

THE RISE TO POWER OF STALIN AND KHRUSHCHEV

The Role of the Party

by

Mark Mitchell Orton

Independent Studies Program

Mr. Walter Andreas Foley

March 17, 1965

TO
MOTHER AND FATHER

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Certainly the highest praise and honors and thanks are due Mr. Walter Andreas Foley, who sponsored this paper. He worked extremely hard and showed the greatest patience with me. The school librarians Mr. Sawin, Mrs. Lake, and Mrs Adams also were of the greatest aid in finding and procuring source material for this paper. I would like to thank Dr. Frederick L. Schuman for the kind attention he showed me in our interview while he was visiting the school for the ISP.

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MILLERS FALLS
ERASE
COTTON CONTENT

CHAPTER I

The aim of this paper is to outline the rise to power of Khrushchev and Stalin with special attention to the role of the party in these two struggles and, then, to analyze and comment on the role of the party and its various facets in the rise of Stalin and Khrushchev. I make no pretence of presenting a comprehensive or definitive analysis of these two struggles in this paper.

For the sake of length and preciseness, the role of the many other elements of Soviet society is omitted, except where it might be crucial to the rise of either man. Foreign affairs, the armed forces, the secret and security police, and public opinion are mentioned only in passing.

The paper is divided into three sections. The first outlines the rise to power of Stalin and includes introductory material on the many posts he occupied and their importance. The second section deals with the rise to power of Khrushchev and includes introductory material on the status of the party at Stalin's death and a short biographical sketch of each of the major figures of the struggle. The last section is an analysis of the party's role in these two struggles with special attention given to the use of the highest party posts, the Secretariat, Central Committee, and the Politburo and Presidium.

CHAPTER II

Introduction

The rise of Joseph Stalin, who was to become the all-powerful ruler of the Soviet Union, began with his accretion of power several years before the death of Lenin, father of the Soviet Union. Lenin's other lieutenants did not immediately become suspicious of Stalin's increasing power because they considered themselves safe as long as Lenin remained alive. In fact the others promoted this accretion of power in his hands and looked upon him as a boor—just the type to deal with the daily drudgery of the party organization. They did not detect until too late the evolution that was transforming the Soviet Union from an unstable revolutionary government into an organization with its own inherent bureaucracy. Stalin's power was not derived from his revolutionary heroism or from a dynamic personality coupled with an immense popularity; but from his control of the many centralized functions and powers of the party apparatus.

"It is impossible to understand Stalin and his later-day success without understanding the mainspring of his personality: love of power, ambition, envy--active, never slumbering envy of all who are more gifted, more powerful, rank higher than he."¹ This unexcelled envy and ambition are the essence of Stalin.

"There is no doubt that in routine work it was more con-

venient for Lenin to depend on Stalin..."² This was the attitude of the men around Stalin. They were glad to let him take care of the daily and un-interesting work of the party, for they were too taken up by intellectual and ideological matters to be interested in these seemingly petty details. 3

Stalin's power was based in five positions that he came to hold before the death of Lenin in 1924. He was General Secretary of the Secretariat of the Central Committee and a member of both the Political Bureau(Politburo)and the Organizational Bureau(Orgburo). Simultaneously he was the head of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspectorate(Rabkrin) and Commissar of the Nationalities.

Stalin was a charter member of both the Politburo and the Orgburo, which were first organized in 1917. The Politburo was the main policy making body of the party and the Orgburo was in charge of the organizational details of party work. Almost immediately Stalin was placed in charge of the daily operations of both these bodies. He was, in short, the only permanent liaison man between these two bodies.

In April 1922, Stalin was elected General Secretary (head of the Secretariat) of the newly organized Secretariat of the Central Committee. The duties of the Secretariat were first defined to be purely organizational and administrative. The Secretariat was primarily intended to co-ordinate the work between the Politburo and the Orgburo. It was also responsible for organizing and documenting the agenda for each Politburo meeting. And, once a decision was made, the Secretariat was responsible for transmitting it to the lower party organizations. More important, perhaps, the appointive powers of the Politburo were placed in the hands of the Secretariat; thus whoever con-

trolled the Secretariat would be able to build up a loyal party following which through further elections could eventually give him control of the Central Committee and the Politburo. On a lesser scale, the Central Control Commission, guardian of party morales and conductor of purges, was placed under the control of the Secretariat. This gave the Secretariat administrative control of the purges.

After Stalin became a member, of the Orgburo, whose duties involved directing the organizational work of the party, was deactivated by Stalin. The Secretariat took over the duties of the Orgburo, mainly because Stalin was able to dominate the Orgburo and phase it out of existence as a working body.

In 1919 Stalin was elected Commissar of Rabkrin, one of Lenin's favorite projects. Rabkrin was to control the rickety and inefficient bureaucracy of the Soviet Government. It was to act as auditor of every action and was to keep a sharp watch for corruption and inefficiency. At the same time, Rabkrin was supposed to train an elite group of managers and bureaucrats.

Stalin's other major source of power was his position as Commissar of the Nationalities. This organization was responsible for governing the many territories outside the RSFSR, which make up over half the population of the Soviet Union. Stalin was thus able to establish a loyal following in these areas that would serve him well in his struggle for power.

Lenin's First Stroke May 26, 1922

Scarcely a month after Stalin was elected General Secretary, Lenin suffered his first stroke which eventually led to his death in January 1924. Trotsky characterized Lenin's illness as "...the sort that might come to a tragic end at

any moment."³ But Lenin recovered his strength during the summer of 1922 and again took an active part in the government in the fall. Late in December 1922, however, Lenin suffered a second stroke which left him partially paralyzed and ended his active participation in the government.

Georgian Crisis and the Break with Lenin

During the summer of 1922, following his first stroke, two major problems occupied Lenin's time and energy. First, he was concerned with the rash policy that Stalin had taken in the Georgian problem. Second, Lenin was worried about the growing power and influence that the bureaucracy wielded in the party.

Georgia, the last non-Russian territory to be incorporated into the Soviet Union, was a Menshevik stronghold and was ruled by a coalition government. In a conciliatory mood, Lenin recognized the coalition regime but then sent Sergei Kirov to organize the Georgian Bolsheviks. Stalin, less patient than Lenin, sent an army into Georgia to destroy the coalition regime and crush the Mensheviks in February 1921. Lenin then urged Stalin to deal gently with the remaining Mensheviks and other opposition. Stalin, nevertheless, discarded the advice of Lenin and began a purge of the opposition elements in Georgia. Lenin finally realized the gravity of the situation when the entire Central Committee of the Georgian party resigned in October 1922 in protest against Stalin's policy.⁴

Stalin's treatment of the Georgian situation and his increasing rashness elsewhere persuaded Lenin that it was necessary to limit Stalin's expanding powers. On December 30-31, 1922, Lenin dictated a bitter attack on Stalin's policy in

Georgia and his role in Rabkrin. Only five days earlier Lenin had dictated his Testament, which only mildly criticized Stalin. On January 4, 1923, however Lenin, greatly disturbed by Stalin's actions, dictated his Postscript to the Testament, bitterly attacking Stalin's rash crudity and proposing that Stalin be removed from the Secretariat.

Stalin is too rude, and this fault, entirely supportable in relations among us Communists, becomes insupportable in the office of General Secretary. Therefore I propose to the comrades to find a way to remove Stalin from that position...⁴

Fortunately, though, for Stalin, this and other critical statements by Lenin were made known only to a few high officials, since an order from Lenin to depose Stalin, had it become widely known, would in all probability be carried out. Stalin's break with Lenin became complete in March 1923 when Lenin sent Stalin a letter notifying him that all "comradely relations" were broken. On March 9, 1923 Lenin suffered his most disastrous stroke--one that made it impossible for him even to follow the developments from his bed. This again was very fortunate for Stalin, for as one of Lenin's secretaries said, "Vladimir Ilyich is preparing a bomb for Stalin at the congress."⁵ (Twelfth Party Congress-April 1923). This "bomb" was to be a complete denunciation and a demand for Stalin's removal.

The Triumvirate Is Formed

By January 1923, after Lenin had ceased to take an active part in the Politburo affairs and the hope of his return diminished, a Triumvirate of Grigorii Evgenevich Zinoviev, Lev Borisovich Kamenev, and Joseph Stalin was formed.⁶ The major reason for the Triumvirate's formation was its hope to thwart any attempt by Trotsky to seize Lenin's position as leader of

the party. It was essentially this fear of Trotsky that held the Triumvirate together. Trotsky was feared because he was the popularly held successor to Lenin's position and his immense popularity as a revolutionary leader gave him a large following in the party.

The basis of Stalin's power has already been noted. Zinoviev derived his power from his three important posts. He was a member of the Politburo and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Communist International (Comintern). He was also head of the Leningrad party apparatus. Kamenev derived his power and importance from his membership in the Politburo and his position as head of the Moscow party apparatus.

The Twelfth Party Congress April 1923

The Twelfth Party Congress met between 17 and 25 April 1923 and was the first congress not attended by Lenin (excepting the first and sixth). In his speech before the congress, Stalin was able to deflect much of Lenin's criticism of his role in Rabkrin and his policy in Georgia. Stalin also managed to win approval of a plan to enlarge the powers of the Central Control Commission in the provincial and local party organs. This greatly increased Stalin's policing powers.

Trotsky, though charged by Lenin to defend the Georgians, said nothing. Probably the majority that the Triumvirate commanded at the congress inhibited Trotsky, for Trotsky felt that any action taken independently of Lenin "...would be interpreted, or, to be more exact, represented as my personal fight for Lenin's place in the party and the state. The very thought of this (a personal fight for Lenin's place) made me shudder."

The importance of this congress lay in the enlargement

of the Central Committee (as suggested by Lenin) to forty members and nineteen candidate members, and the simultaneous enlargement of the Central Control Commission to fifty members.⁹ This provided Stalin with numerous places with which to reward his faithful followers. The congress also marked the emergence of Stalin as the real senior member of the Triumvirate. The threat of an attack by Trotsky on Lenin's behalf against Stalin failed to materialize, and Trotsky's failure to gather any real organized opposition around him weakened his potential strength.

Trotsky and the Declaration of the Forty-Six Fall 1923

General unrest, caused by the so-called "scissors" crisis in the economy, swept through the country in the fall of 1923. Even in the party itself, there was increased criticism of the lack of party democracy and the failure of the leadership to deal with the economic crisis.¹⁰ This unrest culminated in a letter from Trotsky to the Politburo protesting against the lack of party democracy and the over centralized powers of the Secretariat.¹¹ A week later forty-six prominent Bolsheviki issued the "Declaration of the Forty-Six" which protested against the miserable conditions in the party and the leadership's failure to solve the economic crisis. The Triumvirate was careful in dealing with these two opposition groups (one representing the Trotsky opposition; second-representing the opposition of the forty-six) not to drive them together in some sort of, united opposition. At the end of October 1923, in a joint meeting of the Central Committee and the Central Control Com-

*The name given to the opposition that formed around Trotsky.

mission, Stalin, confident of his majority, succeeded in passing a resolution condemning both opposition groups as "factional". Stalin, however, bowed to the necessity of making some concession to the unrest by whole-heartedly supporting a resolution renewing party democracy.¹²

The "New Course" and the Thirteenth Party Conference

Trotsky re-opened his criticism of the Triumvirate on December 8, 1923, when he published an open letter to the party, entitled the "New Course". With phrases such as: "the bureaucratism of the apparatus is precisely one of the principal sources of factionalism..."¹³ and "the party must subordinate to itself its own apparatus..."¹⁴, Trotsky sounded the rallying cry for all the opposition groups. This letter caused such a furor in the party that the Triumvirate felt the necessity of issuing a strong rebuff to Trotsky. The rebuff came at the Thirteenth Party Conference* on January 21, 1924, at which the Trotsky opposition was not well represented and Trotsky not even present. Stalin pressed home his attack by listing six errors Trotsky had committed. Included in the list was the "New Course" article and Trotsky's failure to keep party discipline.

The importance of the Thirteenth Party Conference is that for the first time personalities and not issues had come into direct conflict. Also, Trotsky's continued failure to answer the criticisms of his "New Course" demoralized his following. Furthermore, he made no effort to encourage the formation of an organized opposition, thus defeating his main asset-popularity. It should be noted, at this point, that Trotsky stood vir-

*A conference is a pre-congress meeting to discuss and decide upon the agenda for the congress.

tually alone and isolated in his struggle against the Triumvirate because his close friends and supporters had been (through the Secretariat's appointive powers) sent to posts outside Moscow. Christian Rakovsky, a close friend of Trotsky and head of the important Ukrainian party, was appointed minister to London, while others were sent to Germany, France, and provincial posts.¹⁵

Lenin's Death January 21, 1924

Three days after the close of the Thirteenth Party Conference Lenin died at Gorky. He was laid to rest amidst great ceremony in a permanent mausoleum built beside the walls of the Kremlin. Trotsky, however, was conspicuously absent from the funeral, at a time when he could hardly afford to disappoint his followers. (Trotsky had asked Stalin whether or not he could return to Moscow in time for the funeral and Stalin had said that he could not, even though he would have had sufficient time.) Stalin, meanwhile, made quite an impression at the ceremony with his rather striking funeral oration.¹⁶

The Thirteenth Party Congress May 1924

Following Lenin's death the portals of the party were opened to the "Lenin enrollment". This enrollment of new members was, in part, an excuse for a purge ^{of} ~~against~~ the Trotsky opposition.¹⁷ Also the new members would be easier to control than the older members and the Triumvirate wanted to swamp the older members with the new members and weaken their influence.

On May 22, 1925 the problem posed by Lenin's Testament and Postscript was solved in a plenum of the Central Committee.

Zinoviev saved Stalin the extreme, and most probably disastrous, embarrassment of having the two documents ^{read} to the whole congress. Zinoviev pointed out that Lenin's prophecy had not proven to be true, as everyone could well see, and that the release of these documents would only cause an unnecessary stir in the party. ¹⁸ Trotsky was present, but again failed to take the initiative.

The Thirteenth Party Congress met the next day. The Trotsky opposition found themselves in an even worse position than at the Thirteenth Party Conference, for Trotsky (probably because Stalin applied organizational pressure to exclude him) was not even a voting delegate. Zinoviev opened the congress by bitterly attacking Trotsky and finally calling for him to recant his errors before the party. Although Stalin showed greater restraint than Zinoviev, he did castigate the Trotsky opposition thoroughly. In short, "the congress turned into an ¹⁹ orgy of denunciation."

The other occurrence of import was the expansion of the ²⁰ Central Control Commission from fifty to one-hundred members. This expansion again gave Stalin many more places in which to place his faithful followers, and at the same time increased his strength in the plenums of the Central Committee because the Central Control Commission and the Central Committee met in joint sessions at this time. The congress as a whole was marked by the increased attacks on the Trotsky opposition and the increase in Stalin's power.

Lessons of October November 1924

The summer of 1924 was a quiet one punctuated only by

little pinpricks from various quarters. Trotsky remained very quiet, publishing only one article and refusing to join battle with Zinoviev at the Fifth Congress of Comintern. Stalin, likewise, was silent, although he did criticize Zinoviev quite clearly on several administrative matters.²¹ This criticism may be discounted as an indication of a break in the Triumvirate because open criticism on party organizational matters, at this time, was still quite free and open.

During the first week of November 1924 (some evidence indicates an earlier date in October), however, Trotsky's "Lessons of October" was published. In this article Trotsky renewed the old "strike-breaker" charges against Zinoviev and Kamenev. (They had opposed the decision to seize power in October 1917.) This aroused Zinoviev and Kamenev to great anger and caused a great stir in the party. The attack brought an immediate avalanche of degradation and insult from the Triumvirate on Trotsky. The Triumvirs disinterred old letters from Trotsky to Lenin in which Trotsky openly criticized Lenin.²³ Another measure used by the Triumvirate to discredit Trotsky was the publishing of an "official" history of the revolution that greatly played down the role of Zinoviev and Kamenev as "strike-breakers".²⁴

The importance of the "Lessons of October", perhaps, lies in the fact that in attacking Zinoviev and Kamenev, Trotsky weakened their position vis a vis Stalin and thereby strengthened his. Again, as in the fall of 1923, Trotsky did not answer any of the criticism heaped upon him and this further weakened

any chance he had of founding a real opposition. Stalin seemed to stand above all this petty squabbling and this also doubtlessly enhanced his position in the eyes of the party.

Finally, at the January 1925, plenum of the Central Committee, Trotsky was dismissed from his post as Commissar of War. But as Trotsky himself said about the removal, "the renewal of personnel in the war department had...been going on at full speed behind my back, and now it was simply a matter of observing the proprieties."²⁵ This dismissal from the War Commissariat marked the distinct decline in the position of Trotsky and the beginning of the crumbling of the Triumvirate. It is clear that Stalin understood this because he blocked a move by Zinoviev and the Leningrad delegates at the January plenum to expell Trotsky from the party because Stalin wanted more time to consolidate his supporters in the party.

The Triumvirate Crumbles

With the decline of Trotsky, the Triumvirate crumbled almost immediately. Stalin moved to undermine the power basis of Kamenev and Zinoviev. N.A. Uglanov, appointed Secretary in Moscow by Zinoviev and Kamenev to clean up the corruption, transferred his allegiance and the Moscow party organization to Stalin.²⁶ Thus, Kamenev lost his main source of power and sank to an extremely weak position among the rivals. Stalin continued his efforts to consolidate his position in Moscow where he carried out an extensive purge of Kamenev's followers. Elsewhere Stalin gained control of several provincial party organizations--notably the Ukraine, placing Lazar Kaganovich in charge there.²⁷ During the late fall of 1925 and early 1926 Stalin

undermined Zinoviev's hold on the Leningrad party organization, his chief source of power.

Fourteenth Party Conference April 1925

Many new concessions were made to the peasants at the Fourteenth Party Conference in April 1925. Stalin justified these concessions by saying that Russian communism could not succeed without the support of the peasants. No real opposition was encountered to these concessions, though they were in contradiction to those advocated by Zinoviev, but, perhaps, he was not yet prepared to oppose Stalin. These new peasant concessions were motivated by Stalin's attempts to gain the support of Bukharin, Tomsky, and Rykov in the Politburo. Nikolai I. Bukharin was the party's leading theoretician and a member of the Politburo. He was also editor of Pravda, the party newspaper. Mikhail P. Tomsky was head of the influential Trade Unions and a member of the Politburo. Alexei I. Rykov was chairman of the Peoples' Commissars (Council of Ministers) and also a member of the Politburo. Thus, with the support of these three men Stalin was able to maintain a working control of the Politburo and prevent Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Trotsky from acting against him.

The Fourteenth Party Congress

Little of import occurred between the Fourteenth Party Conference and the congress. Zinoviev and Kamenev were definitely opposed to the new peasant policy of Stalin and his new supporters, Bukharin, Tomsky, and Rykov. Zinoviev did produce a theoretical article criticizing the peasant policy as being unorthodox. Simultaneously the Leningrad party paper carried on

a campaign against the Stalinist policy.

The Fourteenth Party Congress was convened on December 18, 1925. Stalin delivered the opening address. Bukharin opened the debate by criticizing the Left opposition* for opposing the majority in the Central Committee and taunted them for failing to provide any alternate program for the problems plaguing the country. Bukharin ended his speech with a call to Zinoviev to recant his errors (opposingg the party line) before the party.²⁸ Kamenev made the most effective contribution to the Left opposition's cause. He said what was doubtlessly on many, peoples' minds by attacking Stalin's peasant policy and openly calling for his removal. Amidst many interruptions he said, "We (the Left opposition) are against creating a theory of the 'Duce', we are against creating a 'Duce'."²⁹ And "I have arrived at the conclusion at the conviction that Comrade Stalin can not fulfill the role of the unifier of the Bolshevik staff."³⁰ Tomsky answered Kamenev's criticisms by commenting that it was the Central Committee which supports Stalin, and he concluded by calling upon Zinoviev and Kamenev to "bow your heads to the will of the party."³¹ The Left opposition was heavily out-voted and could not affect any of their proposals.

Several personnel changes resulted from the congress. Zinoviev remained in the Politburo, while Kamenev was demoted to candidate membership. Three of Stalin's lieutenants (Molotov, Kalinin, and Voroshilov) were added to the Politburo to enlarge it to nine members. The Central Committee was again enlarged to sixty-three and the Central Control Commission

*Name given to opposition that was forming around Zinoviev and Kamenev.

was expanded to one-hundred and sixty-three. As before, these new positions were filled with Stalin's men. Stalin was clearly in command of the party and the further discrediting of the Left opposition enhanced his position immensely.

Leningrad Falls To Stalin

February 1926

During the middle of the Fourteenth Party Congress, the party paper of the Leningrad party organization was purged by Stalin's supporters and new men placed in charge. Thus, Stalin gained control of the major communications and propaganda center of the Left opposition and of Zinoviev. Shortly after the end of the Fourteenth Party Congress a commission headed by Sergei Kirov, one of Stalin's proteges, went to Leningrad ostensibly to inform the party members of what had taken place at the recent congress. But the real job of the commission was to oust Zinoviev from his position and install a man favourable to Stalin. During a month of speaking tours the commission spoke to thousands of workers' meetings, and gave them the Stalinist party line. Early in February 1926, when the provincial elections were held, Zinoviev and his supporters in the Leningrad party apparatus were ousted from their positions. Zinoviev was thus left with only his Politburo position as a source of power.

The United Opposition

After his defeat in Leningrad, Zinoviev joined in a United Opposition* with Kamenev and their bitter enemy, Trotsky. This opposition was born in defeat and was doomed to defeat. Trotsky

*The name given opposition forming around Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Trotsky.

made concessions to Zinoviev and Kamenev on several economic points and Zinoviev and Kamenev forgave Trotsky for his several criticisms in the "Lessons of October".

Stalin, as in the past, applied immediate organizational measures to destroy the new opposition. The last Zinovievite in the Secretariat (Grigorii E. Evdokimov) was dismissed "at his own request" and replaced by Nikolai Shvernik, a staunch Stalinist. At the July 1926 plenum of the Central Committee, Zinoviev was removed from the Politburo, ostensibly for using the Comintern Executive Committee against Stalin, though the real reason was simply that he had opposed Stalin. At the same meeting the Politburo candidate membership was enlarged to eight by the addition of several staunch Stalinists to the incumbents.³⁴ For the remainder of the summer of 1926 the United Opposition worked to rally support to its banner.³⁵ After staging several demonstrations in October 1926 (which amazed the United Oppositionists and the Stalinists with their boldness) the United Opposition agreed, on October 16, 1926, to submit to party discipline for their untoward actions (mentioned above) in an effort to avoid a complete break with the party. This very compromise weakened their cause because, in submitting to party discipline, the United Opposition was admitting the superiority of the Stalinists.

Stalin did not stop his attack on the United Opposition, and in a Central Committee plenum the opposition suffered another defeat and a stern warning. Zinoviev was dismissed from the Comintern and Trotsky was expelled from the Politburo. Stalin then called for a permanent end to their struggles

and not just a truce. The Fifteenth Party Conference met from October 26 to November 3, 1926 and was attended by 194 hand-picked delegates. Stalin attacked the United Opposition by quoting Lenin on Trotsky, Trotsky on Lenin, Trotsky on Zinoviev and Kamenev, and Zinoviev and Kamenev on Trotsky. The opposition was not able to speak in defence and its views were presented to the delegates by Stalin.

The main subject of debate was Stalin's theory of "socialism in one country". This ideological question of whether it was possible to establish socialism in one country independent of other communist movements or whether it was necessary to promulgate a "permanent revolution" in other countries in order to survive was the theoretical conflict that was to mark this whole era. Stalin had formulated his theory of "socialism in one country" during the anti-Trotsky struggle of 1924.³⁶ In February 1926, Stalin published a pamphlet entitled, "Socialism in One Country". In a short time it became the guiding principle of the party line. The theory was originally a counter to Trotsky's "permanent revolution", which was formulated in 1905. This theory stated that Russian communism could not succeed unless the revolution was continued throughout Europe, and that only with world revolution would Communism be safe anywhere.

These two ideas were an integral part of the struggle for power. Stalin's theory obviously called for a stabilization of the government and the construction of a society without the world revolution that Trotsky insisted upon; whereas Trotsky's theory would have required the aggressive promulga-

tion of the revolution throughout Europe and the world, and hence would pose an inherent threat to the safety of the Russian communism.

The Final Defeat of the United Opposition

The final defeat of the United Opposition came in 1927, when the opposition tried to discredit and un-seat Stalin by blaming him for the failure of the Chinese Communist movement. But this failed and the United Opposition was forced to take to the streets to present their views and rally support. Trotsky, however, made a bad mistake when he published his "Clemenceau Thesis". This mistake in the midst of a war scare was enough to label the United Oppositionists as 'Bonapartists' and totally discredit them. After a final desperate round of mass demonstrations wore Stalin's patience thin, Trotsky and Zinoviev were expelled from the party by a Central Committee plenum in November 1927. The Fifteenth Party Congress, convened in December, finished the vilification of the United Opposition. A resolution expelling seventy-five top leaders of the opposition from the party was accepted unanimously and the United Opposition ceased to exist. Stalin, from this point to his death, was the un-challenged ruler of the party and, eventually, the state, too.

The Right Opposition

1928-1929

With the final destruction of the United Opposition, another opposition, the Right opposition, formed in protest against the economic policies of Stalin. The Right opposition felt that Stalin would carry out their policy of slow industrialization financed by increased production in agriculture

prompted by more concessions to the peasants. The first months of 1928 passed quietly in the party. The origins of the break between Stalin and the Right opposition* became evident at the joint plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission in April 1928. The topic of this plenum was the decline in grain production in the past year. The kulaks were accused of combining with the Nepmen to break the governments' system of price controls. Thus it was agreed to carry out a campaign of repression against the kulaks. These measures were directly opposed to the program of the Right opposition. Stalin added that he felt that only through collectivization could the problem finally be solved.

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The Left opposition had been accused of wanting too rapid an industrialization and prohibiting an alliance between the peasants and the workers. But now the Right opposition would be accused of inhibiting the rapid industrialization of the economy and encouraging the growth of the kulaks. In July 1928, at a Central Committee plenum Stalin announced a new program of large state farms to increase food production, and yet he demanded that this was not a retreat from the NEP and that it would continue.

Bukharin published his "Notes of an Economist" in September 1928. In this article Bukharin said that agriculture and industry could be developed simultaneously by allowing the peasant to continue his individual holdings and by solving the

* The name given to the opposition formed around the leaders Bukharin, Tomsky, and Rykov.

the deficit in consumer goods. He ended his article with a warning that agriculture must not be debased to increase the output of the industrial complex.³⁸

The center of the Right opposition was in Moscow. Stalin took immediate organizational measures (removal from posts) against the opposition leaders in Moscow. Three of the most important subordinates of Uglanov, the Moscow party secretary and one-time Stalinist, were removed in October 1928, although Uglanov was allowed to remain in power.³⁹ Also in October Stalin spoke openly of a right wing danger in the Moscow party organization and at the same time declared that there was no dissension in the Politburo. Bukharin and Tomsky tried to force a change in the party leadership in early November 1928.⁴⁰ Stalin, wishing to maintain a public unity, acceded to these demands, but did nothing to implement them. He doubtlessly could have rejected the demands and had Bukharin and Tomsky expelled from the party but he probably wished to wring a public denunciation of their views.

At the November plenum of the Central Committee Stalin attacked the Right opposition, though he denied the existence of any split in the Politburo, and he further added that he hoped for a reconciliation with the Right. The Right opposition lost their chance to gain support for themselves when (in the name of party unity) they did not openly oppose Stalin. Stalin meanwhile, pushed forward with his plan of rapid industrialization. He planned to finance this program with a complex system of hidden taxes, confiscations, planned inflation, compulsory

state loans, low wages, and food rationing. This plan included a planned famine in the countryside and a scarcity of goods in the cities.

Stalin openly attacked Bukharin by name for secret factional negotiations at a plenum of the Central Committee in February 1929. He equated the Right opposition with the Trotsky opposition. On April 22, 1929 Stalin attacked Bukharin before a joint plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission. The next day Bukharin was removed from the chairmanship of Comintern, a position he had occupied since Zinoviev's downfall. Finally in November 1929, Bukharin was expelled from the Politburo, while Tomsy and Rykov were given temporary reprieves. Tomsy lost his Trades Union position in June 1929 and in July 1930 he was expelled from the Politburo. Likewise Rykov lost both his chairmanship of the Council of Peoples' Commissars and his position in the Politburo at the Sixteenth Party Congress.

Meanwhile Stalin's first Five-Year Plan had been approved by the Sixteenth Party Conference in April 1929, and the kulaks were being exterminated as a class. Stalin was master of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER II

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CHAPTER III

Introduction

In 1953 Stalin was at the pinnacle of his power after ruling the Soviet **Union** for twenty-four years. His power rested on a pyramid-like organization with himself and his private Secretariat at the top. The three legs were made up of the party apparatus, the state bureaucracy, and the secret police and security forces. Though his private Secretariat Stalin ran the whole government and all the other activities of the Soviet Union. He held two positions which came to be symbolic of the supreme power he wielded. He was General Secretariat of the Central Committee and Chairman of the Council of Ministers. From his dominant position he was able to play the conflicting elements (the party apparatus, the state bureaucracy, and the secret and security police) against each other so that no one of them could gain enough power and independence to depose him.

During the later years of Stalin's rule the party suffered a serious and clear decline in influence and vitality. The party lost its old revolutionary fervor and ideological zeal through the demoralization of the Great Purge and Stalin's role, and the result was ideological stagnation and bureaucratization.

In parallel development the state bureaucracy gained

in power and stature as the party delined during the last years of Stalin's rule. This organization was originally Stalin's counter-weight to the power of the party organization. It is probable to assume that Stalin, through personal knowledge of the party's power, was afraid that it might provide the path for another Stalin to rise (under the intense pressure of the vast changes that Stalin carried out by force on the Soviet Union).

The third leg of the power pyramid, the secret and security police, was a necessary part of the Stalinist regime because it was a useful tool for maintaining his control of the party and state bureaucracy, and also, for forcing his changes on the reluctant population. Through the police forces Stalin maintained a continual "reign of terror" for twenty-four years; thus assuring the pliability of both the population and his lieutenants.

When Stalin died quite suddenly in March 1953, there were five men who were considered contenders for Stalin's position. They were: Malenkov, Molotov, Beria, Bulganin, and Khrushchev.

Georgi Maximilianovich Malenkov began his high party career in 1925 as a member of Stalin's Secretariat. From 1930 to 1934 he was the Organizing Secretary of the Moscow City Party. In 1934 he was appointed head of the Personnel Department of the Central Committee and supervised the activities of party officials and local party organizations. He continued this supervision after he became Secretary of the Central Committee in 1939. After the war he became Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers. At Stalin's death Malenkov was a member of the Pre-

sidium, a Secretary of the Central Committee, and Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers.

Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov personified the union of the party and state organizations. Before embarking on his foreign affairs career he had been Secretary of the Ukrainian party and subsequently a Secretary of the Moscow party organization. In 1930 he was named Chairman of the Council of Peoples' Commissars (Council of Ministers). He remained in this post until 1941. In 1939 he was named Minister of Foreign Affairs. In 1953 he was a member of the Presidium, and Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers. In 1949 he had given up his post as Foreign Minister.

Lavrenti Pavlovich Beria represented the secret police at the highest party level. From 1921 to 1931 he worked in the state security forces in Azerbaidjan and then in Georgia. From 1938 to 1946 he was the Peoples' Commissar (Minister) for Internal Affairs and State Security. In 1946 he lost his police job and became Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers and reportedly in charge of nuclear weapon production and he remained in these positions until 1953.

Nikolai Alexandrovich Bulganin had the most diversified career of any of the contenders. From 1931 to 1937 he was Chairman of the Moscow Soviet, and from 1938 to 1941 he was Deputy Chairman of the Council of Peoples' Commissars and at the same time Director of the State Bank of the USSR. During the war he was on several war councils and from 1947 to 1949 he was Minister of Defence. In 1953 he was a member of the Presidium and Vice-Chairman of the Council of Ministers.

Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev worked almost entirely as a party official. From 1935 to 1938 he was Secretary of the Moscow party organization. In 1938 he became the First Secretary of the Ukrainian Communist party and during the same year he was made a ~~candidate-member~~ of the Politburo. In 1939 he became a full member of the Politburo at the end of the Eighteenth Party Congress. During the war he was a political worker and a member of the War Council in the Kiev district. After the war he was again in charge of the Ukrainian party until 1949 when he ^{was} re-appointed to the Moscow party and at the same time he became a member of the Central Committee Secretariat and the Orgburo. In 1951 his main field of concentration changed from agriculture to organizational work in the Secretariat. This change later was crucial to his rise to power. In 1953 he was a member of the Presidium and a Secretary of the Central Committee and First Secretary of the Moscow Party organization.

Stalin's Death and the Reorganization of the Government March 1953

When Stalin died on March 5, 1953 his heirs immediately set about to rearrange the top posts so that they would maintain an appearance of continuity and confidence in the government. The Presidium was reduced from twenty-five members to ten. The Presidium members were now: (as published) Malenkov, Beria, Molotov, Voroshilov, Khrushchev, Bulganin, Kaganovich, Mikoyan, Pervukhin, and Saburov.

Malenkov was made Chairman of the Council of Ministers and also the leading member of the Secretariat. His position in the Secretariat was further strengthened by the addition to



to this body of N.N. Shatalin, a long time supporter of Malenkov. Thus Malenkov combined these two symbolic posts in his one person as Stalin had. This made him the leading member of the contenders.

Beria was given control of both the secret police and security forces, which greatly enhanced his position. Molotov was made Minister of Foreign Affairs. Bulganin was made Minister of Defence. Khrushchev was to remain in the Secretariat to "concentrate" on party organizational affairs.

Just seven days after the original reorganization was announced, new changes were made. Malenkov, "at his own request" was removed from the Secretariat of the Central Committee. Doubtlessly he was either given a choice of which one of two positions (Secretary and Chairman of the Council of Ministers) he wished to relinquish, or he was informed by the other leaders that he was to give up his post in the Secretariat. This move, doubtlessly motivated by a fear that Malenkov would be able to establish himself as Stalin's successor immediately, restored the idea of "collegial" leadership and made it impossible for anyone man to emerge on top at this early point in the struggle (excepting the possibility of armed struggle). The new list of Secretariat members was led by Khrushchev; thus indicating that he was the senior member of the Secretariat, although Khrushchev did not receive official recognition of his senior position until September 1953.

With the changes announced on March 14, 1953, three distinct leaders came to the fore. Malenkov represented the state bureaucracy; Beria represented the secret and security police; and

Khrushchev came to represent the party organization, (It is important to note that Khrushchev was not immediately the outstanding leader of the party organization, but stayed in the background, publicly at least, until after Beria's fall).

The Fall of Beria

Beria loomed among the "collective" leadership as a major threat to the others. His control of the security forces posed the only armed threat to the other contenders (this power was demonstrated by the siege-like state that his security forces held Moscow in for days after Stalin's death). Beria realized that he must divorce himself from the sinister connections that the secret police had with the Stalinist era. He carried out a liberalization policy in the satellites in Eastern Europe and openly favored an international settlement of the "cold war".¹ He extended his power in the Ukraine by exploiting "Russifying" charges against party officials there.²

With the eruption of the workers revolt in Germany in June 1953, the danger of Beria's policies became apparent and he was arrested in July 1953 and executed in December 1953. He was arrested ostensibly on the grounds that he had used the security forces to undermine the party and government and that he had hindered several agricultural decisions.³ But in reality he was arrested because he was the most dangerous threat to the contenders in the collegial leadership.

The effects of the downfall of Beria on the struggle for power were simply that one of the three major contenders for power had been eliminated. Henceforth the struggle was to be

between the men representing the party organization and the state bureaucracy. Beria's successor as head of the Ministry of the Interior was not a member of the Presidium as Beria had been. This clearly testified to the decline of the influence of the secret police.

The "New Course" and Its Impact August 1953

On August 8, 1953, Malenkov, Chairman of the Council of Ministers, announced his "New Course" before the Supreme Soviet. This new program involved a much greater emphasis on consumer goods and concessions for the peasants to increase productivity. The concessions to the peasants included a reduction in taxes, relaxation of controls on individual plots, and decreased quotas on animal deliveries.⁴ The fact that the "New Course" was announced before the Supreme Soviet and was not discussed by the Central Committee immediately indicates that it was a policy measure of the state bureaucracy.⁵ This marked the first major effort by the state bureaucracy to make policy. Essentially Malenkov was trying to establish the supremacy of the state bureaucracy over the party as a policy maker. Thus the success or failure of the "New Course" was an integral and important part of the struggle between the state bureaucracy and Malenkov and the party apparatus and Khrushchev.

In September 1953, at a plenum of the Central Committee, Khrushchev, who became First Secretary at this plenum, announced a new series of agricultural reforms. He openly admitted to the

*I prefer this term because it better indicates the breadth of what has been called "consumerism".

inefficiencies and short comings of the agricultural program and proposed several changes. Generally these were directed toward more efficient use of men and materials, but one reform (the appointment of district party secretaries to MTS (Machine and Tractor Stations) zones to supervise the zones' economic and political activities) was of real significance as it was a clear gain for the territorial party organizations influence and, doubtlessly, drew them closer in support of Khrushchev. The real importance of the September plenum, however, lies in the re-assertion of the party's role as the chief policy making body and also the emergence of Khrushchev as the First Secretary. Khrushchev made a pointed effort not to commit himself to the consumer products development. The fact that this new policy was not discussed at all is an important indication of the party's attitude towards it.

The Failure of the "New Course"

The "New Course" ran into almost immediate difficulties in fulfilling its goals. The grain crop of 1953 was disastrously low and other areas of the agricultural program had also failed. There were also problems in the consumer goods program. The state bureaucracy had failed to react to the new requirements of the program, partly because twenty years of continuous emphasis on heavy industry had left the bureaucracy powerless to deal with the new technical demands.

In February 1954, at a plenum of the Central Committee Khrushchev announced his "Virgin Lands" program--in an effort to restore Soviet agricultural output to the proper levels. This program entailed the enlargement of the cultivated lands by farming immense new tracts of land in Kazakhstan, Siberia,

and Northern Caucasus. In his speech Khrushchev openly criticized the Council of Ministers and announced new changes in the territorial party organization that further strengthened them.⁷ Thus the February plenum, like the September 1953 plenum, was another assertion of the party's leading role as a policy making body. Also this plenum marked the emergence of Khrushchev as the party's spokesman and leader.

Ironically enough the "Virgin Lands" program actually made it much more difficult for the "New Course" to succeed because the expanded agricultural program, although absolutely necessary, involved the commitment of thousands of new tractors and other farm equipment and the diversion of great masses of people back to the land.

When the fiasco of the "New Course" became readily apparent, two factions appeared. The first faction, representing the state bureaucracy, included Malenkov, Mikoyan, and I. Benediktov, the Minister of Agriculture, were committed to salvaging the "New Course". The second faction, representing the party apparatus, included Khrushchev, Bulganin, Zhukov, the Deputy Minister of Defence, and Saburov, an economic planner, and wished to return to the traditional emphasis on heavy industry.

The Malenkov faction remained strong enough through the spring of 1954 to edit a speech made by Khrushchev before a workers meeting in July 1954. The turning point in the struggle seemed to be indicated on August 17, 1954, when the order of the names of the state and party in all publications were re-

versed. Before this time the name, "Council of Ministers" had always come before the name, "Central Committee", but on this day the order was reversed and this practice continues to the present day. This little point of protocol accurately reflected the shift in power from the state bureaucracy to party apparatus. The publicizing that had gone on continuously since the "New Course" was announced dropped off sharply during the fall of 1954. A trip to China in October 1954 also displayed even further the decline in the position of Malenkov. He did not go on the trip and, furthermore, the commitments that the delegates, Khrushchev, Mikoyan, and Bulganin, made to the Chinese indicated further emphasis on heavy industry.

Finally, in February 1955, in the presence of the party Presidium at a meeting of the Supreme Soviet, Malenkov's letter of resignation was read. In his resignation he admitted errors in the state bureaucracy and openly declared the supremacy of the party. The final defeat of Malenkov and the success of the "Virgin Lands" program successfully reasserted the supremacy of the party as a policy making body. Not only was this a victory for the party, but also it was a victory for Khrushchev because he was now clearly the leader of the party and the leading contender for power. (His stature in the Secretariat was improved immensely with the removal of N.N. Shatalin, a Malenkov supporter, from the Secretariat in February 1955). At the same meeting Nikolai Bulganin, nominated by Khrushchev, was elected Chairman of the Council of Ministers. Marshal Zhukov was promoted to replace Bulganin as Minister of Defence.

Bulganin Reorganizes the Government

The downfall of Malenkov and the election of Bulganin as Chairman of the Council of Ministers marked the end of one party-state conflict and the beginning of another. This conflict was not as equally matched a struggle because the party was now much stronger than at the death of Stalin. Bulganin immediately set about to strengthen the state bureaucracy by a series of self-initiated reforms to aid in the planning and administration of the economy. The initiation of these reforms by the state bureaucracy indicated not only that they felt the need for the reforms, but also that they themselves wanted to carry them out to avoid any personal loss of power.

On March 1 1955, personnel changes in the state bureaucracy were announced. Mikoyan, Pervukhin, and Saburov were promoted to First Deputy Prime Ministers. Four other top economic leaders were made Deputy Prime Ministers. The Presidium of the Council of Ministers was enlarged to fourteen members including: Chairman Bulganin; First Deputy Prime Ministers, Kaganovich, Mikoyan, Molotov, Pervukhin, and Saburov; and Deputy Prime Ministers, Malenkov, Malyshev, Kosygin, Tevosyan, Kuucherenko, Khrunichev, Lobanov, and Savenyagin. These men represented the highest level of economic planners and managers and a great power in the Presidium of the power. This new group of state bureaucrats soon gave a sharp rebuff to First Secretary Khrushchev (he had signed several Central Committee resolutions personally) reminding him of the "collective" principle of leadership.

Rapprochement with Yugoslavia

April 1955

In April 1955 many important leaders from the Soviet

Union (Khrushchev, Bulganin, Mikoyan, Gromyko, and Kumenin) visited Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, and Rumania. The visit to Yugoslavia was clearly a move to facilitate a rapprochement with Tito, while the visits to Rumania and Bulgaria seems to have been preparatory to the policy changes of the coming Twentieth Party Congress. At a meeting in **Sofia**, Bulgaria, Khrushchev delivered a speech fore-shadowing much of the criticism that he would offer at the congress. ¹² The rapprochement with Tito (as we shall later see) was simply a political maneuver used by Khrushchev to discredit and unseat the pro-Stalinists in the party, namely Molotov and Kaganovich.

Central Committee plenum July 1955

From 4 to 12 July 1955, the Central Committee met in a plenary session and, ostensibly, discussed the modernization of the economy. But in a closed door session the rapprochement with Tito and Yugoslavia was discussed. Molotov attacked the new policy and advocated a return to the old Stalinist line. Khrushchev then attacked Molotov and forced him to back down in his demands. This was certainly the biggest gain Khrushchev had hitherto made against the pro-Stalinists.

The plenum also announced that the Twentieth Party Congress would be convened in February 1956. Changes in the party Presidium were also announced. Alexei Kirichenko and Mikhail Suslov were both added as full members (both were supporters of Khrushchev.) The Secretariat was also enlarged with the addition of three Khrushchev supporters: Averky Aristov, Nikolai Belyayev, and Dmitri Shepilov. The addition of three loyal supporters

of Khrushchev to the Secretariat gave him virtually complete control of this vital body.

Preparations for the Twentieth Party Congress Fall 1955

During the fall of 1955 the tempo of changes in the party organizations was extremely high. In Georgia alone 2,589 party Secretaries of primary party organizations were changed, and in the Ukraine as many as 95,000 were changed.¹³ These new Secretaries obviously owed their allegiance to Khrushchev and thus it was evident that Khrushchev had already begun preparing himself for the Twentieth Party Congress which would elect a new Central Committee. It was extremely important to Khrushchev's rise that he gain control of this body, for through it he could affect the additional changes necessary in the Presidium that he needed to crush his rivals.

The Twentieth Party Congress February 1956

The Twentieth Party Congress convened on February 14, 1956 with 1,355 delegates attending. The outstanding features of the congress were the criticism of Stalin, the re-affirmation of the party's leading role in Soviet life, further modernization of the economy, and the announcement of the "different roads to socialism" theory.

Criticism of Stalin was a favorite topic of all the speakers. Mikoyan, in particular, shocked the delegates with his open criticism of Stalinism. Not to be out-done, Khrushchev delivered his now famous "secret speech" on the last day of the congress. In this speech he openly discussed the evils of

the "cult of the personality" that Stalin had created. He also revealed Stalin's flagrant misuse of power in organizing mass murder. Khrushchev, in the last analysis, attacked Stalin on two points: first, Stalin had destroyed the principle of collective leadership and second, he had committed terrible crimes to insure his own ascendancy. These revelations caused a major furor throughout the Communist world. The satellite countries of Eastern Europe were especially shaken because of their deep roots in the Stalinist theory of government.

The effects of the "secret speech" on Khrushchev's rise are two fold. The speech established him as the chief leader of the party and freed him from the restraints of the Stalinist heritage. Second, the eruptions that the speech caused in Eastern Europe were to have disastrous effects in December 1956.

In an earlier speech Khrushchev had dealt with the new theory of "different roads to socialism". This new policy was essentially an attempt to broaden the limits of Soviet control over the satellite countries and also facilitate the rapprochement with Tito.

In other areas, the modernization of the economy was discussed at length. The administrative machinery was reduced in size and ordered to carry out reforms to increase efficiency. The priority of heavy industry was assured with secondary attention given to consumer goods. In agriculture a new program of increased freedom for the managers and new de-centralization was announced. In general, the economic directives called for

increased initiative for the managers and increased through-
out.¹⁴

The changes in the party personnel and organization were, perhaps, the most important result for Khrushchev of the congress. A new Central Committee Bureau for the RSFSR was organized and Khrushchev was elected to head this. This new bureau gave Khrushchev a convenient organ through which to further consolidate his position in the RSFSR, and thereby greatly enhanced his position in the party.¹⁵ This new position also displays the commanding position held by Khrushchev. The newly elected Central Committee gave Khrushchev a majority in this body. (This strength in the Central Committee became extremely important to him in the crisis of June 1957). The Secretariat was enlarged by the addition of Leonid I. Brezhnev and Yekaterina A. Furtseva. The number of candidate members of the Presidium was expanded to six by the addition of Marshal G.K. Zhukov, Leonid I Brezhnev, N.A. Mukhitdinov, Dmitri T. Shepilov, and Yekaterina A. Furtseva (the other candidate member was N.M. Shvernik). The Secretariat thus increased its representation in the Presidium to include Khrushchev and Suslov as full members and Brezhnev, Shepilov, and Furtseva as candidate members. These new people soon came to be the core of Khrushchev's regime.

The Twentieth Party Congress marked a distinct gain for Khrushchev in his struggle against his rivals. The new Central Committee was favorable to him and the changes in the candidate membership of the Presidium added greatly to his power. The new Bureau for the RSFSR gave Khrushchev control over all the

party organizations dealing with more than half the population of the Soviet Union. The new Secretariat members, all Khrushchev supporters, greatly increased his influence there.

De-Stalinization and Tito's Visit to Moscow

The revelations of the congress began an era of rampant de-Stalinization. The first major measure in this program was the dissolution of Cominform (Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers' Parties) in March 1956. This was an obvious outgrowth of the "secret speech".

On June 2, 1956 Marshal Tito arrived in Moscow on a state visit. On the same day Molotov was dismissed as Foreign Minister (he was one of the old pro-Stalinists who had opposed the rapprochement with Yugoslavia). Only four days later Kaganovich, another old pro-Stalinist, was relieved of his post as Chairman of the State Committee on Labour and Wage Questions. This demotion of the pro-Stalinists was an important step for Khrushchev in his struggle.

On June 28, 1956, with the outbreak of the Poznan riots, it became apparent that the de-Stalinization campaign had gone far enough because it endangered Soviet control in Eastern Europe. Throughout the summer of 1956 a series of articles was published which defended certain aspects of the Stalinist era and foreshadowed a return to the Stalinist foreign policy in the satellite countries. With the troubles in Poland and the revolt in Hungary in late October 1956 the Soviet policy towards the satellites had definitely returned ^{to} the Stalinist one of rigid controls, thus effectively negating the rapprochement

with Tito. These troubles led to a decline in the party's strength and particularly in the position of Khrushchev, once the leading exponent of de-Stalinization.

Central Committee plenum December 1956

From 20 to 24 December 1956, the Central Committee held a plenary meeting. The official topic of discussion was the economy. Bulganin spoke on his favorite topic, the modernization of the economy. The most important result of the plenum was the appointment of Pervukhin as head of the central planning organ. Under him the major economic leaders of the state bureaucracy were assembled into a leading economic body with unprecedented powers. This marked a decline in the party's role as a policy making body because these reforms were promulgated by the state bureaucrats. Thus the state bureaucracy seized the initiative
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from the party.

Central Committee plenum February 1957

Only two months after the last plenum the Central Committee met and again economic reforms was the topic. This time though, Khrushchev and other party leaders spoke. Khrushchev criticized the centralized control of the economy as being ridiculous and inefficient. He proposed sweeping plans of reorganization. The Soviet Union was to be divided up into regions that would have economic ministries of their own and would control the economy of their own sector independent of any centralized controls. These proposals were later published and a great staged debate was carried on in the press through the winter of 1957.
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This meeting reflects a basic change in the balance of power over that of the December plenum when the state bureaucracy was obviously leading. Whether Khrushchev gained the support of the territorial parties and the army or made a compromise with the state bureaucracy is not known, but by the February plenum he was able to seize the initiative from the state and re-establish himself and the party in the lead in the struggle.

On May 10, 1957 at a meeting of the Supreme Soviet Khrushchev announced the de-centralization plans (the same as at the February plenum, above) and they were accepted. The territorial principle of economic direction was officially accepted and twenty-five central economic ministries were dissolved. Ten of these were central ministries which had been responsible for the manufacture of automobiles, machinery, heavy machinery, the electro-technical industry, tools, and road making equipment. This de-centralization was a political death blow for the economic leaders and managers of the state bureaucracy who had challenged Khrushchev at the December plenum. Although these reforms were doubtlessly necessary, the political implications were far more important. The effective opposition of the state bureaucracy was now impossible and the re-organization gave immense new powers of control to the party apparatus because the de-centralization had given the apparatus direct control over
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the economic ministries.

Central Committee and Presidium meetings June 1957

The de-centralization and the threat of becoming extinct

as a political force drove the state bureaucrats (Malenkov, Pervukhin, and Saburov) to join in a coalition with the pro-Stalinists, Molotov and Kaganovich. While Khrushchev and Bulganin were in Finland this coalition planned strategy to force the removal of Khrushchev. On June 18, 1957 Malenkov and Molotov called a Presidium meeting. Khrushchev was attacked for his reorganization of the economy and his ideological deviations. He was accused of deviating from the resolutions of the Twentieth Party Congress on the eradication of the "cult of the personality". According to some reports demands were made for his removal from the Secretariat. But Khrushchev claimed they lacked the power to remove him saying, "...it was the plenum of the Central Committee that had elected me, and it should therefore be that plenum that made the decision." ¹⁹ The members of the opposition were: Bulganin, Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovich, Saburov, Pervukhin, and Shepilov, a candidate member.

With the aid of Marshal Zhukov, Khrushchev was able to assemble the Central Committee for a plenum. The discussions went on for a week and ended in a complete victory for the party and Khrushchev. By a unanimous vote of the Central Committee Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovich, and Saburov were expelled from the Presidium and the Central Committee and Pervukhin was demoted to candidate-membership in the Presidium. Six days later these four and Shepilov and Pervukhin lost their high state posts.

Thus at one stroke five members of the Presidium were demoted. Those who replaced them were all Khrushchev suppor-

ters. They were: Aristov, Belyayev, Brezhnev, Furtseva, Ignatov, Kozlov, Kuusinen, Shvernik, and Zhukov. Of the total membership of the Presidium seven were Secretaries of the Central Committee; thus giving the Secretariat an overwhelming vote in the top policy making body.²⁰ At one stroke Khrushchev had routed the pro-Stalinists, Molotov and Kaganovich, and the economic managerial group led by Malenkov and Bulganin.

The Fall of Marshal Zhukov Fall 1957

In recognition of his role and support of Khrushchev in the June crisis Marshal G.K. Zhukov was made a member of the Presidium. Now the army remained the only serious rival to Khrushchev. On October 27, 1957, Zhukov was removed from the post of Minister of Defence ostensibly because of poor party work in the military forces. He was also accused of encouraging the "cult of the personality" around him.²¹ Thus the last rival to Khrushchev and the party was eliminated.

In March 1958 Khrushchev was made Chairman of the Council of Ministers by proclamation of the Supreme Soviet. Bulganin had resigned at the same meeting. Thus Khrushchev held the two posts (First Secretary and Chairman of the Council of Ministers) that had become symbolic of Stalin's power.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER III

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4. Merle Fainsod, How Russia Is Ruled, p. 544.
5. Armstrong, op. cit., p. 258.
6. Ibid., pp. 259-60.
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8. Leonhard, op. cit., p. 89.
9. Ibid., p. 90.
10. Ibid., p. 95.
11. Ibid., p. 96.
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13. Ibid., p. 113.
14. Ibid., pp. 141-2.
15. Boris Meissner, The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, pp. 90-95; 105-108.
16. Fainsod, op. cit., p. 169.
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CHAPTER IV

The rise of Stalin and Khrushchev to power can be directly attributed to the growthⁱⁿ importance of the party apparatus and in particular the Secretariat of the Central Committee. Stalin's rise paralleled the growth and development of the party apparatus and, indeed, hinged on its success in subjugating the other elements of the Soviet society to itself. Khrushchev's paralleled the reassertion of the party's influence over the elements (state bureaucracy and secret and security police) in the Soviet society that had come to rival it.

The Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Central Committee was the chief tool of both Stalin and Khrushchev in their struggles against their respective rivals. Stalin was the first to recognize the potential powers of the Secretariat in 1922. Through the appointive powers of the Secretariat, Stalin built up a large following of faithful party workers in the territorial party organizations and he was eventually able to advance these men to the highest positions in the party and state. The import of these promotions became evident when Stalin was able to control a majority in the Central Committee, for then he also possessed actual control of the powers of the Central Committee. Perhaps, the most important of these powers was the power to expel from the party any member--a power originally given

to the Central Committee by Lenin at the Tenth Party Congress in 1921. In addition the appointive powers also aided Stalin in undermining the power bases of his opponents (e.g. Trotsky in the Ministry of War, Zinoviev in the Leningrad party organization, Kamenev in Moscow, and to lesser extent Bukharin, Tomsky, and Rykov). This undermining eventually led to the exclusion of his rivals' supporters from the high positions in the party and state.

A second important aspect of the Secretariat was its control of the party's publications and other media of communication. By controlling the communications the Secretariat was able to effectively prevent any airing of views contrary to those held by the General Secretary. This greatly reduced the ability of any opposition to acquire widespread support for its views. In the early stages of Stalin's struggle (e.g. against the Trotsky opposition) he was unable to control all the party papers-- this accounts for the publication of Trotsky's various articles, although this may have been another political maneuver by Stalin.

A third important aspect was the utter dependence of the Politburo on the Secretariat for administrative affairs of the party. The responsibilities of the Politburo were so great that without the Secretariat it could hardly have functioned at all. Thus, to a large extent, Stalin was able to administratively control the Politburo. In short, the Secretariat was important to Stalin for three reasons. First, it afforded him a tool by

which he could build up a large and influential group of party officials who were personally obligated to support him. Second, the control of the communications gave Stalin a definite advantage in gaining widespread support for his policies and prevented the various opposition groups from forming a large scale organization and gaining the widespread support they would have needed to overcome Stalin. Third, the heavy dependence of the Politburo on the Secretariat gave Stalin some control over the effectiveness of the Politburo as a policy and leading body.

Khrushchev's use of the powers of the Secretariat was somewhat more limited than Stalin's use, at the outset, because of the very nature of the succession crisis in which he was involved did not allow for any prior intrenchment in high party posts as had been the case in Stalin's struggle. Supporters of Malenkov and others were Secretaries and it was not until 1955 that Khrushchev gained the complete control of the Secretariat necessary to fully utilize its powers. As noted above Khrushchev did not undertake large personnel changes and reappointments until 1955 when he had placed his men (Aristov, Belyayev, and Shepilov) in the Secretariat, giving him virtually complete control of the many facets of the Secretariat's powers. Khrushchev's control of the communications media was not nearly as comprehensive as Stalin's because of the proliferation of the many newspapers and magazines attached to every organization in the intervening three decades. Khrushchev was, however, able to con-

trol the main party paper, Pravda, and the policy conflicts of his struggle were reflected in the conflicting reports of Pravda and of the government paper, Izvestiya.

The Central Committee

The role and control of the Central Committee was crucial in both struggles and doubtlessly will play a large role in the current Soviet succession crisis. It was only through the Central Committee that Stalin and Khrushchev were able to effectively crush their opponents in the Presidium and Politburo and high state posts. Stalin surely had effective control of the Central Committee by early 1925 when Trotsky was removed from his position as Commissar of War. In 1927 Stalin again displayed this all-important strength in the Central Committee when Trotsky and Zinoviev were expelled from the Politburo and Central Committee.

Khrushchev's hold on the Central Committee was never as absolute as that of Stalin, but this may be attributed to the desire of everyone to prevent another dictator like Stalin coming to power. The fluctuating support found in the Central Committee for Khrushchev was shown in the December, 1956 and February, 1957 plenums of the Central Committee in which Khrushchev's popularity and support went from one extreme to another. Perhaps, the most striking example of the importance of the Central Committee in these two struggles is the June 1957 crisis when Khrushchev defied a seemingly triumphant majority in the Presidium and appealed to the Central Committee where he was upheld and his opponents crushed. Khrushchev's success here may

be attributed to his support among the territorial party delegates and an underlying concern in the party to avoid a victory by the state bureaucracy over the party and, hence, a return to the Stalinist-style domination of the party.

Stalin's control of the Central Committee was an iron-clad one of personnel obligations, whereas Khrushchev, who had a limited group of loyal supporters in the Central Committee, controlled it partially because he seemed to be the best choice to represent the party and re-establish its old dominance in the affairs of state.

The Politburo and Presidium

The party Presidium is the highest and most-powerful decision making body in the Soviet Union, and the control of the Presidium denotes the control of the entire structure of the Soviet political system. Every political maneuver is aimed at discrediting and crushing opponents in the Presidium and thereby establishing the supremacy of the party apparatus and particularly the Secretariat over this body. Once Stalin established his supremacy in the Politburo (Presidium), it became a consultative body and he ran the government through the Secretariat. Khrushchev followed the same general pattern, but with less success, apparently.

Other Observations

The succession crises that have occurred in the Soviet Union and the third one now in progress seem to be characterized by a decreasing amount of overt strife and conflict. The struggle

of the 1920's involved large numbers of people and was often accompanied by open demonstrations and street riots. The rivals dared to appeal publicly to large groups of party members. The United Opposition tried this in the fall of 1927, but met with little success. The Stalin succession crisis was accompanied by a high degree of apparent unity within the ruling clan and the struggle was restricted to closed meetings hidden behind a facade of unanimity. The struggle was no less bitter than the Lenin succession crisis, but simply more secret and hidden. The present struggle began in the utmost ^{secretly} (as was necessitated by Khrushchev's being alive) and was carried out, probably, by a very few top members of the Secretariat and Presidium. The only outward sign that indicates any change in the status quo is the recent re-centralization of many of the economic ministries. This might indicate the increased strength of the state bureaucracy (as the de-centralization had indicated its decline in 1957). The present will be a long one but it will be less dramatic, and quieter, and less disrupting than the Stalin succession crisis because more than ever before the top leaders must heed the necessities of the new scientific and managerial elite. They must carry on their struggle within certain limits imposed by the increasing sophistication of Soviet society. They can no longer afford to treat the people as Stalin did and they must even avoid the upheavals of the Khrushchev era, for the Soviet society is quite dependent on this new class of highly trained men and women.

Ideological Conflicts

There are two schools of thought on whether the ideological conflicts, which so characterize the Soviet scene, are a smokescreen to hide the basic power struggle; or whether the ideological conflicts are an integral and important part of these struggles. The first school advocates a position which really seems quite untenable considering the emphasis and nature of ideological questions in Soviet Union. In the case of Trotsky's "permanent revolution", the ideological question was an integral part of Trotsky's appeal. His stand on the furthering of the revolution can not be divorced from his struggle against the Triumvirate and especially Stalin, author of "socialism in one country". It seems also that the theory of "socialism in one country" was ^{an} integral part of Stalin's plan for the establishment of his personal supremacy. He used ^{it} almost as a tool to undermine his opponents and attract new followers to his camp.

In the Khrushchev struggle the major ideological question was that of "different roads to socialism". This was more of a political maneuver than a real attempt at revising the official unity of the Communist world movement. Khrushchev used this new policy as a tool to discredit and eventually depose the chief pro-Stalinist element in the leadership, Kaganovich and Molotov.

In the final analysis, then, the ideological questions which have so characterized the succession crises have played an important role in the struggles and doubtlessly will in the present one. The ideological conflicts were integral parts of

the struggles and to a certain extent reflected the the very nature of the appeal and strengths of the various rivals.

The Origins of Expulsion from the Party

The succession crises of the Soviet Union have been and doubtlessly will be characterized by the completeness of the destruction of the oppositional elements through expulsion from the party (and under Stalin eventual liquidation). Though Lenin was not disposed against the use of forceful compliance with his will, he preferred the techniques of compromise and persuasion extensively and with great patience, especially within the ruling group. The official sanctioning of expulsion came at the Tenth Party Congress (1921) when Lenin announced that the Central Committee should thoroughly crush "factionalism" and punish any infractions of party discipline with demotions and expulsion from the party. More important, this new doctrine was applicable to all members, regardless of rank--even Central Committee members. This policy was originally intended to strengthen the party in its fight against internal factions and was the natural outgrowth of the forceful techniques of the Civil War period. Thus in one stroke Lenin ended the practicality of "democratic centralism" and unwittingly gave Stalin his chief weapon against his opponents in the coming struggle. Stalin used this power against a large number of his opponents (e.g. the mass expulsion of United Opposition members in 1927). Khrushchev used this power much less extensively in his struggle. All this indicates that the participation and scope of the struggle is decreasing, and the extent of the present struggle is becoming smaller and the confines of action more exactly defined.

In conclusion, it is clear that the rise to power of Stalin and Khrushchev was the inevitable result of the political system built in the Soviet Union. The supremacy of the party over the other elements of the society is an inherent development of the party's dynamism and leadership. It inculcated its values and political theory and discipline on over six million members who are truly the elite of the Soviet society.

It was not so much inevitable that these two men only were the result of the party's supremacy, but more that some men like Stalin and Khrushchev would have come to the fore, ~~rule~~ to rule as they did--absolutely. The supremacy of the party is insured, barring any real lapse in the dynamism and ideological compulsion of the party, by the very nature of its interpenetration into every corner of Soviet life.

It is also inevitable that there be other succession crises (as there is now) in the Soviet system much like these two that will doubtlessly be centered in the rivalry between the state bureaucracy and the party apparatus, although in the future as the scientific and military communities grow in stature they will move forward to claim a vital and direct influence on the outcome of the power struggles that must ensue in the Soviet political system. It has been suggested that the armed forces will never gain such a prominent position because of its non-political background. But as was seen in the Stalin succession crisis the armed forces did play an important, though not a commanding role, in the struggle and as their

commitment to the present arms race grows, they will certainly find it to their advantage to make their wishes emphatically known to the leaders. And I suspect that if disarmament ever became a serious foreign policy goal of the Soviet Union the armed forces, much like the United States military establishment, would resist this development to the end.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

The following books were especially helpful in preparing this last chapter:

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Robert Conquest, Power and Policy in the U.S.S.R.

Merle Fainsod, How Russia Is Ruled.

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