party and above the nation that he ceased to consider either the Central Committee or the party.

While he still reckoned with the opinion of the collective before the 17th Congress, after the complete political liquidation of the Trotskyites, Zinovievites and Bukharinites, when as a result of that fight and socialist victories the party achieved unity, Stalin ceased to an ever greater degree to consider the members of the party's Central Committee and even the members of the Political Bureau. Stalin thought that now he could decide all things alone and all he needed were statisticians; he treated all others in such a way that they could only listen to and praise him.

After the criminal murder of Sergei M. Kirov, mass repressions and brutal acts of violation of socialist legality began. On the evening of December 1, 1934 on Stalin's initiative (without the approval of the Political Bureau—which was passed two days later, casually), the Secretary of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee, Yenukidze¹¹, signed the following directive:

11. Abel S. Yenukidze (1877-1937), then Secretary of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee, was in this instance no more than a transmitter of orders and, in accordance with prevailing Soviet forms, had no choice but to publish directives drawn up by Stalin. The "directives" themselves, which played a great role in the entire terrorist activity of the Soviet dictatorship in the ensuing decades (they were used even after Stalin's death), were worked out in Stalin's secretariat—and obviously *in advance*, to be put into operation at the most opportune moment. Their real author is rumored to have been Andrei Y. Vishinsky, who soon afterward became Chief Prosecutor of the Soviet Union and was one of the main organizers of the "Yeshovshchina."

Mass repressions grew tremendously from the end of 1936 after a telegram from Stalin and [Andrei] Zhdanov, dated from Sochi on September 25, 1936, was addressed to Kaganovich, Molotov and other members of the Political Bureau. The content of the telegram was as follows:

"We deem it absolutely necessary and urgent that Comrade Yezhov be nominated to the post of People's Commissar for Internal Affairs. Yagoda has definitely proved himself to be incapable of unmasking the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc. The OGPU is four years behind in this matter. This is noted by all party workers and by the majority of the representatives of the NKVD.¹⁵"

Strictly speaking, we should stress that Stalin did not meet with and, therefore, could not know the opinion of party workers.

This Stalinist formulation that the "NKVD is four years behind" in applying mass repression and that there is a necessity for "catching up" with the neglected work directly pushed the NKVD workers on the path of mass arrests and executions.

We should state that this formulation was also forced on the February-March plenary session of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in 1937. The plenary resolution approved it on the basis of Yezhov's report, "Lessons flowing from the harmful activity, diversion and espionage of the Japanese-German-Trotskyite agents," stating:

"The plenum of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) considers that all facts revealed during the investigation into the matter of an anti-Soviet Trotskyite center and of its followers in the provinces show that the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs has

chief of the Leningrad NKVD, his assistants I. F. Zaporozhets and F. T. Fomin, and a number of other NKVD functionaries. It found them guilty in that, "possessing information about the projected attempt on Comrade S. M. Kirov, they displayed not only a careless attitude but criminal negligence toward the main requirements of state security, not taking the necessary measures of protection." The defendants all received 2-3 years in a concentration camp (except for one, M. K. Baltsevich, who received ten years inasmuch as his official duties related directly to cases involving terrorism). Sent to Kolyma, they all obtained high posts in the administration of the camps, but in 1937 all except Zaporozhets were brought back to Leningrad and shot. Zaporozhets, who headed the road-building section at Kolyma, passed through the Yezhov period unscathed.

15. This telegram is an exceptionally important document, showing that Stalin felt that mass repressions within the Communist party were four years overdue—that is, they should have begun in 1932, when Stalin first demanded execution of members of the opposition group headed by Ryutin, Gorelov and others but was defeated both in the Politburo and at the Central Committee plenum which met from September 28 to October 2, 1932. On Stalin's demand, Henry Yagoda was removed from the post of People's Commissar for Internal Affairs and, on September 26, 1936, replaced by Nikolai I. Yezhov.

fallen behind at least four years in the attempt to unmask these most inextinguishable enemies of the people.¹⁶

The mass repressions at this time were made under the slogan of a fight against the Trotskyites. Did the Trotskyites at this time actually constitute such a danger to our party and to the Soviet state? We should recall that in 1927, on the eve of the 15th Party Congress, only some 4,000 votes were cast for the Trotskyite-Zinovievite opposition while there were 724,000 for the party line. During the 10 years which passed between the 15th Party Congress and the February-March Central Committee plenum, Trotskyism was completely disarmed; many former Trotskyites had changed their former views and worked in the various sectors building socialism. It is clear that in the situation of socialist victory there was no basis for mass terror in the country.

Stalin's report at the February-March Central Committee plenum in 1937, "Deficiencies of party work and methods for the liquidation of the Trotskyites and of other two-facers," contained an attempt at theoretical justification of the mass terror policy under the pretext that as we march forward toward socialism class war must allegedly sharpen. Stalin asserted that both history and Lenin taught him this.

Actually Lenin taught that the application of revolutionary violence is necessitated by the resistance of the exploiting classes, and this referred to the era when the exploiting classes existed and were powerful. As soon as the nation's political situation had improved, when in January 1920 the Red Army took Rostov and thus won a most important victory over [White commander Anton] Denikin, Lenin instructed [Cheka chief Felix] Dzerzhinsky to stop

16. The so-called "February-March" Central Committee plenum of 1937 was the longest of the entire Stalin era. Officially, it lasted from February 23 to March 5, but actually the Politburo and other conferences which preceded it had begun by about February 10. The official announcement mentioned only one resolution adopted by the plenum—one dealing with Zhdanov's report on the tasks of Party organizations in connection with elections under the new Constitution. In reality, however, the work of the plenum and the pre-plenum sessions centered upon Yezhov's report on the first results of his efforts to familiarize himself with the work of the NKVD, and upon Stalin's report, "Deficiencies in Party work and methods for the liquidation of the Trotskyites and of other two-facers." Directly related to this report by Yezhov and the terrorist measures it envisaged is the death of Ordzhonikidze (February 18), who either was so harassed by Stalin and Yezhov that he committed suicide or was poisoned on Stalin's orders. The death of Ordzhonikidze, who was officially pronounced Stalin's closest friend, was not enough for the dictator: A plan to wipe out all those who failed to share his ideas was drawn up at the plenum despite the opposition of many of the participants. Nikolai Bukharin and Alexei Rykov, over whom a particularly fierce debate raged, were expelled from the Party and turned over to the NKVD. Their trial was decided in advance, together with mass repressions against everyone whom Yezhov and his agents decided to label "masked enemies of the people."

mass terror and to abolish the death penalty. Lenin justified this important political move of the Soviet state in the following manner in his report at the session of the All-Union Central Executive Committee on February 2, 1920:

"We were forced to use terror because of the terror practiced by the Entente, when strong world powers threw their hordes against us, not avoiding any type of conduct. We would not have lasted two days had we not answered these attempts of officers and White Guardists in a merciless fashion; this meant the use of terror, but this was forced upon us by the terrorist methods of the Entente.

"But as soon as we attained a decisive victory, even before the end of the war, immediately after taking Rostov, we gave up the use of the death penalty and thus proved that we intend to execute our own program in the manner that we promised. We say that the application of violence flows out of the decision to smother the exploiters, the big landowners and the capitalists; as soon as this was accomplished we gave up the use of all extraordinary methods. We have proved this in practice."¹⁷

Stalin deviated from these clear and plain precepts of Lenin. Stalin put the party and the NKVD up to the use of mass terror when the exploiting classes had been liquidated in our country and when there were no serious reasons for the use of extraordinary mass terror.

This terror was actually directed not at the remnants of the defeated exploiting classes but against the honest workers of the party and of the Soviet state; against them were made lying, slanderous and absurd accusations concerning "two-facedness," "espionage," "sabotage," preparation of fictitious "plots," etc.

At the February-March Central Committee plenum in 1937 many mem-

17. Khrushchev's account of the Bolsheviks' abolition of the death penalty in January 1920 is altogether incorrect. The action stemmed from Lenin's desire to ease negotiations with the Western democracies. (These negotiations had been opened by a Russian cooperative delegation headed by the well-known cooperative leader Berkenheim.) In reality, the death penalty was not abolished at all. It was fully maintained in the many areas situated near the Civil War fronts. Moreover, several days before publication of his order to halt executions, Dzerzhinsky issued a secret order to speed up the liquidation of those whom the Soviet punitive organs deemed it desirable to execute. As a result, there were mass executions in all the jails in the last days before the "abolition of the death penalty." In Moscow's Butyrka prison, the condemned men learned that the death penalty was to be abolished the following day, and there were frightful scenes when the executioners came for them. Some of them broke away and hid in the prison yard in hope of surviving until morning, but they were caught and shot. In the general frenzy, a number of persons were shot whose death sentences had already been commuted to prison terms. Finally, in May 1920, with the outbreak of the Russian-Polish war, the death penalty was officially restored. Both Dzerzhinsky's order and Lenin's speech were rank hypocrisy.

bers actually questioned the rightness of the established course regarding mass repressions under the pretext of combating "two-facedness."

Comrade Postyshev¹⁸ most ably expressed these doubts. He said:

"I have philosophized that the severe years of fighting have passed. Party members who have lost their backbones have broken down or have joined the camp of the enemy; healthy elements have fought for the party. These were the years of industrialization and collectivization. I never thought it possible that after this severe era had passed Karpov and people like him would find themselves in the camp of the enemy. (Karpov was a worker in the Ukrainian Central Committee whom Postyshev knew well.) And now, according to the testimony, it appears that Karpov was recruited in 1934 by the Trotskyites. I personally do not believe that in 1934 an honest party member who had trod the long road of unrelenting fight against enemies for the party and for socialism would now be in the camp of the enemies. I do not believe it. . . . I cannot imagine how it would be possible to travel with the party during the difficult years and then, in 1934, join the Trotskyites. It is an odd thing. . . ." (Movement in the hall.)

Using Stalin's formulation, namely, that the closer we are to socialism the more enemies we will have, and using the resolution of the February-March Central Committee plenum passed on the basis of Yezhov's report, the provocateurs who had infiltrated the state-security organs together with conscienceless careerists began to protect with the party name the mass terror against party cadres, cadres of the Soviet state and the ordinary Soviet citizens. It should suffice to say that the number of arrests based on charges of counterrevolutionary crimes had grown ten times between 1936 and 1937.

It is known that brutal willfulness was practiced against leading party workers. The party statute, approved at the 17th Party Congress, was based on Leninist principles expressed at the 10th Party Congress. It stated that, in order to apply an extreme method such as exclusion from the party against a Central Committee member, against a Central Committee candidate and against a member of the Party Control Commission, "it is necessary to call a Central Committee plenum and to invite to the plenum all Central Committee candidate members and all members of the Party Control Commission"; only if two-thirds of the members of such a general assembly of re-

18. Pavel P. Postyshev (1888-1938), a worker from Ivanovo-Voznesensk and a Bolshevik since 1904, became a secretary of the Central Committee in 1930 and Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist party in February 1933. A backer of Stalin in earlier years, he supported Stalin's opponents in the fall of 1932 on the question of executing Communist oppositionists; after that, Stalin removed him from the central Party apparatus and sent him to the Ukraine. In 1936-37, Postyshev, it is now apparent, was among those who tried to oppose the *Yezhovshchina*. For this he was sent in March 1937 to Kuibyshev province as Party Secretary. In 1938 he was arrested and shot.

sponsible party leaders find it necessary, only then can a Central Committee member or candidate be expelled.¹⁹

The majority of the Central Committee members and candidates elected at the 17th Congress and arrested in 1937-1938 were expelled from the party illegally through the brutal abuse of the party statute, because the question of their expulsion was never studied at the Central Committee plenum.

Now, when the cases of some of these so-called "spies" and "saboteurs" were examined, it was found that all their cases were fabricated. Confessions of guilt of many arrested and charged with enemy activity were gained with the help of cruel and inhuman tortures.

At the same time, Stalin, as we have been informed by members of the Political Bureau of that time, did not show them the statements of many accused political activists when they retracted their confessions before the military tribunal and asked for an objective examination of their cases. There were many such declarations, and Stalin doubtless knew of them.

The Central Committee considers it absolutely necessary to inform the Congress of many such fabricated "cases" against the members of the party's Central Committee elected at the 17th Party Congress.

An example of vile provocation, of odious falsification and of criminal violation of revolutionary legality is the case of the former candidate for the Central Committee Political Bureau, one of the most eminent workers of the party and of the Soviet Government, Comrade Eikhe²⁰, who was a party member since 1905. (Commotion in the hall.)

Comrade Eikhe was arrested on April 29, 1938 on the basis of slanderous materials, without the sanction of the Prosecutor of the USSR, which was finally received 15 months after the arrest.

Investigation of Eikhe's case was made in a manner which most brutally violated Soviet legality and was accompanied by willfulness and falsification.

Eikhe was forced under torture to sign ahead of time a protocol of his confession prepared by the investigative judges, in which he and several other eminent party workers were accused of anti-Soviet activity.

On October 1, 1939 Eikhe sent his declaration to Stalin in which he categorically denied his guilt and asked for an examination of his case. In the declaration he wrote: "There is no more bitter misery than to sit in the jail of a government for which I have always fought."

A second declaration of Eikhe has been preserved which he sent to Stalin

19. These quotations by Khrushchev are from the secret portion of the Party constitution of 1934, which had never been published in full.

20. Robert I. Eikhe (1890-1940), a Latvian worker, member of the Bolshevik party since 1905, and Secretary of the Western Siberian Provincial Committee in 1929-34, was a candidate member of the Politburo in 1938. According to available information, he lost his mind in 1938 as a result of frightful torture and cried out that he confessed his "guilt of belonging to a criminal organization which goes by the name of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist party (Bolsheviks)."

on October 27, 1939; in it he cited facts very convincingly and countered the slanderous accusations made against him, arguing that this provocative accusation was on the one hand the work of real Trotskyites whose arrests he had sanctioned as First Secretary of the West Siberian Krai [Territory] Party Committee and who conspired in order to take revenge on him, and, on the other hand, the result of the base falsification of materials by the investigative judges.

Eikhe wrote in his declaration:

"... On October 25 of this year I was informed that the investigation in my case has been concluded and I was given access to the materials of this investigation. Had I been guilty of only one hundredth of the crimes with which I am charged, I would not have dared to send you this pre-execution declaration; however, I have not been guilty of even one of the things with which I am charged and my heart is clean of even the shadow of baseness. I have never in my life told you a word of falsehood, and now, finding my two feet in the grave, I am also not lying. My whole case is a typical example of provocation, slander and violation of the elementary basis of revolutionary legality. . . .

"... The confessions which were made part of my file are not only absurd but contain some slander toward the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and toward the Council of People's Commissars, because correct resolutions of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) and of the Council of People's Commissars which were not made on my initiative and without my participation are presented as hostile acts of counterrevolutionary organizations made at my suggestion. . . .

"I am now alluding to the most disgraceful part of my life and to my really grave guilt against the party and against you. This is my confession of counterrevolutionary activity. . . . The case is as follows: Not being able to suffer the tortures to which I was submitted by Ushakov and Nikolayev²¹—and especially by the first one—who utilized the knowledge that my broken ribs have not properly mended and have caused me great pain, I have been forced to accuse myself and others.

"The majority of my confession has been suggested or dictated by Ushakov, and the remainder is my reconstruction of NKVD materials from Western Siberia for which I assumed all responsibility. If some part of the story which Ushakov fabricated and which I signed did not properly hang together, I was forced to sign another variation. The same thing was done to Rukhimovich²², who was at first designated as a member of the reserve

21. This is evidently Z. M. Ushakov, one of the oldest NKVD investigators, who in 1936 and subsequent years was charged with investigating many of the top Communists; in July 1937, he received the Order of the Red Star. Nikolayev was apparently a minor NKVD investigator.

22. Moisei L. Rukhimovich (1889-1938), a worker and a Bolshevik since 1913; in 1917-18, one of the first organizers of the Red Guard in Kharkov,

net and whose name later was removed without telling me anything about it; the same was also done with the leader of the reserve net, supposedly created by Bukharin in 1935. At first I wrote my name in, and then I was instructed to insert Mezhlauk²³. There were other similar incidents.

"... I am asking and begging you that you again examine my case, and this not for the purpose of sparing me but in order to unmask the vile provocation which, like a snake, wound itself around many persons in a great degree due to my meanness and criminal slander. I have never betrayed you or the party. I know that I perish because of vile and mean work of the enemies of the party and of the people, who fabricated the provocation against me."

It would appear that such an important declaration was worth an examination by the Central Committee. This, however, was not done, and the declaration was transmitted to Beria while the terrible maltreatment of the Political Bureau candidate, Comrade Eikhe, continued.

On February 2, 1940 Eikhe was brought before the court. Here he did not confess any guilt and said as follows:

"In all the so-called confessions of mine there is not one letter written by me with the exception of my signatures under the protocols, which were forced from me. I have made my confession under pressure from the investigative judge, who from the time of my arrest tormented me. After that I began to write all this nonsense. . . . The most important thing for me is to tell the court, the party and Stalin that I am not guilty. I have never been guilty of any conspiracy. I will die believing in the truth of party policy as I have believed in it during my whole life."

On February 4 Eikhe was shot. (Indignation in the hall.)

It has been definitely established now that Eikhe's case was fabricated; he has been posthumously rehabilitated.

Comrade Rudzutak²⁴, candidate-member of the Political Bureau, member of the party since 1905, who spent 10 years in a Tsarist hard-labor camp, completely retracted in court the confession which was forced from him. The protocol of the session of the Collegium of the Supreme Military Court contains the following statement by Rudzutak:

"... The only plea which he places before the court is that the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) be informed that there is in the NKVD an as yet not liquidated center which is craftily

thereafter engaged in economic work. In the mid-1930s, he was People's Commissar for Communications. He was arrested in 1937.

23. Valeri I. Mezhlauk (1889-1938), a Bolshevik since 1917, worked in economic organizations (as chairman of the "Western Steel" trust and others) and in 1936-37 was president of the State Planning Commission. He was arrested in 1937.

24. Yan E. Rudzutak (1887-1940), son of an agricultural worker, a Bolshevik since 1905, ultimately a member of the Politburo. He was arrested in 1938.

manufacturing cases, which forces innocent persons to confess; there is no opportunity to prove one's non-participation in crimes to which the confessions of various persons testify. The investigative methods are such that they force people to lie and to slander entirely innocent persons in addition to those who already stand accused. He asks the Court that he be allowed to inform the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) about all this in writing. He assures the Court that he personally had never any evil designs in regard to the policy of our party because he had always agreed with the party policy pertaining to all spheres of economic and cultural activity."

This declaration of Rudzutak was ignored, despite the fact that Rudzutak was in his time the chief of the Central Control Commission, which was called into being in accordance with Lenin's concept for the purpose of fighting for party unity. In this manner fell the chief of this highly authoritative party organ, a victim of brutal willfulness; he was not even called before the Central Committee's Political Bureau because Stalin did not want to talk to him. Sentence was pronounced on him in 20 minutes and he was shot. (Indignation in the hall.)

After careful examination of the case in 1955, it was established that the accusation against Rudzutak was false and that it was based on slanderous materials. Rudzutak has been rehabilitated posthumously.

The way in which the former NKVD workers manufactured various fictitious "anti-Soviet centers" and "blocs" with the help of provocatory methods is seen from the confession of Comrade Rozenblum, party member since 1906, who was arrested in 1937 by the Leningrad NKVD.

During the examination in 1955 of the Komarov case²⁵ Rozenblum revealed the following fact: When Rozenblum was arrested in 1937, he was subjected to terrible torture during which he was ordered to confess false information concerning himself and other persons. He was then brought to the office of Zakovsky²⁶, who offered him freedom on condition that he make before the court a false confession fabricated in 1937 by the NKVD concerning "sabotage, espionage and diversion in a terroristic center in Leningrad." (Movement in the hall.) With unbelievable cynicism, Zakovsky told about the vile "mechanism" for the crafty creation of fabricated "anti-Soviet plots."

"In order to illustrate it to me," stated Rozenblum, "Zakovsky gave me

25. Nikolai P. Komarov (1886-1937), a worker, a Bolshevik since 1909, and one of Kirov's closest collaborators. Until 1930, he was chairman of the Leningrad Provincial Executive Committee, and later a member of the presidium of the Supreme Council for the National Economy. A member of the Party Central Committee since 1923, he was arrested in 1937.

26. Leonid Zakovsky, one of the most prominent figures in the *Yezhovshchina*, was chief first of the Leningrad section (1934-38) and then of the Moscow section of the NKVD. He was notorious for his merciless employment of torture followed by execution. After Yezhov's removal and Beria's rise to power, Zakovsky was arrested and disappeared.

several possible variants of the organization of this center and of its branches. After he detailed the organization to me, Zakovsky told me that the NKVD would prepare the case of this center, remarking that the trial would be public. Before the court were to be brought 4 or 5 members of this center: Chudov²⁷, Ugarov²⁸, Smorodin²⁹, Pozern³⁰, Shaposhnikova³¹ (Chudov's wife) and others together with 2 or 3 members from the branches of this center. . . .

"... The case of the Leningrad center has to be built solidly, and for this reason witnesses are needed. Social origin (of course, in the past) and the party standing of the witness will play more than a small role.

"'You, yourself,' said Zakovsky, 'will not need to invent anything. The NKVD will prepare for you a ready outline for every branch of the center; you will have to study it carefully and to remember well all questions and answers which the Court might ask. This case will be ready in four-five months, or perhaps a half year. During all this time you will be preparing yourself so that you will not compromise the investigation and yourself. Your future will depend on how the trial goes and on its results. If you begin to lie and to testify falsely, blame yourself. If you manage to endure it, you will save your head and we will feed and clothe you at the Government's cost until your death.'"

This is the kind of vile things which were then practiced. (Movement in the hall.)

Even more widely was the falsification of cases practiced in the provinces. The NKVD headquarters of the Sverdlov Oblast "discovered" the so-called "Ural uprising staff"—an organ of the bloc of rightists, Trotskyites, Socialist Revolutionaries, church leaders—whose chief supposedly was the Secretary

27. Mikhail S. Chudov (1893-1937), a printer by trade and a Bolshevik since 1913, was one of the secretaries of the Leningrad Provincial Committee in 1928-34, a very close co-worker and friend of Kirov, and a member of the Central Committee. He was arrested in 1937.

28. Fyodor Y. Ugarov (1887-1937), a Bolshevik since 1905, one of the secretaries of the Leningrad Provincial Committee, an aide of Kirov. He was arrested in 1937.

29. Pyotr P. Smorodin (1897-1937), a Leningrad worker, Bolshevik since 1917, member of the Leningrad Provincial Committee, close collaborator of Kirov, and member of the Central Committee. He was arrested in 1937.

30. Boris P. Pozern (1881-1937), a Bolshevik since 1903, an active participant in the Civil War, one of the secretaries of the Leningrad Provincial Committee in 1930-34, a close collaborator of Kirov, and a member of the Party Central Committee since 1934. He was arrested in 1937.

31. Lyudmila K. Shaposhnikova (1895-1937), a textile worker, Bolshevik since 1917, Secretary of the Leningrad Trade Union Council, and member of the Central Control Commission. She was arrested in 1937, together with her husband, Mikhail Chudov. From these biographical sketches it should be clear that Zakovsky selected as members of the "Leningrad anti-Soviet center" exclusively the close co-workers and friends of Kirov.

These and many other facts show that all norms of correct party solution of problems were invalidated and everything was dependent upon the willfulness of one man.

The power accumulated in the hands of one person, Stalin, led to serious consequences during the Great Patriotic War.

When we look at many of our novels, films and historical "scientific studies," the role of Stalin in the Patriotic War appears to be entirely improbable. Stalin had foreseen everything. The Soviet Army, on the basis of a strategic plan prepared by Stalin long before, used the tactics of so-called "active defense," i.e., tactics which, as we know, allowed the Germans to come up to Moscow and Stalingrad. Using such tactics, the Soviet Army, supposedly thanks only to Stalin's genius, turned to the offensive and subdued the enemy. The epic victory gained through the armed might of the land of the Soviets, through our heroic people, is ascribed in this type of novel, film and "scientific study"³⁹ as being completely due to the strategic genius of Stalin.

We have to analyze this matter carefully because it has a tremendous significance not only from the historical, but especially from the political, educational and practical point of view. What are the facts of this matter?

Before the war, our press and all our political-educational work was characterized by its bragging tone: When an enemy violates the holy Soviet soil, then for every blow of the enemy we will answer with three blows, and we will battle the enemy on his soil and we will win without much harm to ourselves. But these positive statements were not based in all areas on concrete facts, which would actually guarantee the immunity of our borders.

During the war and after the war, Stalin put forward the thesis that the tragedy which our nation experienced in the first part of the war was the result of the "unexpected" attack of the Germans against the Soviet Union. But, comrades, this is completely untrue. As soon as Hitler came to power in Germany he assigned to himself the task of liquidating Communism. The fascists were saying this openly; they did not hide their plans.

In order to attain this aggressive end, all sorts of pacts and blocs were created, such as the famous Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis. Many facts from the prewar period clearly showed that Hitler was going all out to begin a war against the Soviet state, and that he had concentrated large armed units, together with armored units, near the Soviet borders.

Documents which have now been published show that by April 3, 1941 Churchill, through his Ambassador to the USSR, Cripps, personally warned Stalin that the Germans had begun regrouping their armed units with the intent of attacking the Soviet Union.

39. These remarks by Khrushchev are clearly directed against the *Essays on the History of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45*, published by the Institute of History of the Soviet Academy of Sciences at the end of 1955 under the editorship of B. S. Telpukhovskiy and others. This book was filled with attempts to glorify Stalin as a military strategist.

It is self-evident that Churchill did not do this at all because of his friendly feeling toward the Soviet nation. He had in this his own imperialistic goals—to bring Germany and the USSR into a bloody war and thereby to strengthen the position of the British Empire.

Just the same, Churchill affirmed in his writings that he sought to "warn Stalin and call his attention to the danger which threatened him." Churchill stressed this repeatedly in his dispatches of April 18 and on the following days. However, Stalin took no heed of these warnings. What is more, Stalin ordered that no credence be given to information of this sort, in order not to provoke the initiation of military operations.

We must assert that information of this sort concerning the threat of German armed invasion of Soviet territory was coming in also from our own military and diplomatic sources; however, because the leadership was conditioned against such information, such data was dispatched with fear and assessed with reservation.

Thus, for instance, information sent from Berlin on May 6, 1941 by the Soviet military attaché, Captain Vorontsov, stated: "Soviet citizen Bozer . . . communicated to the deputy naval attaché that, according to a statement of a certain German officer from Hitler's headquarters, Germany is preparing to invade the USSR on May 14 through Finland, the Baltic countries and Latvia. At the same time Moscow and Leningrad will be heavily raided and paratroopers landed in border cities. . . ."

In his report of May 22, 1941, the deputy military attaché in Berlin, Khlopov, communicated that ". . . the attack of the German Army is reportedly scheduled for June 15, but it is possible that it may begin in the first days of June . . ."

A cable from our London Embassy dated June 18, 1941 stated: "As of now Cripps is deeply convinced of the inevitability of armed conflict between Germany and the USSR, which will begin not later than the middle of June. According to Cripps, the Germans have presently concentrated 147 divisions (including air force and service units) along the Soviet borders. . . ."

Despite these particularly grave warnings⁴⁰, the necessary steps were not taken to prepare the country properly for defense and to prevent it from being caught unawares.

Did we have time and the capabilities for such preparations? Yes, we had the time and capabilities. Our industry was already so developed that it was capable of supplying fully the Soviet Army with everything that it needed. This is proven by the fact that, although during the war we lost almost half

40. In this period, Stalin received many more warnings about the impending Nazi attack than Khrushchev mentions. One need only recall the warning transmitted by the U. S. State Department to Soviet Ambassador Constantine Oumansky as early as March 1941. Stalin refused to believe these messages since he hoped for an agreement with Hitler on a joint campaign against the Anglo-Saxon world.

of our industry and important industrial and food-production areas as the result of enemy occupation of the Ukraine, Northern Caucasus and other western parts of the country, the Soviet nation was still able to organize the production of military equipment in the eastern parts of the country, install there equipment taken from the western industrial areas, and to supply our armed forces with everything which was necessary to destroy the enemy.

Had our industry been mobilized properly and in time to supply the Army with the necessary matériel, our wartime losses would have been decidedly smaller. Such mobilization had not been, however, started in time. And already in the first days of the war it became evident that our Army was badly armed, that we did not have enough artillery, tanks and planes to throw the enemy back.

Soviet science and technology produced excellent models of tanks and artillery pieces before the war. But mass production of all this was not organized, and, as a matter of fact, we started to modernize our military equipment only on the eve of the war. As a result, at the time of the enemy's invasion of the Soviet land we did not have sufficient quantities either of old machinery which was no longer used for armament production or of new machinery which we had planned to introduce into armament production.

The situation with anti-aircraft artillery was especially bad; we did not organize the production of anti-tank ammunition. Many fortified regions had proven to be indefensible as soon as they were attacked, because the old arms had been withdrawn and new ones were not yet available there.

This pertained, alas, not only to tanks, artillery and planes. At the outbreak of the war we did not even have sufficient numbers of rifles to arm the mobilized manpower. I recall that in those days I telephoned to Comrade Malenkov from Kiev and told him, "People have volunteered for the new Army and demand arms. You must send us arms."

Malenkov answered me, "We cannot send you arms. We are sending all our rifles to Leningrad and you have to arm yourselves." (Movement in the hall.)

Such was the armament situation.

In this connection we cannot forget, for instance, the following fact: Shortly before the invasion of the Soviet Union by the Hitlerite army, Kirponos, who was chief of the Kiev Special Military District (he was later killed at the front), wrote to Stalin that the German armies were at the Bug River, were preparing for an attack and in the very near future would probably start their offensive. In this connection, Kirponos proposed that a strong defense be organized, that 300,000 people be evacuated from the border areas and that several strong points be organized there: anti-tank ditches, trenches for the soldiers, etc.

Moscow answered this proposition with the assertion that this would be a provocation, that no preparatory defensive work should be undertaken at the borders, that the Germans were not to be given any pretext for the initiation of military action against us. Thus, our borders were insufficiently prepared to repel the enemy.

When the fascist armies had actually invaded Soviet territory and military operations began, Moscow issued the order that the German fire was not to be returned. Why? It was because Stalin, despite evident facts, thought that the war had not yet started, that this was only a provocative action on the part of several undisciplined sections of the German Army, and that our reaction might serve as a reason for the Germans to begin the war.

The following fact is also known: On the eve of the invasion of the territory of the Soviet Union by the Hitlerite army, a certain German citizen crossed our border and stated that the German armies had received orders to start the offensive against the Soviet Union on the night of June 22 at 3 o'clock. Stalin was informed about this immediately, but even this warning was ignored.

As you see, everything was ignored: warnings of certain Army commanders, declarations of deserters from the enemy army, and even the open hostility of the enemy. Is this an example of the alertness of the chief of the party and of the state at this particularly significant historical moment?

And what were the results of this carefree attitude, this disregard of clear facts? The result was that already in the first hours and days the enemy had destroyed in our border regions a large part of our Air Force, artillery and other military equipment; he annihilated large numbers of our military cadres and disorganized our military leadership; consequently we could not prevent the enemy from marching deep into the country.

Very grievous consequences, especially in reference to the beginning of the war, followed Stalin's annihilation of many military commanders and political workers during 1937-1941 because of his suspiciousness and through slanderous accusations.⁴¹ During these years repressions were instituted against certain parts of military cadres beginning literally at the company and battalion commander level and extending to the higher military centers; during this time the cadre of leaders who had gained military experience in Spain and in the Far East was almost completely liquidated.

The policy of large-scale repression against the military cadres led also to undermined military discipline, because for several years officers of all ranks and even soldiers in the party and Komsomol cells were taught to "unmask" their superiors as hidden enemies. (Movement in the hall.) It is natural that this caused a negative influence on the state of military discipline in the first war period.

And, as you know, we had before the war excellent military cadres which were unquestionably loyal to the party and to the Fatherland. Suffice it to say that those of them who managed to survive, despite severe tortures to

41. We now know from revelations by former members of the German secret police that Stalin wiped out a vast part of the command personnel of the Red Army on the basis of false documents which Stalin's personal secretariat had received from Nazi agents. The false documents on the basis of which Marshal Tukhachevsky and his closest colleagues were executed were turned over by Nazi agents to L. Z. Mekhlis, a trusted member of Stalin's personnel secretariat, who flew to Berlin for that purpose in May 1937.

which they were subjected in the prisons, have from the first war days shown themselves real patriots and heroically fought for the glory of the Fatherland; I have here in mind such comrades as Rokossovsky (who, as you know, had been jailed), Gorbatov, Maretskov (who is a delegate at the present Congress)⁴², Podlas (he was an excellent commander who perished at the front), and many, many others. However, many such commanders perished in camps and jails and the Army saw them no more.

All this brought about the situation which existed at the beginning of the war and which was the great threat to our Fatherland.

It would be incorrect to forget that, after the first severe disaster and defeat at the front, Stalin thought that this was the end. In one of his speeches in those days he said: "All that which Lenin created we have lost forever."

After this Stalin for a long time actually did not direct the military operations and ceased to do anything whatever. He returned to active leadership only when some members of the Political Bureau visited him and told him that it was necessary to take certain steps immediately in order to improve the situation at the front.

Therefore, the threatening danger which hung over our Fatherland in the first period of the war was largely due to the faulty methods of directing the nation and the party by Stalin himself.

However, we speak not only about the moment when the war began, which led to serious disorganization of our Army and brought us severe losses. Even after the war began, the nervousness and hysteria which Stalin demonstrated, interfering with actual military operation, caused our Army serious damage.

Stalin was very far from an understanding of the real situation which was developing at the front. This was natural because, during the whole Patriotic War, he never visited any section of the front or any liberated city except for one short ride on the Mozhaisk highway during a stabilized situation at the front. To this incident were dedicated many literary works full of fantasies of all sorts and so many paintings. Simultaneously, Stalin was interfering with operations and issuing orders which did not take into consideration the real situation at a given section of the front and which could not help but result in huge personnel losses.

I will allow myself in this connection to bring out one characteristic fact which illustrates how Stalin directed operations at the fronts. There is present

42. Marshal Konstantin K. Rokossovsky, now Poland's Defense Minister, was arrested in 1937 in Leningrad, where he was a corps commander. He was repeatedly subjected to brutal beatings in the course of interrogation and then sent to a concentration camp, from which he was released shortly before the outbreak of war in 1941. The same fate overtook the other military commanders mentioned by Khrushchev: Colonel-General Alexander V. Gorbatov, now commander of the Baltic Military District; Marshal Kirill A. Meretskov, now commander of the Northern Military District, and many others.

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at this Congress Marshal Bagramian⁴³, who was once the chief of operations in the headquarters of the southwestern front and who can corroborate what I will tell you.

When there developed an exceptionally serious situation for our Army in 1942 in the Kharkov region, we had correctly decided to drop an operation whose objective was to encircle Kharkov, because the real situation at that time would have threatened our Army with fatal consequences if this operation were continued.

We communicated this to Stalin, stating that the situation demanded changes in operational plans so that the enemy would be prevented from liquidating a sizable concentration of our Army.

Contrary to common sense, Stalin rejected our suggestion and issued the order to continue the operation aimed at the encirclement of Kharkov, despite the fact that at this time many Army concentrations were themselves actually threatened with encirclement and liquidation.

I telephoned to Vasilevsky⁴⁴ and begged him: "Alexander Mikhailovich, take a map"—Vasilevsky is present here—"and show Comrade Stalin the situation which has developed." We should note that Stalin planned operations on a globe. (Animation in the hall.) Yes, comrades, he used to take the globe and trace the front line on it. I said to Comrad Vasilevsky: "Show him the situation on a map; in the present situation we cannot continue the operation which was planned. The old decision must be changed for the good of the cause."

Vasilevsky replied, saying that Stalin had already studied this problem and that he, Vasilevsky, would not see Stalin further concerning this matter, because the latter didn't want to hear any arguments on the subject of this operation.

After my talk with Vasilevsky, I telephoned to Stalin at his villa. But Stalin did not answer the telephone and Malenkov was at the receiver. I told Comrade Malenkov that I was calling from the front and that I wanted to speak personally to Stalin. Stalin informed me through Malenkov that I should speak with Malenkov. I stated for the second time that I wished to inform Stalin personally about the grave situation which had arisen for us at the front. But Stalin did not consider it convenient to raise the phone and again stated that I should speak to him through Malenkov, although he was only a few steps from the telephone.

After "listening" in this manner to our plea, Stalin said: "Let everything remain as it is!"

And what was the result of this? The worst that we had expected. The Germans surrounded our Army concentrations and consequently we lost hundreds of thousands of our soldiers. This is Stalin's military "genius"; this is what it cost us. (Movement in the hall.)

43. Marshal Ivan K. Bagramian is today a Deputy Minister of Defense.

44. Marshal Alexander M. Vasilevsky is today First Deputy Minister of Defense.

On one occasion after the war, during a meeting of Stalin with members of the Political Bureau, Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan mentioned that Khrushchev must have been right when he telephoned concerning the Kharkov operation and that it was unfortunate that his suggestion had not been accepted.

You should have seen Stalin's fury! How could it be admitted that he, Stalin, had not been right! He is after all a "genius," and a genius cannot help but be right! Everyone can err, but Stalin considered that he never erred, that he was always right. He never acknowledged to anyone that he made any mistake, large or small, despite the fact that he made not a few mistakes in the matter of theory and in his practical activity. After the Party Congress we shall probably have to re-evaluate many wartime military operations and to present them in their true light.

The tactics on which Stalin insisted without knowing the essence of the conduct of battle operations cost us much blood until we succeeded in stopping the opponent and going over to the offensive.

The military know that already by the end of 1941, instead of great operational maneuvers flanking the opponent and penetrating behind his back, Stalin demanded incessant frontal attacks and the capture of one village after another.

Because of this, we paid with great losses—until our generals, on whose shoulders rested the whole weight of conducting the war, succeeded in changing the situation and shifting to flexible-maneuver operations, which immediately brought serious changes at the front favorable to us.

All the more shameful was the fact that, after our great victory over the enemy which cost us so much, Stalin began to downgrade many of the commanders who contributed so much to the victory over the enemy, because Stalin excluded every possibility that services rendered at the front should be credited to anyone but himself.

Stalin was very much interested in the assessment of Comrade Zhukov as a military leader. He asked me often for my opinion of Zhukov. I told him then, "I have known Zhukov for a long time; he is a good general and a good military leader."

After the war Stalin began to tell all kinds of nonsense about Zhukov, among others the following, "You praised Zhukov, but he does not deserve it. It is said that before each operation at the front Zhukov used to behave as follows: He used to take a handful of earth, smell it and say, 'We can begin the attack,' or the opposite, 'The planned operation cannot be carried out.'" I stated at that time, "Comrade Stalin, I do not know who invented this, but it is not true."

It is possible that Stalin himself invented these things for the purpose of minimizing the role and military talents of Marshal Zhukov.

In this connection, Stalin very energetically popularized himself as a great leader; in various ways he tried to inculcate in the people the version that all victories gained by the Soviet nation during the Great Patriotic War were due to the courage, daring and genius of Stalin and of no one else. Exactly like

Kuzma Kryuchkov⁴⁵ he put one dress on seven people at the same time. (Animation in the hall.)

In the same vein, let us take, for instance, our historical and military films and some literary creations; they make us feel sick. Their true objective is the propagation of the theme of praising Stalin as a military genius. Let us recall the film, *The Fall of Berlin*.⁴⁶ Here only Stalin acts; he issues orders in the hall in which there are many empty chairs and only one man approached him and reports something to him—that is Poskrebyshv⁴⁷, his loyal shield-bearer. (Laughter in the hall.)

And where is the military command? Where is the Political Bureau? Where is the Government? What are they doing and with what are they engaged? There is nothing about them in the film. Stalin acts for everybody; he does not reckon with anyone; he asks no one for advice. Everything is shown to the nation in this false light. Why? In order to surround Stalin with glory, contrary to the facts and contrary to historical truth.

The question arises: And where are the military, on whose shoulders rested the burden of the war? They are not in the film; with Stalin in, no room was left for them.

Not Stalin, but the party as a whole, the Soviet Government, our heroic Army, its talented leaders and brave soldiers, the whole Soviet nation—these are the ones who assured the victory in the Great Patriotic War. (Tempestuous and prolonged applause.)

The Central Committee members, ministers, our economic leaders, leaders of Soviet culture, directors of territorial-party and Soviet organizations, engineers, and technicians—every one of them in his own place of work generously gave of his strength and knowledge toward ensuring victory over the enemy.

Exceptional heroism was shown by our hard core—surrounded by glory is our whole working class, our *kolkhoz* peasantry, the Soviet intelligentsia, who under the leadership of party organizations overcame untold hardships and, bearing the hardships of war, devoted all their strength to the cause of the defense of the Fatherland.

45. Kuzma Kryuchkov was a Don Cossack who distinguished himself in the first border clashes with the Germans in 1914 and whom the Russian yellow press tried to glorify as a national hero. His name came to stand in Russian literature for raucous jingoism.

46. *The Fall of Berlin*, directed by Mikhail Chiaureli from a script by Peter Pavlenko, was a Soviet film released in 1949 with the special object of attributing the entire victory over Germany to Stalin. Marshal Georgi K. Zhukov, who commanded the troops that took Berlin and later accepted the surrender of the German command, appears in *The Fall of Berlin* for only a few seconds—to receive orders from Stalin.

47. Alexander N. Poskrebyshv was long the head of Stalin's personal secretariat and the latter's trusted aide in all sorts of nefarious undertakings. He was by no means merely Stalin's "shield-bearer," but played a tremendous role behind the scenes; in particular, he was a principal instigator of the *Yeshovshchina*. He disappeared immediately after Stalin's death.

Great and brave deeds during the war were accomplished by our Soviet women who bore on their backs the heavy load of production work in the factories, on the *kolkhozes*, and in various economic and cultural sectors; many women participated directly in the Great Patriotic War at the fronts; our brave youth contributed immeasurably at the front and at home to the defense of the Soviet Fatherland and to the annihilation of the enemy.

Immortal are the services of the Soviet soldiers, of our commanders and political workers of all ranks; after the loss of a considerable part of the Army in the first war months they did not lose their heads and were able to reorganize during the progress of combat; they created and toughened during the progress of the war a strong and heroic Army and not only stood off pressures of the strong and cunning enemy but also smashed him.

The magnificent and heroic deeds of hundreds of millions of people of the East and of the West during the fight against the threat of fascist subjugation which loomed before us will live centuries and millennia in the memory of thankful humanity. (Thunderous applause.)

The main role and the main credit for the victorious ending of the war belongs to our Communist party, to the armed forces of the Soviet Union, and to the tens of millions of Soviet people raised by the party. (Thunderous and prolonged applause.)

Comrades, let us reach for some other facts. The Soviet Union is justly considered as a model of a multinational state because we have in practice assured the equality and friendship of all nations which live in our great Fatherland.

All the more monstrous are the acts whose initiator was Stalin and which are rude violations of the basic Leninist principles of the nationality policy of the Soviet state. We refer to the mass deportations from their native places of whole nations, together with all Communists and Komsomols without any exception; this deportation action was not dictated by any military considerations.

Thus, already at the end of 1943, when there occurred a permanent breakthrough at the fronts of the Great Patriotic War benefiting the Soviet Union, a decision was taken and executed concerning the deportation of all the Karachai from the lands on which they lived.

In the same period, at the end of December 1943, the same lot befell the whole population of the Autonomous Kalmyk Republic. In March 1944, all the Chechen and Ingush peoples were deported and the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic was liquidated. In April 1944, all Balkars were deported to faraway places from the territory of the Kabardino-Balkar Autonomous Republic and the Republic itself was renamed the Autonomous Kabardian Republic⁴⁸.

The Ukrainians avoided meeting this fate only because there were too many of them and there was no place to which to deport them. Otherwise, he

48. Khrushchev does not mention two Soviet republics liquidated during the war on Stalin's orders whose populations were deported to Siberia and Kazakhstan, *i.e.*, the autonomous Volga German and Crimean Republics.

would have deported them also. (Laughter and animation in the hall.)

Not only a Marxist-Leninist but also no man of common sense can grasp how it is possible to make whole nations responsible for inimical activity, including women, children, old people, Communists and Komsomols, to use mass repression against them, and to expose them to misery and suffering for the hostile acts of individual persons or groups of persons.

After the conclusion of the Patriotic War, the Soviet nation stressed with pride the magnificent victories gained through great sacrifices and tremendous efforts. The country experienced a period of political enthusiasm. The party came out of the war even more united; in the fire of the war, party cadres were tempered and hardened. Under such conditions nobody could have even thought of the possibility of some plot in the party.

And it was precisely at this time that the so-called "Leningrad affair" was born. As we have now proven, this case was fabricated. Those who innocently lost their lives included Comrades Voznesensky, Kuznetsov, Rodionov, Popkov, and others.⁴⁹

As is known, Voznesensky and Kuznetsov were talented and eminent leaders. Once they stood very close to Stalin. It is sufficient to mention that Stalin made Voznesensky first deputy to the chairman of the Council of Ministers and Kuznetsov was elected Secretary of the Central Committee. The very fact that Stalin entrusted Kuznetsov with the supervision of the state-security organs shows the trust which he enjoyed.

How did it happen that these persons were branded as enemies of the people and liquidated?

Facts prove that the "Leningrad affair" is also the result of willfulness which Stalin exercised against party cadres. Had a normal situation existed in the party's Central Committee and in the Central Committee Political Bureau, affairs of this nature would have been examined there in accordance with party practice, and all pertinent facts assessed; as a result, such an affair as well as others would not have happened.

We must state that, after the war, the situation became even more compli-

49. A great deal has been written about the "Leningrad case," but the essential facts are still unknown. Thus far, no Soviet publication has given the exact nature of the charges leading to the execution of Nikolai A. Voznesensky, a Politburo member and President of the State Planning Commission; A. A. Kuznetsov, Secretary of the Central Committee; Pyotr S. Popkov, Secretary of the Leningrad Provincial Committee; Mikhail I. Rodionov, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Russian Republic, and others. Khrushchev's speech also fails to clear this up. His most important factual statement is the assertion that Stalin had assigned Kuznetsov to the surveillance of the state-security organs—that is, Stalin had removed these organs for some time from Beria's supervision. This order by Stalin must have been given in 1947, when Zhdanov's influence was at its height; Kuznetsov was Zhdanov's man. Khrushchev's statement throws new light on the intense struggle that raged at the top levels of the regime in the first years after the war.

cated. Stalin became even more capricious, irritable and brutal; in particular his suspicion grew. His persecution mania reached unbelievable dimensions. Many workers were becoming enemies before his very eyes. After the war, Stalin separated himself from the collective even more. Everything was decided by him alone without any consideration for anyone or anything.

This unbelievable suspicion was cleverly taken advantage of by the abject provocateur and vile enemy, Beria, who had murdered thousands of Communists and loyal Soviet people. The elevation of Voznesensky and Kuznetsov alarmed Beria. As we have now proven, it had been precisely Beria who had "suggested" to Stalin the fabrication by him and by his confidants of materials in the form of declarations and anonymous letters, and in the form of various rumors and talks.

The party's Central Committee has examined this so-called "Leningrad affair"; persons who innocently suffered are now rehabilitated and honor has been restored to the glorious Leningrad party organization. Abakumov⁵⁰ and others who had fabricated this affair were brought before a court; their trial took place in Leningrad and they received what they deserved.

The question arises: Why is it that we see the truth of this affair only now, and why did we not do something earlier, during Stalin's life, in order to prevent the loss of innocent lives? It was because Stalin personally supervised the "Leningrad affair," and the majority of the Political Bureau members did not, at that time, know all of the circumstances in these matters and could not therefore intervene.

When Stalin received certain material from Beria and Abakumov, without examining these slanderous materials he ordered an investigation of the "affair" of Voznesensky and Kuznetsov. With this, their fate was sealed.

Instructive in the same way is the case of the Mingrelian nationalist organization which supposedly existed in Georgia.⁵¹ As is known, resolutions by the

50. Victor S. Abakumov, Soviet Minister of State Security in 1947-51, and several of his closest colleagues were condemned and executed in December 1954. The basis of the accusation was the repressive measures taken by Abakumov against Zhdanov's closest aides in the "Leningrad case."

51. Thus far, there has been no information about the "Mingrelian conspiracy" in the press. Khrushchev's speech does little to fill this gap. The November 1951 and March 1952 resolutions of the Party Central Committee to which Khrushchev refers were never published in the press. Unquestionably related to this affair is the disappearance of K. N. Charkviani, who was First Secretary of the Georgian Communist party from 1939 to 1951; most likely, he was pronounced a leader of this conspiracy (which was, of course, a product of the MVD's imagination). Those drawn into this case were accused, according to Khrushchev, of planning Georgia's secession from the USSR and union with Turkey.

Khrushchev's statement on the "Mingrelian conspiracy" does explain the purges in Georgia in 1952. Though he implies that the "Mingrelian case," like the "Leningrad case," was also staged by Beria and Abakumov, this is a deliberate distortion. It was precisely in November 1951 that S. D. Ignatiev, one of Beria's bitterest enemies, was appointed Minister of State

Central Committee, Communist Party of the Soviet Union, were made concerning this case in November 1951 and in March 1952. These resolutions were made without prior discussion with the Political Bureau. Stalin had personally dictated them. They made serious accusations against many loyal Communists. On the basis of falsified documents, it was proven that there existed in Georgia a supposedly nationalistic organization whose objective was the liquidation of the Soviet power in that republic with the help of imperialist powers.

In this connection, a number of responsible party and Soviet workers were arrested in Georgia. As was later proven, this was a slander directed against the Georgian party organization.

We know that there have been at times manifestations of local bourgeois nationalism in Georgia as in several other republics. The question arises: Could it be possible that, in the period during which the resolutions referred to above were made, nationalist tendencies grew so much that there was a danger of Georgia's leaving the Soviet Union and joining Turkey? (Animation in the hall, laughter.)

This is, of course, nonsense. It is impossible to imagine how such assumptions could enter anyone's mind. Everyone knows how Georgia has developed economically and culturally under Soviet rule.

Industrial production of the Georgian Republic is 27 times greater than it was before the Revolution. Many new industries have arisen in Georgia which did not exist there before the Revolution: iron smelting, an oil industry, a machine-construction industry, etc. Illiteracy has long since been liquidated, which, in pre-Revolutionary Georgia, included 78 per cent of the population.

Could the Georgians, comparing the situation in their republic with the hard situation of the working masses in Turkey, be aspiring to join Turkey? In 1955, Georgia produced 18 times as much steel per person as Turkey. Georgia produces 9 times as much electrical energy per person as Turkey. According to the available 1950 census, 65 per cent of Turkey's total population are illiterate, and, of the women, 80 per cent are illiterate. Georgia has 19 institutions of higher learning which have about 39,000 students; this is 8 times more than in Turkey (for each 1,000 inhabitants). The prosperity of the working people has grown tremendously in Georgia under Soviet rule.

It is clear that, as the economy and culture develop, and as the socialist consciousness of the working masses in Georgia grows, the source from which bourgeois nationalism draws its strength evaporates.

As it developed, there was no nationalistic organization in Georgia. Thousands of innocent people fell victim to willfulness and lawlessness. All of this happened under the "genial" leadership of Stalin, "the great son of the

Security; the "Mingrelian case" was, therefore, trumped up as a blow at Beria. It and the purges which followed in Georgia (in April, September and November 1952) undermined Beria's position and cleared the way for the projected "second Yeshovshchina" which began, after the 19th Party Congress of November 1952, with the arrests in the "doctors' plot."

Georgian nation," as Georgians like to refer to Stalin. (Animation in the hall.)

The willfulness of Stalin showed itself not only in decisions concerning the internal life of the country but also in the international relations of the Soviet Union.

The July plenum of the Central Committee studied in detail the reasons for the development of conflict with Yugoslavia. It was a shameful role which Stalin played here. The "Yugoslav affair" contained no problems which could not have been solved through party discussions among comrades. There was no significant basis for the development of this "affair"; it was completely possible to have prevented the rupture of relations with that country. This does not mean, however, that the Yugoslav leaders did not make mistakes or did not have shortcomings. But these mistakes and shortcomings were magnified in a monstrous manner by Stalin, which resulted in a break of relations with a friendly country.

I recall the first days when the conflict between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia began artificially to be blown up. Once, when I came from Kiev to Moscow, I was invited to visit Stalin, who, pointing to the copy of a letter lately sent to Tito, asked me, "Have you read this?"

Not waiting for my reply, he answered, "I will shake my little finger—and there will be no more Tito. He will fall."

We have dearly paid for this "shaking of the little finger." This statement reflected Stalin's mania for greatness, but he acted just that way: "I will shake my little finger—and there will be no Kossior"; "I will shake my little finger once more and Postyshev and Chubar will be no more"; "I will shake my little finger again—and Voznesensky, Kuznetsov and many others will disappear."

But this did not happen to Tito. No matter how much or how little Stalin shook, not only his little finger but everything else that he could shake, Tito did not fall. Why? The reason was that, in this case of disagreement with the Yugoslav comrades, Tito had behind him a state and a people who had gone through a severe school of fighting for liberty and independence, a people which gave support to its leaders.

You see to what Stalin's mania for greatness led. He had completely lost consciousness of reality; he demonstrated his suspicion and haughtiness not only in relation to individuals in the USSR, but in relation to whole parties and nations.

We have carefully examined the case of Yugoslavia and have found a proper solution which is approved by the peoples of the Soviet Union and of Yugoslavia as well as by the working masses of all the people's democracies and by all progressive humanity. The liquidation of the abnormal relationship with Yugoslavia was done in the interest of the whole camp of socialism, in the interest of strengthening peace in the whole world.

Let us also recall the "affair of the doctor-plotters." (Animation in the hall.) Actually there was no "affair" outside of the declaration of the woman doctor Timashuk, who was probably influenced or ordered by someone (after

all, she was an unofficial collaborator of the organs of state security) to write Stalin a letter in which she declared that doctors were applying supposedly improper methods of medical treatment.

Such a letter was sufficient for Stalin to reach an immediate conclusion that there are doctor-plotters in the Soviet Union.⁵² He issued orders to arrest a group of eminent Soviet medical specialists. He personally issued advice on the conduct of the investigation and the method of interrogation of the arrested persons. He said that the academician Vinogradov should be put in chains, another one should be beaten. Present at this Congress as a delegate is the former Minister of State Security, Comrade Ignatiev. Stalin told him curtly, "If you do not obtain confessions from the doctors we will shorten you by a head." (Tumult in the hall.)

Stalin personally called the investigative judge, gave him instructions, advised him on which investigative methods should be used; these methods were simple—beat, beat and, once again, beat.

Shortly after the doctors were arrested, we members of the Political Bureau received protocols with the doctors' confessions of guilt. After distributing these protocols, Stalin told us, "You are blind like young kittens; what will happen without me? The country will perish because you do not know how to recognize enemies."

The case was so presented that no one could verify the facts on which the investigation was based. There was no possibility of trying to verify facts by contacting those who had made the confessions of guilt.

We felt, however, that the case of the arrested doctors was questionable. We knew some of these people personally because they had once treated us. When

52. The case of the "doctors' plot" was concocted on Stalin's orders in the winter of 1952-53 by the then Minister of State Security, S. D. Ignatiev, and his deputy, Ryumin. Several dozen of the leading doctors in Moscow were arrested, headed by the top specialists of the Kremlin hospital who treated Stalin and all the Soviet chieftains. They were officially charged with using improper medical techniques in order to murder their patients. Specifically, they were accused of having poisoned Andrei A. Zhdanov and Alexander S. Shcherbakov and of attempting to poison Marshals Konev, Vasilevsky, Govorov and others.

The first official announcement of the case appeared on January 13, 1953 in *Pravda* and *Izvestia*. Two of the arrested doctors, Professor M. B. Kogan and Professor Y. G. Etinger, died under torture. The stage was being set for a major trial, with the doctors and their accomplices accused of being agents of foreign intelligence (chiefly American). At the same time, the former leaders of the MGB were accused of insufficient vigilance. This was directed first and foremost at Beria himself.

After Stalin's death, the case was reviewed on Beria's orders and all the surviving prisoners were released, while Ryumin, who directly led the investigation of the "plot," was tried and executed. Ignatiev was rescued from arrest chiefly by the intercession of Khrushchev, who put him to work in the Party apparatus. (Ignatiev is now First Secretary of the Bashkirian Provincial Committee.)

we examined this "case" after Stalin's death, we found it to be fabricated from beginning to end.

This ignominious "case" was set up by Stalin; he did not, however, have the time in which to bring it to an end (as he conceived that end), and for this reason the doctors are still alive. Now all have been rehabilitated; they are working in the same places they were working before; they treat top individuals, not excluding members of the Government; they have our full confidence; and they execute their duties honestly, as they did before.

In organizing the various dirty and shameful cases, a very base role was played by the rabid enemy of our party, an agent of a foreign intelligence service—Beria, who had stolen into Stalin's confidence. In what way could this provocateur gain such a position in the party and in the state, so as to become the First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Soviet Union and a member of the Central Committee Political Bureau? It has now been established that this villain had climbed up the Government ladder over an untold number of corpses.

Were there any signs that Beria was an enemy of the party? Yes, there were. Already in 1937, at a Central Committee plenum, former People's Commissar of Health⁵³ Kaminsky said that Beria worked for the Mussavat intelligence service.⁵⁴ But the Central Committee plenum had barely concluded when Kaminsky was arrested and then shot. Had Stalin examined Kaminsky's statement? No, because Stalin believed in Beria, and that was enough for him. And when Stalin believed in anyone or anything, then no one could say anything which was contrary to his opinion; anyone who would dare to express opposition would have met the same fate as Kaminsky.

There were other signs, also. The declaration which Comrade Snegov⁵⁵ made to the party's Central Committee is interesting. (Parenthetically speaking, he was also rehabilitated not long ago, after 17 years in prison camps.) In this declaration, Snegov writes:

"In connection with the proposed rehabilitation of the former Central Committee member, Kartvelishvili-Lavrentiev⁵⁶, I have entrusted to the hands of

53. G. N. Kaminsky, a Bolshevik since 1913, member of the Central Committee, and People's Commissar for Health, was arrested in Moscow in 1937 and disappeared. Beria, at that time Secretary of the Georgian Communist party and living in Tiflis, could have no direct connection with the arrests in Moscow.

54. The "Mussavat," the nationalist Moslem party, played a major role in Azerbaijan in the years 1917-20.

55. No information is available about Snegov; he was undoubtedly a Communist party functionary in Baku.

56. Lavrenti I. Kartvelishvili (1891-1938), a Bolshevik since 1910 and a member of the Central Committee since 1930. He occupied a number of prominent posts in Georgia (e.g., Chairman of the Georgian Council of People's Commissars, 1927-29).

In 1930-31, forced collectivization led to widespread peasant disturbances in Transcaucasia. The Organization Bureau of the Party Central Com-

would be easy to prove the baselessness of the charges. I believe deeply that truth and justice will triumph. I believe. I believe."

The old Bolshevik, Comrade Kedrov, was found innocent by the Military Collegium. But, despite this, he was shot at Beria's order. (Indignation in the hall.)

Beria also handled cruelly the family of Comrade Ordzhonikidze. Why? Because Ordzhonikidze had tried to prevent Beria from realizing his shameful plans. Beria had cleared from his way all persons who could possibly interfere with him. Ordzhonikidze was always an opponent of Beria, which he told to Stalin. Instead of examining this affair and taking appropriate steps, Stalin allowed the liquidation of Ordzhonikidze's brother and brought Ordzhonikidze himself to such a state that he was forced to shoot himself⁵⁸. (Indignation in the hall.)

Beria was unmasked by the party's Central Committee shortly after Stalin's death. As a result of the particularly detailed legal proceedings, it was established that Beria had committed monstrous crimes and Beria was shot⁵⁹.

58. Official Soviet statements during the past three years have gradually lifted the veil of secrecy from the death of Grigory K. (Sergo) Ordzhonikidze (1886-1937). The original version published in the Soviet press attributed his death on February 18, 1937 to heart disease. This can now be finally discarded—as can any confidence in the official bulletins of Soviet doctors. Nor can one trust the latest statement, that he shot himself.

Beria unquestionably undermined Ordzhonikidze and persecuted those near to him in every way, but, according to available information, Ordzhonikidze's brother was working not in Georgia but in the Donbas, to which Beria's power did not then extend; moreover, Ordzhonikidze's brother died after the death of Sergo himself. This shows that Stalin's feud with Ordzhonikidze stemmed from causes other than the persecution of his brother and that chief responsibility for it does not lie with Beria. It is probably the other way around: Beria began to undermine Ordzhonikidze precisely because he knew about the latter's conflict with Stalin.

Khrushchev prefers to remain silent about these real causes, since otherwise he would have to reveal the great political struggle between Stalin and the majority of the Central Committee elected at the 17th Party Congress. The most influential leader of this majority (after the murder of Kirov and the poisoning of Kuibyshev) was Ordzhonikidze, who died during the conferences preceding the official opening of the Central Committee plenum (February 23, 1937). At this plenum, Stalin smashed the resistance of the majority, and it was decided to put Bukharin, Rykov and others on trial in Moscow and Budu Mdivani and others in Tiflis. In order to insure his total victory, Stalin had to remove Ordzhonikidze. Hence, despite Khrushchev's statement, it becomes more and more likely that Ordzhonikidze was poisoned on Stalin's orders, with Poskrebyshev handling the assignment.

59. One newspaper report has Khrushchev telling the recent French Socialist delegation that Beria was killed during a session of the Party Presidium by Deputy Premier Anastas Mikoyan.

thing, it meant it was so—after all, he was a “genius,” and a genius does not need to count, he only needs to look and can immediately tell how it should be. When he expresses his opinion, everyone has to repeat it and to admire his wisdom.

But how much wisdom was contained in the proposal to raise the agricultural tax by 40 billion rubles? None, absolutely none, because the proposal was not based on an actual assessment of the situation but on the fantastic ideas of a person divorced from reality.

We are currently beginning slowly to work our way out of a difficult agricultural situation. The speeches of the delegates to the Twentieth Congress please us all; we are glad that many delegates deliver speeches, that there are conditions for the fulfillment of the sixth Five-Year Plan for animal husbandry, not during the period of five years, but within two to three years. We are certain that the commitments of the new Five-Year Plan will be accomplished successfully. (Prolonged applause.)

Comrades! If we sharply criticize today the cult of the individual which was so widespread during Stalin's life and if we speak about the many negative phenomena generated by this cult which is so alien to the spirit of Marxism-Leninism, various persons may ask: How could it be? Stalin headed the party and the country for 30 years and many victories were gained during his lifetime. Can we deny this? In my opinion, the question can be asked in this manner only by those who are blinded and hopelessly hypnotized by the cult of the individual, only by those who do not understand the essence of the revolution and of the Soviet state, only by those who do not understand, in a Leninist manner, the role of the party and of the nation in the development of the Soviet society.

The Socialist Revolution was attained by the working class and by the poor peasantry with the partial support of middle-class peasants. It was attained by the people under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party. Lenin's great service consisted of the fact that he created a militant party of the working class, but he was armed with Marxist understanding of the laws of social development and with the science of proletarian victory in the fight with capitalism, and he steered this party in the crucible of revolutionary struggle of the masses of the people.

During this fight the party consistently defended the interests of the people, became its experienced leader, and led the working masses to power, to the creation of the first socialist state. You remember well the wise words of Lenin that the Soviet state is strong because of the awareness of the masses that history is created by the millions and tens of millions of people.

Our historical victories were attained thanks to the organizational work of the party, to the many provincial organizations, and to the self-sacrificing work of our great nation. These victories are the result of the great drive and activity of the nation and of the party as a whole; they are not at all the fruit of the leadership of Stalin, as the situation was pictured during the period of the cult of the individual.

If we are to consider this matter as Marxists and as Leninists, then we

have to state unequivocally that the leadership practice which came into being during the last years of Stalin's life became a serious obstacle in the path of Soviet social development. Stalin often failed for months to take up some unusually important problems, concerning the life of the party and of the state, whose solution could not be postponed. During Stalin's leadership our peaceful relations with other nations were often threatened, because one-man decisions could cause, and often did cause, great complications.⁶²

In the last years, when we managed to free ourselves of the harmful practice of the cult of the individual and took several proper steps in the sphere of internal and external policies, everyone saw how activity grew before their very eyes, how the creative activity of the broad working masses developed, how favorably all this acted upon the development of economy and of culture. (Applause.)

Some comrades may ask us: Where were the members of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee? Why did they not assert themselves against the cult of the individual in time? And why is this being done only now?

First of all, we have to consider the fact that the members of the Political Bureau viewed these matters in a different way at different times. Initially, many of them backed Stalin actively because Stalin was one of the strongest Marxists and his logic, his strength and his will greatly influenced the cadres and party work.

It is known that Stalin, after Lenin's death, especially during the first years, actively fought for Leninism against the enemies of Leninist theory and against those who deviated. Beginning with Leninist theory, the party, with its Central Committee at the head, started on a great scale the work of socialist industrialization of the country, agricultural collectivization and the cultural revolution.

At that time Stalin gained great popularity, sympathy and support. The party had to fight those who attempted to lead the country away from the correct Leninist path; it had to fight Trotskyites, Zinovievites and rightists, and the bourgeois nationalists. This fight was indispensable.

Later, however, Stalin, abusing his power more and more, began to fight eminent party and Government leaders and to use terroristic methods against honest Soviet people. As we have already shown, Stalin thus handled such eminent party and Government leaders as Kossior, Rudzutak, Eikhe, Postyshev and many others.

Attempts to oppose groundless suspicions and charges resulted in the opponent falling victim of the repression. This characterized the fall of Comrade Postyshev.

In one of his speeches Stalin expressed his dissatisfaction with Postyshev and asked him, "What are you actually?"

62. This remark about the "great complications" which Stalin caused to "our peaceful relations with other nations" is the only place in the Khrushchev text where he expresses himself unfavorably about Stalin's foreign policy after the war.

Postyshev answered clearly, "I am a Bolshevik, Comrade Stalin, a Bolshevik."

This assertion was at first considered to show a lack of respect for Stalin; later it was considered a harmful act and consequently resulted in Postyshev's annihilation and branding without any reason as a "people's enemy."⁶³

In the situation which then prevailed I have talked often with Nikolai Alexandrovich Bulganin; once when we two were traveling in a car, he said, "It has happened sometimes that a man goes to Stalin on his invitation as a friend. And, when he sits with Stalin, he does not know where he will be sent next—home or to jail."

It is clear that such conditions put every member of the Political Bureau in a very difficult situation. And, when we also consider the fact that in the last years the Central Committee plenary sessions were not convened⁶⁴ and that the sessions of the Political Bureau occurred only occasionally, from time to time, then we will understand how difficult it was for any member of the Political Bureau to take a stand against one or another unjust or improper procedure, against serious errors and shortcomings in the practices of leadership.

As we have already shown, many decisions were taken either by one person or in a roundabout way, without collective discussion. The sad fate of Political Bureau member Comrade Voznesensky, who fell victim to Stalin's repressions, is known to all. It is a characteristic thing that the decision to remove him from the Political Bureau was never discussed but was reached in a devious fashion. In the same way came the decision concerning the removal of Kuznetsov and Rodionov from their posts.⁶⁵

63. In the literature on the subject, there has already been some dispute as to exactly how P. P. Postyshev conducted himself at the February-March 1937 plenum (cf. the booklet by Hryhori Kostiuk, *The Fall of Postyshev*, Research Program on the USSR, New York, 1954, and my analysis of it, "From the History of the *Yeshovshchina*: The Fall of Postyshev," *Socialist Courier*, New York, issue No. 12 for 1954, pp. 237-40). The quotation from Postyshev's speech given above by Khrushchev (cf. note 18), and Postyshev's reply to Stalin which he now cites, show that Postyshev opposed Stalin to the very end of the plenum.

64. The last officially announced Central Committee plenum in Stalin's lifetime was that of February 1947, which heard A. A. Andreyev's report on agriculture. It is clear from the biographical note on Nikolai A. Bulganin in the second edition of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* that another plenum took place in February 1948, but no official announcement of it has ever appeared in the press.

65. The disappearance of Voznesensky, Kuznetsov and Rodionov occurred in March-April 1949; hence, the termination of the normal functioning of the Politburo should be fixed at that time. According to information from other sources, the virtually complete dissolution of the Politburo took place in March-April 1951 and represented the punishment which Stalin imposed as a result of the failure of Khrushchev's schemes for amalgamation of the *kolkhozes* and creation of so-called "agro-cities." Khrushchev throws

The importance of the Central Committee's Political Bureau was reduced and its work was disorganized by the creation within the Political Bureau of various commissions—the so-called “quintets,” “sextets,” “septets” and “novenaries.” Here is, for instance, a resolution of the Political Bureau of October 3, 1946:

“Stalin's Proposal:

“1. The Political Bureau Commission for Foreign Affairs (‘Sextet’)⁶⁶ is to concern itself in the future, in addition to foreign affairs, also with matters of internal construction and domestic policy.

“2. The Sextet is to add to its roster the Chairman of the State Commission of Economic Planning of the USSR, Comrade Voznesensky, and is to be known as a Septet.

“Signed: Secretary of the Central Committee, J. Stalin.”

What a terminology of a card player! (Laughter in the hall.) It is clear that the creation within the Political Bureau of this type of commissions—“quintets,” “sextets,” “septets” and “novenaries”—was against the principle of collective leadership. The result of this was that some members of the Political Bureau were in this way kept away from participation in reaching the most important state matters.

One of the oldest members of our party, Klimenti Yefremovich Voroshilov, found himself in an almost impossible situation. For several years he was actually deprived of the right of participation in Political Bureau sessions. Stalin forbade him to attend the Political Bureau sessions and to receive documents. When the Political Bureau was in session and Comrade Voroshilov heard about it, he telephoned each time and asked whether he would be allowed to attend. Sometimes Stalin permitted it, but always showed his dissatisfaction.

Because of his extreme suspicion, Stalin toyed also with the absurd and ridiculous suspicion that Voroshilov was an English agent. (Laughter in

no light whatever on the struggle over this issue, although it played a great role in the destinies of the regime in the last three or four years of Stalin's life.

66. This proposal by Stalin, unquestionably adopted by the Politburo, is the first documentary proof of the correctness of earlier reports of the existence of a special committee of the Politburo which constituted the regime's supreme body in matters of foreign policy. The make-up of this committee is unknown, but, aside from Stalin, it must have included Molotov, Zhdanov, Beria and Mikoyan. Whether Malenkov was a member is not clear: October 1946 was a period of sharp decline in his influence (at that time, he was removed as a secretary of the Central Committee); yet, he not only remained a Politburo member but was immediately designated Stalin's deputy in the Council of Ministers. In any event, Voznesensky's inclusion in the committee gave it a pro-Zhdanov majority, and the incorporation in its sphere of competence of questions of “internal construction and domestic policy” virtually transformed it into an organ replacing the Politburo.

interest of the laboring people, of the interest of the victory of socialism and communism. We cannot say that these were the deeds of a giddy despot. He considered that this should be done in the interest of the party, of the working masses, in the name of the defense of the revolution's gains. In this lies the whole tragedy!

Comrades! Lenin had often stressed that modesty is an absolutely integral part of a real Bolshevik. Lenin himself was the living personification of the greatest modesty. We cannot say that we have been following this Leninist example in all respects.

It is enough to point out that many towns, factories and industrial enterprises, *kolkhozes* and *sovkhoses*, Soviet institutions and cultural institutions have been referred to by us with a title—if I may express it so—of private property of the names of these or those Government or party leaders who were still active and in good health. Many of us participated in the action of assigning our names to various towns, *rayons*, enterprises and *kolkhozes*. We must correct this. (Applause.)

But this should be done calmly and slowly. The Central Committee will discuss this matter and consider it carefully in order to prevent errors and excesses. I can remember how the Ukraine learned about Kossior's arrest. The Kiev radio used to start its programs thus: "This is Radio (in the name of) Kossior." When one day the programs began without naming Kossior, everyone was quite certain that something had happened to Kossior, that he probably had been arrested.

Thus, if today we begin to remove the signs everywhere and to change names, people will think that these comrades in whose honor the given enterprises, *kolkhozes* or cities are named also met some bad fate and that they have also been arrested. (Animation in the hall.)

How is the authority and the importance of this or that leader judged? On the basis of how many towns, industrial enterprises and factories, *kolkhozes* and *sovkhoses* carry his name. Is it not about time that we eliminate this "private property" and "nationalize" the factories, the industrial enterprises, the *kolkhozes* and the *sovkhoses*? (Laughter, applause, voices: "That is right.") This will benefit our cause. After all, the cult of the individual is manifested also in this way.

We should, in all seriousness, consider the question of the cult of the individual. We cannot let this matter get out of the party, especially not to the press. It is for this reason that we are considering it here at a closed Congress session. We should know the limits; we should not give ammunition to the enemy; we should not wash our dirty linen before their eyes. I think that the delegates to the Congress will understand and assess properly all these proposals. (Tumultuous applause.)

Comrades! We must abolish the cult of the individual decisively, once and for all; we must draw the proper conclusions concerning both ideological-theoretical and practical work. It is necessary for this purpose:

First, in a Bolshevik manner to condemn and to eradicate the cult of the individual as alien to Marxism-Leninism and not consonant with the principles



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Lenin's Testament

About a year before his death, Lenin dictated his famous "Testament," a confidential letter giving his estimate of his Communist lieutenants. The letter was known in high party circles, but kept from the outside world until Leon Trotsky "leaked" a copy of it to the American journalist Max Eastman, who on October 18, 1926, had it published in the *New York Times*. Stalin recognized the authenticity of the document in intra-party discussions in 1927, declaring:

"It is said that in the 'Testament' in question Lenin suggested to the Party Congress that it should deliberate on the question of replacing Stalin and appointing another comrade in his place as General Secretary of the party. This is perfectly true."

Thereafter, however, the document was top secret as far as Soviet citizens were concerned until Khrushchev's references to it at the 20th Congress. While Khrushchev quoted Lenin's criticisms of Stalin, he did not publicly refer to the Testament's praise of Bukharin and other leaders later purged by Stalin. The full document follows:

BY THE stability of the Central Committee, of which I spoke before, I mean measures to prevent a split, so far as such measures can be taken. For, of course, the White Guard in *Russkaya Mysl* (I think it was S. E. Oldenburg) was right when, in the first place, in his play against Soviet Russia he banked on the hope of a split in our party, and when, in the second place, he banked for that split on serious disagreements in our party.

Our party rests upon two classes, and for that reason its instability is possible, and if there cannot exist an agreement between those classes its fall is inevitable. In such an event it would be useless to take any measures or in general to discuss the stability of our Central Committee. In such an event no measures would prove capable of preventing a split. But I trust that is too remote a future, and too improbable an event, to talk about.

I have in mind stability as a guarantee against a split in the near future, and I intended to examine here a series of considerations of a purely personal character.

I think that the fundamental factor in the matter of stability—from this point of view—is such members of the Central Committee as Stalin and Trotsky. The relation between them constitutes, in my opinion, a big half of the danger of that split, which might be avoided, and the avoidance of which might be promoted, in my opinion, by raising the number of members of the Central Committee to fifty or one hundred.

Comrade Stalin, having become General Secretary, has concentrated an enormous power in his hands; and I am not sure that he always knows how to use that power with sufficient caution. On the other hand, Comrade Trotsky, as was proved by his struggle against the Central Committee in connection with the question of the People's Commissariat of Ways and Communications,

is distinguished not only by his exceptional abilities—personally he is, to be sure, the most able man in the present Central Committee—but also by his too far-reaching self-confidence and a disposition to be too much attracted by the purely administrative side of affairs.

These two qualities of the two most able leaders of the present Central Committee might, quite innocently, lead to a split; if our party does not take measures to prevent it, a split might arise unexpectedly.

I will not further characterize the other members of the Central Committee as to their personal qualities. I will only remind you that the October episode of Zinoviev and Kamenev was not, of course, accidental, but that it ought as little to be used against them personally as the non-Bolshevism of Trotsky.

Of the younger members of the Central Committee, I want to say a few words about Bukharin and Pyatakov. They are in my opinion, the most able forces (among the youngest) and in regard to them it is necessary to bear in mind the following: Bukharin is not only the most valuable and biggest theoretician of the party, but also may legitimately be considered the favorite of the whole party; but his theoretical views can only with the very greatest doubt be regarded as fully Marxist, for there is something scholastic in him (he never has learned, and I think never has fully understood, the dialectic).

And then Pyatakov—a man undoubtedly distinguished in will and ability, but too much given over to administration and the administrative side of things to be relied on in a serious political question.

Of course, both these remarks are made by me merely with a view to the present time, or supposing that these two able and loyal workers may not find an occasion to supplement their knowledge and correct their one-sidedness.
December 25, 1922

Postscript: Stalin is too rude, and this fault, entirely supportable in relations among us Communists, becomes insupportable in the office of General Secretary. Therefore, I propose to the comrades to find a way to remove Stalin from that position and appoint to it another man who in all respects differs from Stalin only in superiority—namely, more patient, more loyal, more polite and more attentive to comrades, less capricious, etc. This circumstance may seem an insignificant trifle, but I think that from the point of view of preventing a split and from the point of view of the relation between Stalin and Trotsky which I discussed above, it is not a trifle, or it is such a trifle as may acquire a decisive significance.

January 4, 1923

LENIN

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Sergeevich, 1894-1971
The crimes of the Stalin
era; special report to the
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