KHRUSHCHEV AND THE STALIN SUCCESSION:
A STUDY OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION
IN THE U.S.S.R.

Myron Rush

RM-1883

ASTIA Document Number AD 123570

March 20, 1957

Assigned to

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Problem

Khrushchev might have carried on the supreme direction of international communism -- even if with reduced effect -- had he carefully preserved the Stalin myth and ritually established himself as Stalin's legitimate successor. Instead, for reasons which are still obscure but certainly relate to the internal politics of the Soviet Union, he has shattered the myth and broken the sacred succession.*

In the view of some Western observers the obscure reason for Khrushchev's secret speech at the XX Congress in which he condemned Stalin as a tyrant was chiefly to shock the Soviet people and make them throw off their lethargy. But the result of this speech, made in February, 1956, has been rebellion against Moscow's control, under the slogan "eradicate Stalinism," in parts of the Soviet orbit, and confused uncertainty in the rest; in the Soviet Union itself allegedly "rotten elements" began to express their deviant views openly at party meetings. The top Soviet leaders, faced with broad unrest in their great empire, have reacted with unaccustomed indecision and have displayed other signs that there is serious contention among

them. Such results make it appear doubtful that the condemnation of Stalin was a rational and deliberate decision of the Soviet leaders in which the unfavorable consequences, contrary to their calculations, happened to turn out greater than the favorable ones. The part played by "irrational" causes -- particularly the conflicts between Soviet leaders -- in bringing about Khrushchev's secret speech was considerable, and may have been crucial. In this context, the secret speech appears as a dramatic incident in the unfolding succession crisis brought on by Stalin's death. It is with this succession crisis and the contention which it has caused among the top Soviet leaders (the so-called "elite") that this study is mainly concerned.

The Conclusions

Early in 1955, Khrushchev presented himself in a light refracted through the Stalin symbol (Chapter 1). He called attention to his personal influence on Stalin, and implied that his opposition to Malenkov's domestic policies was a re-enactment of Stalin's struggle against similar "deviations" in the late 1920's. The official biography of Lenin (published in April, 1955) seemed to suggest that Khrushchev was Stalin's successor, just as Stalin had been Lenin's. The biography concluded with a short section on Stalin and, at the very end, gave a page-long quotation from Khrushchev. Further identification
with Stalin came at the end of 1955, when important
articles were published which mentioned only three names:
Lenin, Stalin, Khrushchev (Chapter 5).

Khrushchev's claim to be Stalin's successor was based
largely on his position in the party's Secretariat.
Emulating the tactics which Stalin employed after Lenin's
death, Khrushchev tried to use his position as the senior
secretary to gain control over the Central Committee, and
thus over the Presidium (the former Politburo). He ap-
parently wanted the type of power which Stalin had achieved
about 1930, but was not seeking the tyrannical power which
Stalin exercised after 1934.

Throughout the year 1955, Khrushchev sought to
aggrandize his personal power and authority as senior
secretary and to increase the power of the party Secretariat --
which he headed -- in relation to the power of the party
Presidium -- of which he was nominally only an "equal"
member (Chapters 3, 7, 8, 10-12). Evidently these efforts
met with high-level opposition in the party (Chapters 2, 3,
8, 10).

Besides power, Khrushchev needed authority -- acceptance
by his colleagues and by the people of his right to rule.
Stalin's early authority had been based on his special
position of "general secretary of the Central Committee."
In Stalin's last years it was even implied that Lenin had
made Stalin his successor by proposing him for the post of
general secretary. After his death, however, the subject of Stalin's tenure as general secretary became acutely sensitive, probably because it was hoped to deny Stalin's former power and authority to any one of his successors. Yet late in 1957, Khrushchev chose to publish throughout the Soviet press a letter erroneously addressed to him as "general secretary" (Chapter 11). In doing this, Khrushchev evidently hoped to establish his right to Stalin's "legitimate" powers of 1930, and perhaps even to the authoritative title of general secretary.

In general, these seem to have been Khrushchev's goals until the last weeks before the XX Congress, when his strategy foundered. The setback appears to have resulted from strong pressure for a public exposé of Stalin's despotism and his crimes. This pressure, applied by a faction in the top leadership with support among the sub-elites, was apparently designed in part to counter Khrushchev's personal strategy of relying on the Stalin symbol to gain power and authority (Chapters 12-17).

The name of Stalin was virtually absent from the republican congresses preliminary to the XX Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (C.P.S.U.). But Khrushchev's wisdom and authority were extolled in his strongholds, chiefly the Ukraine and Kazakhstan, which hailed the "Presidium headed by comrade Khrushchev." This suggestive phrase makes it seem possible that Khrushchev
now hoped to be elected to a new office -- Chairman of the 
Presidium.

While he abandoned the Stalin myth in mid-January, 
Khrushchev apparently still hoped to prevent the revelation 
of Stalin's tyranny, which would necessarily increase re- 
sistance to his own growing power (Chapters 13-17). When 
such hopes proved futile, it appears that Khrushchev 
decided -- in the last days of the Congress, if not in its 
last hours -- to mitigate the effects of Stalin's denigra-
tion on his personal position by undertaking to divulge the 
dead tyrant's crimes himself (Chapters 17 and 18). At the 
same time he suggested that he had opposed Stalin while he 
lived, and, in varying degrees, he involved other top 
leaders in Stalin's crimes.

Khrushchev succeeded at the XX Congress in sub-
stantially increasing his power, but he failed to establish 
the legitimacy of his personal rule over the Soviet party, 
and hence over the Soviet state (Chapter 20). Despite this 
setback, increased power and authority were later subtly 
claimed for the senior secretary (Chapter 21). By the end 
of the year, Khrushchev's position had become so strong 
that even Soviet defeats in the satellites -- for which he 
bore a large share of responsibility -- did not shake it. 
When the Central Committee met early in 1957, Khrushchev 
again appeared to be master of the situation. The February 
plenum approved a radical revision of the Soviet economy
along lines which Khrushchev proposed, and elected another
of his adherents (F. Kozlov) a candidate of the Presidium.
Khrushchev now assumed the role of defender of Marxism-
Leninism against liberalizing "revisionists." Thus his
anti-Stalin phase lasted about a year; after February, 1957,
just as before February, 1956, he was Stalin's defender.

Almost certainly, Khrushchev will attempt, in the years
to come, to remove some of his opponents from the party
Presidium and to replace them by his protégés among the
newly-elected Presidium candidates (Chapters 19-22). If
he does, he either will gain substantially in personal power
(with consequent stabilization of the Soviet regime and a
temporary resolution of the Stalin succession problem),
or he will fall from power. If Khrushchev fell, many of
his adherents would fall with him. In the ensuing contest
for their places, the party machine's control over Soviet
society might be seriously weakened.*

The Method

The evidence presented in this study is chiefly what
Soviet leaders and authoritative writers have said on
matters affecting the distribution of power and authority

* For a more detailed exposition of the argument for
these conclusions, see Appendix I: Analytical
Summary.
among the Soviet elite. This is perhaps the most sensitive subject in Soviet politics. Direct statements on it are infrequent, and statements on questions involving the power of contending leaders are rare. We must be content with highly veiled and very allusive references to this subject of power distribution and extract from them what information they can be made to yield. Such "esoteric communications" -- public statements whose surface meaning must be probed in order to grasp the author's real meaning -- are important means whereby the top Soviet leadership -- and factions within it -- can communicate quickly and relatively safely with sub-elites in Soviet society. They have played an increasingly important role in the Soviet political system since Stalin's death. These veiled messages, as will appear from the present study, sometimes display remarkable verbal refinement and deceptive subtlety. (An instance of this is the capitalization of the initial letter of Khrushchev's title in order to distinguish him from all other "first secretaries" in the U.S.S.R.)

By seeking out esoteric communications bearing on the distribution of elite power and subjecting them to intensive analysis -- at the same time taking into account evidence of high-level policy disagreements and evidence of patronage appointments -- the author has tried to reconstruct in its general outlines the course of Soviet elite contention in
the period from Malenkov's fall (February, 1955) to the XX Congress (February, 1956), and after.*

The Implications

The findings of this study support the notion that since Stalin's death political power in the U.S.S.R. has been appreciably diffused outside the circle of the top leadership. Not only has the Central Committee won a certain authority as arbiter over the factional disputes of its Presidium, but it appears that the political views of sub-elites now exercise some influence on the deliberations of the top leadership. The vitally important role which esoteric communications have come to play in Soviet politics implies that individual top leaders are increasingly concerned with reaching outside their own narrow circle for political support. Probably this has happened not so much as a result of the innate political strength of the sub-elites and their direct pressure on the narrow circle of top leaders, but because the balance of forces within the top leadership has permitted the rules of the game to be violated by the introduction of previously banned players into the contest. The military leadership, or at least a faction within it, has perhaps been the chief beneficiary in acquiring such an independent role.**

* For a more detailed account and justification of the methods used in this study see Introduction: The Role of Esoteric Communications in Soviet Elite Politics.
** For a more detailed discussion of this question see Appendix II: The Social Context of Soviet Elite Politics.
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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am indebted to Nathan Leites, Robert C. Tucker, Herbert Goldhamer, and Herbert Dinerstein for their extended critiques of this study, which were useful and enlightening. I received assistance and criticism from Raymond Garthoff, Jerzy Gliksman, and Leon Goure, and from Alexander George and Martin Alboum. Anne Jonas provided laborious, precise, and imaginative research.
FORMAL ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF
THE SOVIET UNION*

Congress
of the CPSU

Central Committee
(Presidium) (Secretariat)

Bureau
of the
C.C. for
the R.S.F.S.R.

Central Inspection
Commission

Committee of
Party Control

Party Congresses
of the Union Republics;
Krai and Oblast Party
Conferences

Okrug party
Conferences

City and raion
party conferences

primary party organizations

line of accountability

line of subordina-
tion

Central Committees
of Union Republics;
Krai and Oblast
Committees
(Bureau) (Secretariat)

Okrug
Committees
(Bureau: secretaries)

City and raion
conferences
(Bureau: secretaries)

* Based on a chart in V Pomoshch Slusnateliam Politshkol
(Aid to Students of Political Schools), Moscow, 1955,
p. 273.
FORMAL ORGANIZATION OF SUPREME ORGANS OF STATE POWER AND ADMINISTRATION IN THE U.S.S.R.*

SUPREME SOVIET OF THE USSR
(Highest organ of state power in the USSR)

Soviet of the Union

Soviet of Nationalities

Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR

The Supreme Court

Procurator General of the USSR

The Council of Ministers
(Highest executive and administrative organ of state power in the USSR)

All-Union Ministries

Union-Republic Ministries of the USSR

INTRODUCTION: THE ROLE OF ESOTERIC COMMUNICATIONS IN
SOVIET ELITE POLITICS

Decisions on the internal policy of the vast Soviet empire and on its relations with the rest of the world are made secretly within a narrow circle of leaders (the elite). This has been the Soviet practice for almost four decades, in which time great skill has been acquired in screening struggles over the distribution of power among top leaders, and acute controversies on policy questions, behind a monolithic façade. To penetrate this façade has been the task of students of the Soviet political scene. But the depth of penetration which the individual analyst has tried to attain has depended upon his view of the nature of Soviet elite politics and its susceptibility to analysis. And the divergence of views on this subject has been considerable.

The present study was written in the belief that the general outlines of Soviet elite politics are discernible even when many important details elude analysis. For his evidence, the writer has placed heavy reliance on published Soviet statements, and he has interpreted significant statements principally by means of (1) references to other relevant texts, and (2) hypotheses about the role of esoteric communication in the Soviet system. Statements in this study are of three kinds:

1. Statements of fact -- mostly assertions about what authoritative Soviet political leaders and
writers have said, but also assertions about political acts. They are verifiable by any qualified person who undertakes to check the appropriate texts.

2. Principles of interpretation whereby inferences about events involving the Soviet elite are elicited from statements of fact. In cases where these "principles of interpretation" are not simply applications of common sense, they rest on certain propositions about the Soviet system. These propositions are of two kinds: (1) general hypotheses about the Soviet system which are well established and accepted by most Soviet analysts; and (2) more specific, and more speculative, hypotheses about the place of esoteric communications in the Soviet system -- the mechanics of their construction, their prevalence, and the role which they play in political controversies among the top Soviet leadership.

3. Inferred statements -- mostly about the maneuvering for power in the realm of Soviet elite politics. These are not facts in the same sense as statements about the public acts and explicit assertions of Soviet leaders, for they cannot be directly verified. They are conclusions which have a validity no greater than the argument which produced them.
The hypotheses on the role of Soviet esoteric communications are supported by substantial evidence for the two years prior to the period of the present study, and they have therefore been accepted here as a working tool. However, these hypotheses do not of themselves determine specific interpretations of the revelant textual passages that are analyzed. They have been used here -- along with certain Soviet statements, their context, and what is known to us of the political situation in which these statements were made -- as elements in an argument. The argument has been designed to produce inferences of varying plausibility as to the maneuvering for power among the Soviet elite in the year prior to the XX Congress, and at the Congress itself. The reader must of course make his own assessment of the plausibility of the inferences. He may be assisted in this by a brief discussion of these hypotheses on Soviet esoteric communication, and of the related hypotheses about the Soviet political system, for they have not usually been made explicit in the body of this essay.

1. **Elite secrecy**: Political decisions are made in the Soviet Union by a narrow circle of leaders. Their deliberations (and much of the information on which they are based) are closely guarded secrets. However, they are partially revealed to sub-elites through such non-public channels as secret documents and oral communication.
2. **Elite conflict:** In the U.S.S.R. the exercise of power -- since it does not have the sanction of constitutionally established offices -- necessarily leads to considerable maneuvering for **increased power** by individual leaders and factions. Moreover, despite Soviet claims to "monolithic unity," policy deliberations sometimes result in serious disagreements.

3. **Sub-elite audiences:** The political echelons standing below the top leadership have powerful incentives for seeking to understand the power relations among the elite. Some degree of opportunism is essential to success in the Soviet political system, and the opportunist requires that he be "given a sign" before he commits his faith and his career (and formerly -- at least -- perhaps his life) to any leader or faction.

4. **Motive for partisan elite communications:** One of the chief sources of power for the top leaders is the allegiance and support of these lower-ranking leaders, which is obtained, in part, by patronage and favors. Thus top leaders engaged in controversy are concerned with persuading their followers that their personal position in the top leadership is secure. Moreover, a top leader who seeks to increase his power at the expense of an antagonist may try to convince the antagonist's followers that his own power is rising. These considerations provide a major incentive for partisan communications from individual top leaders to sub-elites.
5. Public expression of elite controversy: The need of sub-elites to know the distribution of power within the elite circle and the corresponding need of antagonists among the top leaders to secure support from these lower political echelons sometimes results in elite controversy being publicly expressed.

6. Rarity of explicit contentious statements: Explicitly contentious statements on vital political questions which are engaging top Soviet leaders in unresolved controversy are virtually taboo. The taboo is observed not only because of the severe sanctions which may be imposed on transgressors (see section 10), but also because the contending leaders have a common interest in mitigating factional antagonism -- in confining it within certain broad limits -- and in concealing existing antagonism from the West and from the Soviet population at large. Occasionally after a controversy has been resolved there will be explicit statements about it. But since these statements serve to discredit the defeated faction, their accuracy cannot be assumed, and they must be subjected to the same analysis and interpretation as other kinds of evidence of elite contention.

This hypothesis has a crucial methodological implication: if an analyst accepts as evidence of unresolved elite conflict only explicit contradictory statements on controversial questions, he may be ruling out the only kind
of evidence which is accessible to him -- veiled messages or "esoteric communications." Because of the paucity of the conclusive data which he insists upon, he will tend wrongly to deny that there is unresolved controversy on some vital issue in the Soviet top leadership.

7. **Esoteric communications**: Since partisan statements on contentious subjects cannot be made explicitly, they take the form of esoteric communications -- texts which are designed to be meaningful only to a part of their audience. This masking is usually achieved by understatement, by the use of subtle hints and allusions. The vehicles for these veiled messages are the standard formulas and stereotyped phrases out of which authoritative Soviet speeches and articles are constructed. Seemingly trivial changes in this ritualistic language produce messages for interested sub-elites.

In this way, for example, the party Central Committee hinted at Stalin's downgrading in their birthday greetings to Voroshilov just a few days before the XX Congress opened. They altered the standard formula -- which had previously made the recipient of such messages the associate of Lenin and Stalin -- by omitting Stalin's name.

8. **Enciphering devices**: Certain intellectual tools are used by Soviet authors in masking contentious statements as well as by their audience in unmasking them. These tools are part of an intellectual heritage which author and
audience share: (1) knowledge of Soviet ideology and doctrine; (2) knowledge of Soviet history -- both actual events and Soviet versions of its own past; (3) knowledge of Soviet protocol and the customary practice of its propaganda machine.

Western analysts can achieve a partial mastery of these tools. But they necessarily lack the intimate knowledge of the Soviet leadership system which only a participant can acquire -- knowledge both of the general rules by which the system operates and of the concrete leadership situation at a given moment. They can compensate for this handicap only by the collection and rigorous analysis of numerous Soviet texts.

9. Subtlety of Soviet esoteric communications:
Soviet sub-elites are able to discern even very heavily masked and remarkably subtle esoteric communications. This is indicated by some of the highly refined verbal changes in key formulas which are discussed in the present study. Less subtle cues are recognized even by persons on the periphery of Soviet politics, who tend to attribute deep political significance to them. Khrushchev intimated this in his secret speech to the XX Congress:

I can remember how the Ukraine learned about Kosior's arrest. The Kiev radio used to start its programs thus: "This is Radio (in the name of) Kosior." When one day the programs began without naming Kosior, everyone was quite certain that something had happened to Kosior, that he had probably 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 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 sovkhozes carry his name. (Author's underscoring.)

The sensitivity of sub-elites is doubtless far greater than that of the "everyone" and the "people" to whom Khrushchev here refers.

One of the rare instances of a public discussion by Communists themselves of their use of highly subtle esoteric communications is in the Central Committee Resolution of the Hungarian Workers' Party of March 4, 1955. It attacked the right-wing deviation of the current head of the government, Imre Nagy, who was shortly removed from his post as Chairman of the Council of Ministers and later expelled from the party. Crucial evidence cited by the resolution to support its charges against Nagy is his failure to use certain formulas in his speeches and articles:

These rightist views were able to become so dangerous in our party and in our state because Comrade Imre Nagy supported these anti-Marxist views in his speeches and articles....One of the fundamental traits of the right-wing line of Comrade Imre Nagy manifested itself in the fact that he denied and belittled the magnificent victories achieved by the party and that he regularly kept silent about the results achieved.
In his article, entitled "After the Central Committee Sessions," which appeared in the October 20, 1954, issue of Szabad Kor /the party newspaper/, Comrade Imre Nagy gave direct encouragement to petty-bourgeois elements within and outside the party to increase their incorrect activity toward undermining the prestige of the party. The article opposes the correct industrialization policy of the party, underestimates the right-wing danger, belittles the importance of the question of economies, passes over in silence the most important questions -- increasing productivity and reducing production costs, wrongly interprets the role of the worker-peasant alliance, saying nothing about the importance of the leading role of the working-class within this alliance.

* The term "worker-peasant alliance" had crucial importance in the politics of the U.S.S.R. and the satellite countries in the period following Stalin's death. Traditionally it is a right-wing slogan, but it can be given a left-wing meaning by emphasizing the phrase "leading role of the working-class," which subordinates the peasantry to the "dictatorship of the proletariat," i.e., to the state. Malenkov resurrected the slogan on the worker-peasant alliance in its right-wing meaning at Stalin's funeral, after it had lain dormant in the U.S.S.R. for two decades. Five months later he set it down as the correct line for the satellites: "It is justly regarded in the countries of People's Democracy that strengthening of the firm alliance of the working-class with the peasantry represents an indispensable condition and a guarantee for their successful progress forward. It is clear that only by steadfastly pursuing this tried Leninist policy can all the tasks confronting the countries of People's Democracy be solved." (Pravda, August 9, 1953.) Bierut used this quotation from Malenkov a few weeks later in justifying his new economic program to the Polish Central Committee. (October 29, 1953.) In the Hungarian decree cited in the text, Nagy's persistence in applying Malenkov's right-wing line is used against him by the left-wing leadership of Hungary, which insisted on the hegemony of the state over the peasant. In the U.S.S.R. itself, the triumph of a basically leftist agricultural policy over Malenkov's was signalled by adding the phrase on leadership of the working-class to the worker-peasant slogan in October, 1955; it had been absent from this slogan in the five previous lists subsequent to Stalin's death.
Right-wing elements within and outside the party considered this article to be a signal, and destructively began to attack the correct policy of the party. Such symptoms could be seen in the editorial staffs of several papers, including Szabad Nép, and also in the sphere of literary life. (Radio Budapest, March 9, 1955; author's underscoring.)

In effect, the resolution charges Nagy with purposely contriving highly subtle esoteric communications which were correctly interpreted by their intended audience as a "signal" to oppose the official party policy. There is substantial indirect evidence of the truth of this charge. A comparable charge could legitimately have been made in the U.S.S.R. against top Soviet leaders. Instead, Beria was charged with far worse crimes and Malenkov with somewhat lesser ones, while Khrushchev's factional victory assured -- for the moment -- that his public record would remain spotless.

10. Rarity of inadvertence in Soviet publications: Soviet public communications are subject to tight and efficient censorship at several points before they are released to the public. The sanctions against carelessness in these matters are severe, for in the Soviet system publication of an incorrect political expression is
generally presumed to have been deliberate and not inadvertent.* Even top leaders are vulnerable in this respect if they lack the personal power to protect themselves against sanctions. Thus it is highly unlikely that unusual statements on important political questions will reflect either (1) inadvertence or (2) the personal discretion of any individual other than a top leader.**

* The presumption of deliberateness is frequently expressed by the phrase, "it is no mere chance" (ne sluuchaino). While use of an erroneous expression is assumed to be deliberate, the alleged consequences of its publication may or may not be characterized as deliberate. (See, for example, a Kommunist editorial's critique of "people" who identified the "consequences of atomic war" with "the destruction of world civilization" -- an evident reference to Malenkov's speech of March 12, 1954. "Such identification serves the cause of the American imperialists, whether willingly or not." [No. 4, March, 1955, p. 107]) On the assumption of deliberateness see N. Leites and E. Berbaut, Ritual of Liquidation, The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1954, Chapter 11.

** The extreme caution of Soviet writers and editors was discussed by the current head of Soviet propaganda, V. Kruzhkov, in the first issue of a new organ of the Central Committee (Party Life, No. 1, April 7, 1954, p. 30). He criticized writers' unwillingness to omit a particular quotation for fear of being accused of "undervaluing...this or that classical formulation." Editors, from similar feelings of "excessive caution," frequently "prompt" the author of an article as to the "necessity" of introducing this or that quotation, and they compel authors to use established formulas rather than their own formulations. Kruzhkov passed from the Soviet scene within a year, seemingly without having effected any significant improvement in writers' and editors' willingness to exercise their doubtful freedom.
An illustration of the Soviet assumption of deliberateness may be seen in the consequences for Molotov of his statement that "the foundations of a socialist society" had been built in the U.S.S.R., whereas the accepted formula, now two decades old, alleges that socialism itself has been achieved. Some months later Molotov had to publish an apology for his error. In his apology Molotov did not acknowledge that his "erroneous phrase" was used deliberately; yet the issue of Kommunist which published the apology editorialized against "efforts (popytok) to carry over to the contemporary period formulas, characteristics, relating to a long-past stage...." * Surely no Western leader would have been compelled to acknowledge a comparable "error" seven months after he made it, and then have it thrown up at him repeatedly thereafter. It seems reasonable, then, to suppose that top Soviet leaders -- and to an even greater degree the lower-echelon leaders and functionaries -- do exercise great caution in making unusual assertions which bear on vital political questions.

This hypothesis has a crucial methodological implication: an analyst should hesitate to assume that the implications which he perceives in a Soviet statement have escaped its author. When a Soviet author makes an assertion which modifies or contradicts earlier Soviet statements, or

* Kommunist, No. 14, p. 4; sent to press September 30, 1955.
which strikingly parallels a passage in some classical
Soviet text, it is best to assume that the author was as
aware of this as the analyst, unless there is evidence to
the contrary. The tendency of the propaganda analyst to
assume that his own understanding surpasses that of his
subjects is particularly productive of error when applied
to Soviet writings. This is not because Soviet leaders and
publicists possess political wisdom, but because they are
deliberate and knowledgeable about what they choose to say
in print.

11. Accessibility to Soviet publications: The power
to publish a partisan communication is an important one in
Soviet elite politics, and its exercise is one way of
publicly demonstrating a leader's power position. Even
minority factions in the top leadership have possessed this
power of publishing an article which bears a partisan
esoteric communication.

The mechanics of exercising this power, however, are
not clear. In some instances a minority faction had access
to Pravda for a partisan statement possibly as a result of
bargaining between the two factions; in other cases, it has
seemed unlikely that the dominant faction would have per-
mitted publication had they been consulted. Conceivably
minority factions in the top leadership can occasionally
publish subtle partisan statements, subject to counter-
action by the dominant faction. This could take the form
of a contradictory partisan declaration by the dominant
group or, in extreme cases, of reprisals against the
minority faction.

The hypotheses about the role of esoteric communications in Soviet elite politics -- particularly the notion that such communications can be highly contrived and remarkably subtle -- received substantial general support in the course of this study. The abundant textual evidence which is cited (mostly quotations involving minute changes in formulas bearing on vital political problems) cannot all be ascribed to chance. This evidence points to an obscure world of meaning which is embedded in Soviet public communication but which is fully accessible only to the most practiced eye. These minute verbal changes have rational causes, and must be explained on political grounds as extremely subtle esoteric communications.* While the particular meanings given to these esoteric communications in this study may, of course, be incorrect, the identification of them, and the demonstration of their great subtlety, indicates that they do play the vital role in Soviet elite politics which these hypotheses attribute to them. It is hoped that this study will contribute toward a general understanding of current

* For a pioneering study of esoteric communication in the U.S.S.R. see Leites and Bernaut, op. cit.
modes of political contention within the Soviet elite.*

Its primary objective, however, is to depict the course of elite contention, from Malenkov's fall to the conclusion of the XX Congress, in the light of the succession crisis.

* For a popular and highly personal account of methods of analyzing Soviet elite contention see Franz Borkenau, "Getting at the Facts Behind the Soviet Façade," Commentary, April, 1954.
...but behind the speeches,
Some obscure game is being played.

"The Winter Station"
by Yevgeni Yevtushenko,
(Oktyabr', No. 10, 1956.)

PART I

THE STALIN SYMBOL IN KRUSHCHEV'S STRATEGY

Throughout 1955 the Stalin symbol played a key role in
Khrushchev's personal political strategy -- a strategy
apparently designed to make him Stalin's successor.
Khrushchev employed the Stalin symbol in his successful
campaign to oust Malenkov as head of the Soviet government;
subsequently his right to the succession was implied when
his name was linked subtly with Lenin's and Stalin's.
Khrushchev patterned his strategy on that of Stalin in the
1920's by seeking to strengthen the power of the Secretariat
of the Communist Party's Central Committee in relation to its
policy-making organ, the Presidium, and thus to enhance the
authority of his own position as senior secretary. Some of
his colleagues, aware of what he was doing, evidently tried
to oppose him, but with small success.

1. Stalin's Purged Enemies and Khrushchev's
   Defeat of Malenkov

   In the first weeks of 1955, prior to his important
   victory over Malenkov, Khrushchev presented himself in a
   light refracted through the Stalin symbol. He asserted
publicly on January 7, at a Komsomol (youth organization) meeting, that he had influenced Stalin on an important matter of policy, thus suggesting his intimacy with the late dictator -- a claim which no other Soviet leader has cared to make. Malenkov, Khrushchev's defeated rival -- who was about to step down as head of the government and was the only Presidium member required to attend Khrushchev's speech -- was called upon to confirm Khrushchev's influence upon Stalin.¹ On the same occasion Khrushchev countered Malenkov's policy of higher priority for the production of consumer goods with Stalin's authority for the preferential development of heavy industry. He even employed Stalin's customary formula when demanding sacrifices from the Soviet people: the danger of "capitalist encirclement."²

¹ "Some comrades reproach us that allegedly the law on the taxation of unmarried and childless persons, adopted some time ago, is bad. Comrades, if anybody is to be blamed for this law it is to a great extent myself. I proposed that law. Comrade Malenkov is present here and he can confirm it. I proposed to Comrade Stalin that such a law should be drafted and adopted and that law was drafted and confirmed." (Author's underlining.)

² "Capitalist encirclement" has been used by Soviet leaders only three times since Stalin's death to describe the current Soviet international position: twice by Khrushchev and once by Kaganovich.
Two weeks after Khrushchev's Komsomol speech, in his report to the Central Committee (January 25, 1955), Khrushchev echoed Stalin's last written words by stigmatizing advocates of the "forced" production of consumer goods as "right" deviationists. 3 Stalin's explicit target (if not necessarily the real one) had been merely an obscure economist, Yaroshenko; Khrushchev's target was the head of the Soviet government. Khrushchev told the 1955 plenum of the Central Committee that "some comrades have confused the question of the pace of development of heavy and light industry in our country." (Author's underscoring.) In Soviet discourse the phrase some comrades usually denotes a top leader. 4 Khrushchev's use of this phrase to characterize the target of his attack was neither anticipated nor echoed in the subsequent extensive controversy on the industrial question.

Of the top leaders only Malenkov had laid himself open to this charge made by Khrushchev. In August, 1953,

3 Stalin's last written work, "Ekonomicheskie problemy sotsializma v SSSR" (The Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R.), Bol'shevik, No. 18, September, 1952, pp. 1-25, was published a few days before the XIX Congress, apparently as a programmatic document for the party. His brief speech to this Congress subsequently appeared as his last published words.

4 The offenders were generally characterized as "economists" or "theoreticians," which implied that they were members of the lower echelons.
Malenkov had implied that light industry should advance as rapidly as heavy industry, an implication which Khrushchev, only a month later, was very careful to avoid:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Malenkov</th>
<th>Khrushchev</th>
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<td><strong>(August 8, 1953)</strong></td>
<td><strong>(September 3, 1953)</strong></td>
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<td>Heretofore we have not had the possibility of developing the light and food industries at the same rate as heavy industry. (Author's underscoring.)</td>
<td>We have not had the possibility of insuring the simultaneous development of heavy industry, agriculture and light industry at high tempos. (Author's underscoring.)</td>
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In his 1955 report to the Central Committee Khrushchev further identified Malenkov as his target when he attacked those who maintained that light industry "can and must" outstrip other branches of industry, an attack which Pravda (the official party newspaper) repeated editorially when Malenkov resigned as head of the government. Again, only Malenkov among the top leaders had used the phrase "can and must" with respect to rates of development in sectors of industry. When addressing the Supreme Soviet (the highest legislative body) on August 8, 1953, he said:

"We can and therefore must, in the interest of securing a more rapid rise in the material and cultural standard of living of the people, force the development of light industry by all means."

Only a year before his attack on Stalin at the XX Congress in February, 1956, Khrushchev indicated his positive attitude toward the Stalin-image when he presented his
opposition to Malenkov's domestic policies as a re-enactment of Stalin's struggle against rightist views in 1929 and 1930. At the January, 1955, plenum the erroneous views of "some comrades" were characterized by Khrushchev as "a belching forth of the right deviation, a belching forth of views hostile to Leninism which were at one time propagated by Rykov, Bukharin and their ilk." At the time Khrushchev delivered his 1955 report, references to this "right deviation" had long since disappeared from Soviet polemical writing, except for Stalin's last work, The Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R. In Soviet historical literature, "right deviation" had come to be symbolized by Bukharin's name alone, so that Khrushchev's placing of Rykov's name before that of Bukharin appears deliberate. It suggested that Malenkov's views involved errors as serious as those of Rykov in the twenties, for Rykov had succeeded Lenin as head of the government just as Malenkov succeeded Stalin.® Stalin subsequently charged Rykov -- as Khrushchev implicitly charged Malenkov -- with advocating a rise in living standards which would impede the growth of

5 Until the purge trials in the mid-1930's the "right" deviation had been identified with three names: Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomsky. Khrushchev pointedly restored only the name of Rykov, the former premier, and not that of Tomsky.
the Soviet economy. 6

Reliance on the Stalin-image was again evident in Khrushchev's very brief appearance before the meeting of the Supreme Soviet which received Malenkov's resignation in February, 1955. In nominating Bulganin to head the government, Khrushchev displayed deference to Stalin and placed great stress on closeness to Stalin as a qualification for high office. He also emphasized Stalin's closeness to Lenin and indicated his own respect for Stalin by using Stalin's first name and his patronymic. Since such nuances are conveyed with great subtlety by Soviet leaders, it is useful to contrast Khrushchev's introduction of Bulganin with Beria's introduction of Malenkov on an identical occasion:

Beria (March 15, 1953) Worthy disciple of the great
...Comrade Malenkov [is] a Lenin, and one of the closest
talented disciple of Lenin and a faithful comrade-in-continuer of Lenin's cause -arms of the
arms of Stalin.

Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin - Comrade Bulganin is an outstanding party and state
leader. (Author's under-scoring.)

6 Even after Khrushchev attacked Stalin as a bloody tyrant in the secret speech at the XX Congress, Stalin's authority continued to be used to counter a right-wing economic policy. Of the four articles by Stalin which the party's theoretical journal Kommunist (No. 14, p. 6) specifically recommended for study after the XX Congress, two were polemical attacks on the right wing: "Ob industrializatsii strany i o pravom uklone v VKP(b)" (On Industrialization of the Country and on the Right Deviation in the VKP(b)), first published in 1928 and reprinted in I. Stalin, Sochinenia (Collected Works), Vol. 11, Gospolitizdat, Moscow, 1952, pp. 245-290; and "O pravom uklone v VKP(b)" (On the Right Deviation in the VKP(b)), first published in 1929 and reprinted in ibid., Vol. 12, 1953, pp. 1-107.
Khrushchev's own closeness to Stalin was explicitly asserted soon afterwards. At the end of March, 1955, a biographical article called him "one of the closest comrades-in-arms of J. V. Stalin." For other Soviet leaders the closest association mentioned in biographical articles or traditional birthday greetings has been merely "comrade-in-arms" -- the phrase which was used even for Khrushchev only one year earlier in the highly eulogistic letter sent him on his sixtieth birthday (April, 1954). In the intervening year Khrushchev had evidently succeeded in increasing his political identification with Stalin.

The calculated association of his own name and policies with those of Stalin indicates that in early 1955 Khrushchev believed the Stalin symbol conferred legitimacy. Certainly he was not then contemplating the denigration, either precipitous or gradual, of Stalin.

2. A Deceased General Secretary Demoted To Block the Rise of A New Incumbent

Malenkov's demotion was a highly dramatic incident in a factional conflict which had persisted, with varying intensity and changing alignments, from the time of Stalin's death. Since Khrushchev's bid to succeed Stalin emerged

7 Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar' (Encyclopedic Dictionary), Moscow, Vol. 3, p. 567; sent to press March 31, 1955. Surprisingly, the article on Stalin in this same volume slighted Khrushchev, presumably because of the influence of his opponents. (See Chapter 2.)
from and was conditioned by this struggle, it is necessary to see how the contention evolved. The two factions, headed by Malenkov and Khrushchev, disputed not only on questions of policy but also on the allocation of the dead dictator's powers and, subsequently, of Beria's. Attached to Malenkov's group were Saburov and Pervukhin and, less securely, Mikoyan. Khrushchev's opposing faction included Bulganin, Kaganovich and, on some issues, Voroshilov and Molotov.

The Malenkov faction's chief base of power was the government apparatus, headed by the Council of Ministers. Malenkov evidently sought to diminish the prestige of the party's Central Committee and its authority over the government, for he publicly slighted the Central Committee in his speeches. When Malenkov suffered defeat, however, in a climactic factional battle in the winter of 1955, he was forced to acknowledge the supremacy of the Central Committee.

8 Malenkov's "new course" program was announced on August 8, 1953, to the Supreme Soviet, before a public decision on the matter had been taken by the Central Committee. Although Malenkov associated the Central Committee with the government five times in his proposals, he invariably placed the "government" before the "Central Committee," a violation of Soviet protocol. Subsequently, when he resigned as head of the government, Malenkov seemed to acknowledge this protocol violation; he noted "by the way" that the reform of the agricultural tax which he had proposed to the Supreme Soviet in 1953 on behalf of the "government and the Central Committee...was carried out on the initiative and proposal of the Central Committee." In the 1954 election campaign Malenkov was the only top leader who failed to mention the Central Committee; every other leader mentioned that body at least twice.
He promised in his resignation statement to the Supreme
Soviet on February 7, 1955, that:

In the new sectors entrusted to me I will,
under the guidance of the Central Committee
of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union,
monolithic in its unity and solidarity, and
of the Soviet government, perform in the
most conscientious manner my duty and the
functions which will be entrusted to me.
(Author's underscoring.)

Upon replacing him Bulganin, "first of all," committed the
Council of Ministers to "undeviatingly carry out the policy
drafted by the Communist Party."

Malenkov's opponents relied on the party apparatus and
its power-center, the Secretariat. This body carried out a
purge of the party apparatus, extending even to members of
the Central Committee, which was apparently in the interests
of the anti-Malenkov faction. It had been instrumental in
purging Beria's followers and appointing new men to their
jobs, and later it drew up charges against a number of
secretaries in the oblasts (provinces) whose careers showed
them to be protégés of Malenkov.

The leader of this faction, Khrushchev, was the only
man who was a member of both the Presidium and the
Secretariat. This dual membership caused Soviet leaders
to regard Khrushchev with suspicion, because of the great
power Stalin had succeeded in seizing from Lenin's faltering
hands (1922-1924) when he held the similar vantage
point of unique membership in the two top policy and
organizational bodies of the party. The concern which this
parallel caused Soviet leaders may be inferred from the following events. While the "resignation" of Malenkov from the Secretariat on March 14, 1953, made Khrushchev the senior secretary, no distinguishing secretarial title was awarded him either at that time or at the July plenum of the Central Committee, four months later. Not until the September meeting of the Central Committee, when the anti-Malenkov faction was evidently building up a counter-weight to Malenkov's authority as Chairman of the Council of Ministers, was the senior secretary given a special title. It was a carefully contrived title, probably reflecting not only the resistance of the Malenkov faction but perhaps also the apprehension of Khrushchev's own associates when faced with the rise of a new Stalin.⁹ Although Communist parties throughout the world were headed by a "general secretary" (and in a few instances by a "chairman"), the Soviet Central Committee contrived a title for Khrushchev which had never previously existed in the U.S.S.R., "first secretary of the Central Committee."¹⁰ This analogy to

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⁹ Published Soviet rank-listings of party Presidium members placed Khrushchev third, after Malenkov and Molotov, indicating that the senior secretary did not head the party.

¹⁰ This new title was first used in Hungary (July 2, 1953) when Rákosi surrendered the post of Chairman of the Council of Ministers to Imre Nagy and simultaneously exchanged the title of "general secretary of the Central Committee" for that of "first secretary of the Central Committee." In Hungary these moves were explained as measures to strengthen "collective leadership." Comparable changes were then effected in the satellites of Poland, East Germany, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Albania. In Czechoslovakia the senior secretary had no title until, a few days after Khrushchev, he also became "first secretary."
the "first secretary" in lower party organs was inap-
propriate because, unlike the lower organs, the Central
Committee had no "second" or "third" secretaries. Ap-
parently this title was intended to deny Khrushchev Stalin's
old title of "general secretary of the Central Committee,"
with its strong dictatorial associations.

Despite the modesty of his title, Khrushchev's power
increased as his faction continued to strengthen the party
apparatus and the Secretariat. (See Chapters 7, 8, and 10.)
It is uncertain by what means the members of Khrushchev's
own group sought to limit and control the power of their
leader, but their efforts had little success. Even after
Malenkov was defeated (February, 1955), and there was no
longer reason to favor increased power for the senior
secretary as a counter-weight to his rival, Khrushchev
still succeeded in acquiring more power.\textsuperscript{11}

There was an attempt being made, however, to prevent
Khrushchev from acquiring Stalin's old powers as "general
secretary." At the end of March, 1955, in its biographical
article on Stalin, the Encyclopedic Dictionary alleged, for
the first time, that even while Stalin lived -- in October,
1952, the month of the XIX Congress -- he had ceased to be

\textsuperscript{11} For example, several of Khrushchev's protégés now
entered the government in high-level positions.
"general secretary." The significance of this reference to the termination of the office of general secretary and its implications for limiting Khrushchev's acquisition of power may be better understood by examination of the history of the post of general secretary.

The office of "general secretary of the Central Committee" to which Stalin was first elected in 1922 had facilitated his rise to power in the 1920's and early 1930's and came to be the symbol of his primacy in the party.

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12 Op. cit., Vol. 3, p. 310. This work is put out by the publishers of Bol'shaja Sovetskaia Entsiklopedija (Large Soviet Encyclopedia), and has leading Soviet publicists, including members of the Central Committee, on its editorial board. A previous involvement in elite politics (politics among the most powerful leaders) had led to complications: the article on Malenkov was extremely eulogistic when Volume II went to press in April, 1954, and had to be toned down in a new printing after Malenkov's fall. The editors noted that "certain mistakes in a part of the printing (500,000) to 700,000) have been corrected." The corrections included deletion of references to Malenkov's appearances at various fronts during World War II.

13 According to the official Stalinist history of the mid-thirties (N. Popov, Outline History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, International Publishers, New York, 1934), "The election of Comrade Stalin as general secretary of the Central Committee meant a decided strengthening of the Leninist core of the Central Committee....It proved of tremendous importance for securing the firm Leninist line of the Central Committee and of the whole party." (Vol. 2, p. 166.) "Right-wing deviationists, following the example of the Trotskyites...concentrated their main fire on the general secretary of the Central Committee, Comrade Stalin." (Vol. 2, p. 369.) According to Trotsky: "In the organizational sphere the actual subject of the Politburo to the Secretariat, and the Secretariat to the General Secretary, was long ago an accomplished fact." (Max Eastman (tr.), The Real Situation in Russia, Allen & Unwin, London, 1929, p. 121.) Stalin's title of "general secretary of the Central Committee" figured prominently in the articles published on his fiftieth birthday (December, 1929).
In the colloquial discourse of the Soviet political world Stalin was the "gensec" (or "boss," khozliin), but by his sixtieth birthday (1939) his party title was rarely published.\textsuperscript{14} Mention of his title appeared almost exclusively in a ritualistic formula which was introduced in the official biography of Stalin issued by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute and published in Pravda on December 20, 1939.\textsuperscript{15}

In 1922 Stalin was elected on the proposal of Lenin general secretary of the Central Committee of the party and from then on has been continuously working at this post. (Author's underscoring.)

This formula, which implied the legitimacy of Stalin's rule by alleging Lenin's investiture of him at the head of the

\textsuperscript{14} As late as 1932 a major opposition group headed by Riutin demanded the removal of Stalin as general secretary. Although until that time it was an unwritten party law that the blood of Bolsheviks must not be spilled by the party, Stalin apparently felt so threatened by the call for his removal as "gensec" that he demanded of the Central Committee that Riutin be executed. This was denied him, and Riutin was merely imprisoned. Khrushchev revealed in his secret speech in 1956 that four years later, almost to the day, Stalin demanded a widespread purge of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite bloc," which was, he said, four years overdue. Thus an oppositionist call to remove Stalin as general secretary initiated a train of events leading to the terrible "vezovshchina," in which many thousands died. (See the commentary by Boris Nicolaevsky on the secret speech in The New Leader, July 16, 1956, p. 523.)

\textsuperscript{15} Stalin, Kratkaiia Biograf\textsuperscript{i}ia (Stalin, A Short Biography). According to Khrushchev's "secret speech" to the XX Congress, this biography of Stalin was "approved and edited by Stalin personally," who added in his own handwriting to the draft text.
party, was henceforth inserted where appropriate in all biographical and reference works on Stalin or Lenin.¹⁶

It was this key formula which received an anti-
Khrushchev twist in late March, 1955. A phrase was added
to the end of the article on Stalin in the Encyclopedic Dictionary: "...J. V. Stalin worked at this post as general secretary of the Central Committee until October, 1952,
and subsequently until the end of his life was secretary of the Central Committee." It is highly improbable that this modified formula was designed merely to set the historical record straight. It bears closely on current questions of politics among the most powerful leaders (elite politics).

There is no published document which shows a legal basis for Stalin's tenure in the office of general secretary after 1934. While his election to the post was announced by the newly elected Central Committee after each

¹⁶ Against this claim of Lenin's sponsorship must be set Trotsky's allegation that it was Zinoviev who proposed Stalin for the post, while Lenin opposed it. (L. Trotsky, Stalin, London, Hollis and Carter Ltd., 1947, p. 357). In favor of Trotsky's argument is the belated appearance of the myth of Lenin's sponsorship, which was not incorporated into the Stalin cult until the purges had removed most witnesses of the event. The only pre-1939 Soviet source for the claim of which this author is aware is the preface ("from the editors") to the 1936 edition of the proceedings of the XI Congress. The investiture myth outlived Stalin, but it was to be a victim of Khrushchev's attack on the "cult of Stalin." Since the myth was born so late (1936-1939) and died so early (1956) it seems reasonable to suppose that Lenin's proposal of Stalin to be "gensec" is not a fact of history but a political fabrication which had served Stalin in the last years of his reign and had proved briefly useful to his heirs.
Congress from the XI (1922) to the XVI (1930), no such announcement was made after the XVII, XVIII, or XIX congresses in 1934, 1939, and 1952. Evidently from 1934 on the formality of electing Stalin general secretary was dispensed with. Stalin may have become convinced by then that his total conquest of the opposition and the implementation of his policies on collectivization and industrialization had made him the acknowledged leader of the party. He had become "Lenin today," and just as Lenin had required no distinctive party office, so Stalin no longer needed periodic election to a special office to legitimate his vast authority.17

17 The theory has been proposed by the eminent émigré analyst of Soviet affairs, Boris Nikolaevsky, that Stalin was forced from the post of general secretary after the XVII Congress by a faction led by Kirov. (Sotsialisticheskii Vostnik /Socialist Journal/, New York, December, 1956.) However, it seems more probable that the success of the "cult of Stalin" and the complete victory of his program made it possible for Stalin simply to dispense with election as general secretary. The Congress praised Stalin like a god; even Kirov, the leader of the faction which supposedly deprived him of his title, placed Stalin among the greatest leaders of all time. About this time Stalin adopted new and more authoritarian symbols of rule. He was "leader" (vyzhd) rather than general secretary. The Congress adopted his "report of the Central Committee" not by a lengthy resolution, as theretofore, but with a single sentence. A clause in this sentence read: "To approve the report of comrade Stalin [this is the first time the name of the reporter was included in the Resolution], and to propose to all party organizations that they be directed in their work by the proposals and tasks advanced in the report of Comrade Stalin." Moreover, while the Central Committee did not announce Stalin's confirmation as general secretary in 1934, it did restore the rank listing of its organs which had been used in Lenin's day (with Stalin now ranked first in all three organs -- Politburo, Orgburo, Secretariat) instead of the
Thus, there is no more reason to suppose that Stalin ceased being general secretary in 1952 than in 1934, for evidently he was not elected to the post after 1930. The sole grounds for accepting Stalin's incumbency after 1934 are the occasional Soviet claims to that effect, mostly in the formula that he "has been continuously working at this post." Such a claim was published as late as December, 1952, which according to the 1955 account in the Encyclopedic Dictionary was one month after Stalin had given up the post. Moreover, the contention that he had worked "continuously" as general secretary even outlived Stalin. An article on Stalin in Kratkii Filosofskii Slovar' (Short Philosophical Dictionary), which was published in

17 (continued), alphabetical listing which had been introduced in the Politburo when Lenin's rule was replaced by "collective leadership." (See the article on "Ts.K." in the first edition of the Large Soviet Encyclopedia, Vol. 60, sent to press December 9, 1934.) The office of general secretary continued to be attributed to Stalin even after the Congress. This was even done, six months later, in an authoritative biographical sketch of Stalin appearing at the end of a semi-official party history: "From 1922 general secretary of the Central Committee of the Party." (E. Yaroslavsky, Istoriia VKP(b) (History of the C.P.S.U.), Moscow, 1934, Vol. 2, p. 332.) Stalin continued to be called general secretary after the XVIIIth and XIXth congresses (1939 and 1952), although, again, nothing was said after these two congresses of his election to the office.

18 Cf. B. T. Baglikov, Velikoe Sodruzhestvo Lenina i Stalin (The Great Cooperation of Lenin and Stalin), Moscow, p. 29; sent to press December 11, 1952.
Moscow on November 18, 1953, states: "...and from this time
\[1922, Stalin\] worked continuously at this post." Since the
formula says continuously (bezmerno), this could only mean
that Stalin held the post of general secretary without
interruption until his death.

From this evidence it appears that the claim that Stalin
worked as general secretary until October, 1952, whereupon
he became merely a "secretary of the Central Committee," is,
as history, false or meaningless. As politics, however --
of the Soviet kind -- it is quite meaningful. The office of
general secretary has been wholly identified with the person
of Stalin. Other Soviet institutions, during Stalin's last
years, were also infused with his person and identified with

19 Some key terms suggestive of bolshevik history were
abandoned in 1952 -- "political bureau," "organizational
bureau," "bolshevik" -- (as a party designation).
These terms, which were still in current use and were
embodied in the party statute, were dropped publicily
and explicitly. But it is difficult to conceive what
further action could have been taken after the XIX
Congress to divest Stalin of the title of general
secretary, since he evidently had not been elected to
the office after the two previous congresses. Even
if it is supposed that Stalin was relieved of his title
of general secretary by some special secret act in
October, 1952, it must be assumed that this was not
merely an empty gesture, having no bearing on the
succession problem. But if it is allowed that Stalin
gave up the title of "genc" in order to deny it to any
potential successor, then the supposed fact of his
giving it up in 1952 becomes a crucial one for Soviet
elite politics after Stalin's death. Thus the dis-
agreement between the 1953 edition of The Short Philo-
sophical Dictionary, which implicitly denied his
removal in October, 1952, and the 1955 edition, which
affirmed it, becomes a matter of elite contention over
the Stalin succession, regardless of which edition we
assume to have been correct.
his will, but at least they had possessed a history of their own before the fusion occurred. The office of "general secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (bolshevik)" had no such independent existence. It had known no other incumbent than Stalin, and, since it had never been mentioned in the party statute, Stalin was its only source of power and authority.

Therefore, the contention that Stalin was relieved of the office at the time of the XIX Congress seems designed to prove that the office had not merely lapsed temporarily when Stalin died, but that it had been permanently discarded even while Stalin lived. It implied that "the highest post in the party" -- as the office of general secretary was called by Beria when writing on Stalin's seventieth birthday, and by Pravda as recently as March 28, 1952 -- was not a normal party position but a prolonged, though possibly necessary, aberration in Soviet history. This idea was already implicit in the designation of Khrushchev in September, 1953, as merely "first secretary," and the point was underlined a few weeks later (October, 1953) when the office of general secretary of the powerful Union of Soviet Writers was abolished and its new top executive officer became "first secretary." (See Appendix III.)

The contention that Stalin ceased to be "gensec" in 1952, which first appeared three years after the alleged event, can best be explained as a move in the serious game
of preventing the rise of a successor to Stalin's dictatorial power. The Encyclopedic Dictionary in which this claim first appeared is an authoritative reference work, and its short biography of Stalin was the first to appear since his death and the historical re-evaluation which his death initiated. The article is one which Soviet politicians as well as publicists would consult to learn the current official attitude toward Stalin and the implications of that attitude for Soviet leadership. The evident effort in this biography to make Stalin's former post of "general secretary" an archaic institution discarded by the XIX Congress (and by Stalin) -- and hence without relevance to the Soviet Union in the year 1955 -- hardly seems necessary unless it was thought that someone aspired to the powers associated with the office of general secretary. Of the seven senior members of the party Presidium (those appointed before 1952) only one was not mentioned in this key article: the only likely candidate for Stalin's former post of "gensec," the senior secretary of the Central Committee, N. S. Khrushchev.

Thus we see that within a few weeks of Khrushchev's victory over Malenkov the parallel between his power-position in the succession struggle and Stalin's position

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20 The question of when Stalin left the post of general secretary evidently lost something of its political importance when Stalin was denounced by Khrushchev at the XX Congress, for nothing explicit has been said about it since.
after Lenin's death evidently led to a rewriting of Stalin's biography, presumably as a means to prevent Khrushchev's further progress along Stalin's path to power.

3. Opposition to Increased Secretarial Power

The power exerted to exclude Khrushchev's name from a biography of the man he may have hoped to succeed was evidently considerable. Three weeks after the publication of Stalin's biography in the *Encyclopedic Dictionary*, a further move in opposition to Khrushchev's growing secretarial power was made in a *Pravda* article occasioned by Lenin's birth anniversary (April 20). The author of this article was G. I. Petrovsky, the only figure in the Politburo (predecessor to the Presidium before 1952) to survive his removal from office in the late 1930's. The article is a eulogy of Lenin's personal qualities as they were manifested in actual encounters with Petrovsky before and after the revolution, but suddenly, in the closing sentences, Petrovsky refers to vital questions bearing on the relative authority of top party organs. He counters the notion that "the secretary" is a valid source for

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21 Petrovsky lost his post as candidate member of the Politburo and was removed from public view in 1939. However, since postwar editions of the *History of the Communist Party: Short Course* still credited him with a Civil War role, it was apparent even during Stalin's lifetime that his retirement from office had not been accompanied by charges of treason. (See *English edition, Moscow, 1945, p. 234.* ) The biography of Petrovsky in the *Large Soviet Encyclopedia* (published early in 1955) claims that Petrovsky has been Deputy Director of the Museum of the U.S.S.R. Revolution since 1939.
policy decisions independent of the Central Committee, or
that he is in any way superior to other members of the
Politburo (Presidium):

Lenin taught us collectivity of work,
frequently reminding us that all members
of the Politburo are equal and the secretary
is chosen for fulfillment of decisions of
the Central Committee of the party.

This demarcation of the powers of the "secretary" by a
former Politburo candidate, an old Bolshevik associate of
Lenin, and reputed friend of the people was supported in
the current issue of Kommunist (the party's theoretical
journal). Petrovsky had relied on his personal re-
collection in citing Lenin's views on the subordination of
the secretary; Kommunist provided the documentation. A
comparison of similar points in the two texts follows:

22 Kommunist No. 6 was sent to the press on April 16,
1955, thus reaching the stands a few days after
Petrovsky's Pravda article. The article which
supported Petrovsky is entitled "Leninist Norms of
Party Life and the Principles of Party Leadership,
and its authors were two leading writers on party
affairs, L. Slepov, party editor of Pravda, and G.
Shitarev, who has the same position on Kommunist.
Almost certainly even such men as these do not act
independently, but are the technical instruments of top
communist leaders. Slepov, it may be noted, had
magnified the authority of the Secretariat in a lecture
in June of the previous year. (See Chapter 10.)

23 Parallel texts are occasionally presented in this study
in order to assist the reader in comparison of similar
material. Capital letters have been used to identify
the related idea in each text. Where the purpose is
to emphasize the similarity of the parallel text, the
same letter is used to identify related ideas in the
two columns (A-A, B-B). Where the purpose is to
emphasize divergencies, a primed letter is used for
the comparable idea in the divergent text (A-A',
B-B').
Lenin frequently reminded us that

the significance of collectivity in the direction of the party and the country, "It must be emphasized from the very outset, so as to remove all misunderstanding," said V. I. Lenin in the report of the Central Committee to the IX Congress of the party, "that only the collegial decisions of the Central Committee adopted in the Orgburo or Politburo, or in the plenum of the Central Committee, exclusively such matters were carried out by B the secretary of the Central Committee of the party." 24

Apparently this marks the first recent appearance in a periodical of this quotation from Lenin. The only previous use of it anywhere which this author has been able to discover was at a session of the Academy of Social Sciences attached to the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. (Communist Party of the Soviet Union), held in November, 1953. (See V. F. Nikolaev, "Vazheishie Printsipi Partiinogo Rykovodstva" [Most Important Principles of Party Leadership], in Kommunistcheskaja Partija Sovetskogo Soiuza -- Napraviilushchaia i Rukovodiashchaia Sila Sovetskogo Obschestva [CPSU -- The Directing and Leading Force of Soviet Society], Moscow, 1954, p. 57.) Indicative of the sensitivity of this quotation, and perhaps of resistance to its use, is its absence from a recent pamphlet on the IX Congress, even though eight pages are devoted to Lenin's Central Committee report where he made the statement. (D. Bakhshiev, Deviatii S'ezd RKP(b) [Ninth Congress of the C.P.S.U.], Moscow, sent to press July 27, 1955.)
The assertions in both texts of the subordinate character of "the secretary" are doubtless partly a barb against Stalin. But the device chosen for attacking Stalin's type of leadership -- a reminder of the narrow limits to "the secretary's" power -- evidently carries a warning that Khrushchev's growing power threatened a new Stalin episode in Soviet history. Both articles imply that "the secretary" is not empowered to issue reshenia, that is, decisions on important questions, even though this authority had previously been claimed for him (June, 1954) and would be asserted on his behalf again (July, 1956). (See Chapters 10 and 19.) By touching upon the powers of the Secretariat and the Politburo (Presidium), Petrovsky and Kommunist approached a most sensitive subject, one which is infrequently mentioned by Soviet authors, and then, with rare exceptions, only to paraphrase the party statute. By delimiting, in Lenin's name, the authority of the secretary and insisting upon equality among Presidium members, Petrovsky hinted at the possibility of friction between the party Presidium and the party Secretariat, the first time this had been done so openly in a quarter of a century.

Fear of Khrushchev's continuing rise, which evidently found expression in these two articles, seems justified. Not only had the growing cult of Khrushchev, aping the incipient Stalin cult of the late 1920's, magnified the secretarial office, but it had also fostered invidious distinctions among Presidium members. This important subject requires detailed examination.
4. Inequality of Presidium Members

Distinctions in the status of the supposedly equal Presidium members were conveyed by manipulating the personal political symbols of the leaders, their names, and their pictures. One of the chief vehicles which had been employed, at the time Petrovsky gave his reminder of Presidium members' equality, was a listing of top leaders engaged in war work during World War II.

This device seems trivial, but it contained the germs of a new "cult of the individual" similar to the one which grew up around Stalin from even smaller beginnings in the mid-1920's. In late 1924, the leadership struggle had broken out of the secret confines of the highest party organs on a question of history: the role of certain Bolsheviks in the October Revolution. This was the so-called "literary debate," which Trotsky initiated in order to compromise Stalin's temporary allies, Kamenev and Zinoviev. Stalin then entered the debate, depreciating Trotsky's role in the revolution and recalling his opposition to Lenin during the decade which preceded the revolution. Such disputes over history, like all public controversy, have since been severely condensed and veiled by the Soviet elite. Public controversy is now carried on, apparently effectively, by the manipulation of a few highly charged political symbols. Thus, a select list crediting top party leaders with contributions to victory in World War II -- the only event in recent Soviet history comparable
to the October Revolution for conferring glory on individual Bolsheviks -- was a potent instrument of elite conflict.

The list initially used in September, 1953, was inclusive and relatively neutral. While somewhat favorable to Malenkov, it did not portend the creation of a new "cult of the individual." All senior members of the Presidium were listed in the rank order then being used for that organ.\textsuperscript{25} Saburov and Pervukhin, who became "party leaders" (i.e., Politburo or Presidium members) only after the XIX Congress (1952), were not included. The list was eminently authoritative, appearing in the most important single article of the Large Soviet Encyclopedia, the "Communist Party of the Soviet Union."

Tampering with the names, however, changed this list into a serious weapon of elite struggle. This transformation was effected, appropriately enough, on the first anniversary of the death of the great rewriter of history and originator of the "cult of the individual" -- J. V. Stalin -- in the official trade union newspaper \textit{TRUD} on March 5, 1954. While retaining the names of dead leaders (Zhdanov and Shcherbakov) the list eliminated five living

\textsuperscript{25} Malenkov, Molotov, Khrushchev, Voroshilov, Bulganin, Kaganovich, and Mikoyan. The name of Zhdanov, a dead Politburo leader, appeared after Voroshilov's, and at the end of the list were "Andreyev, Shcherbakov, Shvernik, and others," that is, a leader who survived his removal from the Politburo, a dead candidate member of the Politburo, and a living candidate member of the Presidium.
Presidium members, leaving only Khrushchev and Bulganin. This abbreviated list of leaders "sent to the front" was the first public intimation of an alliance which, within a year, effected Malenkov's ouster and Khrushchev's nomination of Bulganin as new head of the Soviet government. The two dead leaders retained on the list, Zhdanov and Shcherbakov, were the alleged victims in the "doctor-affair," which was announced in the last weeks of Stalin's reign. This fabricated plot -- apparently the signal for a great purge in which Beria was to be one of the chief victims -- was disavowed soon after Stalin's death by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, of which Beria was the head. The formula linking Zhdanov and Shcherbakov with Khrushchev and Bulganin -- introduced on the first anniversary of Stalin's death -- seems to convey the message that Khrushchev and Bulganin were Stalin's associates in fabricating the doctor-affair. (See Chapters 16 and 19.)

The abbreviated list appeared in a number of publications during the next two months, although there was some use of the full list of senior Presidium members. Abruptly in May, 1954, all such lists ceased to appear.

After a five-month hiatus, from May to December, 1954, listings of World War II leaders appeared again in connection with Khrushchev's mounting campaign against Malenkov. Only the abbreviated list, naming Khrushchev and Bulganin, reappeared -- a portent of Khrushchev's imminent victory over Malenkov. The authoritativeness of this list (if not
its authenticity) is further demonstrated by the adherence to it of the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers in their traditional letters of greeting on decennial birthdays of Presidium members. In these letters, World War II contributions were acknowledged only for Khrushchev (April 17, 1954) and for Bulganin (June 11, 1955); the letters to Kaganovich (November 22, 1953), and later, those to Mikoyan (November 25, 1955) and Voroshilov (February 14, 1956) passed over their contributions to victory in World War II.

Significantly, the biographical article on Stalin in the Encyclopedic Dictionary (March, 1955) which removed him from the post of general secretary in 1952 turned this listing device against Khrushchev. The contribution of top leaders to World War II victory which it cited was not service at the front but membership in the wartime State Defense Committee. This criterion was evidently chosen deliberately in order to exclude Khrushchev, the only senior Presidium member who did not serve on that top Soviet political organ in World War II.

It was against the background of these efforts to create invidious distinctions between Presidium members, to initiate a new "cult of the individual" by tampering with the historical record, that Petrovsky (in his Pravda article in April, 1955) recalled Lenin's frequent reminder that Politburo members were equal. Between the two leaders who
had been favored in these efforts, Petrovsky's chief target was certainly Khrushchev -- the only Presidium member with the title of secretary -- for he juxtaposed, in a single sentence, the problem of equality among Politburo members with the question of the powers of "the secretary."

Khrushchev had already contrived a number of devices to distinguish himself from all other Presidium members: he had secured extensive publicity for his pronouncements, including publication of minor addresses; 26 he had even resorted to such trivial devices as waving his hat in ceremonial photographs in order to stand out from his colleagues.

Khrushchev's efforts to set himself above his compeers is strikingly evident in the letter formally addressed to him on his sixtieth birthday (April 17, 1954) by the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers. Birthday anniversaries, particularly decennials, have been the most important occasion for communist propagation of "cults of the individual." A birthday was first used for personal ends by Stalin on his fiftieth birthday in 1929, when the Central Committee letter recognized his pre-eminence by calling him "senior member of the Central Committee and its Politburo."

While not as pointed as this, the letter to Khrushchev is unique among the six addressed by the party and government

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26 For example, the speech to construction workers (published in December, 1954), the Bernal interview (in December, 1954), and the address to Komsomol settlers of the virgin lands (January, 1955).
to Presidium members on their birthdays since Stalin's death. Khrushchev alone is "son of the working class," even "glorious Slavni\textsuperscript{7} son"; yet Voroshilov and Mikoyan had equally proletarian parents. Only Khrushchev is acclaimed for his contribution "in the grim time of the civil war"; yet Voroshilov was then a leading Bolshevik general and Bulganin, Mikoyan, and Kaganovich (according to their biographies in the Large Soviet Encyclopedia) played active roles in the civil war. Only Khrushchev has contributed to the "great victories of the Soviet people, \textsuperscript{7} the rise of their well-being."

Second to Khrushchev, as a recipient of praise, stands Bulganin. Although considerably lower, he does share with Khrushchev certain distinctive attributes: Only Khrushchev and Bulganin are hailed as "outstanding figure \textsuperscript{8} of the Communist party and Soviet state." Only these two and Voroshilov have engaged in "activity \textsuperscript{9} and only Khrushchev and Bulganin are wished years of further "activity"; the other Presidium members have engaged in "work \textsuperscript{10} and are wished years of more "work." And, as was noted earlier, only Khrushchev and Bulganin are commended for their achievements in World War II.

More blatant contributions to the Khrushchev cult were made during the month following Khrushchev's sixtieth birthday, in connection with the tercentenary of Russian-Ukrainian unity (May, 1954). Despite the current emphasis on collective leadership the Ukrainian first secretary, Kirichenko, hailed
Khrushchev's achievements as "head" of the Ukrainian Central Committee from 1938 to 1949, although Khrushchev had been merely its first secretary. Kirichenko used this reference twice, once in Kiev on May 22 and again in Moscow a week later. Such efforts to further the Khrushchev myth ceased temporarily, however, at about the same time the World War II military lists stopped appearing; both these cessations may have been the result of a general truce which also brought about the replacement of rank-listings of Presidium members with alphabetical listings (June 8, 1954).

These fine distinctions, unfounded claims, and unjustified omissions are clearly the materials out of which a "cult of the individual" is constructed.27 At the time of Petrovsky's Pravda article in April, 1955, these devices had already served to create a myth of Khrushchev as "glorious" son of the people and greatest living Bolshevik hero.

In recalling Lenin's injunction on the "equality" of Politburo members, Petrovsky and his supporters were concerned, not with the falsification of history involved in manipulating political symbols, but with the purpose which such manipulation served and the reality which lay behind it. Khrushchev had removed numerous Central Committee members from their party posts in favor of his personal adherents.

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27 "On the Treatment in the Large Soviet Encyclopedia of the Activity of Eminent Bolsheviks," Voprosi Istorii (Problems of History), No. 5, Moscow, 1956, p. 143. In criticizing the "cult of the individual" after the XX Congress, this article found it necessary to say: "Need it be said that omissions, also, lead to the distortion of history?"
Clearly, if Khrushchev could determine the composition of the Central Committee, he could control it. He could make policy and secure the election of his adherents to the Presidium and to the Secretariat; if need be, he could secure the removal from these organs of his enemies, as he had already done with Shatalin, who was removed from the Secretariat the previous February.

Petrovsky's effort to check Khrushchev was to meet with early failure. Presidium members remained unequal as regards the vital question of their contribution to the war; augmentation of the power of the Secretariat, and Khrushchev's ascendancy within it, continued; and it was even intimated that Khrushchev had a place in the line of succession established by Lenin and Stalin.

5. Lenin, Stalin, and Khrushchev

One of the key documents in the growing Khrushchev cult, a biography of Lenin, went to press on the very day, April 20, 1955, that the Petrovsky article, with its emphasis on the equality of Presidium members, appeared in Pravda. This coincidence indicates that both contending political factions had some access to public communications media, although Khrushchev's was to prove far the greater in the following months.

Lenin, one of the most important books authored by the Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin Institute, was the most significant document in the growth of the new "cult of the individual" after this doctrine came under attack in 1953. Though much condemned in theory, the "cult of the individual"
was still widely practiced, with modified formulas employed in the various cults to accord with new evaluations of their objects. The second edition of Lenin, published in 1955, illustrated the current status of the cults of Lenin and Stalin.\textsuperscript{28} Stalin was still depicted as Lenin's faithful disciple, and his historical image remained large although far smaller and dimmer than when he lived. Moreover, Lenin's call for collective leadership was noted and Stalin's violation of the principle strongly implied.\textsuperscript{29} On the other

\textsuperscript{28} The Lenin and Stalin cults had been authoritatively delineated in an earlier publication of the Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin Institute, the Theses on the fiftieth anniversary of the party, July, 1953. However, its evaluation of Stalin, which was the least flattering of any until the XX Congress, was not consistently adhered to and the Stalin image rose and fell according to the political needs of ascendant leaders.

\textsuperscript{29} In two of his articles published in Pravda early in 1923 ("How We Should Reorganize Rabkrim" and "Better Fewer but Better"), Lenin repeated the major points of his so-called "testament" -- the letter he wrote to the party Congress calling for the removal of Stalin as general secretary -- but without mentioning personalities. The second edition of Lenin broadly hints at the objective of these two articles in preventing a personal dictatorship. "In these articles Lenin again indicates the necessity for strict adherence to the principle of collectivity in party leadership." (p. 290.) The 1955 biography also recalls (p. 300) Lenin's insistence upon the authority of the Central Committee as a collective organ, both before the Revolution and also "after the XI Congress of the party," that is, after Stalin's election as general secretary following the XI Congress. This evidence suggests that members of the Presidium wanted to intimate to informed readers that Lenin had perceived the threat of Stalin's tyranny and tried to prevent it. Khrushchev, in placing himself in the line of succession, Lenin-Stalin-Khrushchev, presumably indicated his willingness to lead the party according to "collective principles," and not in the Stalinist manner. Stalin did likewise when he bid for party leadership in 1925.
hand, the cult of Lenin flourished, feeding upon the praise which went to Stalin when he lived.

What was newly illuminated by this biography of Lenin was the highly developed germ of the cult of Khrushchev. The last pages show Stalin as Lenin's loyal successor; Khrushchev appears at its very end, as defender after Lenin and Stalin of "the only correct party line." A page-long quotation from Khrushchev's report to the Central Committee (January, 1955), giving his arguments for continued emphasis on heavy industry, virtually concludes the book.30

The inclusion of this Khrushchev quotation in the biography of Lenin means that Khrushchev's victory over his factional rivals on questions of economic and foreign policy is assimilated in the history of the party's perpetual struggle against error, just as Stalin's victories over his opponents were in their turn absorbed into the official past, becoming the very substance of party history. The quotation condemns the views of the Malenkov faction as "anti-Leninist views, as a belching forth of the right

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30 The same quotation appears in V pomoshchi slushateliam politshkol, uchebnoi posobie (Aid to Students of Political Schools), p. 483. This textbook, which was published in Moscow in a large edition of three million copies, was sent to press after Lenin, on October 29, 1955.
deviation." Although these threatening words are ascribed to the party. The ominous hint which Khrushchev made in his report to the Central Committee in January, 1955, that his Presidium rivals might be legitimate targets for a purge, had disappeared almost as soon as he made it, and the heresy was ascribed to "certain economists." (See Chapter 1.) By quoting the Khrushchev 1955 report in the Lenin biography, however, the threatening hint was resurrected and made an integral part of official party history, at least for the moment.

The biography, Lenin, which was apparently an instrument of Khrushchev's personal ambition, subtly countered a crucial point in the biographical article on Stalin in the

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31 Lenin, 2nd ed., Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin Institute, Moscow, 1955, p. 283. The phrase "belching forth" (otrizhkoj) by which Khrushchev implied the sudden upsurge of a long-suppressed tendency to right deviation was not a mere literary flourish. The phrase is a vital part of party history, an echo of Stalin's terrible purge in the 1930's. The phrase "belching forth of the right deviation" appears in the Central Committee's secret letter of January 18, 1935, on the assassination of the top Bolshevik leader Kirov the previous month. Stalin briefly quoted the passage in which this phrase appears in his notorious speech to the Central Committee plenum on March 3, 1937, when he demanded the blood purges which destroyed, within two years, the greater part of the political and military leadership of the country and culminated in the third great trial -- that of the "right deviators." (Stalin, O Nekotatkakh Partiinoi Rabotii i Merax Likvidatsii Trotskykh i Inikh Dvurushnikov /On the Inadequacies in Party Work and Measures of Liquidating Trotskyites and Other Double-dealers/, Moscow, 1935, p. 4.)
Encyclopedic Dictionary: the contention that even during his lifetime Stalin had ceased to be "general secretary of the Central Committee." A different ending was given to the same formula on Lenin's investiture of Stalin in the post:

Stalin (March 31, 1955) (Encyclopedic Dictionary, III, 310; author's under-scoring.)

"Stalin worked at this post until October, 1952 and subsequently until the end of his life was secretary of the Central Committee."

Lenin (April 20, 1955) (p. 280; author's under-scoring.)

"...and from this time [April 3, 1922] Stalin worked continuously at this post for more than thirty years."

The Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin Institute seems to have deliberately chosen an ambiguous phrase which leaves undetermined whether, as the Encyclopedic Dictionary contends, Stalin left the post right after the XIX Congress (October, 1952), or whether he occupied it until his death (March, 1953). Without directly contradicting the Encyclopedic Dictionary's version, the Institute evidently used its great ideological authority as a party institution to challenge the status of that version as a political "fact." It will be necessary in this study to return to this debate, which did not end with Lenin.

The biography, Lenin, places Khrushchev in the line of succession, by portraying him in the Stalin image as a
defender of the party line on heavy industry -- an image
which Khrushchev had himself created three months previously
in his 1955 report to the Central Committee. This boost to
the Khrushchev cult was very probably an immodest gambit of
the first secretary himself, who presumably calculated that
a book on Lenin not only provided the best setting for a
claim to the succession but, since Lenin was sacrosanct,
might also confer immunity to criticism directed at mani-
festations of the "cult of the individual."32 Since in
advancing his fortunes in the new "literary debate"
Khrushchev did not scruple to misuse party history to
blacken his rivals, he seems an unlikely candidate for the
role of restorer of the truth to party history. Yet he
assumed that role in his "secret" speech to the XX Congress;
he must have been persuaded to do so by subsequent events.

32 Khrushchev commended this biography of Lenin in his
Central Committee report to the XX Congress, listing
its publication among the measures of the Central
Committee "for improving ideological work." But
subsequently Lenin came under attack for its use of
"theses squeezed out of the Short Course History
of the C.P.S.U.," and for its indulgence in the cult
of the individual. (The only "individual" mentioned,
of course, is Stalin.) This criticism appears in an
editorial in Voprosi Istorii (Problems of History),
ettitled "Twentieth Congress of the C.P.S.U. and
Tasks of Inquiry into the History of the Party,"
No. 3, 1956, p. 11. This editorial was, in turn,
attacked in an article by E. Bugaev, "Kogda
utrachivaetsia nauchni podkhod" (When the Scientific
Approach Is Lost), in Partiinaia Zhizn' (Party Life),
6. **A Last Episode in the "World War II Cult of the Individual"**

Two weeks after the Petrovsky article in *Pravda* had proclaimed the equality of Presidium members, this principle was again challenged by the use of military listings which made distinctions between the members. In their 1955 V-E Day speeches, a number of military spokesmen included the stereotyped formula on party leaders who were sent to the fronts in World War II. Professional soldiers joined political officers in this enterprise, thus demonstrating their willingness to engage in the rivalries of party leaders. One professional officer, Marshal Konev, created further distinctions among Presidium members by elaborating the listing device. He added to the list the names of Voroshilov and Kaganovich, thus distinguishing between the four Presidium leaders included in the list and the three senior members left off (Molotov, Mikoyan, and Malenkov). Moreover, in delivering his speech Konev, whose rise in prominence among the marshals coincided with Khrushchev's rise among party leaders, singled out Khrushchev from the others ("Comrade Khrushchev, Comrades...") as had been done for Stalin during the last years of his life.33

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33 The published version (*Pravda*, May 9, 1955), which was otherwise identical with the one broadcast, did not distinguish Khrushchev in this way. The speech was broadcast live by Radio Moscow on May 8, 1955.
The military lists which appeared on V-E Day, 1955, were varied and unstable. Some mentioned only Khrushchev and Bulganin among living leaders, some added Voroshilov, others included both Voroshilov and Kaganovich. Some lists, following the 1954 practice, placed Bulganin first; others imitated Konev, who introduced a formula in which Khrushchev came at the head of the list. One unique but highly authoritative list even omitted Khrushchev and put Molotov in his place.\(^34\)

\(^{34}\) Problems of History, No. 5; sent to press May 12, 1955. The list was included in an editorial, an important one for Soviet historical writing on the war, which provided a somewhat different occasion for listing the top leaders. Directing attention to the major party pronouncements on the subject, it referred to the works of Stalin and "the valuable analysis of various problems connected with the history of the patriotic war, contained in the articles and speeches of M. I. Kalinin, V. M. Molotov, K. E. Voroshilov, N. A. Bulganin, A. A. Zhdanov, A. S. Shcherbakov, and other leaders of the party and the Soviet state." Khrushchev's pronouncements on the war as Ukrainian party leader would seem to qualify him at least equally with some whose names do appear on the list. Since this slight to Khrushchev appeared in an editorial, which in Soviet journalism is supposed to be a place for directives and not discussion, and since its authors were the editors of Problems of History, it is difficult to divest the slight of political importance. This seems particularly true in view of subsequent criticism of Molotov for committing an ideological error in his Supreme Soviet speech earlier that year.
The variations in these World War II lists may have reflected the instability of factional alignments among the Soviet elite. If so, this may account for their virtual abandonment after the celebration of V-E Day in May, 1955. But the abandonment of these lists did not mean the end of the Khrushchev cult which, as may be seen in the next chapter, received an important boost before the month was out.

35 After the XX Congress military lists were again used for apparently contentious purposes, although on a far smaller scale. In July, 1956, an authoritative Kommunist article (No. 10) noted that Khrushchev, Bulganin, and Zhdanov were directed by the party to engage in "military work" (p. 65), and also mentioned the fronts on which all three were active (pp. 65, 67, 68). At the same time this article credited other senior Presidium members by listing the State Defense Committee (p. 65). Again, on December 7, 1956, a Pravda article by Marshal Sokolovsky mentioned the contributions on World War II fronts of Zhukov and Bulganin and of Timoshenko and Khrushchev. Thus, since the XX Congress, Khrushchev and Bulganin have again been singled out among the top party leaders, but they have had to share honors with top military leaders to a greater extent than before. In November, 1956, Problems of History published a new list which linked the names of Molotov and Malenkov. "In September, 1941, at the most acute moment of the struggle for Leningrad, the Central Committee /sent them/...for the organization of its defense." (No. 10, p. 18.) Others who participated on this front and received mention were Voroshilov and Zhdanov, and Marshals Zhukov and Govorov. This list made the two Politburo members and the two marshals subordinate to Molotov and Malenkov, and slighted Khrushchev and Bulganin by omission. Whether it signalled an alliance of Malenkov and Molotov -- two men whose positions on policy questions have diverged strongly -- is not clear.
7. A Unique Secretarial Title

Khrushchev's efforts to enhance the authority and prestige of his position as senior secretary seem evident in the last days of May, 1955. He was endeavoring to make this post correspond more closely to the office of "general secretary" which Stalin had used in the 1920's to establish his ascendancy in the party. Just before he undertook his trip to Belgrade to settle the party's quarrel with Tito, Khrushchev's secretarial title was modified. This was done in a manner so subtle and elusive as virtually to have escaped notice in the West.

The device used to achieve this rise in Khrushchev's party position was, at first, the capitalization of the initial letters of his party title, making it Pervi Sekretar (First Secretary). This distinguished Khrushchev's title from the thousands of pervi sekretars on many levels of the

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36 There are no strict rules in the Russian language for capitalization of titles, and Pravda's practice is not uniform. Thus, for example, a member of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet is sometimes Chlen and sometimes chlen, and a Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers may be Zamestitel' or zamestitel'. This variability makes it possible to indicate precedence, when this is desired, by capitalizing a title. In general, capital initials tend to be used by Pravda for titles as a mark of prestige (e.g., deputy Minister of Agriculture, but usually Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers) and in formal announcements (such as when a Soviet leader has received a foreign dignitary).
party apparatus, beginning with the lowly rajon committee and rising to the Ukrainian Central Committee. The amount of effort expended to secure a **unique** title for Khrushchev is made more apparent when it is realized that Stalin used the lower-case for his own famous title, "general secretary of the Central Committee," and that he was willing, until the mid-thirties, even to share that title with his subordinate at the head of the Ukrainian Party.

The newly capitalized title was introduced by **Pravda** hesitantly and tentatively. On May 19, 1955, in connection with Khrushchev's speech to the Industrial Conference, **Pravda**'s editorial identified him as **Pervyi Sekretar**.

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37 The present Ukrainian Central Committee is the only committee except the party Central Committee to have a "Presidium" instead of a "Buro." Its first secretary, Kirichenko, is a member of the party Presidium and a favorite of Khrushchev; yet he, too, has done without capital letters in his title. Not until the summer of 1956, over a year after Khrushchev's adoption of the capital initial, were there some erratic efforts made to capitalize the initial letter of Kirichenko's title.

38 The two senior secretaries in the Ukraine from 1925 until 1938 were elected "general secretary of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist party" (Kaganovich, 1925; Kosior, 1928). Kosior's successor, Khrushchev, when he was elected in January, 1938, only received the title of "first secretary." This was probably related to the failure of the XVII Congress to re-elect Stalin to the post of "general secretary."
although the news account on the same page continued to use the lower-case initials. Khrushchev was again identified as Pervi Sekretar a week later (May 26), when Pravda mentioned him in connection with the reception of the Chinese Defense Minister. The next day, however, in announcing Khrushchev's departure for Yugoslavia, Pravda capitalized only Pervi and not sekretar, thus splitting in half an already minute distinction. Entering into the spirit in which such fine distinctions are drawn, we may conjecture that Pervi sekretar proved itself superior to Pervi Sekretar either as being less blatant or as better suggesting the precise increment of prestige which Khrushchev's colleagues were willing to allow him. (If these conjectures seem facetious, the fault lies in the farcical event which they are designed to explain.) Pravda and TASS (the official news agency) used this toned-down but still illicit version with fair consistency in the nine months before it became legitimate. The Central Committee had originally elected Khrushchev pervi sekretar, but in February, 1956, after the XX Congress, the newly elected

39 Similar confusion regarding Khrushchev's role and prestige attended the announcement, a few days earlier (on May 13), of the forthcoming Soviet delegation to Yugoslavia. The text of the joint statement, as first issued by TASS (the official news agency) did not identify Khrushchev as head of the delegation; this information was inserted in an editor's parenthesis and subsequently incorporated in Soviet and Yugoslav versions.
committee announced the election of Khrushchev as Pervyi sekretar.

In the political game as it is played in the U.S.S.R. participants find it essential to know as precisely as possible the status and power of the chief players.\textsuperscript{40} In such an atmosphere, even a minute change in a title could be a powerful signal, particularly when the title involved is the most critical one in the party -- that of the senior secretary. No exact measurement can be made of the increased authority secured by Khrushchev through this device, but something of its political significance and of its part in the contention among the Soviet elite can be indicated.

The role of the senior secretary grew quickly from the low point which it reached shortly after Stalin's death. From March until September, 1953, the job apparently was merely to administer the organizational affairs of the party. The only time the Central Committee met during these six months was in July to discuss the purge of Beria, and it then heard Malenkov deliver a "report of the Presidium."\textsuperscript{41}

However, when the Central Committee next met two months later, senior secretary Khrushchev made the address, not

\textsuperscript{40} "Bluffing" may be an important element in the game. For example, in the weeks following Stalin's death, Beria may have manipulated political symbols to imply that he was more powerful than was actually the case. However, a called bluff may be mortal, as it was for Beria.

\textsuperscript{41} Pravda, July 10, 1953.
Malenkov. Khrushchev indicated that he was speaking on behalf of the Presidium, although his talk was not formally a report of that body.\textsuperscript{42} Khrushchev's own proposals were organizational ones; they were offered tentatively for discussion, and were not adopted. It now appeared that in addition to administering the party's organizational affairs, the senior secretary was also to be the Presidium's spokesman in the Central Committee on questions of policy -- at least for agriculture. Apparently it was agreed that a new title should symbolize this added function of the senior secretary, for the September, 1953, plenum elected Khrushchev "first secretary."

Five months later, in February, 1954, Khrushchev again presented a report to the Central Committee. This time, however, his major proposals, which involved a tremendous grain program on unused lands, were no longer presented in the name of the party Presidium. Khrushchev's failure to invoke an originating authority for his new program implied that the secretary could make policy proposals to the Central Committee on his own authority. This had not been the practice in the 1920's; it was, however, characteristic of later, full-blown Stalinism.

\textsuperscript{42} "The Presidium of the Central Committee of the party deemed it necessary to submit for the consideration of the present plenum proposals for the carrying out of a number of important and urgent measures which should insure the swift advance and diversified development of agriculture." (\textit{Pravda}, September 15, 1953.)
No new title signalled the acquisition of this new authority, but the senior secretary's power in organizational affairs and his authority on policy questions continued to grow. Responsible for agricultural policy by early 1954, the first secretary had by the end of the year become chief Soviet spokesman on foreign policy, religious affairs, housing, and industrial policy as well.

These subsequent additions to the secretary's authority might have seemed to warrant a commensurate title, yet the tacit bestowal of it in May, 1955, raised serious questions: Was Khrushchev's authority in the party to be based on personal force, as Lenin's was, or was it, like Stalin's, to be formalized in a special title? Was it appropriate, at a time when the "cult of the individual" was being attacked, for the most powerful leader to get a unique title? Since party propaganda saw collective leadership incarnate in the Central Committee, how was it possible for its first secretary to be upgraded without public authorization from that model collective organ?43

43 The use of capital "P" in Khrushchev's title appeared first in Pravda alone, and was adopted by the other central newspapers only gradually and with apparent reluctance. On several occasions, a TASS dispatch was carried in virtually identical form in several central newspapers except for variations in the use of the lower- or upper-case "P." Clearly, the Central Committee could not have taken an official position on this question since some editors used their own discretion in deciding whether or not to capitalize the "P" in TASS transmissions which did not indicate capitalization.
In the battle of symbols this change in Khrushchev's title seemed to flout the Petrovsky-Lenin depreciation of the secretary's role, which Petrovsky had characterized a month earlier as "fulfillment of decisions of the Central Committee of the party." The change reflected the growth of Khrushchev's power and apparently was meant to establish that this increased power belonged by right to the senior secretary.

8. The Growing Secretariat and Impotent Opponents

Petrovsky, in his Pravda article depreciating the secretary's role, spoke of the secretary, in the singular. Initially there was only one secretary, and his role in party affairs was a limited one. Sverdlov, who first held the post from 1917 to 1919, worked at it only part time for he was simultaneously the chief executive of the Soviet state. In July, 1955, the size of the Secretariat, and consequently the power of this body which Khrushchev had made largely an instrument of his personal will, were increased.

A small number of secretaries restricts the secretariat's capability for intervention in the apparatus of party and state, and hence limits its authority in relation to that of the Presidium. Thus to maintain the proper balance between the two organs, it is necessary to limit the
number of secretaries. This fact was explicitly acknowledged by Khrushchev himself at the XIX party Congress (1952), when he gave the report for the Central Committee on the new party statute:

In order to prevent the secretariats supplanting the bureaus of the province committees, territory committees, and Central Committees of Communist Parties of Union republics, the number of secretaries should be reduced to three and the secretariats should be directed to report decisions adopted by them to the bureau of the province committee, territory committee, or Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Union republic, respectively. (Author's underscoring.)

This statement subordinating lower-echelon secretariats to their bureaus was not a free expression of Khrushchev's personal views since it was made in a report on behalf of the Central Committee. He probably delivered the statement reluctantly, for in 1952 Khrushchev was the only top leader who did not belong to the government; his power was based solely on his position in party secretariats, in the central secretariat, and in the local Moscow party organization.

\[\text{While a deliberative body tends to lose power as its size increases (sometimes to a group within it, as the Central Committee lost power in the twenties to the Politburo)}, \text{so an executive body like the secretariat will tend to become more powerful as it grows, as long as the head of the secretariat is strong enough to give it unity. Of course, if the organ becomes too large it will become an unwieldy instrument and will lose power to a more efficient organ. This situation may be graphically represented as follows:}\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{power} \\
\text{size of organ}
\end{array}
\]
Certainly Khrushchev seemed to show little hesitation in violating the relevant provision of this statute (Article 42) after he became first secretary in September, 1953. At the lowest (raion) echelon, the secretaries were immediately increased, so as to strengthen party control in agriculture. After the party congresses of the Soviet republics were held during the first months of 1954, the secretariats were enlarged and their powers increased. Instead of three, party committees soon had four or five secretaries, all of them statutory members of the executive organ or bureau of the committee. As a result, throughout the U.S.S.R., the local party apparatus was not only able to intervene effectively in the daily affairs of the bureau, but also to dominate decision-making.45

The Central Committee's Secretariat, however, did not increase correspondingly in size. According to Pravda, on March 21, 1953, after Stalin's death, five secretaries had been elected. The next month a secretary was ousted and no one appointed to his position. Thus the Secretariat was reduced to four members, and remained this way from April,

45 For a short time after Stalin's death the influence of the local government apparatus in the bureau may have increased considerably. The dominant leaders in several republics (e.g., Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan) became heads of governments instead of secretaries, a choice comparable to the one which Malenkov made at that time. The same choice was made by two satellite leaders as late as mid-1954, in Rumania and Bulgaria.
1953, to February, 1955. Of these four secretaries, Khrushchev was the only Presidium member; Suslov very probably served Khrushchev's interests; Pospelov, more of a scholarly ideologist than a politician, was at first used by Malenkov but later seems to have become neutral, or at least passive, as regards factional maneuvering; Shatalin was Malenkov's protégé. After Malenkov's demotion in February, 1955, Shatalin was sent from Moscow to the farthest reaches of Siberia (Primorski Krai) thus, presumably, leaving only three secretaries.

Khrushchev apparently did not press for an increase in the number of secretaries until he felt certain that his nominations would be accepted by the Central Committee. When this committee met from July 4 to July 12, 1955, the strength of the Secretariat was increased at the top of the party pyramid just as it had been increased on the lower levels during the previous two years. The election of three Khrushchev adherents raised the number of secretaries to six. One of the original secretaries, Suslov, was elected to the Presidium (although he was not previously a candidate), thus making two of the six central secretaries full Presidium members. Since the first secretary of the Ukrainian Central Committee, Kirichenko, was also made a full member.

of the Presidium, three of the eleven Presidium members were now full-time party secretaries.

These changes seemed to demonstrate that the leaders who sponsored the depreciation of the Secretariat lacked power to prevent its being augmented in numbers and authority to a point where, in Khrushchev's own words to the XIX Congress, it threatened "to supplant the bureau." It appears that Khrushchev used his influence as first secretary to oust a number of Central Committee members who were opposed to him from their local party jobs, and then placed his own adherents in the vacant positions. In July, 1955, when perhaps one-fifth of the Central Committee's members owed their seats to him, Khrushchev's strength in the Central Committee not only gave him an increased influence in the Presidium, but also gave the Secretariat an enhanced authority and greater power in relation to the Presidium. These operations were very similar to Stalin's classical maneuvers in the 1920's, in which he used his position as general secretary to dominate first the Central Committee and then its Politburo.

Khrushchev also showed some disregard for the sovereign party body, the Congress, whose convocation was announced at the July, 1955, plenum. Rather than permit the Central Committee which the forthcoming XX Congress would elect to choose the new Presidium members, Khrushchev evidently forced their immediate election by the existing Central
Committee which he controlled. By this crude display of power he may have sought to assure himself of adequate strength in the Presidium so that, in the seven-month interval before the Congress met, he could manipulate events in such a way that he would control the Congress and forestall any appeal to it against his rapidly growing strength. Stalin, too, had prepared facile victories at the XV and XVI congresses (1927 and 1930) by aggrandizing his power at the Central Committee meetings which preceded them. 47

Khrushchev's success at this July plenum in emulating Stalin's tactics may have been a turning point in post-Stalin Soviet history. When the building of Khrushchev's power began, early in 1953, it was probably designed as a counterweight against the man who appeared most capable of inheriting Stalin's former power -- Malenkov. The death of Stalin initiated a series of events which strikingly parallel developments after Lenin's first stroke (May, 1922), when Zinoviev and Kamenev built up Stalin, whom they saw no reason to fear, against the dreaded Trotsky. Khrushchev's backers, probably Bulganin and Kaganovich and at times Molotov and Voroshilov, may have felt no serious misgivings about their protégé until after the defeat of Malenkov in February, 1955.

47 One significant and perhaps characteristic difference may be noted: Stalin increased his strength at plenums by reducing his enemies to impotence; Khrushchev, by advancing his partisans. This "moderate" device, which he also used at the XX Congress, will probably be abandoned by Khrushchev if he gains sufficient power to remove his opponents from positions of authority.
Then, however, the removal of Malenkov’s man, Shatalin, from the Secretariat threatened to give Khrushchev unchecked dominion over the Secretariat, an ominous parallel to Stalin’s domination of that organ in the 1920’s.

Historical parallels are important aids to the imagination of political leaders who face a critical situation where established modes of action are no longer adequate. The Soviet leaders faced such a crisis when Stalin died and they became involved in the problem of the succession. Their tendency to form expectations on the basis of historical parallels was reinforced by the Bolshevik habit of thinking in terms of historical precedent. 48

When Lenin died, the image of Bonaparte, a creature of the revolution yet the subverter of it, dominated the minds of the Soviet leaders. Trotsky, the builder of the Soviet army, seemed fitted for the Bonapartist role. Partly for this reason he was greatly suspect to the other leaders, but could do little to resist their opposition for fear of reinforcing these suspicions.

Similarly, in early 1955 the parallel between Stalin and Khrushchev may well have dominated the political thinking of the Soviet leaders and probably of most politically-minded people in the U.S.S.R. as well.

At the July, 1955, plenum of the Central Committee two countermoves seemed open to those fearful of Khrushchev's growing power. Since the current structure of the party embodied persistent features of the organization in the 1920's, these alternatives were, broadly speaking, the same ones which attracted Zinoviev and Kamenev when they began to awaken to Stalin's growing power. One possible move was to diminish the powers of the Secretariat. This Petrovsky had proposed in Pravda, just as Kamenev had proposed it to the XIV Congress, but equally without success. (See Chapter 10.) A second alternative was to create a counterweight to Khrushchev in the Secretariat. By placing a senior member of the Presidium in the Secretariat it might still have proved possible to prevent Khrushchev from gaining control over the apparatus. This maneuver had been attempted by Zinoviev in August, 1923, but had come to nothing, largely because Stalin's opponents had no leader with a skill and taste for secretarial conniving.49

Khrushchev's opponents in the Presidium, however, possessed both, as well as long experience in the Secretariat. The careers of Mikoyan and Voroshilov and, in still greater degree, of Molotov, grew out of their successful performance in the 1920's as party secretaries devoted to Stalin's interest, while Kaganovich remained a member of the central Secretariat until as late as 1939. Nevertheless, none of these veterans gained election to the expanded Secretariat.

49 See Chapter 10.
in July, 1955, which indicates that "ordinary" intra-elite maneuvering had already become ineffective against Khrushchev's power. 50 The three new secretaries elected in July were neither veteran party leaders nor were they likely to oppose Khrushchev.

Almost at the same time that the Central Committee strengthened the Secretariat and its senior secretary, the opposition to Khrushchev gave another indication of its continuing concern to prevent his acquisition of the powers which were Stalin's as general secretary in the late 1920's. Once again, as at the end of March, 1955, an important reference work contended that Stalin was not general secretary at the time he died. (See Chapter 2.) A new printing of the Short Philosophical Dictionary (sent to press on July 15, three days after the Central Committee plenum) amended its article on Stalin so that his tenure as "gensec" ended in October, 1952. 51 The previous printing, November 18, 1953, had kept him at that post until his death. Although the Short Philosophical Dictionary thus sided with the Encyclopedic Dictionary, subsequent printings of Lenin

50 Conceivably, Khrushchev's opponents may have been unable to agree on a counterweight to Khrushchev whom they could trust to act for them in the Secretariat. However, it seems more likely that they lacked the power to put a man in the Secretariat, as evidenced by their inability to prevent Khrushchev from strengthening the organ.

51 Short Philosophical Dictionary, p. 460.
(see Chapter 5), including one on August 20, 1955, continued
to assert ambiguously that Stalin remained "gencsec" for
"more than thirty years."

Thus we can see that in mid-1955 the opposition to
Khrushchev was weak not only in the realm of power politics,
but also in the closely related realm of symbols.

9. Fallibility and the Leading Core

In mid-September, 1955, readers of the theoretical
organ of the Soviet Communist party, Kommunist (No. 14),
found a letter from a member of the party Presidium, an
"Old Bolshevik" and former head of the Soviet government,
confessing that he had recently committed an ideological
blunder. Molotov wrote that he had used an erroneous formula
on a vital ideological question in his speech to the Supreme
Soviet on February 8. His blatant error had been indulgently
overlooked for seven months, although no one was so blind to
its implications as to repeat it. (See Appendix IV.)
Significantly, it was only after Kirichenko and Suslov had
been elected to the Presidium and Khrushchev had less need
to rely on the veteran Bolsheviks in the group, and after he
had shifted to a more "liberal" foreign policy, that Molotov's
"error" exposed him to a humiliating public rebuke.52

52 Later, other veterans, such as Kaganovich, also
suffered a decline in status.
The decisive political distinction in an oligarchical society, where not everyone can be criticized and some leaders are immune, must be the distinction between those who are immune to criticism and those who are not. Whatever Petrovsky, or Lenin, may have meant by the "equality" of Politburo members, such leaders would be essentially unequal if some were immune to criticism while others had "self-criticism" imposed on them. 53 In this sense, Lenin's injunction had already been violated two months before Petrovsky's article publicly recalled it, when Malenkov was made to confess his errors to the Supreme Soviet on February 7 and thus was deprived of his "equality" as a collective leader. The fact that Molotov also was made to display his fallibility suggests that enforced public confession had become a device to deny the equality of Presidium members and to discriminate among them just as the war lists did. Whether attaching this stigma of fallibility was believed by Khrushchev and his allies to be adequate for their purposes, or whether more severe measures were contemplated, is not certain. But the need for continuing reminders of

53 For the leader involved, imposed "self-criticism" is little better than "criticism from below," although its advantages for maintaining a dictatorial regime must have recommended it.
Malenkov's and Molotov's fallibility was still evident at the XX Congress.⁵⁴

In its decree of June 30, 1956, the Central Committee spoke of the growth, even while Stalin still lived, of a "Leninist core of leaders within the Central Committee who correctly understood the pressing requirements in the spheres of both internal and foreign policy....The Leninist core of the Central Committee immediately after the death of Stalin set a course of resolute struggle against the cult of the individual and its consequences."

The idea of a "Leninist core within the Central Committee," a vague, undefined leading group apparently distinct from the institutionalized core of the Central Committee, its Presidium, could be a potent weapon of elite conflict. (See Chapter 21.) In his opening address to the XIX Congress (1952), Molotov characterized the deceased

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⁵⁴ XX Sъezd Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Souiza, Stenograficheskii Otchet (XX Congress of the C.P.S.U., Stenographic Report), Moscow, 1956. Without using their names, Khrushchev recalled "errors" of both Malenkov (see Chapter 1) and Molotov. (Vol. 1, p. 115.) The errors are also cited in the resolution of the Congress on Khrushchev's report, which noted that the Central Committee had acted against them. (Vol. 2, p. 427.) A new demonstration of Malenkov's fallibility was undertaken by Saburov, his one-time protégé, who criticized Malenkov's Ministry of Electric Power Stations for wasting fuel. (Vol. 2, p. 201) Subsequently Saburov was himself removed from his post as head of the planning agency when that body came under heavy criticism in December, 1956. Kaganovich has also been displaced from an important post since the XX Congress, so that now four of the eleven Presidium members have had black marks set against them, more or less publicly.
Zhdanov as "member of the Stalinist leading core," a phrase which he denied Kalinin, another deceased member of the Politburo. It seems possible that forced public acknowledgment of their errors by Malenkov and Molotov was designed to deprive them of a place in this mythical Leninist core of the Central Committee, which may have been taking shape in Soviet elite politics during 1955.

10. **Secretariat Co-ordinate with Presidium?**

A Soviet Debate

According to Khrushchev's own principle, enunciated at the XIX Congress (1952), the increased size of the Secretariat after July, 1955, might result in its supplanting the party Presidium. (See Chapter 8.) Certainly the relative authority of the strengthened Secretariat which Khrushchev headed, to its Presidium of which he was an ordinary member, must have been a burning question of elite politics in the months after the July, 1955, plenum of the Central Committee.

This issue was mentioned in the basic textbook for students in party political schools. This "study aid,"
which was sent to the press on October 29, 1955, has chapters on the major institutions, concepts, and events of party history. The section dealing with the party statute includes a diagram on "the organizational structure of the Communist party of the Soviet Union."\(^{56}\) This diagram shows lines of election and accountability going from primary organizations up to the Central Committee and its organs, and lines of subordination going downward from the Congress to the primary organization. The remarkable feature of the diagram is the Central Committee box. It shows no line indicating subordination of the Secretariat to the Presidium, although the statute says the Presidium is organized "to direct the work of the Central Committee between plenary sessions" and the Secretariat is "chiefly" concerned with "verification of the fulfillment of party decisions and cadre selection." The two organs are represented in the diagram as though co-ordinate:

\[\text{Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union} \quad \text{Lines of subordination (Linija podchineniia)} \]
\[\text{Central Committee} \quad \text{- - Lines of election and accountability} \]
\[\text{Presidium} \quad \text{Secretariat} \]
\[\text{CC of Union Republic, etc.} \]

\(^{56}\) Ibid., p. 273. This diagram did not appear in the 1951 edition. As far as this author can determine, it is the first diagram to depict high party organization in Soviet political literature of recent years.
The debate on the relative power of the Politburo and the Secretariat was an old one. It was a critical question in Stalin's rise to power (see Chapter 8), when it emerged into public discussion at the XIV Congress (1925) as Stalin's opponents sought with increased determination to halt the rise in his power. Kamenev stated the position of the opposition with a boldness which shortly caused him a demotion in the Politburo to candidate member:57

We object to the Secretariat, uniting policy and organization in itself, being placed above the political organism. We stand for an internal organization of the supreme power so as to assure full power to the Political Bureau, which contains all the political brains of our party, and sub-ordinate the Secretariat to it as the technical executant of its decisions....

(Uproar) We cannot consider normal, and think harmful to the party, the prolongation of a situation in which the Secretariat unites policy and organization, and, in fact, predetermines policy. 

(Uproar) I have become convinced that Comrade Stalin cannot play the part of co-ordinator of the Bolshevik general staff....

Stalin's reply is highly relevant to the present political situation in the U.S.S.R. and deserves to be quoted at length:58

What indeed is their platform: Their platform is -- reform the Secretariat of the Central Committee. The only thing


they have in common and that completely unites them is the question of the Secretariat....

This question has a history. In 1923, after the XII Congress, the people who met in the "cave" (laughter) drafted a platform for eliminating the Politburo and for politicizing the Secretariat, i.e., for transforming the Secretariat into a political and organizational directing organ to consist of Zinoviev, Trotsky, and Stalin.... To a question sent to me in writing from the depths of Kislovodsk (the cave mentioned above) I answered in the negative, stating that, if the comrades insisted, I was prepared to clear out without any noise, without a discussion, open or secret....

That was, so to speak, the first stage.

And now, it appears, the second stage has been ushered in, opposite to the first. Now they are demanding not the politicization, but the technicalization of the Secretariat; not the elimination of the Politburo, but full powers for it.... Whether a technical Secretariat would prepare, whether it would be capable of preparing, those questions which it would have to prepare for both the Orgburo and the Politburo, I have my doubts.

While defending the power of the Secretariat at the XIV Congress, Stalin still formally acknowledged the supremacy of the Politburo, even loosely calling it "the highest organ...in the party."59 As late as the XVII Congress (1934) Kaganovich called it "the organ of operative direction of all branches of socialist construction."60 However, after

60 XVII S'ezd Vsesoiuznoi Kommunisticheskoi Partii, Stenograficheskii Otchet (XVII Congress of the All-Union Communist Party, Stenographic Report), Moscow, 1934, p. 564.
1934, which was a turning point in Stalin's dictatorship, organs of the Central Committee were discussed seldom, and their relative authority perhaps not at all. It was sometimes said that Stalin, as general secretary, occupied "the highest post" in the party, and it would have been illogical to continue calling the Politburo the "highest organ of the party" when the "highest post in the party" stood outside it.

After Stalin's death, however, a new situation was created. The power of the regime, which had been concentrated in the hands of the autocrat, had now to be allocated to the organs of party and state. The supremacy of the party Presidium was soon asserted. According to Pravda (July 10, 1953), the plenum of the Central Committee which formally purged Beria (July 2-7, 1953) first "heard and discussed" a "report of the Presidium" delivered by Malenkov.61

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61 After 1934 no "reports of the Politburo" to the Central Committee seem to have been publicized, nor was the Politburo even mentioned in Central Committee resolutions. Since 1953, however, there have been at least six reports to the Central Committee by members of the Presidium, but none was called a "report of the Presidium." Two weeks after the July plenum publicized the authority of the Central Committee's executive organ, the Presidium, an important article appeared in Kommunist which forcefully upheld the authority of the party bureau. The Central Committee's "theoretical and political journal," Kommunist, vigorously affirmed for the entire party apparatus the principle of bureau supremacy over the Secretariat. (No. 11, "Kollektivnost Rykovodstva -- Vissihi Printsip Partiinogo Rykovodstva" [Collective Leadership -- Highest Principle of Party Leadership], by F. Yakovlev.) Yakovlev charged that Secretariats -- the bodies responsible for checking on the fulfillment of decisions -- appropriated the authority of bureaus, (continued on page 63)
The Presidium was widely publicized in the days which followed. Newspaper articles published in the republics from July 11-15, 1953, show that at party meetings called to approve the purge of Beria, the Presidium was thanked for its timely action, and even hailed as the collective organ of the party.

However, in subsequent months the power of the Secretariat increased in relation to that of the Presidium. (See Chapter 7.) Early in January, 1954, a formula was used which indicated that the two organs were co-ordinate. This formula appeared at the end of an extended discussion of the "unity of political and organizational leadership"

61 (continued) the executive organs of party committees. He especially criticized first secretaries for imposing their will on elected organs of the party. "Life has already demonstrated that attempts (popitki) by individual committee secretaries to base all bureau work on the principle of one-man leadership (edinopachalitza) inevitably lead to undermining the authority of a party leader, to errors in economic and political work." (p. 35)

He criticized those Party organizations in which a single secretary adopts "one-man decisions" (edinolichnie reshenia) which are "somehow designated decrees (postanovleniami) of the secretariat." (p. 36) Yakovlev's article may have been inspired by Malenkov, who had "resigned" his post as the senior secretary of the Central Committee only ten days after Stalin's death. Deprived of this foothold in the Central Committee's Secretariat -- which possessed great powers of appointment -- Malenkov evidently sought to delimit the power of secretariats throughout the party system, and to restore the authority of the bureau, whose members include industrial magnates, bureaucrats, and military and police officials, in addition to party secretaries. The bureau's authority had been little more than a statutory fiction when Stalin's principle of one-man rule had prevailed on all levels of the party system.
in an authoritative book on party organization: 62 "the
Central Committee headed by /Vo glave s7 the Presidium and
the Secretariat." As far as can be determined, the only
other "heads" of the Central Committee which Soviet leaders
and publicists have referred to in recent years were Lenin
and Stalin; yet here the Secretariat stands with the Presi-
dium in place of these two former dictators.

Bakhshiev also reaffirms -- probably in Khrushchev's
interest -- a principle which Kamenev had attacked in 1925
when he found it embodied in Stalin's Secretariat:

Our party proceeds from the fact that
policy and organization are inseparable.
The party led a resolute struggle against
the Trotskyites /e.g., Kamenev/, who tried
to separate the political activity of the
party from its organizational work. Enemies
of Leninism strived to divorce artificially
political questions from organizational ones,
to introduce chaos and dissension /nerazberikhu/
... Lenin said at the XI Congress /1922, when
Stalin became general secretary/ that any
political question might be organizational,
and vice versa. "It is impossible to
separate mechanically the political from the
organizational." 63 This precept is one of
the most important bases of the activity of
the Communist Party.... 64 (Author's
underscoring.)

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62 D. Bakhshiev, Partiinoe stroitel'istvo v usloviiakh
pobedi sotsializma v SSSR (Party Construction After
Achieving Socialism in the U.S.S.R.), p. 21. This
book, which was sent to press on January 5, 1954, had
a publication of 75,000 copies. Bakhshiev, co-author
with L. Slepov (editor of Pravda) of the Large Soviet
Encyclopedia's article on party work ("Partiinoe
Stroitel'istvo"), is an authoritative commentator
on party organization.

63 Lenin, Sochinenia (Collected Works), Gospolitizdat,

64 Bakhshiev, op. cit., p. 17.
Having established his principle on Lenin's authority, and subsequently on Stalin's, Bakhshiev next applied it to the Presidium and the Secretariat:

The party does not separate organizational work from political but, on the contrary, links them organically... The unity of political and organizational work is embodied in the activity of the Central Committee of the party and of the organs created by it... The Presidium and the Secretariat of the Central Committee assure unity of political and organizational leadership.\textsuperscript{65} (Author's underscoring.)

Bakhshiev's remarks are apparently intended to assert the necessity for the Secretariat becoming involved in political (i.e., policy) questions. That his purpose was to aggrandize the authority of the Secretariat, and presumably of Khrushchev as well, is supported by his employment of the unique formula already mentioned.

An even higher authority than Bakhshiev on party organization wrote with the same implications six months later in June, 1954. While contending that "all the most important political and organizational questions are discussed at plenums of the Central Committee," L. Slepov, Pravda's expert on party affairs and perhaps the top writer on this subject in the Soviet Union, acknowledged that these plenums "cannot be convened frequently because members of the Central Committee are located in all parts of the country."

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid., p. 18.
Decisions \textit{reshenije} on questions which cannot be put off \textit{otlagatel'stva} are adopted by the Presidium and the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the party.\textsuperscript{66} (Author's underscoring.)

However, after April, 1955, when Petrovsky's article invoked Lenin's authority to subordinate the secretary to the Politburo, the primacy of the Presidium was strongly reasserted:

The Central Committee and C.P.S.U. and its Presidium, expressing the collective political experience, the collective wisdom of the party, assures collective leadership of the party and country, unwavering unity and solidarity \textit{sploshennost},\textsuperscript{7} of the party ranks, leadership of the struggle of the Soviet people for gradual transition from socialism to communism.\textsuperscript{67} (Author's underscoring.)

Even after the plenum of the Central Committee in July, 1955, had greatly strengthened the power of the Secretariat (see Chapter 8), a Soviet legal authority forcefully argued the Presidium's primacy. He saw in the most important Soviet legal acts "a direct juridical expression of the policy of the Communist party, which is worked out by the highest organs of the party -- by the Congress of the party, Central

\textsuperscript{66} L. Slepov, \textit{Kommunisticheskaja partiia, rykovodashchaja sila sovetskogo obshchestva} (The Communist Party -- Leading Force in Soviet Society), Moscow, p. 54; sent to press June 10, 1954.

\textsuperscript{67} \textit{Bol'shaja Sovetskaja Entsiklopedija} (Large Soviet Encyclopedia), 2nd ed., Vol. 34, article entitled "Presidium TsK KPSS," sent to press June 20, 1955. This article also defines "Presidium" as "a constant directing organ" \textit{postiannii rykovodashchii organ} of party organizations.
Committee of the party, its Presidium."68 (Author's under-scoring.)

The subordinate status of the Secretariat was indicated even as late as October, 1955, in the lectures of Professor Volkov, which were published in pamphlet form with a printing of 160,000 copies. As Kommunist had done in April, Volkov chose that quotation of Lenin's which restricted the authority of "the secretary" to implementing higher organs' decisions. Volkov was even so bold as to stress the application of Lenin's words to the current party situation by his introductory remark:

The internal structure of the Central Committee must be such as to assure

The underlined phrase is remarkable for leaving open the question of whether the structure of the Central Committee, as it currently conducted its affairs, did or did not fulfill this condition of collectivity.

69 I. M. Volkov, Ustav kommunicheskoi partii sovetskogo sovusa -- osnovnoi zakon partii nozhn (Statute of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union -- Basic Law of Party Life). This pamphlet, published by the authoritative All-Union Society for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge, was sent to press on October 1, 1955. Presumably the lectures were delivered during the previous month or two. (Soviet lectures, it should be noted, can be authoritative sources; they are sometimes cited in the bibliographies of the Large Soviet Encyclopedia.) While this author knows nothing of Volkov's background, evidence suggests that he has had access to important unpublished documents. In his pamphlet Volkov makes some revelations about the crucial plenum which ousted Beria, including a reference to its decrees, that do not seem to have appeared elsewhere prior to the XX Congress: "The decree [postanovlenie] of the July 1953 plenum of the Central Committee of the party have great significance for the development of internal party democracy, criticism and self-criticism, and in raising collectivity in party leadership. The plenum resolutely condemned the idealist 'theory' of the cult of the individual which is alien to the spirit of Marxism-Leninism, which received a certain dissemination in our press and oral propaganda. By means of this antimarxist 'theory' certain party workers [Stalin?] tried to justify a vicious practice in their activity whereby Leninist principles of internal democracy were replaced by one-man [edpolichnimi], bureaucratic, commands [razporiazheniami]." (p. 37.)
It was into this long-standing controversy on the relative powers of the Secretariat and the Presidium that the party textbook intruded when it published a diagram purporting to show that the party's command structure drew no line of subordination from the Secretariat up to the Presidium. The textbook thus intimated that "the secretary" (i.e., Khrushchev) had more important functions than merely carrying out the Presidium's decisions.

Besides supporting the Secretariat's claim to equality with the Presidium, the "study aid" also seemed to boost Khrushchev's personal claim to a special position in the Secretariat. After presenting definitions (taken verbatim from the current party statute) of the Central Committee's top organs, the "study aid" gave their composition. While all eleven members of the Presidium were listed, members of the Secretariat were not. The textbook did not even mention the two Presidium members who also belonged to the Secretariat. It merely noted: "The Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. chose N. S. Khrushchev as first secretary."

Since it listed no secretary other than Khrushchev, the textbook seemed to imply that Khrushchev stood at the head of the Secretariat as its one-man leader (единоличник).

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70 The 1951 edition of this textbook for party schools had listed the entire Secretariat as follows: "J. V. Stalin (General Secretary), G. M. Malenkov, P. K. Ponomarenko, M. A. Suslov, N. S. Khrushchev." (Vol. 2, p. 94.)
11. "To Mr. N. S. Khrushchey, General secretary"

A chance event early in November, 1956, strikingly posed the question of Khrushchev's personal political ambitions and revealed something of his opinion of Stalin's place in party history.

Khrushchev received K. Holyoake, New Zealand's deputy prime minister, at Yalta on October 17, 1956, an event duly noted in the Soviet central and regional press. Shortly after leaving the Soviet Union, Holyoake sent a letter of thanks to Khrushchev for having received him. Wholly by chance the letter was addressed to "Mr. N. S. Khrushchev, General secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union." This letter which incorrectly addressed Khrushchev as General secretary was prominently published on November 3 in the central and provincial press and was broadcast twice to the Soviet people by Radio Moscow.  

A detailed exploration of the background and circumstances leading up to the publicizing of this error, which associated Khrushchev's name with Stalin's title of dictatorship, may provide an important clue to Khrushchev's political tactics and ambitions, and to the objectives of his secret report to the XX Congress.

71 The only exception noted was in Sovetskaia Kirgizia, a republican newspaper which had carried an earlier announcement of Holyoake's reception by Khrushchev.
Although Stalin had risen to power through his position as general secretary, and although he was the only person ever to hold this title, the announcements on his illness and death failed to mention it. They referred to him as "Chairman of the U.S.S.R. Council of Ministers and Secretary of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U." That is to say, they disregarded Stalin's autocratic position in the party and accorded him a party title ("Secretary of the Central Committee") which he shared with nine others; moreover, this indistinctive party title was placed after his unique government title (Chairman of the Council of Ministers) although elsewhere in the same documents the Central Committee always appeared before the Council of Ministers. The periodical press was flooded with innumerable eulogies of Stalin's life and work for a week after his death, but they also failed to accord him the title of general secretary. Nor did these articles mention the investiture myth, first propagated in 1939, of Lenin's alleged proposal to elect Stalin "general secretary"—a strange omission at the time of Stalin's death and the onset of a new succession crisis.72 (See Chapter 2.) Even more remarkable is the fact that for almost three years after Stalin died there was virtually no mention in the periodical

72 The biographies of Stalin and Lenin, where the myth has an important place, were almost certainly referred to by authors of the articles published when Stalin died. Just a year before, in an article on the thirtieth anniversary of the XI Congress, Pravda had duly noted that the Central Committee first elected Stalin general secretary, "the highest post in the party," shortly after the Congress adjourned (March 28, 1952).
press that he had ever been general secretary. The first
Soviet publications resorted to clumsy expedients in
order to convey the notion of Stalin's succession to
Lenin's authority without mentioning the post of
general secretary. For example: "In these difficult
years /after Lenin's death/ Stalin, having passed
through the Leninist school, headed the Central
Committee of the Communist party and showed himself
in this post /sic/ to be a great continuator of
Lenin's cause." (Problems of History, No. 12; sent
to press December 7, 1954, p. 4.) Of course, there
is no post of "head" of the Central Committee.
Stalin's unique and distinctive title of "general
secretary of the Central Committee" was mentioned
only once in the very extensive sampling of Soviet
political periodicals made by the author for the two-
and-a-half-year period from Stalin's death until the
Holyoake letter. (It was mentioned six times, each in
connection with the investiture myth, in the numerous
books and reference works examined for the same period.)
The one reference in a periodical occurs in a review
article which repeats the investiture myth as it
appears in the book being reviewed, the official
biography Lenin. (See Party Life, No. 7, 1955, p. 21.)
The author, E. Bugaev, subsequently revealed that he
was not enthusiastic about the anti-Stalin campaign.
In the wake of the attack on Stalin at the XX Congress,
there was a debate among historians as to how far party
history should be revised. The zealous anti-Stalinists
were represented chiefly by the professional journal
Problems of History, while those reluctant to make much
change were primarily historians connected with party
journals and institutions. The strongest attack on
Problems of History was Bugaev's, in an article enti-
titled "Kogda utrachivaetsia nauchnyi podkhod" (When
One Loses a Scientific Approach), and Bugaev was in turn
vigorously rebutted by his target in an editorial
article, "O stat'e tov. E. Bugaeva" (On the Article of
Comrade E. Bugaev). (See Party Life, No. 14, July, 1956,
pp. 62-72, and Problems of History, No. 7, July, 1956,
pp. 215-222.) The two factions in this controversy,
which has had distinctly political overtones, may well
have their respective protectors among the top leaders.
Conceivably, then, since only one reference to Stalin
as general secretary appeared in the periodical press in
almost three years following Stalin's death, this one
exception may have been designed by the Stalinist Bugaev
to serve some political purpose in the extensive maneuver-
ing which went on in the spring of 1955. Bugaev, it should
be noted, ranks among the top party publicists. He is
apparently an editor of Party Life, the organ of the
Central Committee in which the two important articles
referred to above have appeared.
use of this party title in a Soviet newspaper after his
death was applied not to Stalin but to Khrushchev -- in the
Holyoake letter.

The apparent taboo on mentioning "general secretary of
the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U." in periodicals in-
dicates that it had become a highly-charged political
symbol in the U.S.S.R. from the moment of Stalin's fatal
illness.\footnote{It is clear that the failure to credit Stalin with the
post of general secretary was not simply a means to
depreciate Stalin's role in party history, because the
prohibition was observed equally when the Stalin
symbol was ascendant (e.g., March, 1953, and December,
1955) as when it was in eclipse (e.g., August, 1953).} In the Stalinist traditions of the party, the
title was not only intimately connected with the succession
problem, but also the office which it named had been called
supreme in the party. The very words "general secretary"
symbolized the overriding question facing the top Soviet
leaders: Was the succession crisis to issue in a stable
"collective leadership" or a new Stalin? Yet, despite the
political explosiveness of the title, Holyoake's letter
addressed to "Mr. N. S. Khrushchev, General secretary,"
was published prominently on the front page of virtually
every central and important provincial newspaper in the
U.S.S.R., and was broadcast to the land.
The decision to publish this letter was evidently a deliberate one. It was addressed to Khrushchev and presumably was delivered to his offices. His staff, being aware of the political sensitivity of the term "general secretary," almost certainly showed it to Khrushchev, who was then in Moscow. Khrushchev was under no constraint to publish Holyoake's error. Several ways were open to him to avoid associating his name with the title of "general secretary." He could have paraphrased the letter in a news item. He could have wired Holyoake for permission to use his correct party title of First secretary, or even

75 If, as seems most unlikely, the letter reached the newspapers without Khrushchev's personal authorization, the editors would hardly have agreed to publish it, nor can it be supposed that the censors would have approved publication. Soviet newspapers do publish, without correction, protocol letters from foreigners which incorrectly address Soviet dignitaries as "his excellency." Soviet citizens are accustomed to this and doubtless discount it. However, misuse of a party title possessing crucial historical associations is far more serious. On such a question Soviet newspapers would hardly be indulgent, nor Soviet readers indifferent.
simply corrected it himself. Finally, Khrushchev need not have published the letter at all.  

From the alternatives open to him Khrushchev evidently chose to publicize the error which addressed him with Stalin's distinctive title. If so, he doubtless chose deliberately, fully aware that his action would strengthen widespread fears that the horizon of his political ambitions extended at least as far as Stalin's powers in the late 1920's. A further consequence, he could assume, would be intensified efforts by his compers to build a countervailing power against his own. Presumably in Khrushchev's calculations the advantages gained by publishing Holyoke's letter outweighed these dangers.

Amid the intensive political maneuvering which marked the months before the XX Congress, and particularly at this time when the election of delegates to the Congress was

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While Khrushchev had received several foreign personages in the months prior to Holyoke's visit, newspapers had published a "thank you" note from only one of these (Finnish Premier Kekkonon, in Pravda, September 24). About the same time that he entertained Holyoke, Khrushchev also received two far more important officials of foreign governments (Canadian Foreign Minister Pearson on October 12, and Burmese Premier U Nu on October 29), as well as two private individuals (an American agriculturalist on October 8, and Pietro Nenni, Italian Socialist leader, on October 16). Some of these guests may have sent letters of thanks, although none were published; nevertheless, announcement that these persons had been received, without subsequent publication of "thank you" notes from them, assured that failure to publish Holyoke's letter would have attracted no attention. Furthermore, if it is supposed that the letter was published in order to please its sender, this could have been achieved by publishing it only in Pravda; there was no need to publish it in over a dozen key provincial papers as well.
being prepared, Khrushchev had good reason to persuade the sub-elites standing just below the Central Committee that his power was ascendant and he was aiming high. This intelligence would encourage his supporters to hope for great rewards, his enemies to cease their opposition, and neutrals to seek his patronage. Apparently Khrushchev saw in Holyoake's letter a fateful opportunity to accomplish this aim. By publicly associating his name with the forbidden title of "general secretary" he revealed at once the breadth of his ambitions and implied an estimate of his power, for he was not likely to reveal his ambitions unless he possessed, or anticipated, the power to realize them.

Because our knowledge of the situation in which he acted is inadequate, however, it still remains uncertain whether Khrushchev's political tactics envisaged his actual election as "general secretary of the Central Committee."

Two major possible interpretations, then, need to be considered:

1. The use of varying formulas about the senior secretary's title may have been primarily a means of talking about that officer's authority and powers in a semi-public debate. If so, the contention that Stalin ceased to occupy the post of general secretary in October, 1952, may have been a way of saying that the powers which Stalin had appropriated for the senior secretary were not
intrinsic to that office but were due to emergency conditions (or, conceivably, due to Stalin's personality). While such discussion was very probably designed to counter Khrushchev's growing secretarial power, it may not have been intended specifically to deny the office to Khrushchev. From this point of view, capitalizing the initial letter in Khrushchev's secretarial title constituted a claim to increased authority on policy questions, but not necessarily a step toward his becoming general secretary.

2. It cannot be ruled out that Khrushchev may have specifically sought the title and office of "general secretary of the Central Committee" because of its traditional association with Stalin's powers. The office offered important advantages to Khrushchev over his post of First secretary, for under Stalin "general secretary of the Central Committee" had sometimes been given an implied status outside and above the Secretariat, as a
special office of the Central Committee.\footnote{This could be done readily since the office was not even mentioned in the party statute. Politicheskii Slovar (The Political Dictionary), in 1940, did not mention the "general secretary" in its article on "Secretariat," but included it in the one on the Central Committee ("TsK/VKP"), where it is cited after the statutory organs of the Central Committee. This was also done in the "Biographical Chronicle" in Stalin's Collected Works (Vol. 8, p. 389): "1 January 1926). At the meeting of the plenum of the Central Committee C.P.S.U., J. V. Stalin is elected \(\text{Izbiroetsia}\) a member of the Politburo, Orgburo, Secretariat of the Central Committee and is appointed \(\text{Utverzhdaetsia}\) as general secretary of the Central Committee C.P.S.U."} The achievement of this goal, if it was harbored, would have been well served by publicizing the Holyoake letter, which flouted the taboo against naming the office of general secretary. More than this, the very notion of Khrushchev as general secretary, which had been severely repressed, gained a certain respectability merely by being brought into the open.\footnote{This could be achieved by Khrushchev without excessive risk of reprisal, for only a preponderance of political power against him -- such as had been available to elicit Molotov's confession -- could have forced Khrushchev to acknowledge his ulterior motives in publishing Holyoake's letter.}
While publication of the Holyoake letter does not necessarily demonstrate Khrushchev's designs on Stalin's old title, there are good grounds for regarding it as another public expression of elite contention over the powers and authority of the senior secretary.

This contention continued. Just six weeks after the Holyoake letter was published, the sensitive historical fact that Stalin had once been "general secretary of the Central Committee" was mentioned in Kommunist for the first time since Stalin's death. At the beginning of this Kommunist article on Stalin's seventy-sixth birthday, the author, Matiushkin, notes that Lenin's death found his "true disciple and comrade-in-arms," Stalin, in the post of general secretary; at its end, he quotes Khrushchev at length on the recent successes and current policies of the U.S.S.R., which was then preparing for the XX Congress. Only three names are mentioned in the article: Lenin, Stalin, and Khrushchev.

This apparently was only the second, and last, time the post of "general secretary of the Central Committee" was mentioned in a Soviet periodical from the time of Stalin's death until the XX Congress. It is the only mention of "general secretary" in this period which was not occasioned by a re-telling of the investiture myth. Kommunist's recently-appointed chief editor, Kumyantsev, was formerly a Ukrainian party official under Khrushchev, and later his subordinate in the Central Committee Secretariat.

These same three names, together with Bulgarin's, appear as late as January 10, 1956, in a last commemorative article on Stalin: "Kommunistcheskaia Partiia -- Velikaia Preobrazuiushchaia Sila Otshestva" (Communist Party -- Great Transforming Force of Society), by Ts. A. Stepanian, Voprosi Filosofii (Problems of Philosophy), No. 6, 1955.
Thus as late as December, 1955, the cult of Khrushchev remained closely associated with the cult of Stalin. More concretely, the Khrushchev cult was associated with the effort to make Stalin's incumbency as general secretary a respectable biographical fact, and the office itself a legitimate one.

12. Last Glow of the Stalin Cult

Kommunist's subtle linking of the Stalin and the Khrushchev cults came at a time of upsurge for the Stalin cult. Although Stalin's seventy-sixth birthday warranted far less recognition than his seventy-fifth and could even have been ignored as was his seventy-fourth, it occasioned almost as much publicity for Stalin as any anniversary since his death. This special effort to eulogize him, particularly in light of the subsequent treatment of Stalin, must have served some specific purpose.81

81 It has been suggested that the publicity accorded Stalin's seventy-sixth birthday was required by a Central Committee decree of January 11, 1955, signed by Khrushchev. This decree changed the date for commemorating Lenin from his death-day to his birthday. However, it took no action with regard to Stalin or any other dead leader. The reason given for the change with respect to the Lenin celebration is that when Lenin died the loss which the Soviet people had suffered was foremost in their minds. But, the decree argues, since Leninism is a living doctrine, it is logical to celebrate his birthday instead. This argument, of course, could be applied to Stalin only if it were assumed that Stalinism, like Leninism, was a living doctrine. This author believes that it was on this assumption, rather than simply because of the Central Committee decree, that Stalin's birthday was widely celebrated in the U.S.S.R. less than two months before the XX Congress. Needless to say, Stalin's next birthday was ignored despite the decree of January 11, 1955.
Coincidence of the final glorification of Stalin with intensification of the Khrushchev cult suggests what this purpose may have been. Having only recently associated his name with Stalin's unique title of general secretary, and having begun to place himself in the line of succession "Lenin-Stalin-Khrushchev," Khrushchev had something of a stake in Stalin's good name. The remarkable attention paid to Stalin in the last days of 1955, the stress on his loyalty to Lenin's cause and on his victory over the anti-Leninist enemies of the people, dispelled some of the anti-valence which had accumulated around the Stalin symbol after his death, making it a more serviceable instrument of Khrushchev's personal designs.

The opposition to Khrushchev, observing the concomitant rise of the cults of Khrushchev and Stalin, may have recognized Khrushchev's use of the Stalin symbol as a point of vulnerability. His continuing efforts to enhance the powers and authority of the senior secretary might be checked by exposing the degeneration of these powers in Stalin's personal dictatorship, with their resultant purges and terrible consequences for the Communist party and for Soviet society. No direct evidence that Khrushchev's opponents had adopted such counter-tactics is available for the last months of 1955. The first weeks of 1956, however -- the time of preparation for the XX Congress -- show such confusion, conflict, and indecision regarding the place of
Stalin and Stalinism in the Soviet future as to suggest that an anti-Stalin movement was making progress against efforts, probably by Khrushchevites, to abort it.

Until mid-January, 1956, authoritative periodicals indicated Stalin's continuing high status. Belated tributes appeared in periodicals in connection with his birthday; a particularly eulogistic one was published in Problems of Philosophy on January 10. On January 12 TASS announced imminent publication of the crucial fourteenth volume of Stalin's Collected Works, which was said to cover the period from January, 1934, up to the beginning of 1941. The delay in publication of this volume, which covers the period of the purge, had interrupted for five years the smooth flow of Stalin's works which produced thirteen volumes from 1946 to 1951. Publication of the volume was complicated after Stalin's death by the rehabilitation of many purge victims. The year 1955 was critical in this respect; according to Khrushchev's secret speech it saw the secret rehabilitation of the chief Stalinist victims of the purge, Postyshev, Rudzutak, Kosior, etc. Therefore, the announcement that the fourteenth volume would be published at the time of the XX

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82 According to N. Tropkin, chief editor of publications of Gospolitizdat (the state publishing house for political literature), the fourteenth volume was to appear in February in connection with the XX Congress. (Literaturnaya Gazeta [Literary Gazette], Moscow, January 12, 1956.) Tropkin is himself a top party theoretician, well conversant with the period covered by Stalin's fourteenth volume.
Congress strongly suggests that a solution had been found to
the problem of basically justifying the purges of the
1930's -- including, it may be supposed, the public purge
trials of the "enemies of the people" -- while implicitly
condemning those excesses which led to the secret destruction
of Stalinist leaders.

The legitimacy of the office of general secretary had
also to be considered before the fourteenth volume of Stalin's
Collected Works could be published. Specifically, a decision
had to be made whether to assert that Stalin was confirmed
as general secretary after the XVII Congress in 1934. (See
Chapter 2.) (The Soviet press failed to mention con-
firmation of Stalin as general secretary by the Central
Committee at the time of its first plenum following the
XVII Congress.) In the previous volumes, a "Biographical
Chronicle" had noted Stalin's "appointment" as general
secretary by Central Committee plenums following each party
congress after 1922, when he was first "elected" to the
office. The "Biographical Chronicle" in the thirteenth
volume, published in 1951, closed with January 31, 1934,
after the XVII Congress had concluded, but just before the
Central Committee met to elect its new officers. Thus the
fourteenth volume required a decision to be made on whether
to perpetuate the myth that Stalin legitimately occupied the
post of general secretary after 1934. Khrushchev's efforts
to succeed Stalin would be favored by perpetuation of this
myth, and hindered by its demise. Similarly, Stalin's good reputation would be supported by continuation of the myth and blackened by failure to perpetuate it.

The fact that Stalin's reputation was not intended to suffer seriously in the fourteenth volume of his *Collected Works* was suggested a week after its publication was announced: *Kommunist*’s first issue of 1956 had an article by a top ideologist which several times mentioned Stalin favorably. However, the volume was not published at the time of the Congress, although others announced for February publication were. It still remains unpublished, evidently because Khrushchev's secret speech undermined the "line" previously decided upon for this volume.

After mid-January, 1956, it became evident that Stalin was being downgraded. At most of the republican congresses which began on January 14, Stalin's name was used sparingly in the reports of the first secretaries; speeches of the delegates appearing in published -- that is, censored -- accounts of the congresses contain virtually no references to Stalin. After January 23, Stalin's name is absent from *Pravda*. Thus it appears that sometime in the middle of January an abrupt decision was made on the highest level

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83 M. Kammari, "Rol' narodnykh mass v razvitii dukhovnoi zhizni obshchestva" (Role of the Popular Masses in the Development of the Spiritual Life of Society), *Kommunist*, No. 1 (sent to press January 18, 1956), pp. 25, 33, 34.
to reverse the December upsurge of the cult of Stalin, to
deny the dead dictator any significant role in the pre-
Congress campaign (and presumably in the Congress pro-
ceedings), but to continue to allow him respectability.\textsuperscript{84}
It was an unstable and perhaps tentative compromise between
those who would discredit Stalin and those who wanted to
maintain the image of Stalin presented on his birthday in
December.\textsuperscript{85}

\textsuperscript{84} In the last half of January, Stalin's name appears
mostly in hyphenated form with others of the Communist
deities. His doctrines and his former leadership
apparently were not recalled except in the Caucasus.

\textsuperscript{85} Some of the less authoritative journals continued to
eulogize Stalin until early February, 1956, indicating
that the decision was not passed down to the middle
echelons -- either because it was tentative or because
it was being resisted. (E.g., \textit{Voprosi Ekonomiki}
[Problems of Economics], February 4, 1956.)
PART II

KHRUSHCHEV'S RETREAT FROM THE STALIN SYMBOL

Khrushchev successfully employed the Stalin symbol during 1955 in his bid for increased power and authority. But, in the last weeks before the XX Congress, he seems to have realized that his opponents were attacking Stalin in order to frustrate his personal strategy of succeeding Stalin to the powers he had in 1930. Khrushchev apparently modified his strategy accordingly. However, since he had previously identified himself with the Stalin symbol and had followed closely in Stalin's footsteps, Khrushchev could not retreat at once from the path he had chosen. Thus, while Khrushchev and his supporters evidently agreed on the need to deglorify Stalin, they continued to resist mounting pressures for his condemnation even after the XX Congress opened.

13. Khrushchev's Changed Tactics

Khrushchev continued to rely on the Stalin image until mid-January, 1955, but he lessened his commitment thereafter. He made no mention of Stalin on January 21 at a Komsomol meeting, although when he addressed the youth organization on an identical occasion in the previous year he had stressed his closeness to the dead dictator. While his adherents' continuing references to Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin indicate that Khrushchev probably still hoped to retain the
support of Stalinists, he began to blunt the parallel
between his own and Stalin's ascent to personal leadership. 86

It became necessary, then, for Khrushchev to find some other
path to legitimate succession. Despite the surface stability
of the leadership, the succession crisis brought on by
Stalin's death had not yet been resolved. A man determined
to provide stable leadership without having to rely on
shifting factional majorities (i.e., a leader who rejects
"collective leadership") has only three choices: to be

(1) a charismatic leader whose moral and intellectual
superiority is universally acknowledged (e.g.,
Lenin);

(2) a tyrannical leader possessed of such power over
his associates that none would dare to challenge
him (e.g., Stalin from the thirties until his
death);

(3) a legitimate leader exercising the decisive
powers of an established office.

86 Men who had supported Khrushchev while his power grew,
and who were rewarded by him, continued to uphold Stalin's
good name by placing it in the company of Communism's
revered fathers. Speaking before the party Presidium
(at its January 17 meeting in preparation for the XX
Congress), Furtseva, first secretary of the Moscow City
Committee told this committee that the party was armed
with the "great teachings" of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and
Stalin. Presidium member Kirichenko, according to
Pravda on January 23, still spoke of the quartet's
"great cause." On January 27, Kapitonov, a leader
acceptable to Khrushchev if not close to him, reported
to the Moscow oblast committee in the presence of top
party leaders that the party was united under the banner
of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin.
Of these three possibilities, the second -- which required personal control over the policy and the army -- was probably considered the most difficult to achieve because it was the most feared by all the other leaders. The first required qualities which none of the leaders possessed. It was the third possibility which alone offered hope for an ambitious leader to achieve an orderly solution to the problem of the Stalin succession. But Stalin's tyrannical regime had not provided for an established supreme office with clearly demarcated authority.

At Stalin's death, Malenkov apparently had hoped that by occupying the government post of "chairman of the Council of Ministers" he could gain recognition as supreme leader in the party as well, and thus establish himself as Stalin's successor. There was good historical basis for Malenkov's calculation. Lenin had held no special party title, but his pre-eminence was symbolized by his title of "Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars," ineffectual though that body was. There is a suggestion in Trotsky's writings that Lenin intended the succession to be passed down through this post at the head of the government. Lenin proposed the formation of a commission which, Trotsky believed, was to become

...the lever for breaking up the Stalin faction as the backbone of the bureaucracy, and for creating such conditions in the party as would allow me to become Lenin's deputy, and, as he intended, his successor.
Furthermore, in the last years of his life Stalin's governmental and military titles were almost the only ones to appear in print, and in the days of his last illness and death his governmental title was invariably placed before his party title.88 This background seemed favorable to Malenkov's pretensions, for in the first days of the new regime he was accorded the identical title: "Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Secretary of the Central Committee." But his strategy did not succeed, and the Malenkov charter in the initial Stalin succession crisis was apparently definitely closed when Khrushchev was elected "first secretary of the Central Committee" in September, 1953.

The situation then facing Khrushchev had been aptly described thirty years previously at the XIV Congress in a


88 Stalin's governmental title continued to precede his party title until just before Holyoake's letter was published. The first published work to place "Secretary" before "Chairman of the Council of Ministers" apparently was The Large Soviet Encyclopedia, in its article on the "Rossiiskaia Sovetskaia Federativnaia Sotsialisticheskaia Respublika" (Vol. 37, p. 73; sent to press October 28, 1955).
remark by Sokolnikov addressed to Stalin: "Lenin was neither chairman of the Political Bureau, nor general secretary, but nevertheless he had the last word in politics....If Stalin wants to win the same confidence, let him win it."\textsuperscript{89}

(Author's underscoring.) This Khrushchev could not do; he needed an office. In his effort to get "the last word" Khrushchev relied first on the post of senior secretary. Its capacity for accumulating power, already demonstrated by Stalin, was shown again; but the authority of the post remained defective, for it had largely been abandoned as a symbol of authority in Stalin's last years, and, in any case, it had no place in the party statute. Khrushchev evidently had hoped to make up this inadequacy and legitimize his growing power by resorting to an expedient which had not been available to Stalin: he intended to rely on the precedent of Stalin's long (though obscure) tenure in the post of senior secretary.

When the decision was made in mid-January to restrict the use of Stalin's name in pre-Congress propaganda, Khrushchev could no longer base his claim to pre-eminent authority in the Soviet regime on the analogy between his own secretarial office and Stalin's. Denied one of the two offices which, according to Sokolnikov, might confer supreme authority, Khrushchev apparently decided to seek the other --

\textsuperscript{89} XIV S'ezd Vsesoiuznoi Kommunistcheskoj Partii (Stenographic Report of the XIV Congress of the C.P.S.U.), Moscow, 1926, p. 335.
a special office as head of the Presidium. Although such
an office lacked traditional authority, if it could be
secured it would have constitutional advantages over a
position at the head of the Secretariat -- whether that
position was called "first secretary of the Central
Committee," or "general secretary of the Central Committee." The head of either of these organs could not legitimately
claim more authority than the organ itself possessed, and,
according to Article 34 of the party statute, the Secre-
tariat directs the "current work" of the Central Committee,
while the Presidium simply directs its "work." Thus a man
heading the Presidium could legitimately claim far more
constitutional authority than a mere leader of the Secre-
tariat.

Khrushchev's new tactic of seeking to head the Presi-
dium was evidently launched almost simultaneously in the
two powerful republican party organizations which he con-
trolled, in the Ukraine and in Kazakhstan. The Ukrainian

90 It is significant that the Chinese communist party has
succeeded in formalizing its power structure in such a
way that it conforms roughly to the demands of its
statute, while the top of the Soviet party hierarchy
does so in far less degree. At its VIII Congress
(September, 1956) the Chinese communist party took
measures to curtail the authority of the Secretariat
in relation to that of the Politburo. A standing
committee was set up in the Politburo to perform
functions which the Secretariat had previously arrogated
to itself. The change was a purely formal, or statutory,
one since the new body was composed of the same men who
had headed the old Secretariat.
party congress, meeting to elect delegates to the XX Congress, heard the republic’s propaganda chief, Nazarenko, say the Soviet party was "consolidated around its Central Committee and its Presidium headed by Comrade Khrushchev." This phrase, published for the first time on January 24, was pronounced on the same day halfway across the U.S.S.R. by the entire Kazakh Congress.  

According to that republic’s newspaper:

On the proposal of delegate tov. Iliashev the Congress unanimously elects an honorary presidium of the Congress of members of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union headed by [ed. sl. tsk] the first secretary of the Central Committee C.P.S.U. Comrade Khrushchev N.S. (All rise; stormy prolonged applause.)

The effort to achieve a supreme office in the post-Stalin regime by heading the party Presidium was based on the assumption that that organ possessed great public authority and prestige. Actually, like its predecessor the Politburo, the party Presidium’s power exceeded its authority and it worked without benefit of publicity. It was twice accorded prestige and a public role in the first months after Stalin’s death, but with the ascendance of Khrushchev and his backing of the Secretariat the Presidium lost this public role. There were even intimations, as mentioned in Charter 10, that the Presidium was only co-ordinate with the

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91 No one had ever before been called head of the Presidium — neither Stalin, Malenkov, nor Khrushchev himself, and there are only a few instances known of Stalin being called head of the Politburo (e.g., Pravda, November 30, 1939, and November 7, 1942).
Secretariat. Khrushchev himself had tended to slight the Presidium in his speeches while persistently promoting the Central Committee. 92 Even in July, 1955, after his growing strength in the Central Committee enabled him to place two apparent adherents of his in the Presidium, Khrushchev continued to rely primarily on the Secretariat, where his opponents were not represented. 93 Therefore, if, as seems probable, Khrushchev decided in mid-January to try to establish his claim to personal leadership on the basis of pre-eminence in the Presidium, a hasty effort was needed to publicize the authority of that body.

This build-up also was undertaken at the Ukrainian and Kazakhstan party congresses. Nazarenko, in the same address in which he placed Khrushchev at the head of the Presidium, emphasized that the Presidium was an organ of collective leadership, a "theoretical [teoreticheskogo] center,"

92 There were only two reports delivered to the Central Committee before the XX Congress by Presidium members other than Khrushchev (Malenkov in July, 1953; Bulganin in July, 1955) and both of these mentioned the Presidium. Only the first of Khrushchev's three published reports to the Central Committee did so.

93 Khrushchev's first public reference to the Presidium after September, 1953, came on October, 1955, three months after the July plenum, when he spoke in the name of the "Central Committee, of the Presidium," at a memorial meeting in Sevastopol.
which had developed Lenin's doctrine. Similarly, other delegates to the Ukrainian Congress -- chiefly those who preached the cult of Khrushchev -- publicized the authority of the party Presidium. The Kazakh first secretary, who mentioned Khrushchev eight times in his report, emphasized the "daily attention of the Presidium of the Central Committee" to tasks of great state significance (implying, of course, that the Secretariat dealt only with lesser matters). Thus, he conferred upon the Presidium attributes of solicitude and omnipotence which were Stalin's while he lived. Others at the Kazakhstn Congress linked Khrushchev and the Presidium in expressing thanks for assistance in the reclamation program. Priachina, a candidate of the republican Central Committee, ended her speech thus:

Permit me to express sincere thanks to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, to the Presidium of the Central Committee of C.P.S.U. and personally to Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev for rendering aid to the construction and organization of our sovkhozes. (Stormy, prolonged applause.)

Author's underscored.

Pravda Ukraini, January 24, 1956. Nazarenko had benefited from Khrushchev's patronage when he headed the Ukrainian party apparatus (1938-1949) and more recently had accompanied him on important party business trips. In late June, 1956, subsequent to the XX Congress, he left politics because of "illness," according to the Ukrainian Central Committee. Conceivably he suffered for his part in furthering Khrushchev's apparent tactics of becoming head of the Presidium; however, the head of the Kazakh party, who also seems to have supported these tactics, has not suffered as a result.
Praise for Khrushchev at these two republican congresses exceeded that given to any living leader since Stalin's death. The most powerful man at the Ukrainian Congress, Kirichenko, continued to publicize Khrushchev's authority as he had been doing since the spring of 1954. In his report to the Congress Kirichenko referred to the occasion on which his subservience got him promoted to the party Presidium: "Comrade K. S. Khrushchev emphasized at the July 1955 plenum of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. that the main thing is organizational work."95 Thus did the successful apparatchik (professional party worker) quote his master on the vital need for apparatchiks.

The strongest praise for Khrushchev came from two members of the C.P.S.U. Central Committee, Korotchenko and Korneichuk. D. S. Korotchenko, head of the Ukrainian Republic and the only Ukrainian among the twenty-five members of the Presidium elected after the XIX Congress, said:

The Central Committee sharply turned the attention of all party and Soviet organizations to questions of...production, of the economy. We all know how correctly, sharply, and with what principle Comrade K. S. Khrushchev posed and is posing (stavili stavit') these questions before the entire party.96 (Author's underscoring.)

95 Pravda Ukraini, January 19, 1956.
96 Ibid., January 23, 1956.
Korotchenko's sweeping claim that one man, Khrushchev, set the party its economic tasks could hardly be matched. Yet the remarks of Korneichuk, the foremost political literary figure, were worthy contributions to the growing cult.  

He intimated that Khrushchev inspired the Ukraine's achievements and that the Chinese dictator, Mao Tse-tung, owed him gratitude:

I am convinced that I express your fervent feelings, dear comrade delegates, when I say that in all our achievements there is part of the spirit of the fervent heart of our friend and leader Comrade Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev, who taught us in the Ukraine not to be separated from the people, to have dear knowledge of its demands, its thought, its dreams, to lead with knowledge of affairs...  

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97 Korneichuk's last play, Wings, which treats of police excesses allegedly due to Beria, was publicly applauded by Khrushchev after having met an ambivalent response from cautious critics.

98 These qualities of leadership were attributed to Khrushchev in a key document of the cult of Khrushchev published just before the XX Congress. It was entitled Party and People (Party and People), and written by V. P. Moskovsky, former editor of Red Star and a top Soviet propagandist. Although its first pages contain a powerful indictment of the cult of the individual, Moskovsky contrives to mention Khrushchev thirty-eight times in the pamphlet's seventy-two pages. He creates an image of Khrushchev as a popular leader whose ties are with the people, who expresses their aspirations and serves their cause. Party and People was published in Moscow on February 3, 1956, in an edition of 100,000 copies. Moskovsky's political rank is just below that of a candidate member of the Central Committee; he was elected to the Central Inspection Commission at both the XIX and the XX congresses. His military rank of Major General apparently was acquired in a long career as a political officer in the armed forces. Moskovsky has twice served as editor of Red Star, each time in a period of Khrushchev's political ascendancy (1949-1953, 1954-1955). At the present time he apparently has an important position in the party's propaganda machine.
I will never forget my encounter with the great leader [yozhik] of the Chinese people, Comrade Mao Tse-tung [who] with simple words, with fervent feelings of fraternity, asked us to convey great [bolshoi], as he said: great, great greetings to the Soviet people, to Comrade Khrushchev, sincere thanks for the aid to the people of China. (Applause)\(^{99}\) (Author's underscoring.)

Lesser delegates to both congresses indicated Khrushchev's identification with the Central Committee by using a phrase heavily redolent of the cult of Stalin: "the Central Committee and Comrade Khrushchev personally..."\(^{100}\)

His personal intervention in diverse matters -- a Stalinist attribute -- was also alluded to in delegates' speeches on evening education, Ukrainian literature, and agriculture.


\(^{100}\) M. S. Spivak: "The Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. and Comrade Khrushchev Nikita Sergeevich personally attach exceptional significance to organizational work, from the Central Committee of the party, ministries, obkoms [province party committees], down to the M.T.S. [machine tractor stations] and kolkhozes [collective farms]." (Pravda Ukraini, January 24, 1956.)

E. P. Chramkova: "All this work was carried out by us as a result of the huge care that was shown in reclamation of the new land by the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. and Comrade N. S. Khrushchev personally. Com. Khrushchev in May of 1954..., acquainted himself in detail with the situation of affairs, investigated difficulties on the spot, and helped us to eliminate them expeditiously [operativno]. Without this aid of the Central Committee and Soviet government [sic] we would hardly have been able to carry out this work..." (Kazakhstan Pravda, January 27, 1956.)
These pure manifestations of the "cult of the individual" are remarkable for coming only three weeks before the meeting of the XX Congress at which the cult was denounced. It is apparent that the adulation of Khrushchev at these two republican congresses was not the mere outpouring of enthusiastic delegates. It was clearly authoritative, for top leaders were among those who eulogized Khrushchev, and their contributions to the cult of Khrushchev were deliberately passed outside the relatively private chambers of the congress to a broad section of the Soviet public. Not only were they passed for publication by cautious censors, but the chief editors of two top republican newspapers — men confirmed in their posts by the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. — selected these passages for publication when they condensed the original speeches.

The effort of key delegates at the two congresses to boost both a particular party organ, the Presidium, and a particular leader, Khrushchev, and to place the leader at the "head" of the organ, appears to be a centrally directed maneuver. Its goal, apparently, was to get from the XX Congress a Central Committee which would be prepared to elect Khrushchev chairman of the party Presidium. The plan to have Khrushchev elected as general secretary of the Central Committee — if it once existed — had been abandoned. Stalin's name was virtually effaced from the published records of the Ukrainian and Kazakhstan congresses, and
apparently there was only a single reference to him by
Kirichenko. Since, however, that isolated mention of the
fallen god was delivered by a member of the party Presidium
and was publicized in Pravda, Khrushchev's pre-Congress
tactical shift evidently did not envisage an actual attack
upon Stalin.

14. The Historians Debate Stalin

As a meaningful silence began to envelop Stalin's name,
a meeting of historians undertook to debate his place in
Soviet history. The occasion of the meeting was "a confer-
ence of the readers of the journal Problems of History,"
ostensibly to discuss the scientific work conducted during
the past year by their authoritative, although non-party,
journal.

The Conference, the first of its kind in many years,
met on January 25, 27, and 28, 1956. The proceedings of
this Conference probably became available to the Soviet
public during the time of the XX Congress. The published --
that is, censored -- report on the Conference appeared in
the next issue of Problems of History, which was sent to the
printer on February 13 and may have reached subscribers a
week later.101 However, since the Conference was attended
by more than six hundred persons, the more outstanding

101 Problems of History, No. 2, 1956. All parenthetical
page references to quoted matter appearing in the text
and footnotes of this chapter, unless otherwise in-
dicated, refer to this issue of the journal.
developments may quickly have become known to influential circles in Moscow and the provinces. In the published account of the meeting Stalin's name appears only once. Nevertheless, this account makes clear that the real subject of discussion at the Conference was the former dictator.

In his co-report to the Conference, the deputy chief editor of the journal, Burdzhalov, called in effect for an end to the distinctively Stalinist version of party history. He required attention to be given to activities of "bolsheviks on whom V. I. Lenin relied," thus making Stalin share with others what he had claimed for himself. He attacked distortions in the histories of local party organizations in the Ukraine and in the Transcaucasus; here again the implication was that achievements which Stalin had claimed as his own should be denied him. Burdzhalov demanded that the intra-party struggles of the 1920's, previously described in the journal's editorials in the Stalinist version as a fight against "a handful of unmasked spies and wreckers," be correctly presented as a fight against "anti-Leninist tendencies and groups supported by backward social strata."

Burdzhalov capped his attack by asserting the inadequacy of the bible of Stalinist history, The Short Course of the History of the VKP(b):

Some historians of the party treat many important questions dogmatically, un-critically, limiting themselves to expositions /perekazivaniem/ of The Short Course of the History of the VKP(b), not developing the theses which it presents, remaining on the level achieved by science in 1938. (p. 202)
In view of a recent large reprinting of this history, Burdzhalov's sneer at its outdated theses could hardly have been anticipated by his fellow-historians. Critical of this book was necessarily criticism of Stalin, as post-Congress evaluations of that party text make clear.

This cautious break with the Stalin myth, although it appears in a co-report to the Conference by a journal editor, was not recognized by subsequent speakers at the meeting as establishing the party "line" on The Short Course. Burdzhalov, who holds no party office, was criticized by G. D. Kostomarov, candidate member of the powerful Moscow City Committee and member of the Party History Institute of the Moscow organization. He found "incomprehensible the way in which E. R. Burdzhalov posed the question of The Short Course of the History of the VKP(b)." Another highly authoritative party historian, M. D. Stuchebnikova, head of the party

102 A new printing of The Short Course of the History of the VKP(b) was made in 1955 from the 1945 matrices. Copies 500,001 - 700,000 were authorized to the printer on September 29, 1955.

103 Kostomarov was first elected to the Moscow city committee in January, 1950, shortly after Khrushchev became the head of the Moscow organization.

104 Here (p. 210), as at numerous other points in the account of the Conference, the reporter seems to give only a hint of what was said in an extended, and perhaps heated, discussion.
history section of the Institute of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin,
found it

...impossible to agree with some theses advanced [at the conference]. The reproach
was cast at party historians that they
limit themselves to exposition of the "Short
history," that the treatment of questions
of the history of the party is the most
backward sector on the history front.
Actually party historians have substantial
achievements [ser'ezhie dostiženija]. They
study deeply the works of Marx, Engels,
Lenin, and Stalin.... [This is the only
reported reference to Stalin at the Confer-
ence.] (p. 209)

Besides criticizing Burdzhalov for his innuendo against
Stalin, members of the Conference also found fault with
other liberalizing themes in his co-report: the Mensheviks'
opposition to the Czarist regime; the incorrect treatment of
the nationalities question in Soviet historiography; the
need for increased publication of party documents; crediting
of a wide circle of Lenin's associates with the party's
achievements.105 The chief critics of Burdzhalov on these

105 The journal itself was also criticized for accepting
for publication excessively liberalizing articles; but
Burdzhalov's co-report was the chief target. Kostomarov
appeared particularly indignant at the notion that Lenin
was a collective leader. He criticized an article which
had appeared in the journal for alleging that "Lenin had
directed the work of Bolsheviks...as a member of the
Central Committee." According to Kostomarov, "Lenin
directed as leader [vozhd] of our party and leader of the
revolution." (p. 210) After the Congress, while Lenin
continued to be called vozhd, he was also described as a
collective leader.
points were historians attached to party institutions; academic historians tended to support him. This alignment of party versus academic historians has remained remarkably stable in the sharpening controversies on these questions which have followed the XX Congress.

Burdzhalov's views evidently did not represent the official party line for Soviet historiography. Not only was he subjected to strong criticism from party historians, but he received very slight support from his co-reporter, A. V. Pankratova -- member of the Central Committee, top-ranking historian in the party, and chief editor of the history journal. Her co-report avoided the controversial points in Burdzhalov's presentations, and she said in her summation

106 Two of Burdzhalov's critics worked for the Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin Institute (M. A. Dvoinishnikov and M. D. Stuchebnikova); Kostomarov, as already indicated, worked for the Institute of Party History attached to the Moscow Party Committee; and B. D. Datsiuk worked for the Higher Party School attached to the Central Committee. Burdzhalov had criticized Kostomarov in his co-report and he rebutted Datsiuk and Dvoinishnikov in his summation.
that no "revolution in historiography" was intended.\footnote{107}

This statement, which was intended to reassure Burdzhalov's critics, was probably true when she made it; yet it was belied at the XX Congress three weeks later, first by Mikoyan and four days after him by Pankratova herself. Like the effacement of Stalin from the republican congresses, and from pre-Congress propaganda generally, the Conference's debate on Stalinism in history indicates that by the end of January Stalin's historical status had been reappraised but not yet finally decided.

In the same issue of Problems of History which printed the report of the Conference there was also an article which carried the de-Stalinization of party history even beyond Burdzhalov's co-report. This article berated

\footnote{107 Burdzhalov did not claim that his co-report was based on directives of the Central Committee, or that it embodied the party line. In his summation, he referred vaguely to "party instructions" (\textit{ukazanii partii}) in order to defend the journal, not his report, against certain criticisms. However, the only "instruction" he mentioned was a very general one: "The party summons us to struggle against bookishness \textit{[nechetnichestva]} and dogmatism, to the creative development of science. This relates particularly to historians of the party, whose works have particularly numerous elements of bookishness and dogmatism." (p. 212). Neither did Pankratova, in her co-report, cite any recent party decision on Soviet historiography. She referred to general tasks set for the journal by the Central Committee and the Presidium of the Academy of Science; but these clearly were not laid down recently, for the "editorial board has tried to fulfill these instructions \textit{[ukazanii]} and to promote further successes in Soviet historical science." (p. 199; author's underlining.)}
The resurrection of these names did not, however, portend the delivery of Khrushchev's secret speech. The journal had previously resurrected the name of Voznesensky, a more recent victim of Stalin's, and had spoken well of his book on World War II. This was done on December 10, 1955, when praise to Stalin still filled the columns of the Soviet press. Thus, it may be seen that the names of Stalin's victims appear in December and again in February as isolated signals, not as elements in an emergent campaign to disavow Stalin's purge of his erstwhile followers. These isolated signals, and more particularly Burdzhalov's co-report, may represent pressure exerted by a faction in the Soviet leadership to destroy the Stalin image. The resistance of party

108 Problems of History, No. 2, published the names of these Stalinists in an unsigned article, "Pamphlets on Congresses and Conferences of the C.P.S.U." (p. 127). The criticized pamphlets were published during 1955, superseding a previous series which was strongly criticized in a Central Committee decree (December 24, 1953) for failing to show adequately "the leading role of the Communist Party, for not showing the role of the people's masses in history" — i.e., for excessively crediting Stalin with Soviet successes. (Cf. O Partii i Sovetskoi Pechati. Sbornik Dokumentov [On the Party and Soviet Press, Collected Documents], Moscow, 1954, p. 662.)
officials like Kostomarov to such pressures suggests that
elements in the top leadership were reluctant even to admit
Stalin's defects, let alone his crimes.109

15. The Politicians Debate Stalin

If, as we have contended in this study, an elite
faction was pressing for the revelation of Stalin's crimes,
it won an important victory just ten days before the Congress
opened, when a hard blow was struck at the Stalin myth.

A letter of greeting was sent Voroshilov on his seventy-
fifth birthday by the Central Committee and the Council of
Ministers, as tradition required. But an important element
in the tradition was violated: where past letters to a top
Soviet leader made him "a pupil of Lenin, a co-worker of
Stalin," the letter to Voroshilov omitted Stalin. That this
should have been done in a document addressed to Voroshilov

109 The hypothesis that Burdzhalov's co-report was an
incident in the factional contention of the Soviet
elite is supported by some post-Congress developments.
Burdzhalov has been subjected to a powerful attack in
party organs for the liberalizing articles he authored
after the Congress in Problems of History (Nos. 4 and
8). Significantly, he was even criticized for pursuing
an objective which he had set for historians in his co-
report, namely, that of being truthful about the
historical role of the Mensheviks. (See Party Life,
No. 14, pp. 62-72; Lenigradskaja Pravda, August 5,
1956. For a critical allusion to Burdzhalov, without
mention of his name, see the second editorial of
Kommunist, No. 10, p. 24.) Problems of History (Nos.
7 and 8) defended Burdzhalov's position against some
of these attacks, presumably indicating that he still
enjoyed high-level support. But at the end of October,
1956, an article in Kommunist (No. 15, p. 52) not only
attacked Burdzhalov on a point where he was too critical
of Stalin but added a reminder that this veteran
communist publicist had not always expressed anti-
Stalinist views. Since Burdzhalov had previously
acknowledged this himself, the reminder seems threatening.
was especially noteworthy since he, more than any other
Presidium member, had tried to protect the name of the dead
Stalin: only he spoke of the Lenin-Stalin Central Committee
(Pravda, April 30, 1955) and only he and Kaganovich called
Stalin vozhd (leader). (Pravda, November 7, 1953.)

Apparently it had now been agreed to take the de-Stalinization
campaign a step beyond the compromise decision of mid-January;
for to omit Stalin's name from the Central Committee document
was virtually to suggest that it was not respectable.

It may be conjectured that Voroshilov was averse to
the omission, as were Kaganovich and Molotov, while Mikoyan,
Malenkov, Saburov, and Pervukhin probably favored it. If
so, the faction led by Khrushchev (which we presume also in-
cluded Suslov and Kirichenko -- who had praised Stalin only
two weeks previously [111] and probably Bulganin) had the

\[110\] According to the U.S. State Department release on the
secret speech, Khrushchev alluded to Voroshilov's
devotion to Stalin despite injuries suffered at his
hands. In his post-Stalin speeches Voroshilov had
almost invariably referred to Stalin as the "great
Stalin." The parenthetical page references designated
"S.R." referring to quoted matter in the text and foot-
notes of this study are to U.S. Department of State

\[111\] Pravda, January 23, 1956.
necessary votes in the Presidium to prevent the omission of Stalin's name from the letter (by 7 to 4). Its failure to do so may mean that Khrushchev, having already ceased his efforts to link himself directly with the Stalin image, sought to avoid a contest with the anti-Stalinist group.

Khrushchev's position with respect to Stalin had become complicated. In mid-January, he seems to have decided to lessen his personal vulnerability to attacks on Stalin by ceasing to employ the Stalin symbol in his bid for the succession. As a result Khrushchev no longer needed to preserve the positive features of the Stalin image, but he still had good reason to oppose revelation of the terrible crimes of the tyrant Stalin. He must have feared they would be used as a weapon to prevent him from acquiring Stalin's arbitrary power. Khrushchev could abandon the ambivalent Stalin image, but he could not escape it.

The dual problem Khrushchev apparently faced was to prevent an anti-Stalin campaign if the costs were not excessive, and to avoid being maneuvered into a position where he might become the target of a widespread and probably growing anti-Stalinist sentiment. It appears that Khrushchev's

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112 Since no Central Committee plenum was announced during the period from July, 1955, to the XX Congress, it is reasonable to assume that the decision was taken in the Presidium.

113 When the anti-Stalin campaign emerged, it was justified as a means of preventing the repetition of the Stalinist autocracy.
solution was to adopt a tactic of flexible and not ex-
cessively firm resistance to proposed major moves toward de-
Stalinization. On this hypothesis, the references to Stalin
by Kirichenko, Furtseva, and Kapitonov, and the defense of
the Stalinist history, The Short Course of the History of the
VKP(b), by Kostomarov -- all evident beneficiaries of
Khrushchev's influence -- were designed or supported by
Khrushchev to maintain Stalin's respectability; but he sub-
sequently agreed, under pressure, to omit Stalin's name from
the joint letter to Voroshilov, fearing that to insist on
its inclusion might make him the target of liberalizing anti-
Stalinist forces among Soviet sub-elites. Meanwhile resist-
ance to the revelation of Stalin's crimes continued, and it
is difficult to suppose that Khrushchev had no hand in it.

On February 13, the day before the XX Congress opened,
Stalin's name appeared again in the central press after
having been erased from Pravda's pre-Congress propaganda
campaign three weeks before. According to a Pravda article
by Bierut, first secretary of the party Central Committee
of Poland, the Polish party was "implementing the principle
of priority for heavy industry...which was emphasized by
Lenin and later by Stalin and systematically carried out by
the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U." This invocation of
Stalin's authority for giving top priority to heavy industry
was the same use Khrushchev made of the Stalin symbol a year
previously in his factional struggle with Malenkov. It will
be noted that this reappearance of Stalin’s name in the press came after the Voroshilov letter had made it clear to any trained communist that Stalin’s status was, at best, doubtful, and after Pravda articles by other top satellite leaders had conspicuously avoided Stalin’s name and his dogmas.\textsuperscript{114} Yet not only did Bierut use Stalin’s name to sanction priority for heavy industry, but by discerning in agriculture a “sharpening class struggle,” he also employed a Stalinist doctrine which was soon to be attacked in Poland as in the U.S.S.R. and the other satellites.\textsuperscript{115}

It is difficult to understand why the Soviet leadership, having omitted Stalin’s name from the Voroshilov letter, permitted Bierut to invoke it nine days later in the pages of Pravda. It is most improbable that Bierut could have done this without approval from at least some of the top Soviet leaders. While it is uncertain who these might have been, it is noteworthy that Bierut managed to imply that Khrushchev and Bulganin had special responsibility for Soviet foreign policy.\textsuperscript{116} He conveyed this idea by using a

\textsuperscript{114} Articles by Cheorghiui–Dej (Rumania) on February 10 and Rákosí (Hungary) on February 11.

\textsuperscript{115} Stalin’s dogma that class struggle would be intensified in the Soviet Union in the measure of Soviet successes was first attacked in Khrushchev’s secret speech.

\textsuperscript{116} This had previously been done in January at some republican congresses. See, for example, praise of Khrushchev’s and Bulganin’s application of the Leninist line to international politics in the ”Report of the Central Committee of the Karelo–Finnish S.S.R.” (Leninskaia Pravda, January 18, 1956.)
highly original formula which referred to the principles of peaceful coexistence "so clearly formulated in the speeches of Comrades Khrushchev, Bulganin, and other Soviet leaders." (Author's underlining.) In this way Bierut supported Khrushchev's pretensions to pre-eminence in the Soviet leadership (and perhaps Bulganin's as well), by bringing to the pages of Pravda a blatant manifestation of the Khrushchev cult which had previously been largely restricted to certain republics.\footnote{Three days later, in his speech to the XX Congress, Bierut again made an unusual reference to Khrushchev's Congress report (Pravda, February 16, 1956).} This association of the Stalin cult with the Khrushchev cult makes it reasonable to suppose that Khrushchev covertly supported Bierut's evident effort to avert the denigration of Stalin.

The divergence of the Bierut article and the Voroshilov letter on the Stalin question apparently added to the existing uncertainty about Stalin. On the day after Bierut's support of Stalin in Pravda, opening day of the XX Congress, the central press was consistent in ignoring Stalin; but organs of the Central Committee in several republics (of which thirteen were examined) varied markedly in their treatment of Stalin.
Stalin received favorable treatment in the Ukraine, Belorussia, Uzbekistan, Latvia, and Georgia. 118 Mention of Stalin was avoided in Armenia, Moldavia, and the Karelo-Finnish Republic, where neither his name nor his picture was published. He was accorded intermediate treatment in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Estonia, and Kirghizia, where papers used his name in their editorials but published no picture; and in the Tadzhik Republic, where the reverse was the case.

This absence of uniformity at the eleventh hour is striking. The authoritative Voroshilov letter appeared as a virtual directive to make the Stalin image taboo -- a policy which was actually followed by three republican party organs. That ten others still gave Stalin an honorable place in final pre-Congress propaganda, that five of these even emphasized Stalin’s good name, strongly suggests that unofficial word from Moscow circles -- doubtless reinforced by the Bierut article -- encouraged them to do so.

Supporting evidence for this hypothesis may be drawn from the way particular republican newspapers treated Stalin. One of the three republics which ignored Stalin was Armenia,

118 Stalin’s profile was shown (with his three predecessors on a standard medallion) only in the Ukrainian, Belorussian, and Uzbek papers, and in two others. The Belorussian, Uzbek, and Georgian papers (plus three others) named Stalin in their editorials; the Georgian paper (Zaria Vostoka) named him three times, thus compensating for the absence of his picture. The Ukrainian paper (Pravda Ukraini) left Stalin out of its editorial, but more than compensated by hailing him and the three other sacred leaders in bold letters over the medallion.
the homeland of Stalin's first open critic, Mikoyan, whose speech at the XX Congress even raised the question of Stalin's loyalty to Leninism. This same newspaper, the Yerevan Kommunist, had published the complete text of Mikoyan's locally delivered election speech in March, 1954, including his controversial views on foreign and defense policy. These passages, and much else, were eliminated from the Moscow version of Mikoyan's speech -- the only one to be abbreviated.

In the Ukraine, on the other hand, where Khrushchev's lieutenant, Kirichenko, is the dominant political figure, the Stalin image was prominently displayed. Since Kirichenko is a member of the party Presidium, hence privy to their decisions, it is difficult to suppose that the chief Ukrainian newspaper was not aware of a decision to denigrate Stalin while the Armenian paper was. It seems more likely that the strong Ukrainian support for Stalin on February 14 and the Armenian slighting of him were both deliberate acts, not blunders resulting from ignorance.119

From this evidence it appears that in the last hours before the XX Congress opened Khrushchev acted to defend Stalin's good name -- though surely not his inflated reputation -- against impending attacks on it. To this end, he

119 The journal of the Ukrainian Central Committee still quoted Stalin in an issue which went to press after the XX Congress opened. It probably reached the stands about the time of Khrushchev's secret speech. (Kommunist Ukraini, No. 2, p. 42.)
may have secured respectful treatment of Stalin in most republican newspapers on the day the Congress opened, and in Bierut's Pravda article the day before.

16. **Stalin at the XX Congress**

Stalin's name was mentioned five times at open sessions of the XX Congress by four speakers. Two of the speakers headed foreign communist parties; they spoke forcefully on Stalin's behalf. The third speaker was Khrushchev who twice made favorable references to Stalin. The last was Mikoyan who criticized Stalin by name and thus for the first time in over a quarter of a century subjected the dead dictator to explicit public criticism in the U.S.S.R. These five references to the dead dictator are parts of a subtle debate on Stalin's place in Soviet mythology which was conducted at the sessions of the XX Congress.¹²⁰

Although the two times Khrushchev mentioned Stalin at the XX Congress his remarks were favorable, they were certainly not eulogistic. He deprived Stalin of: the divine

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¹²⁰ The notion that addresses were distributed to the speakers for delivery at the XX Congress, like parts in an elaborate ritual, seems untenable in view of the widely varying treatment which top speakers gave such crucial questions as, for example, the way affairs were conducted in the period of Stalin's rule. Several top leaders even expressed personal reservations about party policies. Molotov, for example, saw in the rapprochement with Yugoslavia a contribution to "peace and international security" where other speakers saw a contribution to "peace and socialism." Molotov's reservations about the Yugoslav brand of socialism have been indicated on several other occasions as well.
attributes which his frightened lackeys had conferred upon him while he lived; high bolshevik qualities which were still attributed to Stalin after he died; and even the political stature which was rightfully his as the successful dictator over a powerful state. Stalin was reduced by Khrushchev to the level of such minor leaders as Tokuda (the Japanese party leader), and Gottwald (the Czechoslovak party leader). He was described by Khrushchev as "a most prominent figure" vjdneishikh deiatelei, a phrase which gave him the status of a mere member of the Politburo, not its chief. (I, 3.) Khrushchev even referred ironically to "a miracle-working hero," (I, 102), and when he spoke of the "restoration" of collective leadership, Khrushchev implicitly raised the question of Stalin's political purity -- the first time this had been done by a top Soviet leader since Stalin's death. (I, 101.)

Even while scaling down Stalin's political stature, however, Khrushchev apparently contrived to defend him.

121 Unless otherwise indicated, all parenthetical references to volume and page appearing throughout Chapters 16, 17, and 18 refer to XX S'ezd Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza, Stenograficheskii Otchet (XX Congress of the C.P.S.U., Stenographic Report), Moscow, 1956.

122 Kommunist had already referred to the "implementation" of collective leadership "after the XIX Congress." (No. 17, 1955, p. 4.)
Although he spoke against a background from which Stalin's image was conspicuously absent, Khrushchev rejected the choice open to him of not mentioning Stalin's name -- a choice made by every other Soviet delegate at the Congress except Mikoyan, who criticized Stalin and the choice of the Central Committee in its letter to Voroshilov. In his brief speech of greeting to the newly-assembled Congress Khrushchev memorialized Stalin, although he had good precedent for not doing so. (I, 3.)\textsuperscript{123} Even though he had decided to mention Stalin, Khrushchev could still have spoken of him in a neutral sense. Instead, he spoke once of Stalin's death as a "loss" (I, 3) and again, in his major report on the same day, he said "death tore \textsuperscript{\textit{virvala}} Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin from our ranks" (I, 99) -- a phrase which had not previously been used in the three years since Stalin's death.

These references to Stalin appear to have been designed to maintain the Stalin image as a favorable one. It seems hardly possible that Khrushchev would speak twice of Stalin's death as a loss if he were then planning to charge -- as he did ten days later -- that Stalin's last months were spent

\textsuperscript{123} At the three Congresses held from 1930 until 1952, deceased leaders were not memorialized. At the XIX Congress (1952), which met after a thirteen-year interval, the three Politburo figures who had died were commemorated. Moreover, according to precedent, Bulganin, as head of the government, should have greeted the Congress. Yet Khrushchev chose to do this himself and thus became the only Soviet delegate at the Congress who spoke favorably of Stalin.
in plotting to "finish off" his old Politburo colleagues.\textsuperscript{124}

Stalin evidently had plans to finish off the old members of the Political Bureau. He often stated that Political Bureau members should be replaced by new ones.

His proposal after the Nineteenth Congress concerning the selection of twenty-five persons to the Central Committee Presidium was aimed at the removal of the old Political Bureau members and the bringing in of less experienced persons so that these would extol him in all sorts of ways.

We can assume that this was also a design for the future annihilation of the old Political Bureau members and, in this way, a cover for all shameful acts of Stalin, acts which we are now considering. (G.R., p. 55.)

By making slightly favorable remarks about Stalin, Khrushchev may have hoped to discourage the easy transition from the glorification of Stalin -- which was already well-advanced by the time the Congress opened -- to the exposure of his terrible crimes.

The next mention of Stalin's name heard by the Congress was on the following day, February 15, in the only address delivered by a foreign communist. After some brief and innocuous remarks of his own, the Chinese delegate, Chu Teh, read a telegram from the Chinese Central Committee "signed

\textsuperscript{124} In the analogous speech at the XIX Congress, Molotov used non-evaluative expressions with respect to the deaths of party leaders: "Absent from our midst today are several of the most prominent figures of our party. Alexander Sergeyevich Shcherbakov...has died. Mikhail Ivanovich Kalinin...is gone from our midst. Andre Alexandrovich Zhdanov...has died. (Author's underlining.)
by Comrade Mao Tse-tung." Mao spoke of the "invincibility of the Soviet Communist Party created by Lenin and nurtured by Stalin and his closest comrades-in-arms. (Prolonged applause.)" (I, 230; author's underscoring.) The message was dated February 9, 1956, five days after the Voroshilov letter raised the question of Stalin's good name. After he received this message from Mao Tse-tung, Chu still had another five days before the Congress in which he could have sought Peking's permission to eliminate the inappropriate eulogy of Stalin. That he did not so use this time seems best explained by the hypothesis that Chu was encouraged by some Soviet leaders to retain the eulogy of Stalin when delivering Mao's message to the XX Congress.

Mao's intervention in Soviet politics seems highly deliberate. In addition to praising Stalin he also eulogized Khrushchev:

The great successes gained by the Soviet Union in foreign and domestic policy in recent years are inseparable from the correct leadership of the well-tried /Ispitannogo/ Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. headed by /vo glave s/ comrade Khrushchev.... (Stormy applause.)

125 Mao claimed too much for Khrushchev in saying that he "headed" the Central Committee. This phrase would have been appropriate to an effort designed to make Khrushchev "general secretary of the Central Committee", but it was too audacious for one whose boldest partisans, in the days before the Congress, had only envisaged him as heading the Presidium. It will be recalled in this connection that Korneichuk told the Ukrainian Congress of Mao's gratitude to Khrushchev for helping the Chinese people. This top-ranking Soviet writer may have acted as a personal intermediary between Mao and Khrushchev when he was in China in May, 1955.
Mao left no doubt about extending his support to Khrushchev. When speaking of the "correct leadership" of the Soviet party in foreign affairs, he listed six diplomatic moves, all of which were taken after Malenkov was ousted.

This message to the Congress by Mao Tse-tung provides a key to the de-Stalinization campaign. It combines emphasis on Stalin's formative influence on the Soviet party with blatant support of Khrushchev's claims to primacy over his Presidium colleagues.

The fourth reference to Stalin at the XX Congress, and the first criticism of him, was made by Mikoyan on February 16. This Old Bolshevik, who had been elevated to the Politburo by Stalin rather belatedly (1935), found "hardly helpful, hardly correct, a well-known dictum of Stalin in The Economic Problems of Socialism in the U.S.S.R....," and called for "critical revision of certain other precepts of the Economic Problems." (1, 323.) This attack on a proposition of Stalinist social science, and on Stalin's last written work, did not lie within the frame of reference which Khrushchev's report had established for discussion.

A few paragraphs later Mikoyan undertook to reveal Stalin's terrorism against the leaders of the Bolshevik party. He approached this vital raw nerve from behind a screen of historical criticism, under the heading "historians." Certain "events of the Civil War," he said, are not explained in a true Marxist fashion but
by alleged sabotage on the part of some
party leaders of that time who were wrongly
declared enemies of the people /nepravilno
objavlennikh vragami naroda/ many years
after the events described. (1, 326;
author's underscoring.)

Mikoyan immediately identified two such civil war leaders
who had suffered at the hands of both the historians and
those who declared them "enemies of the people": he spoke
of Conrade Antonov-Ovseyenko and Conrade Kosior, according
them the fraternal title which he had denied to Stalin!

Mikoyan thus undertook the public rehabilitation of Stalin's
purge victims -- the outstanding event of the XX Congress --
a full week before Khrushchev; and he did it publicly, not
in secret session.

In the preceding three days there had been evidence of
efforts to discourage such intimations of Stalin's murderous
crimes against his own supporters: in the restoration of
Stalin's name to Pravda, in the eulogies to him in most re-
publican newspapers, and in Khrushchev's favorable references
to Stalin on the first day of the Congress. (See Chapter
15.) If discouragement was the objective of these actions,
they met with failure at the hands of Mikoyan.

Just as Khrushchev evidently sought to avoid mention of
Stalin's terrorism for tactical reasons rather than out of
affection for Stalin, so Mikoyan aimed beyond Stalin in his
speech. Kosior, the second of the two civil war leaders re-
habitated by Mikoyan, was Khrushchev's predecessor as boss
of the Ukraine; he disappeared in 1938.\textsuperscript{126} While the extent of Khrushchev's responsibility in the purge of Kosior is uncertain, his career was patently built on the ruins of Kosior's Ukrainian political machine.\textsuperscript{127} Mikoyan need not have mentioned Kosior; he could have mentioned other Stalinists such as Chubar, Eikhe, and Rudzutak, whose purge did not bring such evident advantage to any present leader. In passing over these names and choosing Kosior's, Mikoyan was doubtless acting deliberately. Khrushchev, simply by being senior secretary, was necessarily in the line of fire when Stalin was attacked. Mikoyan's intention in mentioning Kosior was probably to show even more pointedly that Khrushchev might well become the author of a new terror if

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{126} Kosior still held his post and was in good standing at the end of October, 1937, when a favorable biography of him appeared in the \textit{Large Soviet Encyclopedia} (first edition, Vol. 34). Within three months he was replaced by Khrushchev. Subsequently, according to the \textit{Large Soviet Encyclopedia} (first edition, Vol. 55), "the entire Ukrainian nation, stalwart followers of Lenin and Stalin, under the leadership of N. S. Khrushchev, waged a resolute struggle for the liquidation and eradication of the Bukharinite-Trotskyite spies, wreckers, and traitors..." Since Mikoyan's speech to the XX Congress, no party organ has repeated his contention that Kosior was not an "enemy of the people." The other man mentioned by Mikoyan, Antonov-Ovseyenko, a Trotskyist, remains the only non-Stalinist who has been exculpated.
\item \textsuperscript{127} In this respect his career parallels Beria's, that "villain," according to the secret report, who "climbed up the government ladder over an untold number of corpses." (S.R., p. 41.)
\end{itemize}
he was awarded Stalin's "legitimate" powers. Certainly the reference to Kosior, by recalling that Khrushchev capitalized on Stalin's purges, made it difficult for any partisan of the first secretary to contend that he, unlike Stalin, could never "degenerate" into a terroristic tyrant.

Mikoyan brought his attack on Stalin even closer to the current succession problem in the last sentences of his speech. Here he alluded to Lenin's "testament," identifying the document by a brief summary of its main points, but leaving out Lenin's evaluation of leading Bolsheviks.

Lenin's great anxiety about the fate of our party and our revolution before he left us is well known. More than anything else he feared a split in the party, a split in the alliance of the working class and the peasantry. He was preoccupied with the search for means to avert one and the other. He was convinced that if the unity of the ranks of the party, of its leadership, was observed, if the alliance of the working class and the peasantry was preserved and strengthened, the cause of communism was invincible.

How great would be Lenin's joy if now, after thirty-two years, he were able to see what organizational and political unity of the ranks of the party and of its leadership exist at present, how the ideas of Marxism-Leninism are prospering, how inviolably strong the alliance of the working class and the collective farm peasantry is; he would see that we not only swear by Lenin's name but are exerting our efforts to put into practice Lenin's ideas and reverently fulfilling his behests \(\text{zaveti}\). (Tempestuous, prolonged applause.) (I, 328; author's underscore.)
The best-known feature of Lenin's "testament" is its postscript, which calls for the removal of Stalin as general secretary:

Stalin is too coarse, and this fault, entirely supportable in relations among us Communists, becomes insupportable in the office of "gensec." 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 passage from the "testament" along with another which characterizes Stalin are the only ones which have since been quoted. They appeared both in the June 30 decree of the Central Committee and in Khrushchev's secret speech. It was very probably this postscript which Mikoyan wanted to recall by alluding to the "testament," because it could serve to draw a parallel between the succession problem in the early twenties and at the present time. Khrushchev's persistent efforts to retrace Stalin's steps to power, and more particularly his publication of the Holyoake letter, readily bring to mind a critical juncture in 1924. At that time, failure to take Lenin's advice to remove Stalin from the post of "gensec" led to twenty years of tyranny. 128 Mikoyan

128 The Central Committee decided after Lenin's death not to observe his request that the "testament" be transmitted to the XIII Party Congress.
may have sought to remind the XX Congress that it, too, was at a critical juncture, that its decisions might determine whether a new tyranny was to be born. 129 If so, his fantasy on "Lenin's joy if now, after thirty-two years, he were able to see the leadership's unity" may well have been a plea to preserve the existing balance, to award Khrushchev no more authority and prestige than he had already brought with him to the Congress.

The opening words of Mikoyan's speech are: "Comrades, I am entirely in agreement with the report of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U." (I, 301.) This emphatic profession of adherence to Khrushchev's report (he was the only speaker to use the first person) seems intentionally ironical,

129 This message of Mikoyan's seems to have been repeated after the XX Congress by Petrovsky, the former Politburo candidate who had offered the reminder in 1955 that the secretary was supposed to implement collective decisions. "I happened to see Vladimir Il'ich and to converse with him in the days -- very difficult for party and country -- when he was ill. Throughout my life the words he spoke in this conversation have been engraved in my memory: it is necessary to choose as party leaders men who will preserve the unity of the party. The cause of socialist revolution would develop if there was no split in the party. Lenin requested me to convey this to the comrades." (Trud, April 20, 1956; author's underscoring.) Khrushchev has several times hinted publicly at disagreements among the top leaders, therefore there might well be a question as to whether he was a leader who would "preserve the unity of the party." See also Sholokhov's speech to the XX Congress, where he seems to hint that Khrushchev lacks the qualities which Lenin thought necessary for the party's senior secretary. (Appendix III.)
for his speech transgressed the frame of reference which was established in the report. The applause of the Congress for Mikoyan's speech was apparently spontaneous and its intensity exceeded any except that for Khrushchev's report of the Central Committee. If Mikoyan had sought to weaken the factional loyalties of the Congress by a direct appeal to their personal judgment, to their fears and hopes and their idealism, he must have been gratified by the response.

Others presumably were less gratified; the single night which separated Mikoyan's speech from that of Thorez, head of the French Communist Party, must have been filled with strenuous consultation which resulted in the fifth and final public mention of Stalin at the XX Congress:

Mikoyan's speech continues to stand beyond the frame of reference established months after the XX Congress, especially on the question of the "objective" causes of Stalin's use of terror against the party leadership. In his "secret speech" Khrushchev, in effect, ignored this problem, attributing Stalin's crimes almost entirely to his paranoid personality. After foreign communist leaders criticized this deficiency, the Central Committee decree of June 30 pointed to the need for centralization in any socialist society, and its transcendent importance in conditions of "capitalist encirclement." Only Mikoyan has alluded to the objective basis for a party split which Lenin recognized: the danger of a split in the worker-peasant alliance. He seems to hint that Stalin destroyed the unity of the party leadership by an incorrect policy towards the peasantry, and could restore that unity only by terrorizing the opposition leaders. While such a contention might lack merit as history, it has the unique virtue of being a "Leninist" explanation of Stalin's "degeneration." Significantly, the slogan "strengthen the alliance of the workers and the peasants" -- abandoned in the last two decades of Stalin's rule -- was resurrected by Malenkov at Stalin's funeral and boosted by Mikoyan in October, 1953.
The C.P.S.U. has always provided the model of firm adherence to principle and unfailing fidelity to the great ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin. (I, 346; author's underscoring.)

This pointed reference of Thorez to the C.P.S.U.'s "firm adherence and unfailing fidelity" to Stalin's ideas -- after two dozen speakers had avoided mentioning Stalin -- was surely intended to affect the outcome of the subtle debate on Stalin being conducted before the XX Congress. Apparently he sought to counter Mikoyan's hint of Stalin's tyranny, to prevent it from issuing into a full revelation of Stalin's crimes to the Congress and to the party at large.131

Unlike other belated efforts to preserve Stalin's good name -- notably Mao's Congress message and Bierut's Pravda

131 Thorez also seemed to contradict Mikoyan on the question of the impoverishment of the workers in capitalist countries. The orthodox view remains that of Thorez.

Mikoyan (February 16, 1956)  "We...are not studying deeply enough facts and figures, and frequently limit ourselves, for purposes of agitation, to picking out individual facts about the symptom of an approaching crisis and the impoverishment of the workers...." (I, 323; author's underscoring.)

Thorez (February 17, 1956)  "In capitalist France...one witnesses the constant enrichment of monopolies and, at the same time, the constant lowering of the standard of living of the workers and the impoverishment of the working class. In their daily lives the proletarians experience the full rigor of this objective law of the capitalist system." (I, 342; author's underscoring.)
article — Thorez's speech does not eulogize Khrushchev, and hence leaves uncertain Khrushchev's involvement in it.\footnote{132} Assuredly Stalin's status had not yet been finally decided, or Thorez would hardly have dared to make the Congress' attitude toward Stalin a matter of "fidelity" and "principle";\footnote{133} neither would he have had his statement on Stalin publicized outside the precincts of the Congress. Thorez may well have been encouraged in his gambit by long-time Stalinists like Voroshilov, Kaganovich, and Molotov, who must have disliked the radical shift from Stalin's policies and code of political conduct. If so, it may be conjectured that Khrushchev extended a benevolent neutrality to their efforts but was no longer willing — once Mikoyan had openly criticized Stalin and hinted at his tyranny — to associate his name publicly with the defense of Stalin. We may safely conclude from this call by Thorez for fidelity to Stalin's ideas, which was published in Pravda on February 18, 1956, and twice broadcast to the Soviet people, that the Presidium had not yet decided to adopt the course towards which Mikoyan was pushing them.

\footnote{132} Thorez, like several other foreign communists, did not even mention Khrushchev's name or his report.

\footnote{133} Thorez's statement on "fidelity to the great ideas of... Stalin" was one of the few by him which was applauded at the Congress. Mao's reference to the party "nurtured by Stalin" also was applauded.
The debate continued. Although Stalin’s name does not appear again in newspaper accounts of the Congress after Thorez’ speech of February 17, efforts to prevent excessive de-Stalinization were evident as late as the night session on February 18, in the speech by Kaganovich. Three months previously, in his October Revolution address (November 6, 1955), Kaganovich had still emphasized the legitimacy of Stalin’s succession to Lenin, calling him "true comrade-in-arms of Lenin, the great Stalin." But when addressing the XX Congress, Kaganovich agreed that "collective leadership" was indeed a better mode of governing than the "cult of the individual." However, he implied that this problem had already been solved "after the XIX Congress," and solved on the basis of principle; there was no need, he seemed to say, to make a "bold" personal attack on Stalin:

After the XIX Congress of the party the Central Committee boldly (I have in view boldness which has to do with ideas, which is principled, theoretical \smelost ideinuiu, printsipialnuiu, teoreticheskuiu\) raised the question of the struggle against the cult of the individual. This is not an easy question. But the Central Committee gave a correct, Marxist-Leninist, party-type answer \partiinni otvet\ to it. (I, 532; author’s underscoring.)

An additional obstacle which Kaganovich raised to prevent an attack upon Stalin appeared in his effort to saddle Beria with a terrible crime of his master’s. He called the Beria group a "fascist-provocateur band." (I, 509.) Beria had been called many things since being purged,
including "provocateur"; but he had never been called "fascist." Even after Beria became a devil in Soviet mythology, neither accusations nor epithets were laid lightly upon his head; all seemed to serve some purpose. Kaganovich's aim in adding an epithet which implied that Beria's provocation had anti-Semitic overtones was evidently to make Beria responsible for the anti-Semitic "doctor-affair," announced on January 11, 1953, in Stalin's last days, and disavowed on April 4, shortly after his death. (See Chapter 4.)

Despite the many terrible crimes attributed to Beria after he was purged, he had never been charged with framing the doctor-affair. As long as Beria was not made responsible for it, the doctor-affair could be used as a weapon against some living leader, or against Stalin, as was done by Khrushchev in his secret speech. He made Stalin wholly responsible for the doctor-affair fabrication; Beria was not

134 The prolonged failure to accuse Beria of the doctor-affair was doubtless due, in part, to the difficulty of explaining away certain factors; namely, that Beria was a chief target of the doctor-plot and a chief instigator of its reversal. A very plausible case can be made for Khrushchev's involvement in the doctor-affair as one of its instigators. (See Chapter 4.)
Very probably it was to prevent just such an accusation that Kaganovich called Beria a "fascist-provocateur," intimating that Beria, not Stalin, was responsible. While Kaganovich failed in his broad objective of countering pressures for the exposure of Stalin's crimes, his effort subsequently met with a certain limited success: it was his implied version of the doctor-affair, rather than Khrushchev's secret one made on February 25, which was later accepted by Pravda. Five months after the Congress, on July 8, an unsigned Pravda article charged Beria with the doctor-affair, thus exonerating Stalin from direct responsibility for this particular crime:

"This rotten band of Beria and his accomplices fabricated false incriminating materials on honest party and Soviet workers, and also on a number of Soviet citizens. Thus, by it was fabricated the Leningrad affair, and a number of other affairs."

135 "Present at this Congress as a delegate is the former Minister of State Security, Comrade Ignatiev. Ignatiev is rather clearly a protege of Khrushchev, who has aided his political comeback since the reversal of the doctor-affair. Stalin told him curtly: 'If you do not obtain confessions from the doctors we will shorten you by a head.' 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." (S.R., p. 41.) While the doctor-affair was attributed to Stalin by Khrushchev, he charged the Leningrad affair mainly to Beria, probably correctly. (S.R., p. 38.)"
According to Pravda, Stalin was responsible for the "doctor-affair" only to the extent that his incorrect theoretical formulas and his one-man decisions made all Beria's crimes possible.

Pravda's belated acceptance of Kaganovich's hint as to who was behind the doctor-affair could not, of course, erase the condemnation of Stalin which that hint had apparently been designed to avert.136

When the XX Congress met on Monday, February 20, to conclude debate on the Central Committee's report, the defenders of Stalin's cause seemed to suffer a setback. Sholokhov, the eminent Soviet novelist, spoke of "a power-loving sengec who did not want to heed the collegium principle in his work." (I, 585.) On the surface he seemed to be speaking of Fadeev, the former literary dictator; but there could be little question that he was referring to Stalin as well. (In this same speech Sholokhov seemed to hint that Khrushchev, like Stalin, lacked the qualities Lenin thought necessary in the senior secretary: see Appendix III.) Of even greater political significance is the fact that

136 Pravda's shift of responsibility for the doctor-affair from Stalin to Beria is one of several instances where the public attack on Stalin has fallen well short of the extreme position held by Khrushchev in his secret speech on Stalin's post-1934 tyrannical regime. Such retreats are further indications of the haste with which the secret speech was decided upon. They probably reflect a political shift by Khrushchev towards rapprochement with the Stalinists rather than a victory won by Stalinists over Khrushchev's opposition.
Pankratova, the top-ranking Soviet historian, no longer straddled the fence as she had done a few weeks before in her co-report to the meeting of historians. Speaking almost at the end of the debate on Khrushchev's report, she now gave tacit support to Burdzhalov, deputy chief editor of Problems of History, with an attack on the Stalinist version of history, just as Mikoyan had done four days earlier. At the January conference of historians, Burdzhalov had attacked a key book on the Ukraine: Razgrom Burduaznoi Natsionalisticcheskoi Kontr-revolutii na Ukraina (Defeat of the Bourgeois Nationalist Counter-Revolution in the Ukraine), by A. Likholat. 137 This book, which was sent to press on May 20, 1954, had been widely praised until Burdzhalov charged it with "distortion of the history of Bolshevik organizations in the Ukraine." Both Mikoyan and Pankratova used criticism of Likholat's book as the basis for condemning Stalinist historiography at the XX Congress. More than this, both hinted that the purges conducted in the thirties under the slogan of eradicating "enemies of the people" were not wholly justified. Here

137 Likholat's powerful place among Soviet historians, even as late as the Congress of historians at Rome in September, 1955, is suggested by a refugee Soviet historian, S. V. Litechin: "To all appearances it was Likholat himself whose function it was to exercise 'thought control' in the Soviet delegation." (Soviet Historians in Rome, The Russian Review, Hanover, N.H., October, 1956, p. 266.)
Pankratova, although she referred to Mikoyan’s speech in this connection, was more cautious than he:

**Mikoyan** (February 16, 1956)

Certain complex and contradictory events... are explained...as alleged sabotage by some of the party leaders of the time who were wrongly declared enemies of the people many years after the events described. (I, 326; author’s underscoring.)

**Pankratova** (February 20, 1956)

...subjective attributing of all our failures to merely the harmful activities of our enemies or of people who have been declared enemies...in this can be seen the...cult of the individual. (I, 623; author’s underscoring.)

17. The Last Moments of Uncertainty

Even Pankratova’s speech did not signify that the denigration of Stalin had been finally decided upon. Three significant events in the final hours before Khrushchev’s secret speech indicate continuing confusion and uncertainty.

At the early session on Friday, February 24 -- after five days’ discussion of the five-year economic plan -- a resolution was adopted on Khrushchev’s report of February 14. Although it came towards the end of the Congress, within a few hours of the secret speech, this resolution took a relatively weak position on the issue of de-Stalinization. In it the Central Committee was instructed “not to weaken the struggle against vestiges of the cult of the individual....” (II, 424.) This seemed to assume that the evil was virtually uprooted (only "vestiges" remained) and that future slackening of the pace of de-Stalinization
which had been maintained before the Congress should be avoided ("not to weaken the struggle"). The resolution of the Congress on the "cult of the individual and its consequences" which came after the secret speech was far stronger. It called for "measures," "complete suppression" of the illegitimate cult of the individual, and required the Central Committee "to liquidate its consequences" in all vital areas of Soviet life. The strength of this resolution is to be expected, in light of the secret speech; but the weakness of the first resolution -- which preceded it by only one day -- seems odd, particularly since it served as the basic text in propaganda on the cult of the individual in the weeks following the Congress. (The stronger resolution was passed secretly and not publicized until four months later. [II, 498±7]

Adoption by the Congress of its resolution on the report of the Central Committee was accompanied by an unusual manifestation of the cult of Khrushchev. A draft of the resolution was presented to the Congress by the "commission for the preparation of the resolution of the XX Congress on the report of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U.," a group of fifty-five men comprised largely of apparatchiks plus the party Presidium. Its nineteen-page draft was adopted by the Congress in customarily docile fashion, but with one highly significant change: After the routine clause approving "the political line and the
practical activity of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. 

a second clause was added: "to approve the proposals and conclusions of the Central Committee contained in its report." (II, 368.) This clause, in effect, put the seal of approval of the Congress on any dictum of Khrushchev's report which did not find its way into the lengthy draft resolution. (Note, however, that the report as a whole was not approved, as was done for Stalin in 1934 and 1939.)

The insertion of this clause is significant not only because it was proposed from the floor of the Congress, but also because it was inappropriate from the standpoint of precedent. Until the XVII Congress (1934), approval of the Central Committee's work, as presented in its report, was always announced in a lengthy resolution passed by the Congress.

At the XVII Congress, when Stalin began to dispense with the forms of "inner-party democracy," the resolution on the Central Committee report was very brief and contained no discussion of its theses. Instead, a second clause was added to the traditional one approving the political line and practical work of the Central Committee:

2. To approve the report of comrade Stalin and to propose to all party organizations that they be directed in their work by the proposals and tasks advanced in the report of comrade Stalin.138

138 This was the first time the reporter for the Central Committee was mentioned in the Congress' resolution. It is significant that despite current emphasis on a return to Leninism, many distinctively Stalinist forms -- like this one -- were retained at the XX Congress.
This clause evidently was intended to confirm the wisdom of Stalin's utterances while dispensing with the formality of repeating them. The clause was reserved for Stalin. It was denied to Malenkov at the XIX Congress despite the brevity of the Congress' resolution, which did not refer to any of Malenkov's theses. 139

Clearly, then, there was no basis in precedent for approving the "proposals and conclusions" of Khrushchev's report of the Central Committee, since the nineteen-page resolution was supposed to embody them. Members of the Resolution Commission apparently saw no need for this Stalinist clause, since they omitted it from the draft resolution. We do not know who proposed this clause from the floor, nor who backed it. We know only that there was an incongruent relapse into a purely Stalinist ritual just a few hours before Khrushchev launched his secret attack on Stalin.

The third remarkable event of Friday, February 24, is the apparent postponement for several hours of Khrushchev's secret speech. The early session on Friday ended with this procedural announcement by the presiding chairman, Pervukhin:

Today at five o'clock in this hall there will be a meeting of the Council of delegation representatives [Sovet predstavitelei delegatsii]. At six o'clock, there will be a closed evening meeting of the Congress. At this meeting delegates with deciding and with consultative votes will attend. (II, 401.)

139 In effect the XIX Congress approved only the work of the Central Committee, not anything Malenkov said in his report of the Central Committee.
According to the stenographic report, however, the closed meeting did not ensue that evening at six o'clock as Pervukhin had announced. It was not held until Saturday, February 25. (II, 402.) (This is in accord with Western reports that Khrushchev began his speech about midnight.) The delay suggests that a last-minute difficulty may have developed, requiring postponement of the secret speech for several hours. We cannot know what this difficulty was, but the fact that the scheduled six-o'clock meeting was not held is a further indication of uncertainty -- and perhaps indecision -- lasting almost to the moment that Khrushchev began to deliver his secret speech.
PART III

KHRUSHCHEV'S ATTACK ON STALIN, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

For several hours after midnight on February 25, 1956, hundreds of the "best representatives" of the Soviet communist party listened to a speech describing how the party's former leader had murdered without cause thousands of good communists, including many of the party's former leaders. They were told he acted in this way because of a "persecution mania." No political reason was given for these criminal acts and the deceased leader allegedly believed that he was acting on behalf of worthy political goals.

The secret speech was soon made known to various subject peoples, some of whom mistakenly supposed it to be a signal for withdrawing from the socialist camp which the deceased leader had built up. The result was considerable bloodshed, with consequent damage to the international and, apparently, to the internal position of the Soviet Union. The benefits anticipated for the U.S.S.R. from this speech have not yet become manifest.

18. Khrushchev's Conversion to Anti-Stalinism

Khrushchev's retreat from the Stalin symbol, begun in mid-January, ended about midnight on February 25, when he attacked the man he hoped to succeed. The tacit controversy on Stalin's historical status which evidently raged during
the Congress is manifest to us only through certain hints and clues; a fuller reconstruction of it must await the final defeat and public condemnation of one of the contending factions. It appears that in the last few days before the Congress opened and during the first days of the Congress itself, Khrushchev tried to prevent an open attack being made on Stalin at the XX Congress. But after Mikoyan's open criticism of the dead dictator and his virtual condemnation of the purge of Stalinist leaders in the 1930's, Khrushchev's role becomes obscure. The inveterate Stalinists, Thorez and Kaganovich, may have had his active support; they almost certainly had his benevolent neutrality. This view supposes a degree of indeterminacy in the political situation which many Western observers are reluctant to allow. But the evidence requires us to suppose either (1) a fluid situation, or else (2) the hopeless resistance of veteran Stalinists (Thorez and Kaganovich) to an irrevocable party decision -- a resistance, moreover, which they were able to publicize against the united power of the anti-Stalinists and the Khrushchev forces!

140 Of the last six references to Stalin in the central press around the time of the Congress which were in the slightest degree favorable to him: three were associated with a cult of Khrushchev (Kirichenko, Bierut, and Mao) and two were uttered by Khrushchev himself; only the final reference by Thorez was neither spoken by Khrushchev nor associated with an assertion of his authority.
The belief that the fate of the Stalin image lay in the balance at the XX Congress is supported by evidence from Khrushchev's speeches. When he addressed the Congress on its opening day, Khrushchev spoke of Trotsky and others as "enemies of the people," a phrase which Pravda repeated in its editorials of February 16 and 20 and which even appears in the resolution of the Congress on February 24. (II, 424.) But on the following day Khrushchev said that the phrase "enemy of the people" was an invention by Stalin to justify his tyrannical terror: "The formula 'enemy of the people' was specifically introduced for the purpose of physically annihilating such [innocent] individuals." (S.R., p. 7.) Thus Trotsky and his fellow deviators became merely anti-party and anti-Lenin. It will be recalled that in the interval between Khrushchev's two speeches Mikoyan referred to party leaders "who were wrongly declared enemies of the people." It is hard to believe that Khrushchev would have used the phrase had he known that Mikoyan was to raise doubts about it, and that he himself would shortly discredit it altogether.\[141\]

\[141\] The phrase "enemy of the people" has not been used accusingly in the periodical press since the XX Congress. However, in Radio Moscow's live broadcast on November 6, 1956, of the major annual policy speech on the October Revolution anniversary, Suslov reverted to the old formula: "The services and role of Stalin in the October Revolution, in socialist building, and in the struggle against the enemies of the people and the enemies of the working class are commonly known." However, when this speech was published Pravda omitted the phrase "enemies of the people." This indication of controversy on a question affecting the personal security of individual members of the top leadership -- who may find themselves (continued on page 142)
Again, evidence of haste in the preparation of the secret speech may be seen in a major historical error which Khrushchev committed when delivering it. He said:

We cannot forget to recall the Soviet government resolution of August 14, 1925, concerning the founding of Lenin prizes for educational work. This resolution was published in the press, but until this day there are no Lenin prizes. This too should be corrected. (S.R., p. 48; author's under-scoring.)

Actually Lenin prizes were issued, until 1935. This is made clear in the joint decree of the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers which reinstated Lenin prizes (Pravda Ukraini, September 8, 1956). Such an error does not seem likely in a carefully prepared speech, but it could occur readily in one which was hastily prepared.

(continued) charged with being enemies of the people if the phrase is resurrected -- underlines the significance of Khrushchev's shift at the XX Congress from an accusative use of the term "enemies of the people" in his first report to a disavowal of it in the second. The only published reference to "enemies of the people" which this author has discovered since the XX Congress is in an important lecture-pamphlet by two top authorities on party organization: L. Slepov and G. Shitarev, Leninskie Normi Partiinoi Zhizni i Printsip Partiinogo Rykovodstva (Leninist Norms of Party Life and Principles of Party Leadership), p. 13. This pamphlet, which was sent to press on July 28, 1956, is basically an expansion of a Kommunist article by the same authors and with the same title which appeared in April, 1955 (No. 6). The pamphlet's reference to enemies of the people is an addition to the Kommunist article; it was deliberately inserted, not merely retained from the original. Among the enemies of the people are listed not only the customary classical deviators among the Bolsheviks -- Trotskyites, Bukharin- ites, bourgeois nationalists -- but also earlier enemies -- the Mensheviks and liquidators who were the first to have this charge levelled at them by the Bolsheviks. See Chapter 21 for an extended discussion of this pamphlet.
19. The Secret Speech

It was some time after midnight on Saturday, February 25, that Khrushchev began the epoch-making denunciation of his former chief. The "secret report" (the unofficial title given to this report in the West) is largely the story of what Stalin did to the leaders of the ruling stratum, and particularly to those who had been his closest associates. Since it is concerned primarily with the fate of former Soviet leaders, since it was undertaken without preparing Soviet society or the world communist movement for terrible revelations about the leader who had been held sacred, the secret speech seems to issue from the clashing wills and strategies of factions in the current Soviet leadership. In the light of the subtle debate on Stalin which the leaders evidently conducted before the Congress, the secret speech appears as Khrushchev's response to Mikoyan's plea to the Congress that they not permit the Stalinist cycle in Soviet history to be

142 The version of Khrushchev's secret speech released by the U.S. Department of State was covertly acquired. However, it seems to be authentic and has been accepted as such by all authoritative commentators. Doubtless some passages from the actual speech have been deleted; nevertheless, after careful study, it seems reasonable to speak of Khrushchev making on "omission" when a theme is absent from this edited report.

143 The Soviet people are involved only occasionally as Stalin's victims, as in the loss of hundreds of thousands of troops at Kharkov (p. 32) and the deportations of small nations (p. 36). Even here, Khrushchev seems particularly indignant that these nations were deported "together with all communists and Komsomols."
repeated. While the precise circumstances of Khrushchev's conversion to anti-Stalinism are shrouded in secrecy, this interpretation of that remarkable event is supported by a close examination of the secret speech itself.

In his speech to the XX Congress on February 16, Mikoyan had seemed to hint at Khrushchev's involvement in the purge of Kosior, thus reminding the Congress of Khrushchev's potentialities for becoming a new Stalin. (See Chapter 16.) In his secret speech Khrushchev took great pains to counter this suggestion. He was, for instance, suspiciously explicit and detailed in identifying the persons responsible for the purge of Kosior:

We are justly accusing Yezhov for the degenerate practices of 1937. But we have to answer these questions: Could Yezhov have arrested Kosior, for instance, without the knowledge of Stalin? Was there an exchange of opinions or a Political Bureau decision concerning this? No, there was not, as there was none regarding other cases of this type. Could Yezhov have decided such important matters as the fate of such eminent party figures? No, it would be a display of naivete to consider this the work of Yezhov alone. It is clear that these matters were decided by Stalin....Stalin decided everything....Stalin not only agreed to, but on his own initiative issued arrest orders.... (S.R., p. 25.)

Not long ago -- only several days before the present Congress -- we called to the Central Committee Presidium session and interrogated the investigative judge Rodos, who in his time investigated and interrogated Kosior, Chubar, and Kosaryev.... The question arises whether a man with such
an intellect could alone make the investigation in a manner to prove the guilt of people such as Kosior and others. No, he could not have done it without proper directives.... He could do this only through long tortures, which he did, receiving detailed instructions from Beria. In this manner Stalin's orders concerning the use of methods of physical pressure against the arrested were in practice executed. (S.R., p. 26; author's underscoring.)

Not content with demonstrating that Stalin, Yezhov, Rodos, and Beria purged Kosior, Khrushchev pointedly intimated that he himself knew nothing of the impending purge of Kosior. Allegedly there was no discussion or decision on the question of Kosior by the Politburo (to which Khrushchev was elected at about that time) and Khrushchev hinted that he only learned of it subsequently, like the rest of the public:

I can remember how the Ukraine learned about Kosior's arrest. The Kiev radio used to start its program thus: "This is Radio Kosior." When one day the programs began without naming Kosior, everyone was quite certain that something had happened to Kosior, that he had probably been arrested. (S.R., p. 56; author's underscoring.)

Khrushchev's disingenuous defense against any imputation of his involvement in the Kosior purge -- his singling out of Kosior three times as an instance of Stalin's tyranny -- heightens the probability that Mikoyan was pointing at Khrushchev when he mentioned "Comrade Kosior."

In delivering his attack on Stalin, Khrushchev pursued with some subtlety a number of other personal goals. (Why he was able to pursue these private ends is discussed later.)
In his secret speech Khrushchev attempted:

1. To demonstrate his own (and Bulganin's) opposition to Stalin's methods and mistakes;
2. To implicate the other senior Presidium members in Stalin's tyranny;
3. To intimate that among the implicated members of the Presidium some were especially guilty.

1. Khrushchev's opposition to Stalin: Khrushchev claimed that in 1942 he actively opposed Stalin's order to encircle Kharkov, a suicidal operation which resulted in the loss of "hundreds of thousands of our soldiers" (p. 33). He stood alone in this opposition, since Marshal Vasilevsky refused the support Khrushchev had asked of him. After the war his stand was confirmed by Mikoyan, who said, "Khrushchev must have been right." During the war Khrushchev commended Zhukov's military ability to Stalin, and he openly defended Zhukov against Stalin's slander after it ended. (S.R., p. 34.)

Khrushchev and Bulganin "often" discussed with each other Stalin's despotic treatment of party leaders. (S.R., p. 53.)

2. Politburo members implicated in Stalin's tyranny: Of the seven senior members of the Presidium (i.e., those who sat on the Politburo before 1952) only two were not implicated by Khrushchev in Stalin's tyranny; ironically, they were the only ones who had been called "closest comrade-in-arms of Stalin" after the tyrant's death: Khrushchev and Bulganin.
The other five senior Presidium members were in some way associated with Stalin's tyranny in Khrushchev's secret report. "Mass repressions grew tremendously from the end of 1936 after a telegram from Stalin and Zhdanov...was addressed to Kaganovich, Molotov, and other members of the Political Bureau." (S.R., p. 16.) (Khrushchev gives no reason why he chose to mention Kaganovich and Molotov and not the "other members." ) Kaganovich and Mikoyan "were present" at the session of the party Orgburo (the organizational bureau of the Central Committee abolished at the XIX Congress, 1952) when Beria's political career was launched -- "it was then for the first time in the party's history that Beria's name was mentioned as a candidate for a party position." (S.R., p. 42.) Voroshilov has remained silent about Stalin's falsifications of history; he should "find the necessary courage" -- which, apparently, he has lacked heretofore -- "and write the truth about Stalin...which he knows....It will be difficult for Comrade Voroshilov to undertake this...." (S.R., p. 49.) These four men -- Kaganovich, Molotov, Mikoyan, and Voroshilov -- were associated by Khrushchev with Stalin's career in the twenties and thirties; a fifth, Malenkov, was emphatically associated with Stalin's leadership during the war. (S.R., pp. 30, 33.)

3. The guiltiest ones: While Khrushchev specifically implicated five leaders in Stalin's tyranny, two in particular were singled out: Malenkov and Kaganovich. Kaganovich was
twice associated with the dictator's tyranny: he received Stalin's telegram stepping up the purge and was present when Beria's career was launched. But Malenkov was implicated far more than Kaganovich by being depicted as the tyrant's alter ego in his catastrophic conduct of the war.

...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. (S.R., p. 33; author's underscore.)

There are other indications that Khrushchev sought to involve Malenkov and Kaganovich in the denigration of Stalin. The secret report allowed three of the five implicated leaders to achieve at least partial atonement because they suffered at Stalin's hands without cause: Voroshilov was deprived of his right to attend Politburo meetings and suspected of being an English agent (S.R., pp. 54-55), while baseless charges were leveled at Molotov and Mikoyan (S.R., p. 55). But neither Malenkov nor Kaganovich were pictured as Stalin's

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144 On another occasion Malenkov turned down Khrushchev's request for arms for the Ukraine: "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.)" (S.R., p. 30.)
victims. Khrushchev further revealed his antagonism towards these two by failing to mention their first names and patronyms, thus depriving them of the respectful mode of address which he bestowed on the other top leaders.

Khrushchev's antagonism was doubtless more political than personal. Malenkov, in his two years as head of the government, probably had made himself the symbol of liberalization to advocates of such tendencies.\(^4\) Inasmuch as his demotion was accompanied by Stalinist cries of "Rykov" and "right-wing deviation" Malenkov appeared to be the first anti-Stalinist, making Khrushchev but a poor third after Mikoyan. Presumably it was to avert this seeming justification of Malenkov that Khrushchev emphasized Malenkov's closeness to Stalin in World War II.\(^5\) Kaganovich, on the other hand, appeared as the most loyal of Stalinists at the Congress when he raised an obstacle to the denigration, at a time when even Voroshilov and Molotov had become silent. Kaganovich, like Malenkov, had to be besmirched in the secret speech, but for just the

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\(^4\) The low point of the Stalin symbol, which was indicated in the party's "theses" on its fiftieth birthday, coincided with the high point of Malenkov's career, which came two weeks later, in his Supreme Soviet address of August 8, 1953.

\(^5\) Khrushchev also hints at Malenkov's complicity in the infamous "Leningrad affair" when he says that "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." (S.R., p. 38.) According to a Polish defector, S. Blairer, the party Presidium involved Malenkov in the Leningrad affair through a letter to party activists in 1955. (News from Behind the Iron Curtain, New York, October, 1956, p. 9.)
opposite reason: Kaganovich defended Stalin not because he was more loyal than the others, Khrushchev seemed to imply, but because he was so deeply implicated in Stalin's crimes.

Despite these personal gambits of Khrushchev, the secret speech has been accorded the status of a "report [доклад] of the Central Committee" in the official stenographic report:

Having heard the report of com./Fadey
Khrushchev N. S. on the cult of the individual and its consequences, the XX Congress of the C.P.S.U. approves the theses of the report of the Central Committee..." (II, 498; author's underscoring.)

The resolution apparently refers twice to the secret speech, once as "the report of com. Khrushchev N.S." and a second time as "the report of the Central Committee." The Congress resolution seems deliberately to refer a second time to the subject report, instead of using a pronoun (viz., approves its theses). The intention seems clear, to claim for the secret speech -- without explicitly asserting it -- the status of a Central Committee report.

There seems good reason, however, to suppose that when Khrushchev delivered his speech on February 25 its text had not yet been approved by the Central Committee, or even by the Presidium. The most recent plenum of the Central Committee had been held in July, 1955, and the evidence

147 While an interpreter of Soviet affairs should reject a Soviet statement about its own proceedings only with great circumspection, it should be noted that during Stalin's rule published stenographic reports sometimes illegitimately edited the material from the Congress.
presented here makes it hard to believe that the denigration of Stalin was decided on before the Congress opened. Action by the Central Committee after the Congress convened would be difficult to obtain on so controversial a question, and would probably be illegal.\footnote{148} It is in any case difficult to see how Khrushchev could get either the Central Committee or the party Presidium to approve his self-justification and the Stalinization of his enemies.

A second reason for doubt as to Khrushchev's authority to deliver the secret speech is simply that he claimed none. Nowhere in the available text of his secret speech did Khrushchev say that the Central Committee had authorized him to give it. Only twice did he even allude to the Central Committee in connection with the anti-Stalin campaign. His remark that the Central Committee "consider it absolutely necessary to make the material pertaining to this matter \text{cult of the individual} available to the XX Congress" (S.R., p. 1; author's underlining) apparently refers to documents distributed to the delegates just before Khrushchev began to speak; these papers demonstrated Lenin's doubts about Stalin as a political leader.\footnote{149} Later in the secret report

\footnote{148} The statute seems to limit the Central Committee's authority to the period between Congresses (article 36), and the party Presidium's and the Secretariat's authority to the period between Central Committee plenums (article 34).

\footnote{149} "This letter \text{Lenin's so-called 'testament'}...was distributed among the delegates to the XX Party Congress." (p. 3) According to a statement of the Marx-Lenin Institute appearing in Kommunist, these documents were made available to the XX Congress "on the decision of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U." and later sent out to party organizations. (Kommunist, No. 9, p. 16.)
Khrushchev indicated a Central Committee sanction for revealing cases fabricated against members of the XVII party Congress which met in 1934. The most implied by these allusions is that Khrushchev received a limited authorization from some high party organ, such as the Presidium; but they hardly appear to permit the full substance of Khrushchev's indictment of Stalin.

We are confronted, then, with a paradox: in presenting an indictment of twenty years of Soviet history, in making Stalin out to be among the worst monsters in history, in inaugurating the greatest reversal in communist history, Khrushchev took almost no pains to clothe his remarks with the authority of the Central Committee; yet the stenographic report would have us believe that the Central Committee had indeed authorized them. (Subsequently, it may be noted, Khrushchev threw the mantle of the Central Committee over relatively trivial actions, such as his visit to the reclaimed agricultural areas.)

It is obvious that a certain obscurity still clouds the question: what authority had Khrushchev to speak "on the cult of the individual and its consequences" when he stepped

150 "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 XVII party Congress." (p. 19.)

151 "I went on the decision of the Central Committee of our party." (Izvestia, August 1, 1956.)
to the rostrum around midnight Saturday, February 25, 1956.\textsuperscript{152}

Whatever his authority, Khrushchev displayed in the secret speech his remarkable daring and tactical flexibility. Although he controlled the apparatus of the party which had bestowed upon him new powers and authority, he apparently found that something was lacking for complete victory. It may be conjectured that he found it necessary to cope with "public opinion": with the beliefs and passions of economic administrators and of the technical intelligentsia; even with the fears of party apparatchiks who remembered how their last advocate grew into their oppressor; and especially with the complaints of the military. If Khrushchev persisted in defending Stalin -- as he evidently tried to do at least until February 14 -- he would only become identical in their eyes with the tyrant Stalin whom Mikoyan had exposed. In that event members of these groups might fight desperately to prevent Khrushchev from acquiring the "legitimate" power

\textsuperscript{152} A question must also be raised about the resolution of the congress approving the "theses" of Khrushchev's secret report. There was no time for debate on Khrushchev's delivered speech, and the resolution does not claim to have debated it. The resolution says, "having heard the report," not "having heard and discussed" it. (II, 495.) Evidently the Congress simply listened to Khrushchev and shortly afterward "approved" his speech. Presumably the reference to "theses" approved does not mean that these were actually taken from the report and directly passed upon by the Congress, but only that the Congress withheld approval from Khrushchev's personal remarks about himself and the other top leaders.
Stalin had held in 1930.\textsuperscript{153} Evidently it was to avoid this, to gain their support or at least acquiescence, that Khrushchev made his characteristically sudden decision to deliver the secret report.

Material for the denigration was at hand.\textsuperscript{154} Prying into Stalin's conspiratorial activities was probably begun by his successors as soon as he fell ill, and was intensified when Beria was arrested. Stalin's destruction of loyal

\textsuperscript{153} Shortly before the XX Congress, at a Moscow party conference of the military okrug (district), Marshal Zhukov registered a vigorous complaint against party interference in military affairs: "In the okrug certain efforts have been noted to subject the official activity of commanders to criticism at [party] meetings. Such efforts are blameworthy. Our task is the comprehensive strengthening of the authority of the commanders, giving support to exacting officers and generals." (Krasnaya Zvezda /Red Star/, January 25, 1956.) Stalin's terrible purge of military commanders after he became an absolute despot was related in considerable detail in the secret speech. While Khrushchev has been supported by a faction in the top military leadership (see Chapter 6) and has succeeded in rewarding some of his backers with places on the Central Committee (e.g., Moskalenko, Grishko), there is evidence that another faction within the military wants to lessen the influence of the party in military affairs. This lessening has already occurred in some measure since Stalin's death, but these gains might be imperiled -- and further gains made impossible -- if a "collective leadership" were superseded by the rule of a new Stalin, even if he only had the same powers Stalin had in 1930.

\textsuperscript{154} "The Commission has presented to the Central Committee Presidium lengthy and documented materials pertaining to mass repressions against the delegates to the XVII 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." (p. 13.)
Stalinists had already been condemned to leaders of the ruling and favored groups in Soviet society, perhaps as a means of assuring that such a terroristic purge would not be repeated. Thus, in 1955, according to the secret report (S.R., p. 22), a number of purged Stalinists were secretly rehabilitated. But subsequently Stalin was publicly eulogized for his fight against "enemies of the people" and his many virtues were proclaimed. Evidently the rehabilitation of Stalin's victims was not intended to alter greatly the public image of Stalin. A basically positive image was retained for the public so that the myth of Bolshevik infallibility might be preserved. Surely the perils of a public disavowal of Stalin were in some measure appreciated by the top leadership; they were certainly feared by the convinced Stalinists. But co-existence of a positive image of Stalin for the public with a negative image in ruling circles proved impossible. The tension between the two poles was excessive. It could perhaps have been relieved in a number of different ways, with different political results; actually it was relieved by Khrushchev's secret speech, with the epochal consequences this entailed.

20. **Results of the Mikoyan-Khrushchev Duel**

If it is granted that the secret speech was Khrushchev's response to Mikoyan's provocative address of February 16, the question arises as to whether the two men achieved their respective objectives. Probably Khrushchev's immediate
objective was primarily defensive -- to prevent Mikoyan from becoming the leader of a broadly-based anti-Stalin movement which would be potentially anti-Khrushchev. In this he succeeded. Mikoyan's objectives, on the other hand, were probably complex. To the extent that his attack on Stalin was designed to discredit Stalinist economic and foreign policies it was successful, because Khrushchev's adhesion to the anti-Stalin camp meant partially abandoning the advocates of Stalinist policies who had been his allies of the past three years: Molotov, Voroshilov, and, most of all, Kaganovich. Identification of Khrushchev's personal fortunes with the fortunes of anti-Stalinism assured continuation of the trend towards adopting more "flexible" policies, some of which ran counter to distinctively Stalinist doctrines and practices. But Mikoyan was evidently concerned not only with questions of policy, but also with the problem of the distribution of power within the Soviet elite. By evoking the spectre of the tyrant Stalin, Mikoyan probably hoped (1) to impede Khrushchev's use of the great power he brought to the Congress, and (2) to preclude the establishment of a full-blown cult of Khrushchev, both of which could result in a dangerous aggrandizement of Khrushchev's power.

Mikoyan seems to have been substantially successful in preventing the proceedings of the Congress from becoming material for a Khrushchev cult. Despite the dominant role of Khrushchev at every stage of the Congress, his name has
been mentioned infrequently in published discussions of its work and achievements. Yet Khrushchev's dexterity in abandoning Stalin allowed him to seize credit for the anti-Stalin campaign. To Mikoyan the results may have appeared mixed. By dramatizing the "degeneration" of Stalin's autocracy, Khrushchev was unable to avoid warning his colleagues against granting too much power to Khrushchev himself. At the same time, paradoxically, his denunciation of Stalin gave him a specious claim to supremacy over his colleagues. Anti-Stalinism, had it been prudently initiated, might have provided a better foundation in 1956 for Khrushchev's ambitions than his previous pose of defender of the Stalinist faith.

Mikoyan's success in his more immediate objective of impeding Khrushchev's use of the power available to him at the Congress is difficult to assess. The power which Khrushchev brought to the XX Congress was very great. By the time of the January and July plenums in 1955 he had apparently begun to play tutor to the Central Committee in a manner somewhat reminiscent of Stalin in the middle period of his rule. Khrushchev's conduct at these meetings is intimated in an account given to the Congress by one of his partisans, Z. I. Muratov:

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155 This was done publicly in a brief note in the stenographic report (II, 498) and, more privately, in versions of the secret speech which were widely circulated in the Soviet bloc.
Plenums of the Central Committee were for us a school for study, a training school, and a tempering school. At plenums and meetings the Central Committee, its first secretary, Com. N. S. Khrushchev, and other members of the Presidium of the Central Committee corrected us when individuals among us, members of the Central Committee, committed errors, corrected in a fatherly way, corrected us regardless of post occupied or of record, taught and reared us in the spirit of adherence to principle and in the spirit of unlimited faith in the principles of Leninism, and demanded a profound knowledge of affairs and concreteness in leadership. (I, 572; author's underscoring.)

A comparable account of Khrushchev’s domineering conduct at Central Committee plenums has been given by a former communist who saw a stenographic record of the July plenum.¹⁵⁶

Khrushchev’s appetite for power had not been appeased by his victory over Malenkov in January or by the very substantial increases in power granted him by the July plenum of the Central Committee. After this plenum, displacement of top apparatchiks who opposed Khrushchev, or had lost his confidence, was actually stepped up. In the six months preceding the XX Congress at least eight -- possibly a dozen -- members of the Central Committee were eased out of that body by removal from the jobs which had virtually made them ex officio members.¹⁵⁷ This combination of continually growing power


and an ambition with undisclosed limits gave Khrushchev a powerful momentum which Mikoyan evidently hoped to slow down or to halt.

Despite Mikoyan, Khrushchev made further great gains at the XX Congress. When the membership of the Central Committee was announced, a few hours after the secret speech, thirty-three per cent of all its members and candidates were new to the Central Committee. About 25 per cent of the new leaders had been associated with Khrushchev in the Ukraine. Of the entire Central Committee, perhaps one-quarter had at one time been personally associated with Khrushchev. When this new Central Committee met on the following day, it elected four Khrushchev protégés to be candidate members of the party Presidium. Although all full members of the Presidium were re-elected (one candidate was dropped), the excessive ratio of candidates to full members (six to eleven) implied that candidates might find vacancies open to them at some plenum of the Central Committee before the next Congress convened.158 Should this happen, it would indicate that Khrushchev had again observed the tactics of his master: Stalin demoted six Politburo members in the years from 1925 to 1930, but only two (Kamenev [I925] and Tomsky [I930]) were dropped immediately after a party Congress.

158 Another Khrushchev protégé, F. Kozlov, was elected a candidate member of the Presidium in February, 1957.
Another gain for Khrushchev was evident when the Secretariat became a still more powerful organ. Three new secretaries, making a total of eight (including two full and three candidate members of the Presidium) were elected to the Secretariat as against only eleven full members of the Presidium. It is a remarkable fact that the Secretariat has consistently grown more powerful by the addition of persons raised rapidly to eminence by Khrushchev. This body seems to have become Khrushchev's personal organ, without effective check or control by other members of the Presidium.

In his opening report to the Congress, Khrushchev proposed that a new bureau be set up in the Central Committee to deal with party affairs of the R.S.F.S.R. While such a bureau may have organizational advantages to recommend it, Khrushchev could not have been unmindful of the fact that Stalin had established similar regional bureaus in the early twenties in order to tighten the Secretariat's control over local party organs. On February 29, 1956, Soviet newspapers announced that the Central Committee had indeed set up a "Russian Republic Bureau of the Central Committee," although this action was not credited to the Central Committee plenum which had met on February 26. Presumably the new Bureau was set up
by the Secretariat in the name of the Central Committee. Of its ten members, at least eight were apparatchiks who had benefited from Khrushchev's patronage.

Khrushchev did not receive from the new Central Committee the more authoritative title of "general secretary of the Central Committee" which he had apparently sought in November, 1955. Yet it was apparent from the Central Committee's announcement of its newly-elected organs that Khrushchev had at least acquired a special position in the Secretariat. He headed the list of secretaries as Pervi sekretar, thus making official the unique title which Pravda had conferred on him in May, 1955, when it first capitalized the initial letter of his title. Moreover, Khrushchev's colleagues in the Secretariat were listed after him in alphabetical order, irrespective of the fact that one was -- like Khrushchev himself -- a member of the Presidium, three were candidate members of the Presidium, and three were mere members of the Central Committee. This mode of listing the Secretariat was first used after the XIX Congress, with Stalin first and the rest in alphabetical

159 Khrushchev's report of February 14 said "the Central Committee considers it necessary to set up a Bureau of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. for the R.S.F.S.R." (I, 108); yet the resolution of the Congress did not specifically approve the establishment of this powerful new organ. It called only for "improvement of the organizational structure." (II, 425) It seems possible, then, that the amendment to the draft resolution approving "the proposals" of the Central Committee report was designed, in part, to get a congressional sanction for the new bureau and for other favorite Khrushchev proposals, such as the further expansion of the virgin-lands program.
order; but from Stalin's death until the XX Congress members of the Secretariat had been given in rank order. The new list indicated that Khrushchev's position in the Secretariat was analogous to Stalin's in 1952, that he was, in effect, the head of that organ.\textsuperscript{160}

While Khrushchev was accorded a special position in the Secretariat, he was not similarly favored in the Presidium. He was not elected "Chairman of the Presidium," the title which the Ukrainian and Kazakhstan congresses had seemed to envisage for him a month before. But here again he took a step in this direction when he was elected "Chairman of the new Central Committee Bureau for the R.S.F.S.R.," although it is uncertain whether the title of chairman was conferred upon him by the Central Committee, by its Secretariat, or by the newly-elected bureau itself.

The distinction between power and authority (legitimate power) is a vital one, especially in a dictatorship which is in the throes of a succession crisis. Khrushchev gained greatly in power at the XX Congress; yet the increase in his authority (as indicated by his titles), while considerable, may have fallen short of what he might reasonably have

\textsuperscript{160} Pravda, February 28, 1956. Even before this announce-
ment by the new Central Committee, press accounts
during the XX Congress (and the stenographic report
published subsequently) accorded Khrushchev the title
of "First secretary." Significantly, Stalin was re-
ferred to simply as "Secretary" when he reported for
the Central Committee to the XVIII Congress (1939) and
when his membership in the Secretariat was announced
after the XVIII and XIX Congresses.
anticipated before Mikoyan delivered his speech. If so, Mikoyan's allusion to the consequences of Stalin's tyranny may significantly have affected the immediate outcome of the Congress.

Another important obstacle to Khrushchev's growing power, which may also be attributable in part to Mikoyan's efforts, was the election of Marshal Zhukov as a Presidium candidate. This provided a countervailing force against Khrushchev's gains. Moreover, Zhukov's position as the top-ranking candidate, ahead of four Khrushchev protégés (Brezhnev, Mukhitdinov, Shepilov, and Purtseva), seems designed to serve as a barrier against a further increase of Khrushchev's strength in the Presidium. Khrushchev would presumably have to accept Zhukov as a full member before he could bring in his own supporters—a move which he might be reluctant to make. Were he to accept Zhukov into the Presidium as the price for adding his own protégés, he might find that the Marshal, no matter how naive politically, could be useful to Khrushchev's politically adept rivals. Presumably it was to counter any such use of Zhukov that Khrushchev seemed to go out of his way to suggest in his secret speech that he was Zhukov's advocate, not his enemy. But while he referred to Zhukov seven times in telling how he defended him, even before Stalin himself, as a "good" general and a "good" military leader (S.R., p. 34), he did not once use Zhukov's first name and patronymic. This may indicate a lack of personal intimacy between the austere Marshal and the
outspoken Khrushchev, and possibly a certain political
distance as well.

The long-term consequences for Khrushchev's personal
ambitions of the Khrushchev-Mikoyan debate have not yet run
their course. The evident haste of Khrushchev's decision,
the failure to prepare adequately even for consequences which
were certain to ensue, led to riots in Georgia and signifi-
cant symptoms of political disorientation in the U.S.S.R.\textsuperscript{161}
One apparent consequence of Khrushchev's secret speech was
the withdrawal of standard Soviet textbooks from use in the
schools, with the result that the educational system suffered
dislocation. For example, in the R.S.F.S.R., history examina-
tions had to be postponed in the tenth grade, which is the
final grade in Soviet secondary schools. The most serious
consequences, of course, were in the satellite countries,
where the secret speech provided the liberalizers with a
powerful, yet a sanctioned, slogan: down with Stalinism.\textsuperscript{162}

\textsuperscript{161} One of the most suggestive of these is a sentence in a
Kommunist editorial: "Opinions which objectively tend
toward depriving of respect [razvchenie] the leader-
ship elected by the party masses themselves, toward
discrediting party cadres, have nothing in common with
a correct Leninist conception of the role of leaders.
Such opinions were set forth by some communists of
inadequate political maturity during the discussion of
the results of the XX Congress." (No. 10, p. 10; sent
to press July 17, 1956.)

\textsuperscript{162} This failure to prepare for the empire-shaking reper-
cussions of the secret speech, either in the U.S.S.R. or
in the Soviet orbit, makes highly tenuous the hypothesis
that it was a carefully calculated shock deliberately
administered by the Soviet leadership in order to shake
the effects of Stalinism from the Soviet system.
These liberalizing forces could not be effectively inhibited, partly because of Khrushchev's previous political commitment to effect a rapprochement with Titoist Yugoslavia. In his dilemma Khrushchev committed the Bolshevik's cardinal sin, vacillation. He sought ineffectually to keep Rákosi in power in Hungary and to prevent Gomulka's accession to power in Poland. He subsequently gave way on both issues, suffering as a result a Soviet political defeat in Poland and near-disaster in Hungary.

Because Khrushchev's anti-Stalin speech tended to commit him to a liberalizing policy, it antagonized conservatives like Kaganovich, Molotov, and Voroshilov, but it did secure him a measure of support from anti-Stalinists. Mikoyan's position was probably somewhat ambiguous. He was able to support Khrushchev's liberalizing tendencies, but he probably continued to fear Khrushchev's appetite for power. From this interpretation it might be deduced that if Khrushchev began to incline towards reaction, towards Stalinist types of control, Mikoyan might become a key political enemy. Although events remain obscure and the outcome of Moscow's factional struggle is still indeterminate, an estrangement between Khrushchev and Mikoyan seems to have begun. Khrushchev has now publicly questioned Mikoyan's judgment, in a statement having overtones of personal vindictiveness possibly related to events at the XX Congress. The setting for this criticism is almost precisely the same as when Khrushchev mounted his attack on
Malenkov in January, 1955. In an address to a mass meeting of the Komsomol on November 8, 1956, when he relied heavily on the fine harvest in the virgin lands to help his political fortunes, Khrushchev recalled a conversation he "once" had with Mikoyan in the city of Alma Ata:

We exchanged opinions as to the possibilities of supplying grain to the country. When I said to him that Kazakhstan will this year produce one billion poods of grain, he did not reply. I said to him: "Why do you say nothing?" He replied: "I am not arguing, but one billion I do not quite believe; perhaps there may be 750 million poods instead of the 650 million planned, but not a billion!" Do you remember, Anastas Ivanovich, didn't you say that? You did say that, didn't you? (Laughter in the hall.) "Yes, I did." And what did Kazakhstan say? "It kept its word." Did it produce a billion? "Yes, a billion." This shows that even some of us, the leaders, who advanced the question of the reclamation of virgin and waste lands, did not expect such splendid results, particularly in Kazakhstan, which used to produce little wheat. That is why such surprise by A. I. Mikoyan at that time is understandable.

Since the central press only published excerpts from this speech by Khrushchev (November 11, 1956), there was no need to publicize this particular colloquy. Coming at a time when crucial decisions were being made in Moscow, this demonstration of Mikoyan's lack of foresight on an issue which evidently had divided the Soviet leadership in 1954 may have considerable political significance. As if to counter Khrushchev's innuendo, Mikoyan emphasized in his next published speech: "You see, comrades, that when we made this decision, we were convinced that we were making the correct decision." (Pravda, January 22, 1957.)
21. Continuing Debate on the Legitimate Authority of the First Secretary

From the moment of Malenkow's removal from the party Secretariat in March, 1953, Khrushchev was firmly linked to the Stalin image by the symbol "general secretary of the Central Committee." As senior secretary he embodied in his person the key problem which beset the party: whether there was to be another "general secretary" -- the phrase symbolic of another "Stalin" -- for there had been no other general secretary. As we have argued, the existence of this triad -- Khrushchev, general secretary, Stalin -- led to a number of consequences: a broad proscription on mention of Stalin's incumbency as general secretary of the Central Committee; esoteric controversy (in reference works) as to when Stalin left the office; finally, Khrushchev's act of accepting this triple association when holyoke's letter addressing him as "general secretary" was published in November, 1955. It appears that Khrushchev subsequently found it expedient to break free of the triad by acquiescing, albeit reluctantly, in the deglorification of Stalin and by seeking election as "head of the Presidium," not as "general secretary of the Central Committee." This maneuver was imperiled at the XX Congress, when Mikoyan linked Khrushchev with Stalin's worst crimes and hinted at Lenin's call for the ouster of Stalin as general secretary. Mikoyan tried to re-forge the triad, making it an evil one: Stalin, general secretary-usurper, Khrushchev. By his attack on Stalin in the secret report, Khrushchev dissociated himself
from Stalin the tyrant, and thus shattered this evil triad. At the same time, Khrushchev began to reconstruct a new image. He indicated that the office of "general secretary of the Central Committee" was indeed a legitimate and a powerful one which Stalin had lawfully filled "in the first period" after Lenin's death. This was accomplished with the help of Lenin's "testament," which Khrushchev quoted in his secret speech:

Comrade Stalin, having become "gensec," has concentrated enormous power in his hands, and I am not certain that he always knows how /I ia ne uveren, sumeet li on ysegor/ to use that power with sufficient caution.

While, in his "testament," Lenin undertook to provide a means to avert the threatened split in the party, his remedy, as stated in the "postscript," was not to reduce the enormous power of the "gensec," but to replace Stalin by someone who possessed the qualities required for the office (patience, loyalty, politeness). Lenin implied that it was permissible for the "gensec" to have "enormous power" but that he ought to exercise it with caution. Khrushchev indicated that this situation prevailed after Lenin's death: "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." (S.R., p. 5; author's underscoring.) This is to say that, in the period, roughly, 1924-1934, a correct system of leadership became established in the Communist party; it was directed by a "gensec" who had regard for the
"serious admonitions" in Lenin's "testament." Stalin became a tyrant only "during the last years," "during the period following the XVII Party Congress \(\bar{\text{1934}}\)," "during this period \(\bar{\text{1935-1937}}\)."

Even in his secret report, Khrushchev still tried to preserve something of that image of the good though powerful Stalin -- an image which Khrushchev had used earlier in his personal strategy for acquiring power. But this time the Stalin image was projected back to the party's golden age, when Stalin led the Central Committee as the still-innocent "gencsec."

It seems doubtful that when Khrushchev gave the secret report he still hoped to be elected to the Stalin-tainted office of "gencsec." Yet the issue is not dead, as can be seen by comparing the two major documents on de-Stalinization published in the U.S.S.R. after the XX Congress: Pravda's editorial of March 28, 1956, and the Central Committee's decree of June 30.\(^{163}\) These two documents contain a key statement about the early period when Stalin led the party well, which has an important bearing on the present leadership situation. They both state that Stalin was general secretary of the Central Committee at the time of Lenin's death, a

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\(^{163}\) While the decree was put out in the name of the Central Committee, that body had not met since the first days after the Congress. Presumably it was authorized by the Presidium. While not as important as the decree, the editorial has considerable significance because it was Moscow's first public word on the subject of de-Stalinization.
formerly suppressed fact which began to circulate after the Congress. Yet comparison reveals a curious difference between these two references to this elusive fact of the party's golden age: the editorial tries to minimize the legitimate authority attached to the "gensec"; the decree magnifies it.

Pravda Editorial
(March 28, 1956)

Occupying the important post of general secretary of the Central Committee of the party J. V. Stalin became one of the leading figures of the party and the Soviet state. He, especially in the first years after Lenin's death, together with other members of the Central Committee fought actively for Leninism, against the distorters and foes of Lenin's teaching. (Author's underscoring.)

Central Committee Decree
(June 30, 1956)

Being in the post of general secretary of the Central Committee for a long period J. V. Stalin together with other leaders actively struggled for the realization of Lenin's behests [zavet]. He... headed the party's struggle against the Trotskyites, right-wing opportunists and bourgeois nationalists and against the intrigues of capitalist encirclement. (Author's underscoring.)

The editorial subtly counters the notion that Stalin's post was the highest in the party:104 it was an "important post"

104 That it was the highest post was explicitly affirmed by Beria in 1949 and by Pravda as late as March, 1952.
(A), which made it possible for Stalin to become (C)\textsuperscript{165} "one of the leading figures" (D). Moreover, the editorial tends to reduce Stalin's political authority to the level of an ordinary member of the Central Committee by having him work with "other members of the Central Committee" (F). On the other hand, the decree has Stalin work "with other leaders" (F'). In general, the Central Committee statement does not restrict the powers of the office of general secretary. In the fight against deviation from Leninism, while the editorial has Stalin merely active like other Central Committee members, the decree has Stalin leading the fight at the head of the party (H') -- this when the watchword is "restoration" of collective leadership. The decree's formula adds to the party's enemies "the capitalist encirclement" (I'), so that foreign policy, as well as domestic, is included in the party activities which the "gensec" legitimately headed.

The decree emphasizes that Stalin performed the functions of the office of general secretary "for a long period" (B'). This statement is interesting in view of the apparent controversy after Stalin's death as to when Stalin ceased to be "gensec." Three formulas had been used to describe the term

\textsuperscript{165} Actually, Stalin was already one of the seven members of the Politburo when he was elected general secretary, and had been a member of that organ since its establishment. By diminishing the political stature of Stalin before he became "gensec," the editorial once more counters the notion that that office could be the highest in the party, for only a "leading figure" would be appointed to the party's top post.
of Stalin’s tenure: “until he died”; “until October, 1952”; "for more than thirty years." None of these has been used since the secret speech, and no effort has been made to resolve the question as to when Stalin ceased to occupy the office. However, the decree’s use of the phrase "for a long period" seems to imply that Stalin legitimately remained general secretary after the XVII Congress (1934), even though he was not actually re-elected to the post at that time.166

The decree indicates further that in his long tenure as general secretary Stalin "struggled for the realization of Lenin's behests" (C'), implying that for a substantial part of its history the office provided the party with correct, as well as legitimate, leadership.167

166 An editorial in Kommunist, No. 14, which was sent to press on October 9, 1956, similarly implies that Stalin remained general secretary after 1934. It denies that criticism of the cult of the individual means the denial of the works of Stalin. "Being in the post of general secretary of the Central Committee for a long period (dilateli period), J. V. Stalin delivered the reports of the Central Committee to the congresses of the party." (p. 4.) The last of these reports, which the article recommends for study, is the report to the XVIII Congress in 1939. (This work is explicitly recommended by Party Life, No. 16, p. 39.) Thus it is implied that Stalin legitimately remained general secretary at least until 1939.

167 Mikoyan strongly implied a contrary view at the end of his speech to the XX Congress. Alluding unmistakably to Stalin’s famous oath to Lenin at his funeral, Mikoyan said: "we not only swear by Lenin’s name but are exerting our efforts to put into practice Lenin’s ideas and are fulfilling his behests reverently. (tempestuous, prolonged applause.)" Kommunist seemed later to take direct issue with Mikoyan’s hint: "It would be wrong to deny that J. V. Stalin occupying the post of general secretary of the Central Committee for a long time,...actively fought for the implementation of the Leninist behests (zavetoy)." (Kommunist, No. 10, p. 23; sent to press July 17, 1956; author’s underscoring.)
To recapitulate: the secret speech (February), like the
decree (June), emphasizes the notion of the legitimate supremacy
of the general secretary in Stalin's "good" period. On the
other hand, the editorial (March), coming in the interval be-
tween these two statements, depreciates the authority and the
power of the office of general secretary. It appears that in
the weeks after the XX Congress opponents of Khrushchev's power
succeeded in attaching to the anti-Stalin campaign the notion
that when Stalin was good (in the early period) he was not
powerful, and when he became very powerful he ceased to be good.
This theme is not prominent in Khrushchev's secret speech; it
becomes so with the March editorial and remains implicit in
authoritative statements about Stalin in the interval between
the editorial and the decree.168 At that time Khrushchev ap-
parently succeeded in restoring the image of the good though
powerful Stalin of the early years which he had stressed in
the secret report.

In view of the long-standing controversy about the office
of "general secretary," these very subtle differences seem to

168 There are intimations of Stalin's initial parity with
other Soviet leaders in the following phrases which
appeared in Kommunist: "Stalin together with other
members of the Central Committee"; Stalin was "one of
the leaders"; Stalin occupied "leading posts
/vedushchie posti/." (No. 5, p. 23; sent to press on
April 19, 1956) The Chinese, however, even in their
initial comment on the Stalin debate, emphasized that
Stalin was an autocrat from the moment Lenin died.
(See notes on the Chinese Politburo meeting, Pravda,
April 7, 1956.)
indicate continuing conflict as to the power and authority of the senior secretary, or more generally, as to the Stalin succession. Presumably the office of the "gensec" is no longer involved substantially in the controversy, for it must have suffered depreciation with the blackening of its only incumbent. At this time it is probably no more than a symbol of the political supremacy which Khrushchev still seeks to acquire through increasing the powers of the senior secretary. That Khrushchev does still retain this ambition is indicated by recent textual evidence similar to that presented in this study, as well as by more direct manifestations of his political activity.

The "restoration" of collective leadership implied that throughout the party hierarchy every first secretary -- who under Stalin was a petty despot in his own domain -- was now to be permitted only those powers which were not "restored" to the collective organ, that is, only residual powers. As is customary in Soviet political discourse, these residual powers were conveyed by means of a formula:

> It would be incorrect to present the matter as though collegiality of leadership excludes one-man /edinolichnie/ instructions of, for instance /skazhem/, the secretary of a raion, city, or oblast committee on a question of current work. (Author's underscoring.)

There is excellent reason to suppose that this formula applies to the secretary of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. -- that is, to First secretary Khrushchev -- even though this is
not explicitly stated. It must be remembered that direct comment on the explosive question of the present powers of the Central Committee senior secretary is nowhere to be found.\textsuperscript{169} As this study has shown, this crucial subject is approached deviously and is heavily veiled. In light of this reticence, the formula described actually seems designed to assert the applicability of its definition of the residual powers of "the secretary" to the C.P.S.U. Central Committee itself. Three of the five relevant echelons -- raion (county), city, oblast (province) -- are explicitly mentioned as instances where this formula is applicable; use of the term skazhestvo (for instance) demonstrates that the list is not exhaustive, and implies that the remaining two relevant echelons -- the all-union and the republic -- are also covered by the formula.\textsuperscript{170} In any case the party statute provides no basis for discriminating between the powers of a Central Committee secretary and those of an oblast secretary.

One version of this formula was used in the spring of 1955, when an effort was apparently being made to restrict the powers of the Secretariat. It appears in a \textit{Kommunist} article

\textsuperscript{169} When reference is made to the powers of the First secre-
tary, the terms "secretary" and even "Secretariat" are usually used.

\textsuperscript{170} The sixth and lowest echelon -- the primary organization -- is not usually headed by a collective but by a secretary. According to Article 59 of the party statute, however, if the primary organization has more than fifteen members, it has the right to elect a bureau as well as a secretary.
by two top writers on party affairs, party editors, respectively, of Pravda and of Kommunist. After the XX Congress a considerably expanded version of this article was published under the same title as a lecture-pamphlet.\textsuperscript{171} The formula on the residual powers of the secretary was modified in this later version in such a way as to increase considerably the secretary's power and authority.

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<td>It would be incorrect to present the matter as though collegiality of leadership excludes one-man instructions [ukazania] of, for example, [skazhe the secretary of a raion, city, or oblast committee on a question of current work. It is a matter of \textsuperscript{171} \textsuperscript{171} delo v tom/ the party leader acting strictly in the spirit of the decision of the committee or of the superior organ itself -- the conference. (p. 57.)</td>
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It would be incorrect to present the matter as though collectivity of leadership excludes one-man decisions and instructions /resheniya i ukazaniya/ of, for example, the secretary of a raion, city or oblast committee.

D' It is a matter of the the party leader acting strictly in the spirit of the decision of the committee, or of its superior organ -- the conference, so that on any operational /operativnomu/ question decided by the secretary, the bureau can say: "Yes, this question was decided correctly just as if it had been discussed collectively and there had been reliance on general opinion." (p. 37.)

171 L. Slepov, G. Shitarev, Leninist Norms of Party Life and the Principles of Party Leadership (Moscow; sent to press July 28, 1956.) The pamphlet, possibly a transcription of two lectures delivered in Moscow, was printed by the authoritative All-Union Society for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge in 175,000 copies. (See Chapter 18 for a discussion of this pamphlet in another connection.)
These four textual changes which the authors introduce in the pamphlet act harmoniously to produce a single effect: restrictions on "the secretary" are removed, thus permitting his retention of ill-defined powers which had become firmly attached to the secretarial office during three decades of Stalin's rule. Discussion of these four changes follows:

1. ([8-81]) Adding the power to make decisions /решения/ to that of issuing instructions /указания/ is the crucial change made in the pamphlet which the other three changes support. The word решение connotes the political or judicial act of an authoritative body; указание, on the other hand, merely connotes explanatory instructions, advice, or the directions required to carry out a higher decision.

In justifying "one-man...decisions" /единоличное...решение/ for "the secretary," the pamphlet disregarded the

A Kommunist article (No. 10, p. 7) has indicated, in a general sense, the tenacity with which Stalin's system of one-man leadership tends to persist, so that rooting out the manifestations of the cult of the individual requires positive action and "prolonged work." Thus we may deduce that power will devolve from the secretary only if this is actively pursued as a goal; otherwise he will retain something of his illegitimate powers.

For example, the basic collection of party documents is entitled The C.P.S.U. in Resolutions and Decisions /решения/ of Congresses, Conferences, and Plenums of the Central Committee. Решение (decision) can also have the generic meaning of "decision on any unresolved question."

In a different context указание can mean "fundamental principle", for example, the указание laid down in Lenin's writings.
maxim -- introduced a few weeks after Stalin's death (in April, 1953) and continuing well after the XX Congress -- that "one-man decisions are always or almost always one-sided decisions." Both the party statute and Lenin's uniquely explicit statement on the powers of the Central Committee secretary (1920) -- quoted in both versions -- also seemed to deny the secretary the right to issue reshenia:

Only collegial decisions (reshenii) of the Central Committee, adopted in the Orgburo or in the Politburo or in a plenum of the Central Committee, exclusively such questions are implemented by the secretary of the Central Committee of the party. (Author's underscoring.)

It will be recalled that in his April 20, 1955, article in Pravda, Petrovsky emphasized that "the secretary is chosen for fulfillment of decisions (resheniiakh) of the Central Committee of the party." (See Chapter 3.) The original Slepov-Shitarev article, published in Kommunist at the same

175 The quotation is from Stalin's interview with Emil Ludwig in 1931, Collected Works, Vol. 8, p. 107.

176 According to article 34 of the party statute, the Secretariat of the Central Committee is organized for the "direction of current work," but this is indicated to be "mainly organizing the verification of fulfillment of decisions of the party (reshenii partii) and the selection of cadres." This seems to limit the Secretariat of the Central Committee -- and presumably lower echelon secretariats as well -- to the fulfillment of decisions taken by more authoritative party bodies, and to deny it the right to issue decisions (reshenii) itself.

time as Petrovsky's *Pravda* article, seemed to draw from Lenin's statement that "the secretary" could not issue *resheniia*, for it only accorded him the right to issue instructions.

As late as May, 1956, two months after the Congress ended, Shitarev published a *Kommunist* article which, while extending somewhat the powers of the secretary, still left him without the power to issue decisions.\(^\text{178}\) Moreover, a *Pravda* article by a powerful *apparatchik* just a few weeks later (May 25) limited individual leaders to the issuing of instructions.\(^\text{179}\) But in July, the Slepov-Shitarev pamphlet

\(^{178}\) "In party work also collegiality does not exclude operational orders, instructions, directives (*rasporiazheniia*, *ukazaniia*, *direktiv*) of the secretary of a raion, city, or oblast committee, in short (*slovom*), of a party leader, on all questions regarding fulfillment of adopted decisions (*resheniia*) and which require, on the whole, immediate intervention. It is a matter of these instructions (*ukazaniia*) having as their basis the decisions (*resheniia*) of the committee or its higher organ -- the conference -- so that it reflects the opinions of the party organs and excludes a subjective approach....To regard collectivity as though each directing action (*rukovodiashche deistvie*), for instance, of the secretary of an oblast or a raion committee must be sanctioned by a resolution of a bureau or a committee, would be to destroy collegiality...." (G. Shitarev, "Neuklonnoe osushchestvenie kollektvnosti -- zalog pravil'nogo rukovodstva" (*Unwavering Realization of Collectivity -- Guarantee of Correct Leadership*), *Kommunist*, No. 6, p. 57; sent to press May 3, 1956.)

deliberately awarded the secretary the additional right of issuing decisions. This seemed to be a reversion to Slepov's contention in June, 1954 (see Chapter 10): "Decisions решения on questions which cannot be delayed are adopted by the Presidium and the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the party."

The substantial issues involved in this evident controversy as to the secretary's right to issue decisions can only by intimated, since we know little about the operation of the top party organs in the U.S.S.R. It may be significant, however, that Khrushchev first signed a published Central Committee decree just a few months after Slepov claimed the Central Committee Secretariat had the power to issue decisions. This was the important decree on anti-religious propaganda. When published in Pravda on November 11, 1954, it was designated as a постановление (decree) of the Central Committee which ranks as a решение. There had been no Central Committee plenum since the previous June, so this decree probably emanated from the Secretariat itself, possibly with Presidium approval. A second Central Committee decree was published over Khrushchev's signature three months later. This decree, published in Pravda on January 11, 1955, changed the date for commemorating Lenin. A third decree, signed jointly by Khrushchev for the party and Bulganin as Chairman of the Council of Ministers for the government, was published in Pravda on March 9, 1955. However, subsequent
to the Slepow-Shitarev statement of April, 1955, in Kommunist, which limited the secretary's power to the issuance of instructions, Khrushchev ceased to issue decrees bearing his signature. Presumably this right of issuing decrees was one which the later Slepow-Shitarev pamphlet sought to restore to Khrushchev although he has not yet publicly exercised the right. (Khrushchev did, however, conduct important negotiations with Tito in Yugoslavia without any other party Presidium member being present, and again in the U.S.S.R. when his protégé Kirichenko -- and later Bulganin and Voroshilov -- were the only other Presidium members present.)

2. (C) Having awarded the secretary authority to make decisions (решения), the Slepow-Shitarev pamphlet logically removed the restrictive phrase, "on a question of current work" (С-С'). This was done despite the provision of the party statute (articles 34 and 42) which explicitly limits the Central Committee Secretariat (and all other secretariats) to "current work." Although the pamphlet is a considerably expanded version of the original Kommunist article, in this instance it eliminated a phrase, thus indicating that the changes have political, and not merely rhetorical, significance.

3. (A) By changing the relatively precise and legalistic term collegiality (which Lenin had used) to collectivity (A-A'), which is a loose principle, the limitations on the secretary's power are made very vague. The injunction to practice
collectivity involves such varied things as consulting with large groups of activists, listening to public opinion, and convening committee meetings regularly. Collegiality has the more restrictive meaning of practices appropriate to a collegial organ, or collegium -- its mode of considering questions and taking decisions.

4. (D) The secretary's newly-conferred power to issue decisions (решение) had to be reconciled, of course, with the current campaign against the cult of the individual, that is, against "one-man decisions." The method of reconciliation suggested seems to be for the secretary to decide as the committee would have decided had the decision been theirs (D-D')! This criterion, which an autocratic secretary might not find excessively restrictive, is more compatible with collectivity than with collegiality.

These four logically connected changes, introduced by top-ranking authorities on party organization into two crucial sentences of their own authorship, seem of undoubted political significance. The changed definition of the secretary's residual powers which results from them seems to lessen the scope for collectivity in leadership.

Another effort to restrict the scope of the collective body in decision-making and to preserve the power and authority of the senior secretary may be seen in a post-Congress change of view as to the right of the party leader to exercise one-man management (распорядительство). Kommunist,
in its last editorial before the Congress (No. 2), denied him this right; but seven months after the Congress Pravda insisted that the party leader "can and must" exercise it (September 6, 1956).

Kommunist, No. 2 (February 9, 1956)

But even now it still happens that some secretaries of obkoms, of Central Committees of the Communist parties of the union republics, try to replace collective leadership by one-man management /edinolichnim rasporiaditel'nostvom/, which leads to mistakes and failures in work. (p. 13)

The Russian term used, rasporiaditel'stvostvo, is a neologism not to be found in Soviet dictionaries; these two instances of its use are among the rare ones in print. Pravda's insistence that the style of leadership represented by the factitious term is mandatory for party leaders, after Kommunist had condemned their practice of it, seems to reflect that post-Congress effort to enhance the authority of the senior secretary in which Slepov and Shitarev were also engaged when revising their article. Pravda's injunction to practice one-man management was subsequently repeated by D. Bekasov in an article on "Leninist Norms of Party Leadership," which appeared in Sovetskaia Rossия (Soviet Russia), recently-founded organ of the Central Committee Bureau for the R.S.F.S.R. and of the R.S.F.S.R. Council of Ministers, on October 25, 1956.
These post-Congress developments suggest that developments at the XX Congress did not convince Khrushchev that his ambitions were fruitless, and that they did not check the aggrandizement of his secretarial office.

22. The Prospects for Khrushchev

Khrushchev's position in the top Soviet leadership, as it has been interpreted in this study, cannot be characterized as that of first among equals, as many Soviet analysts have done. This description could only be adequate if the Soviet leadership were static, or if it were in a state of secure equilibrium. But this is not the case. The Soviet top leadership -- the Presidium and the Secretariat -- is not a stable group, assured of tenure for life; members are elected by the Central Committee and are constitutionally subject to its will. If one member of the top leadership is able to affect significantly the composition of the Central Committee, he may be able to determine the membership of the top organs, and this Khrushchev has already achieved in some measure. He not only has a weightier and more authoritative voice in important deliberations than his colleagues, but he has a measure of power over them; his control over the lower party echelons may enable him in future to unseat them, each in turn, if they give him cause and opportunity. His colleagues, as individuals, must seek either to accommodate to Khrushchev's power or to balance it by grouping together and opposing him in cautious maneuvering. They may hope to unseat him if he
over-reaches himself or blunders, but this has already become very difficult. Even severe setbacks in foreign policy, like those suffered in Hungary and Poland, have as yet not affected Khrushchev's personal fortunes adversely, as they probably did Beria's after the East German revolt (June, 1953) and Malenkov's after the West's approval of West German rearmament (December, 1954). The closest parallel to Khrushchev's achievement was Stalin's in 1927 when, after the complete failure of his China policy, he continued to consolidate his personal power.

Khrushchev may not prove Stalin's peer in intra-party maneuvering, but his skill in this realm ought not to be underestimated, as some Western analysts have done, simply because he is talkative while Stalin was reticent. His tactical flexibility is remarkable. He has now abandoned his pose of being the foremost anti-Stalinist, a pose which, according to the interpretation presented in this study, was adopted on the spur of the moment and under great factional pressure, and which lasted barely a year. Since early 1957, Khrushchev has begun to defend Stalin against his detractors. Although he still criticizes Stalin's mistakes, he now recalls that "Stalin, with whom we worked, was an outstanding revolutionary... who loyally served the interests of the working-class and the cause of Marxism-Leninism." Khrushchev's most radical shift from his assessment of Stalin in the secret report is with respect to Stalin's wartime leadership. In the secret report Stalin is presented as a defeatist who displayed passivity and
ineptitude; but in Khrushchev's speech of February 18, 1956, "this great victory was attained under the leadership of our party and its Central Committee, at the head of which stood comrade Stalin." (Pravda, February 20, 1957.)

It would be wrong to suppose that Khrushchev's remarks represent the final step in a far-sighted plan initiated at the XX Congress to substitute a new and balanced image of Stalin for that of the former Stalin cult. The historical niche which was being prepared for Stalin after the XX Congress was a lowly one. After his great crimes were balanced against his achievements, Stalin's historical worth was set below that of ordinary Politburo members who did not suffer disgrace during their lifetime. Thus in the authoritative Politicheskii Slovar (Political Dictionary), published in August, 1956, five deceased Politburo members for whom there are entries are called "outstanding leader" (vidaiushchiia deiatel). Lenin ranks far above them as "leader"; Stalin ranks below them. Like the former candidate member of the Politburo, M. Frunze, Stalin is merely "one of the most prominent leaders" (odin iz vidneishikh deiatelei). Thus, when Khrushchev called Stalin an "outstanding revolutionary," when he credited Stalin with Soviet military victories instead of blaming him for Soviet defeats, he was abandoning the extreme anti-Stalin position assumed by him at the XX Congress in favor of a new position on this most representative political symbol of the Soviet Union's
recent past. Khrushchev now poses as defender of the Marxist-Leninist faith against "revisionists" and "opportunists." It is a role which is more congenial to him, if we may judge by the orthodox Stalinism of his speeches in 1954 and early 1955, and by the unsurpassed venom against deviators in his speeches of the purge period.

Despite the severe blows which the Soviet empire has suffered from Khrushchev's political adventurism, his personal retreat has been executed in surprisingly good order. He has taken up these new positions before his colleagues could do so publicly, and his massive blunders -- unlike Malenkov's and Molotov's "errors" -- go unacknowledged. His authority appears intact, and those who seek to know the party line must look to his utterances to discover it.

Growth in the cult of Khrushchev was interrupted, but not halted, by the XX Congress. Three post-Congress manifestations of this cult are particularly noteworthy:

1. In his secret speech Khrushchev criticized as immodest the practice of assigning the names of living Soviet leaders to places and institutions. He indicated that the practice should be stopped and that a gradual process of re-naming should be undertaken where necessary.

   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 sovkhozes 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 sovkhozes?
(Laughter, applause, voices: "That is right.")
This will benefit our cause. After all, the cult of the individual is manifested also in this way. (G.R., p. 56.)

There were actually instances of this re-naming after the Congress. Yet Radio Kiev announced on November 18, 1956, that a new town under construction in the Ukraine had been named Khrushchev.

2. Publication of a collection of Khrushchev's speeches to Komsomols was announced in the chief newspaper in the Ukraine (Pravda Ukraini) on October 26. Issuance of this book -- the first by an individual member of the present Soviet leadership since Stalin's death -- may subsequently have been abandoned, or at least delayed, for the title has not yet appeared on Soviet book lists.

3. In referring to Khrushchev's long service in the Ukraine, the Large Soviet Encyclopedia made the following statement: "In January, 1938, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Ukraine chose as first secretary N. S. Khrushchev, who headed vozglavias the Ukrainian party organization for twelve years." (Author's underscoring.)

The implied equation, "first secretary of the Central Committee equals head of the party organization," is a Stalinist equation. During Lenin's lifetime it was not valid, and shortly after Stalin's death it was explicitly stated to be false: "As is known, at the head of party organizations, from top to bottom /vo glave partiinikh organizatsii snizu doverkhu/ are not individual persons, but collective organs, chosen by communists and subordinate to them. The work of the organizations is directed not by the secretary alone but by the party bureau or the party committee as a whole."\(^{181}\) Since this formerly proscribed Stalinist formula has now been applied by the authoritative Encyclopedida to Khrushchev's former position in the Ukraine, the question arises whether it is also to apply to his present position. If so, it will place Khrushchev at the head of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

If Khrushchev is to pursue further the course of action which has been attributed to him in this study, he must effect the removal from the Presidium of some of his former opponents, whose continued presence there make possible the formation of shifting combinations which can oppose him on particular issues and which might even succeed in ousting him. An

\(^{181}\) This statement, which accords with the party statute, appears in a pamphlet by G. Shitarev, published shortly after this authority on party organization became an editor of Kommunist. (G. Shitarev, Kommunist -- Aktivni Poets za Vipolnenie Partiiinikh Reshenii /The Communist -- Active Fighter for the Fulfillment of Party Decisions/, Moscow, p. 33; sent to press February 17, 1954, and published in an edition of 100,000 copies.)
indication that Khrushchev aims to alter the composition of
the Presidium may be seen in the change which has occurred in
a key formula on leadership within the Central Committee. In
March, 1956, a Kommunist (No. 4) editorial spoke of the re-
stitution of collective leadership during the preceding three
years in "the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. and its
Presidium." However, the decree of June 30 -- in which
Khrushchev's influence seems ascendant -- claimed that after
Stalin's death "within the Central Committee of the party a
Leninist core of leaders" arose which struggled against the
cult of the individual and its consequences.\textsuperscript{182} Stalin had
also spoken of a "core" in the Central Committee when he
addressed the XII Congress (1923) after Lenin became in-
capacitated. According to Stalin, this "core formed within
the Central Committee in the course of years of work" con-
sisted of himself, Zinoviev, and Kamenev.\textsuperscript{183} These defenders
of Leninism were superseded by new Leninist cores, always

\textsuperscript{182} See also Kommunist, No. 10, p. 10.

thereafter "headed by Stalin." The composition of the new core announced in the Central Committee's decree of June 30, 1956, is uncertain, but the members are defenders of Leninism against its enemies, and rectifiers of the "mistakes" of Stalin's "last period." This change from a restoration of collective leadership by the Presidium to a restoration by a "Leninist core" may have been intended to foreshadow the removal from the Presidium of those members who stand outside this Leninist core.

Khrushchev is now so far committed in his bid for personal power that he could probably no longer accept a merely equal place in the collective leadership even if he wanted to. Of the four protégés whom he raised to candidate members of the Party Presidium from relative obscurity (only Brezhnev had been elected to the thirty-six-man Presidium in 1952), some at least must be promoted to full members, or they must, in due course, lose their places as candidates. If they are promoted, Khrushchev will have increased greatly his control over the party. But if they are removed, Khrushchev's successful opponents will probably force him to surrender his

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184 The significance of this symbolism is suggested by a sentence from an official party history of the early 1930's (although that history was subsequently discredited):

"The election of Comrade Stalin as General Secretary of the Central Committee meant a decided strengthening of the Leninist core of the Central Committee as a result of the victorious struggle against Trotskyism and the 'Workers' Opposition.' It proved of tremendous importance for securing the firm Leninist line of the Central Committee and of the whole party." (N. Popov, Outline History of the C.P.S.U., Vol. 2, p. 166.)
leadership of the Secretariat and his place in the Presidium. In that case, the Central Committee, which Khrushchev has been packing with his partisans for almost four years, would doubtless be purged again, and the leadership of major non-party institutions would be considerably altered. Clearly, the problem of the Stalin succession has not yet been solved.

The likelihood of alternative outcomes other than a great gain or a great loss in Khrushchev's political power during the next few years was sharply reduced when the Central Committee, at its February, 1957, plenum, elected still another Khrushchev protégé, F. R. Kozlov, to candidate membership in the Presidium. All five of Khrushchev's candidates for the Presidium, it will be noted, are full-time party secretaries. There are now seven candidates to the Presidium and only eleven full members. The total membership (eighteen) was never equalled by the Politburo, whose largest membership was seventeen during 1925-1927, when Stalin had obtained candidate status for a number of followers but had only begun to remove from the Politburo his political enemies.

If Khrushchev actually succeeds in eliminating from the Presidium some of his factional opponents, he may achieve roughly the level of personal power which Stalin had in 1927. Only if he were to succeed in removing most of the senior members of the Presidium would he approach Stalin's power of 1930, when Stalin was the sole remaining member of Lenin's
Politburo. This, probably, represents the limit of Khrushchev's ambition. It seems safe to say that he would not try to attain the despotic powers exercised by Stalin after 1934 unless he were driven to it, against his conscious will, by the realization that any lesser power position would prove unstable.

Khrushchev's prospects, and the final outcome of the Stalin succession crisis, remain uncertain. In the near future they may be greatly influenced by international events lying beyond Khrushchev's full control as well as by his capability for maintaining control over the party apparatus. But on a longer view, the question which was briefly posed at the XX Congress may prove decisive: Can Khrushchev -- or any other leader who makes himself the master of the party apparatus -- be prevented from realizing his potential power by the leaders of non-party institutions and, ultimately, by those political forces outside the Central Committee that are more responsive to the broader currents of Soviet society?
APPENDIX I

ANALYTICAL SUMMARY OF
"KHRUSHCHEV AND THE STALIN SUCCESSION"

Proposition and Evidence

A. The relative authority of the two organs of the Central Committee -- the Secretariat and the Presidium -- has been a major issue of contention among top Soviet leaders; the positions taken on this question by individual leaders have been determined by power considerations, not principle.

I. During his tenure as head of the government, Malenkov fostered the Presidium's authority; the opposition, headed by Khrushchev, successfully sought to strengthen the Secretariat, an effort which Khrushchev continued for almost a year after Malenkov's demotion.

   1. General statement. 3/53-2/55
   2. Malenkov boosted Presidium at time of Beria ouster. 7/53
   3. "Central Committee headed by Presidium and Secretariat" 1/54
   4. Decisions on urgent questions "adopted by Presidium and Secretariat of Central Committee." 6/54
   5. Central Committee plenum greatly strengthens Secretariat. 7/55
   6. Party textbook implies Secretariat is coordinate with Presidium. 10/29/55
II. After Malenkov's demotion a group opposed Khrushchev's efforts to increase further the authority of the Central Committee Secretariat.

1. Petrovsky's Pravda article deprecates the authority of the Secretariat. 4/20/55

2. Kommunist article also deprecates Secretariat's authority. 4/16/55

3. Large Soviet Encyclopediа says the Central Committee and its Presidium (omits Secretariat) embody collective leadership. 7/55

4. Legal authority says party policy worked out by Central Committee and its Presidium (omits Secretariat). 8/55

5. Volkov's published lectures deprecate authority of the Secretariat. 10/55

III. Khrushchev was probably responsible for sudden boosting of the Presidium just before the XX Congress, but at the Congress itself he returned to the tactic of strengthening the power of the Secretariat vis-a-vis the Presidium.

1. The Presidium, and Khrushchev, are praised just before the XX Congress. 1-2/56

2. The Secretariat is strengthened at the Congress, but there is no effort to publicize the organ. 2/56
B. The **powers** of the senior secretary (and his **title**, as far as it symbolized his legitimate authority) have been **crucial issues** in elite politics since Stalin's death.

I. Sensitivity of the senior secretarial title is evident in the Central Committee's unwillingness to give Khrushchev a title after Stalin's death, and in its award of a factitious title to him later in the year.

II. Khrushchev has deviously asserted the power and prestige of the senior secretary (cf. also B-III).

1. Central Committee decrees were twice issued over his signature.
   - 11/54
   - 1/55

2. Soviet newspapers capitalized the initial letter of his title as senior secretary; this change was adopted by the newly-elected Central Committee after the XX Congress.
   - 5/19/55
   - 2/56

3. Khrushchev's one-man rule over the Secretariat is implied by the party textbook.
   - 10/29/55

III. The title of "general secretary" posed a sensitive problem with regard to the Stalin succession from the moment Stalin became ill.

1. Stalin's post of "general secretary" of the Central Committee has been a controversial one in the party's history.
   - 1922-1953

2. The post of "general secretary" was first made relevant to the succession problem in 1939.
   - 12/39

3. When Stalin died there was immediately a virtual taboo against mentioning in periodicals that he had ever been general secretary, even in articles on his party career.
   - 3/53-2/54
After Malenkov was demoted
(leaving Khrushchev unen-
cumbered by a strong opponent),
an opposition group tried to
set a limit to Khrushchev's
still-growing power by contend-
ing that the post of general
secretary had been abolished
in Stalin's lifetime.

(1) Affirmations -- previous to
the controversy -- that
Stalin continued as general
secretary after the XIX
Congress.

a. Baglikov
b. Short Philosophical
Dictionary (1953)

(2) Opposition contends that
Stalin ceased to be general
secretary at time of XIX
Congress.

a. Encyclopedic Dictionary
b. Short Philosophical
Dictionary (1955)

(3) A pro-Khrushchev evasion:
Stalin remained general
secretary "for more than
thirty years" (Lenin)

5. The Holyoake letter (addressing
Khrushchev as general secretary)
is published, probably in order
to signal the extent of Khrushchev's
power and the scope of his
ambitions.

6. Kommunist recalls that Stalin was
general secretary at the time
of Lenin's death. This is one of
only two mentions of Stalin's in-
cumbency as "gensec" found in
Soviet periodicals from Stalin's
death until the XX Congress.
(B-III)

7. Mikoyan hints in his XX Congress speech that Lenin had wanted Stalin removed as general secretary.

Date: 2/16/56

8. Lenin's testament, including his advice to remove Stalin as general secretary, is distributed to Congress (and parts are read to them by Khrushchev).

Date: 2/25/56

9. Khrushchev depicts the image of a Stalin who was good for a time even after he held the enormously powerful post of general secretary following Lenin's death (secret speech).

Date: 2/25/56

10. Major documents in the anti-Stalin campaign, after the Congress, mention that he was once general secretary (but do not contend that he left the office after the XIX Congress).

(1) First public attack on Stalin after the secret speech slights the post of general secretary.

Date: 3/23/56

(2) Subsequently the Central Committee decree magnifies the office of general secretary and asserts that Stalin performed its duties well "for a long period."

Date: 6/30/56

C. A cult of Khrushchev -- initiated on the first anniversary of Stalin's death -- mounted steadily to a climax at republican congresses in the last days before the XX Congress.

I. Khrushchev's special contribution in World War II.

1. In opposition to the full list of senior Presidium members who contributed to World War II victory, is the abbreviated list of Khrushchev and Bulganin.

Date: 3/5/54-5/54
2. Victory of the Khrushchev-
Bulganin list and new claims
for Khrushchev.

II. Invidious publicity for Khrushchev.

1. Letter of the Central Committee
and Council of Ministers
accords Khrushchev status
well above other Presidium
members.

2. Khrushchev's achievements as
former "head of the Ukrainian
Central Committee" are publicized
(actually he was only "first
secretary of the Central
Committee" in the Ukraine (1938-
1949).

3. Special publicity is given
Khrushchev's pronouncements.

III. Khrushchev is placed in the line
of succession, Lenin-Stalin-Khrushchev.

1. The new edition of Lenin ends
with a long quotation from
Khrushchev.

2. The only names mentioned in
some key pre-Congress articles
are Lenin, Stalin, and
Khrushchev.

IV. Highest point of Khrushchev cult is
attained at republican congresses in
the days preceding XX Congress, and at
Congress itself.

1. Khrushchev hailed as "head of
the Presidium" at Ukrainian
Congress and by the entire
Kazakhstan Congress.

2. Personal eulogy of Khrushchev
by leading Ukrainian and
Kazakhstan delegates resembles
early praises of Stalin (ca.
1929-1934).
3. Bierut in Pravda article hails foreign policy speeches of Khrushchev (and Bulganin).
   2/13/56

4. Mao's message to Congress calls Khrushchev head of the Central Committee.
   2/15(9)/56

5. Khrushchev assumes numerous functions of the Congress which Stalin always left to others.
   2/14-25/56

6. The only contemporary opposition to Stalin's errors mentioned in Khrushchev's secret speech is his own.
   2/25/56

D. Khrushchev has made devious but unmistakable attacks on other members of the Presidium, some of which seem calculated to force them out of the "Leninist core" of leaders of the party.

I. Khrushchev intimates to the Central Committee that Malenkov has been engaged in an "anti-Leninist," "right" deviation similar to the Rykov-Bukharin deviation which resulted in the purge of these men from the top leadership.
   1/25/55

II. The official biography of Lenin quotes Khrushchev's hint about Malenkov's recent "right" deviation, thus incorporating it in official party history.
   4/20/55

III. Molotov confesses, probably under pressure from Khrushchev, that he made an ideological error in a speech delivered seven months previously.
   9/55

IV. Khrushchev hints at errors of Malenkov and Molotov in his report to the XX Congress.
   2/4/56

V. Khrushchev's secret report hints at complicity in Stalin's crimes of Malenkov and Kaganovich; also of Molotov, Mikoyan, and Voroshilov.
   2/25/56
VI. A Central Committee decree says a "Leninist core" of the Central Committee, formed while Stalin lived, has struggled against the cult of the individual and its consequences since Stalin's death. This raises the question as to which members of the Presidium were not in the Leninist core.

E. Opposition to Khrushchev's personal political ambitions by top-level leaders (a group with fluctuating composition and leadership) has been manifest since Stalin's death, and particularly since Khrushchev's victory over Malenkov (February, 1955).

I. The opposition has tried to minimize the authority of the Secretariat. (See A-II)

II. The opposition has tried to minimize the authority of the senior secretary. (See B-I, B-III-4)

III. The opposition has deprecated, and then attacked, Stalin. (See F-IV)

IV. The opposition has opposed Khrushchev personally.

1. Contrived omission of Khrushchev's name from the only biographical article on Stalin published in a reference work subsequent to his death and before the XX Congress. 3/29/55

2. Khrushchev's name omitted by Problems of History in a list of leaders whose pronouncements on World War II were recommended for study. 5/12/55

3. Mikoyan hints at Khrushchev's complicity in Stalin's crimes by rehabilitating "Comrade Kosior" at the XX Congress. (See also Khrushchev's defense against Mikoyan's effort to link him with the purge of Kosior.) 2/25/56
F. The attack on Stalin was almost certainly
decided upon by Khrushchev after the XX
Congress opened, when Mikoyan's attack on
Stalin, and his implicit attack on Khrushchev
for complicity in Stalin's repressive actions,
raised obstacles to Khrushchev's immediate
ambition.

I. Since Khrushchev's position as senior
secretary was one which Stalin had
used to acquire and exercise dictatorial
power (at least until 1941), Khrushchev's
attitude towards Stalin -- particularly
as regarded his mode of rule -- was a
crucial question in post-Stalin Soviet
politics.

II. Khrushchev had openly used the Stalin
image to confer legitimacy.

1. The lists of political contributors
to World War II victory which
started the Khrushchev cult were
initiated on the first anniversary
of Stalin's death and were
prominent on Stalin's seventy-
fifth birthday anniversary.

2. At a crucial moment in his
victorious controversy with
Malenkov, Khrushchev tried to
demonstrate his personal influence
on Stalin.

3. Khrushchev portrayed his victory
over Malenkov as a re-enactment
of Stalin's victory over party
deviationists after Lenin's death.

4. In nominating Bulganin as premier,
Khrushchev stressed that closeness
to Stalin was a qualification for
high office.

5. Khrushchev's name was associated
with Stalin's (and Lenin's) in
the official biography of Lenin
and subsequently in some key
articles.
III. Khrushchev was probably responsible for the highly incongruous publicity accorded Stalin from late 1955 until the opening days of the XX Congress.

1. Display of the cult of Stalin on his seventy-sixth birthday, and the subsequent announcement of the impending publication of the long-delayed fourteenth volume of Stalin's works covering the purge period (1934-1941) came after the rehabilitation of Stalinist purge victims; this indicates that esoteric knowledge of this condemnation of Stalin's purge was intended to co-exist in future with an exoteric image of "Stalin, victor over the party's enemies."

2. Khrushchev was probably responsible for the extensive favorable publicity for Stalin on his seventy-sixth birthday anniversary, which commended him for his victory over the anti-Leninist enemies of the people.

3. One crucial item in this belated indulgence of the Stalin cult was the second and last reference to appear in a periodical (from Stalin's death until the XX Congress) of the fact that Stalin had once been general secretary.

4. Khrushchev's adherents (but not Khrushchev) included Stalin among the communist deities even after Stalin had been largely eliminated from pre-Congress propaganda.

5. Two ideologists who may be linked to Khrushchev (one was appointed to the Moscow party committee right after Khrushchev became its head) opposed de-Stalinization moves at the historians' conference.
6. Republican newspapers (particularly those in Khrushchev's strongholds) gave Stalin respectable mention on the day the Congress opened.

7. Of the last six references to Stalin in the central press which were in the slightest degree favorable to him:

   (1) Three were associated with the cult of Khrushchev.
   a. Kirichenko to the Ukrainian Congress. 1/17/56
   b. Bierut in Pravda. 2/13/56
   c. Mao greetings to Congress. 2/15/56

   (2) Two were uttered by Khrushchev. 2/14/56

   (3) The last, by Thorez, did not mention Khrushchev, although it doubtless had high-level support. 2/17/56

IV. The opposition to Khrushchev sought to downgrade and expose Stalin in the weeks before the Congress, and at the Congress itself.

   1. **First decision against Stalin**: Virtual elimination of the Stalin symbol from pre-Congress propaganda probably forced by opposition. Mid-Jan/56

   2. Opposition leaders sponsor Burdzhalov's attack on Stalin at history conference. 1/25-28/56

   3. **Second decision against Stalin**: Opposition leaders probably forced the elimination of Stalin's name from the Central Committee letter to Voroshilov. 2/4/56
4. Mikoyan made the first open attack on Stalin's ideological wisdom and said that certain victims of the great purge were wrongly accused of being "enemies of the people." Nothing was said publicly to match this public attack on Stalin until six weeks later (March 28, 1956). Thus Mikoyan transgressed the frame of reference established for the XX Congress.

V. Khrushchev's decision to expose Stalin in a secret speech probably came after the mid-way point in the Congress.

1. Khrushchev, in his first report, characterized Trotsky \textit{et al.} as "enemies of the people" (he could legitimately have said "enemies of the party"); in his second speech he said this phrase was invented by Stalin in 1937 to justify his terroristic rule. In the interval, Mikoyan had denied that Kosior and Antonov-Ovseenko were "enemies of the people."

2. An early decision to indict Stalin would have resulted in the preparation of an impersonal, written document like the report of February 14. Instead, his attack on Stalin seemed to be a brilliant rhetorical improvisation from his carefully prepared notes. It contained factual mistakes, innuendoes against Khrushchev's opponents, and boasts by Khrushchev that he (alone) actively opposed Stalin's wrong decisions -- all of which doubtless would have been eliminated if a written text had been prepared following a \textit{pre-Congress} decision that Khrushchev was to deliver the speech.
3. The decision may have been made between February 17 and 20, i.e., after Thorez' praise for Stalin but possibly before Pankratova echoed Mikoyan's attack on Stalin.

4. The closed meeting, convened for an unannounced purpose at 6 p.m. on February 24, was delayed for about six hours, possibly to accommodate last-minute bargaining on the delivery and contents of the secret speech.

5. It is doubtful that Khrushchev's secret speech was authorized for delivery by the Central Committee or the Presidium -- certainly it was not authorized in its details and probably not even in outline.

G. Even after the Congress, and Khrushchev's secret speech, controversy over the legitimate powers of the senior secretary continued.

I. The post-Congress controversy involved Stalin's incumbency as general secretary.

1. Stalin's legitimate powers as "gensec." 3/28/56

2. Stalin's tenure as "gensec," and the portion of it when he was still a good leader, i.e., "fought for Leninism." 6/30/56

II. The controversy also involved the secretary's powers to issue orders on his own authority.

1. The right of the Secretariat to issue decisions /Resheniya/ is asserted by Pravda's party editor. 6/10/54

2. The secretary's power is restricted to the issuance of instructions /Ukazania/, both in Pravda and in Kommunist. 4/20/55
3. This formula is adhered to in the first months after the Congress.  
   5/25/56

4. The secretary's right to issue decisions is reasserted by two top experts on party organization.  
   7/28/56
APPENDIX II

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF SOVIET ELITE POLITICS

Esoteric communications are messages from the elite, or top leaders, to groups and institutions standing outside the top leadership. Insofar as these messages involve contention among the top leaders, they provide evidence on the extent to which such groups and institutions are drawn into this contention. However, little is known about the influence exerted by these groups on the distribution of power within the elite, or on its major decisions. Even less is known about the mechanics whereby these social groups are able to affect the maneuvers and deliberations of the top leadership.

The data presented here do not bear directly on these questions of influence and mechanics, but the study reveals numerous esoteric communications on questions involving the distribution of power within the elite during the months after Malenkov's fall. Since these messages were seemingly related to an unresolved controversy among the top leadership, it is reasonable to suppose that outside forces were being invoked by both sides (or, conceivably, that one faction's efforts to draw them into elite affairs were countered by the opposing faction).* Since the messages are heavily veiled, involving

* In the weeks after Stalin's death, Beria made almost open appeals to sub-elites outside the party apparatus. He implicitly promised to ease the police terror, to which economic administrators and intellectuals were subject, and to foster the influence of the intelligentsia in the minority nationalities. The party apparatus defeated him, and no one since has appealed with such boldness to groups standing outside the party center.
subtle changes in certain basic formulas, they seem designed for relatively small, well-informed audiences or sub-elites."

It may be conjectured that it is the existence of these sub-elites as partially independent power centers which chiefly distinguishes the present political situation in the Soviet top leadership from that of the 1920's. (There are also numerous parallels in the two eras which are emphasized in the body of this essay.) The presence of a communist intelligentsia (in the very broad Soviet sense of the word) contrasts markedly with the situation in the 1920's. At that time, institutions other than the party (and the police) apparatus extensively employed Czarist-educated specialists. They were therefore suspect, and the institutions which employed them were subjected to close control by the party (and the police) apparatus. Thus these institutions were inadequate bases of power from which to contest Stalin's chief instrument, the party apparatus. In the last decades of Stalin's rule, however, the non-party institutions were staffed by a new generation, which was Communist-educated and indoctrinated. Stringent controls may have become more

* The term sub-elites is used to refer to two broad groups: (1) persons having high positions in a chain of command (e.g., professional military leaders, economic executives, plant managers, and sub-leaders in the party apparatus); (2) influential persons in the Soviet system who stand outside any command structure (e.g., specialists of various kinds, social scientists, and writers).
difficult to justify and to enforce. In any case, since Stalin's death, police control has been slackened generally, and party control at least in the military forces.

The trend toward collective leadership which started after Stalin's death soon resulted in a weakening of the power of the local political police chieftains and, in lesser degree, of the party bosses -- the first secretaries, who were limited despots in their own realm under the master despot, Stalin. There was some increase in the power of the "bureau" on all levels of the hierarchy. As a result, the representatives of non-party institutions who sat in these bureaus -- military officials, economic administrators, state bureaucrats -- all acquired greater administrative power, and probably some increased influence on policy as well.

This development apparently was opposed by Khrushchev, on behalf of the party apparatchiks. After some months of

* The drastic -- but short-lived -- amalgamation of Soviet ministries after Stalin's death "has become possible," said Pravda at the time, "because the party has developed and trained highly-qualified cadres, politically mature, who are capable of carrying out the party's policy." (K. Ivanov, April 26, 1953; author's underscoring.) Subsequently the editor of Red Star justified the strengthening of one-man command (edinonachal'ie) in the armed forces by the fact that "our army and navy have experienced cadres of officers and generals supremely devoted to the Motherland." (Major General V. Moskovsky, "Na strazhe mira i bezopasnosti Rodiny" [In Defense of Peace and the Security of the Motherland], Znamia, No. 2, February, 1955, p. 124.) Since the XX Congress, Red Star, in supporting one-man command in the armed forces, has noted that "our commanders...are now even more successfully than before carrying out the functions of military and political leaders of troops...." ("Velikiy podvig Sovetskogo Naroda" [The Great Feat of the Soviet People], May 9, 1956; author's underscoring.)
uncertainty, the party apparatus was able to retain much of the power of command which Stalin had assigned to it, and even to increase its autonomy when there was a general relaxation of police controls. Representation of the party apparatus on policy-making bodies throughout the party was greatly strengthened in 1954 and 1955 by increases in the number of secretaries, who are statutory members of the bureau on all echelons except the All-Union. Thus, when the XX Congress convened, almost half (around 45 per cent) of the members of bureaus in republican central committees were party secretaries.

Despite this resurgence of the party apparatus, key non-party institutions had probably achieved sufficient independence from party and police control to support sub-centers of power. Their political influence at the XX Congress was probably greatly enhanced by the acute dissension among the top leaders. This, at any rate, is a plausible explanation of the surprisingly open resistance to Khrushchev which -- according to this author's interpretation of the relevant texts -- emerged at the sessions of the XX Congress. It should be noted that this conjecture about the influence of sub-elites on the top Soviet leadership is largely a by-product of the present study, a superstructure of considered speculation erected over more solidly-grounded hypotheses for which there is more direct evidence.
APPENDIX III

SHOLOKHOV'S REMARKS ON A "POWER-LOVING GENSEC"

A "general secretary" has usually dominated the Union of Soviet Writers since it was first organized in 1934. For most of this period the general secretary was A. A. Fadeev, a virtual dictator among writers for the greater part of fifteen years (although, of course, subordinate to Stalin and Zhdanov). The parallel between this sub-dictator's career and Stalin's was implied by Fadeev himself in 1954 at the Second Congress of Soviet Writers, in words which strongly anticipated those used by Soviet leaders at the XX Congress with respect to Stalin's dictatorship:

Many shortcomings and mistakes in the work of the Union of Writers can be explained by the fact that for the past 20 years the collective principle of leadership has far from always been observed in the Union of Writers. (Author's underscoring.)

Fadeev spoke bluntly of the relative authority of the Presidium and the secretariat of the Writers' Union, a highly sensitive issue even when it was the top organs of the Writers' Union, and not those of the party, which were being considered.

Writers want to be assured of real collective leadership in the Union, they want a relatively broad presidium possessing full right of decision on questions concerning the Union between plenums of the board /pravlenia/, which is analogous to the party Central Committee/ and they also want the Union's secretariat to be an organ subordinate to the board and to the presidium. (Literary Gazette, December 27, 1954; author's underscoring.)
The parallel between Stalin's regime and Fadeev's tyranny over the Writers' Union was implied again at the XX Congress by the great novelist M. A. Sholokhov, who brought the subject close to the succession problem. By paraphrasing Stalin's remark of 1925 on the need for collective leadership in the party after Lenin's death, Sholokhov recalled it for the Congress, although explicitly he referred only to the Writers' Union.

Sholokhov (February 20, 1956)

Was it not evident to some of us after Gorky's death [read: Lenin's death] that there was no one among the writers [read: leaders] who came up to his shoulders? We did not have, do not have, and perhaps will not have anyone equal to Gorky [read: Lenin].... 

(1, p. 585.)

Stalin (Collected Works)

If any of us go too far, we shall be called to order -- that is essential, that is necessary. To lead the party otherwise than collectively is impossible. Now that Ilyich is not with us, it is silly to dream of such a thing, it is silly to talk about it. Collective work, collective leadership... that is what we need now. (Vol. 7, p. 402.)

Sholokhov continued: "What did we do after Gorky's death?

We set up a collective leadership in the Writers' Union, headed by com. Fadeev.... Fadeev [read: Stalin] proved to be [Okazalsia] quite a power-loving gensec [general secretary] and did not want to heed the collegium principle in his work."

* Sholokhov's strong attack on Fadeev, perhaps in particular the implied identification of Fadeev with Stalin, may have contributed to Fadeev's suicide some weeks after the Congress. According to the Literary Gazette, May 17, 1956, Sholokhov was one of the few highly prominent writers who did not attend the funeral.
These words are not really appropriate with respect to Fadeev, who did not become head of the Writers' Union until two years after Gorky's death. By then a dictatorship over literary activity had already been established by the future party boss, A. S. Shcherbakov, from his post as secretary of the Writers' Union. On the other hand, Sholokhov's words are highly appropriate for Stalin, even down to the detail of referring to the "gensec." For the office of general secretary of the Central Committee had acquired this nickname within a few months of its creation -- it already appears in Lenin's "testament" (1922) -- and subsequently it became attached to Stalin personally.

Sholokhov's reference to a "power-loving gensec" approached in its daring Mikoyan's similarly implicit attack on Stalin. Moreover, by asserting that we "do not have and perhaps will not have anyone equal to Gorky" -- that is, Lenin -- Sholokhov seemed to warn of the need to maintain the collective leadership. (Note that, like Stalin in 1925, he presents collective leadership as an alternative to the leadership of a Lenin, while the Congress, and post-Congress propaganda, made Lenin the exemplar of collective leadership.)

This warning may even have been directed against Khrushchev personally. In his speech Sholokhov addressed Khrushchev:

You are a polite \textit{vezhlivyi} man, Nikita Sergeevich, but...let me ask you with coarse \textit{grubovato} directness: can one weaken \textit{writers' ties with life} when they do not exist? (I, p. 582)
The irony of Sholokhov's statement that Khrushchev is "polite," not "coarse," is obvious; the exact opposite is true of Khrushchev. But the remarkable thing about Sholokhov's little joke is that its two key terms -- "polite" and "coarse" -- played a key role in efforts to remove Stalin as general secretary in the last years of Lenin's life and in the first years after he died. They appear in the postscript to Lenin's "testament," where he calls for Stalin's removal from his secretarial post:**

Stalin is too coarse /grub/*** and this fault, entirely supportable in relations among us Communists, becomes insupportable in the office of gensec. Therefore I propose to the comrades to find a way to remove Stalin from that position and appoint to it another man who is... more patient, more loyal, more polite /vezhliv/ and more attentive to comrades, less capricious, etc.

The "testament" was suppressed after Lenin's death, although subsequently a considerable number of allusions were made to it in factional controversy. In 1927 Stalin acknowledged that Lenin had sought to have him removed as gensec because of his

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* Khrushchev had interrupted a number of speakers to interject comment or queries in the days before Sholokhov took the floor.

** This "testament" was recently published in Kommunist, No. 9, 1956, pp. 17-18.

*** Note that Lenin's term, grub (coarse), was attenuated by Sholokhov to grubovatoi (rather coarse), thus slightly weakening the parallel.
"coarseness"; nevertheless he tried to deprive his "coarseness" of any political significance:

It is said that in that "testament" com. Lenin proposed to the Congress that in view of the "coarseness" [гробости] of Stalin it should consider the question of replacing Stalin in the post of general secretary by another comrade. This is entirely correct....* Yes, I am coarse [гроб], comrades, with respect to those who rudely [гроб] and treacherously wreck and split the party. I have never concealed this and do not conceal it now. Perhaps some mildness is required with respect to splitters. But I am not good at that. At the very first meeting of the plenum of the Central Committee after the XIII Congress I asked the plenum of the Central Committee to release me from my duties as general secretary.... A year later I again put in a request to the plenum to release me, but I was again obliged to remain at my post.... There is not a word, not a hint in the "testament" about Stalin having made mistakes. It refers only to Stalin's coarseness [гробости]. But coarseness is not and cannot be a defect in the political line or position of Stalin.**

Sholokhov, it should be noted, is a professional user of words; it may be presumed that he used them carefully when he addressed the assembled leaders of the Soviet party at the XX Congress. In view of the key role the terms "coarse" and "polite" played in controversy about Stalin's qualifications for the post of general secretary, Sholokhov's ironic use of them with respect to Khrushchev is highly suggestive.

* Here Stalin read the postscript to Lenin's "testament," but, according to Souvarine (Stalin, p. 458), this reading was excised from the Collected Works.

** Stalin, Collected Works, Vol. 10, pp. 175-177.
If to this is added Sholokhov's evident reminder of how Stalin changed from the head of a collective to a "power-loving gensec," it appears likely that Sholokhov's speech to the congress gave a pointed warning against Khrushchev's ambitions.*

If this conjecture about the purpose of Sholokhov's remarks is true, it suggests that the extensive easing of pressure from the political police has made it possible for an eminent writer to participate in the factional activities of the elite. It seems unlikely that Sholokhov would have undertaken a daring speech directed against Khrushchev without assurance of protection from a powerful faction.

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* Shortly after the XX Congress, or Lenin's birthday celebration, G. Petrovsky again conveyed a verbal message from Lenin, just as he had done the year before: "It is necessary to choose as party leaders men who will preserve the unity of the party. Lenin requested me to convey this to the comrades." (Trud, April 20, 1956.) Petrovsky repeated Lenin's warning on the need to preserve unity in the party's leadership in an article on the anniversary of the October Revolution (Pravda Ukraini, November 6, 1956.)
APPENDIX IV

MOLOTOV'S IDEOLOGICAL "ERROR"

Molotov, in his foreign-policy speech to the Supreme Soviet on February 8, 1955, turned back the clock of history for the Soviets. By modifying a long-standing formula he placed the U.S.S.R. in a stage of socialist development which was supposed to have been passed in 1932; at the same time he depreciated the progress which the satellite countries had made. This gross ideological heresy was achieved in a single sentence.

Along with the Soviet Union, where the foundations /osnovy/ of a socialist society have already been built, there are also People's Democracies which have taken only the first, though highly important, steps in the direction of socialism. (Author's underscoring.)

Actually, as Molotov conceded seven months later in a letter to the editors of Kommunist, the Communist party had proclaimed in 1932 the achievement which Molotov spoke of in 1955 -- the building of the foundations of socialism; subsequently, in 1939, the party claimed to have entered a new phase of development, the "perfecting" of socialism and gradual transition to communism.

It is difficult to suppose that Molotov's use of this archaic formula to describe the present stage of development in the U.S.S.R. was inadvertent. The issue of Kommunist which published Molotov's letter confessing his
error implied that it was not, and editorialized on:

the theoretical bankruptcy and the dangerous political harm of efforts to carry over to the contemporary period formulas and descriptions relating to a stage which was passed through long ago -- to present the matter as though only the foundations of socialism (i.e., the basis of socialism) have been built in our country. (Author's underscoring.)

While we must recognize that K humanitarian's criticism of Molotov was not unbiased -- after all, Molotov did not say "only the foundations of socialism" had been built -- it is difficult to disagree with their hint that Molotov's use of the formula involved conscious "effort." To suppose it was a mere slip is to deny Molotov not only the ideological genius credited to him by the Large Soviet Encyclopedia but also the clerical aptitude which Lenin believed to be his special talent. As head of the government in the mid-1930's Molotov had even assisted in proclaiming the achievement of socialism, and he had unfailingly repeated the correct formula innumerable times.

Molotov's precise objective in making this error is obscure, but it seems possible to reconstruct with some measure of confidence the general purpose which his gambit may have been designed to serve. It is well to begin with the consequences which the K humanitarian editorial we have

* K humanitarian, No. 14, p. 4.
already mentioned said might result from the view to which Molotov gave expression:

It can do our cause harm, since it distorts the perspective of development and leads to an underestimation of the socialist system's forces and potentialities. Yet these forces and potentialities are genuinely inexhaustible. (Author's underscoring.)

Molotov tended to emphasize the dangers in the communist international situation in his speech to the Supreme Soviet. He argued, for example, that United States foreign policy still aimed at "overthrowing socialism," a far-reaching ambition which seemed to demonstrate not only the depth of U.S. enmity, but also the dangers which the socialist camp still faced.

It seems reasonable to suppose, then, that Molotov's deviant formula in February, 1955, may have been intended to head off the buoyantly optimistic assessment of the communist world's prospects which later permitted Khrushchev, at the XX Congress, to revise much of Stalinism and even something of Lenin's doctrine.

To be more specific -- and more conjectural: Molotov's gambit may have been precipitated by current doctrinal discussions in the Presidium which later introduced a change of dogma decreed by the Central Committee (June 30, 1956):

Great harm to the cause of socialist construction and the development of democracy inside the party and the state was inflicted by Stalin's erroneous formula

* Ibid.
that as the Soviet Union moved toward socialism the class struggle would allegedly become more and more acute. This formula, which is only correct for certain stages of the transition period, when the question of "who will defeat whom?" is being decided, when a persistent class struggle for the building of the foundations of socialism was in progress, was put forward in 1937 at a moment when socialism had already triumphed in our country and the exploiting classes and their economic base had been liquidated. (Author's underscoring.)

This is an important revision of Stalinist doctrine, since it restricts the development of class struggle -- and therefore the need for increasing repression -- to the period of building the foundations of socialism. It implies that the purges of 1936-1938 were unnecessary. It implies further that the present level of police repression need be no higher than it was in 1932, and might even be lower inasmuch as the exploiting classes have since been liquidated. Molotov may have been opposing such notions -- if they were under consideration early in 1955 -- by emphasizing that the U.S.S.R., was still at an early stage in development towards socialism and still needed strong repressive machinery. Significantly, in retracting his "erroneous" formula, Molotov was made to concede that the class struggle had indeed abated, for he acknowledged that the traditional question "who will destroy whom?" had long ago been decided:

* Ibid., p. 127.
Thus in 1932 the decision of the XVII Conference of the party indicated that the construction of the foundation of socialism was completed in the U.S.S.R. and that the Leninist problem of "who... Whom?" had been resolved to the detriment of capitalism and to the advantage of socialism, had been resolved entirely and irremediably in the cities and the country.

This enforced concession may have made it difficult for Molotov to argue in the next months for maintenance of existing levels of police repression and ideological control in party councils.

Molotov's original contention that the People's Democracies had only taken the "first steps" in the direction of socialism suggests that these regimes are fragile, and might imply the continuing need there for repressive measures. In his letter of confession Molotov did not apologize for his deprecatory remark about the progress of the People's Democracies, and he continued to resist ideological rapprochement with Tito, even at the XX Congress when this policy had clearly been decided upon.

Since the Hungarian rebellion in November, 1956, the Soviet leadership seems to have moved towards the position which Molotov had defended. An article in the party journal, Partiinaia Zhizn, noted that in the People's Democracies the transition to socialism had not been completed; as a consequence, further progress could not be made "without temporary exacerbations of the class struggle."* Even in the Soviet

* Party Life, No. 20, p. 43.
Union "it was impossible to conclude...that at the present time there were no longer any manifestations of class struggle." And despite Molotov's ideological blunder, it was indicated that he was playing an important role in assuring the ideological purity of Soviet literature.

* Ibid.

** Sovetskaia Kultura (Soviet Culture), November 20, 1956.