

The Drama of the Plenums : A Call to Arms

Khrushchev. You want to turn everything back in order then to take up the axe yourself.
Molotov. No, this is not so, com. Khrushchev. I hope that that is not what you want, and moreover,
 that is not what I want.
 CC CPSU Plenum, Kremlin, 24 June 1957

by *David Wolff*

In the third week of June 1957, a series of meetings of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CC CPSU) found N.S. Khrushchev, the First Secretary, in the minority. With a Kremlin coup in the offing, Khrushchev managed to convoke a CC plenary session, whose outcome was not at all certain prior to the meeting's opening. But by the third day, when the epigraph above was spoken, it was clear that the Army and security organs, together with the CC, would support Khrushchev. Thus, Molotov had no axe at hand and Khrushchev's concern was purely rhetorical, a reminder of the true correlation of forces on the plenum floor.¹ This kind of showmanship is illustrative of the theatrical qualities of the plenum transcripts, excerpts from which are presented here for the first time in English translation. Additional materials can be found on the CWIHP website.

For the most part, the CC CPSU Presidium/Politburo members staged and took leading roles in the drama.² Under Stalin, and later under Brezhnev, autocratic rule produced unanimously-approved speeches and decisions to be rubber-stamped by the plenum. But during the Khrushchev years, especially between 1953 and 1957, "collective leadership" produced multiple Presidium scripts to compete on the plenum floor, with the winning narrative to be determined by the audience. With this in mind, the selection of cadres for the plenum (to paraphrase Stalin) would decide all.³ Of course, the structure of CPSU work and promotion was such that all Presidium members had chaired innumerable meetings of the *aktiv* and knew all the organizational tricks. But Khrushchev was best of all, both at garnering loyalty and placing the trustworthy onto the CC. This is not to say, as Mark Kramer points out in his essay, that the plenum decisions were made in the course of the session. Nonetheless, the plenum discussions provide us with a window into the Presidium-level discussions that did lead to the key decisions, just prior to the plenums themselves.

Aside from the sharp dialogue generated by clashing scripts, another theatrical plenum element is the role of the "voices" rising up from the plenum floor to interrupt the speaker. Although one can not tell from the transcripts, one suspects that these are generated by loyalists hand-picked for their eloquence to play a role somewhere between *claque* and Greek chorus. Their functions are

multiple, serving sometimes as echo (**Mikoian**: That is why Nikita Sergeevich [Khrushchev] blew up. I also almost blew up. **Voices**: Blew up.), sometimes as a prompt (**Pospelov**: The July 1955 plenum recorded this. **Voice**: On Yugoslavia.), and sometimes for emphasis (**Khrushchev**: How much gold did we spend then, com. Malenkov, 200-250 tons? **Voice**. If not more.). Heckling was also part of the job, as was laughing at the right jokes and myriad other planned impromptus.⁴

The three essays that begin this section each cover different ground. Vladislav Zubok's piece most closely captures the core problematic of this *Bulletin* issue. As each of Khrushchev's competitors is expelled from the inner circles of power, Zubok chronicles the key foreign policy decisions linked to the demotion. Beria, Malenkov, Molotov, and Zhukov followed each other down in dizzying succession. Gael Moullec reminds us that foreign policy and leadership struggle were just a small part of the issues touched on by the plenums. The social and cultural history of the Cold War can also draw from this invaluable source. Mark Kramer's article will be essential reading on this topic and for all those planning work in *fond 2* at the former Central Committee archives in Moscow (now known as the Center for the Storage of Contemporary Documentation, or TsKhSD) for many years to come.

The plenum excerpts themselves help tie together the various sections of this *Bulletin*. (Excerpts from the July 1953 plenum, at which Beria was denounced, have already appeared in English and are summarized in CWIHP *Bulletin* 1, and are therefore omitted here.) In January 1955, the role of Malenkov and Beria during the 1953 German events took center stage, complementing Christian Ostermann's essay and accompanying documents. By July 1955 Molotov and Khrushchev clashed over the normalization of relations with Yugoslavia. These discussions supplement the Yugoslavia section. Khrushchev's "second secret speech" at the Sixth Plenum of the Polish United Workers' Party in March 1956 adds context to Stalin's conversations with Yugoslav leaders. In the part of the *Bulletin* devoted to Deng Xiaoping and Sino-Soviet relations, we often see Deng eager for information about plenum results. Chinese matters, as well as wide-ranging foreign policy disagreements, appear in the June 1957 transcripts.⁵ Mark Kramer's essay also makes clear how extensively the plenum sessions treated

China in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

Although the “second secret speech” comes from the Polish archives and the June 1957 plenum materials have been published in Russian and Chinese, the remaining excerpts, including extensive citations in the Kramer, Moullec and Zubok essays, come directly from TsKhSD’s *fond 2*.⁶ In the spring of 1996, with the preliminary polls for Russia’s presidential election suggesting that the Communists might take back power and reclaim their archives, CWIHP’s former director James G. Hershberg launched a special initiative to study and copy these documents while available.⁷ Although the alarm proved premature, the happy result is that CWIHP was able to gather a substantial collection of plenum records, now on deposit and available for general use in the reading room of the National Security Archive at The George Washington University as part of READ, the Russian and East European Archival Database. We hope that the brief excerpts and expert commentary assembled here will whet appetites for more systematic exploration, both in Washington and Moscow, of this important Cold War source.

¹ The following morning, on June 25, Khrushchev staged a similar reminder with a reference to Molotov’s wanting “to return to some of Stalin’s bad methods.” Other comments by Khrushchev on Stalin’s methods can be found in the Warsaw “Second Secret Speech” introduced in this *Bulletin* by Leo Gluchowski.

² Starting from the 19th Party Congress in October 1952, the Politburo was renamed the Presidium. With Khrushchev’s fall

from power in late 1964, the older name, Politburo, was reintroduced.

³ This is known in the political science literature by a term coined by Robert Daniels, the “circular flow of power.”

⁴ An example where the hecklers clearly found their way through the thick skin to a soft spot follows:

Molotov: (quoting *Pravda*, citing Khrushchev) “If, for instance—N.S. Khrushchev adds as a joke—our [foreign] minister Gromyko and your secretary [of state] Dulles met, in a hundred years they wouldn’t agree on anything, and, perhaps, only our grandsons would wait long enough to get any results from these negotiations.” **Voice:** Read on. **Molotov:** Read on yourself.

Voice: It is being said as a joke there. **Molotov:** One does not play with the authority of the MID of the USSR in front of bourgeois governments. (All examples are drawn from June 1957 plenum extracts published here or on the CWIHP website.)

⁵ This helps to explain why the transcripts of the June 1957 plenum sessions, first printed in *Istoricheskii arkhiv* 3-6 (1993) and 1-2 (1994) have already appeared in a two-volume set in Chinese. See *Sugong gongchandang zuihou yige “fandang” jitian* (The CPSU Final “Antiparty” Group) (Beijing, 1997). The introduction by one of Mao’s Russian translators (who is also often present at Deng’s meetings with the Soviets), Yan Mingfu, has since been reprinted twice in the popular press. See *Wenhui dushu zhoubao* 4 October 1997 and *Zuoja wenzhai* 24 October 1997.

⁶ TsKhSD (Tsentr khraneniia sovremennoi dokumentatsii) = Center for Storage of Contemporary Documentation. This is the former CC CPSU working archive.

⁷ CWIHP associates participating in this initiative included Ray Garthoff, Hope Harrison, James G. Hershberg, Mark Kramer and Vladislav Zubok.

More Evidence on Korean War Origins from the July 1955 CPSU Plenum

[Ed.Note: During the past five years the CWIHP *Bulletin* has hosted important new findings on the origins of the Korean War. This excerpt from the plenums, though present in the verbatim record, was later expunged from the internal-circulation print version, since it so clearly contradicts the Soviet Union’s official pronouncements. Further East-bloc documentation on the Korean War can be found in *Bulletin* 3, pp.1, 14-18; *Bulletin* 4, p. 21; *Bulletin* 5, pp. 1-9; *Bulletin* 6-7, pp. 30-125; and *Bulletin* 8-9, pp. 237-242.]

Khrushchev. Viacheslav Mikhailovich [Molotov], this smells a bit hostile to us [*nemnozhko ot vrazhdebnogo nam v etom otnoshenii popakhivaet*]. Viacheslav Mikhailovich, if you, as minister of foreign affairs, analyzed a whole series of our steps, [you would see that] we mobilized people against us. We started the Korean War. And what does this mean? Everyone knows this.

[Anastas] Mikoian. Aside from our people, in our country.

Khrushchev. Here, Viacheslav Mikhailovich, this must be borne in mind; everything must be understood, everything analyzed, [and] only then can one come to the correct conclusion. We started the war. Now we cannot in any way disentangle ourselves. For two years there has been no war. Who needed the war?...

[Source: *TsKhSD f.2, op. 1, d. 173, ll. 76 ff.* Translated by Benjamin Aldrich-Moodie.]

Declassified Materials from CPSU Central Committee Plenums: Sources, Context, Highlights

by Mark Kramer

In October 1995 the Center for Storage of Contemporary Documentation (TsKhSD) in Moscow, which houses the former archive of the Central Committee (CC) of the Soviet Communist Party (CPSU), received materials from the Russian Presidential Archive for a newly opened section known as Fond 2. The new *fond* (an archival term roughly translated in English as “collection”) includes different versions of CPSU Central Committee plenum transcripts from 1918 to 1990 as well as secret documents that were used at the plenums. Some 845 voluminous files (*dela*) of declassified plenum materials from 1918 to 1941 had been available since the early 1990s at another repository in Moscow, the former Central Party Archive (now known as the Russian Center for Storage and Study of Documents of Recent History, or RTsKhIDNI); but the newly-opened Fond 2 at TsKhSD is many times larger and much more comprehensive.¹ Not only does Fond 2 add to the RTsKhIDNI collection of pre-1941 materials; it also provides full documentary coverage for the dozens of Central Committee plenums after 1941.

This article will briefly discuss the structure of Fond 2, the problems that arise when using the documents, and a few highlights from plenary sessions held in the 1950s and 1960s.

Structure Of Fond 2

Fond 2 of TsKhSD is divided among five *opisi* (roughly translated as “inventories” or, in this context, “record groups”).² Initially, only Opis’ 1 of Fond 2 was released. In early 1996 the Russian government’s “Commission on Declassification of Documents Created by the CPSU” announced that the other four *opisi* of Fond 2 had been declassified in 1995 and would be transferred to TsKhSD.³ Unfortunately, this announcement turned out to be misleading. As of late 1997, none of the other four *opisi* had yet been transferred from the Presidential Archive. Thus, even though Opis’ 2, 3, 4, and 5 were nominally “declassified,” researchers had no access to them. In response to complaints from visiting scholars, the director of TsKhSD conceded that the commission’s announcement had been “premature.”⁴

The four additional *opisi* of Fond 2 are due to be transferred to TsKhSD in the first half of 1998. However, officials at TsKhSD have no direct say in the Presidential Archive’s actions and therefore can offer no guarantees. Once the transfer is completed, these new *opisi* will provide an invaluable complement to the existing Opis’ 1. Opis’ 2 includes the protocols and stenograms from Central Committee plenums held between 1918 and 1966,

adding to the RTsKhIDNI materials. Opis’ 3 includes documents from Central Committee plenums ranging from 1966 to 1986. Opis’ 4 includes protocols from Central Committee plenums held between 1966 and 1990. Opis’ 5 comprises documents from plenums held between 1986 and 1990, the core of the period when Mikhail Gorbachev was CPSU General Secretary.

Opis’ 1 of Fond 2 consists of 822 separate *dela*, with materials arranged in the order in which they were produced. The files include transcripts and other documents from Central Committee plenums held between 1941 and 1966. In principle, the plenum materials from before 1953 should be housed at RTsKhIDNI rather than at TsKhSD. However, to maintain the integrity of the *fond*, the earlier materials will be kept together with the more recent documents. All told, Opis’ 1 covers 51 plenums.⁵

In many cases, two or more versions of the same plenum exist. The closest thing to a verbatim transcript, known as an “uncorrected stenogram” (*nepravlennaya stenogramma*), was compiled by a team of stenographers during the plenum. Excerpts from this raw text were sent by the head of the CPSU CC General Department to all those who spoke at the plenum. The speakers were permitted to see and edit only their own remarks.⁶ The full text then underwent further editing by one or two senior party officials. The corrected version, known as the “author’s copy” (*avtorskii ekzempliar*), contains the full verbatim text marked up in handwriting as well as newly drafted pages and paragraphs to be inserted into the transcript. (Often the insertions were in handwriting, too.) The revised version was then retyped to produce a “corrected copy” (*korrektorskii ekzempliar*), which was given to a few senior Presidium/Politburo members to review.⁷ Usually, one of the officials (e.g., Mikhail Suslov) would approve the corrected copy as the final version, but in a few cases each official would make additional changes, resulting in an “edited copy” (*redaktsionnyi ekzempliar*). A few last-minute revisions might then be made in the edited copy before a final “stenographic account” (*stenograficheskii otchet*) was typeset. The whole process of editing and revision could sometimes take several months or longer.⁸ The final stenographic account was disseminated to all members of the CPSU Presidium/Politburo, CPSU Secretariat, and CPSU Central Committee, to other senior employees of the central party apparatus, to leading officials in the fourteen union-republic Communist parties, and to the first secretaries of the CPSU’s territorial, regional, provincial, municipal, and local committees.

The different versions of the proceedings were preserved for most, but not all, of the 51 plenums. The status of each version is specified clearly both in the *opis'* and on the cover of each *dela*. The *dela* for a particular version are grouped consecutively, which makes it relatively easy to distinguish them from other versions.

In addition to the transcripts of plenum proceedings, Opis' 1 includes many files of documents that were used or distributed at the plenums. These documents in some cases were publicly available after the plenums, but in other cases they were classified "secret" or "top secret" and issued on a highly restricted basis. For certain plenums, a separate *dela* contains the resolutions and theses (or drafts) approved by the Central Committee as well as any final comments by senior party officials.

Although Opis' 1, like all the other *opisi* of Fond 2, is officially described as "declassified," selected materials in Opis' 1 (and in the other four *opisi* of Fond 2) are in fact still classified and are marked as such (*ne rasssekrecheno*) in the *opis'*. The fact that some materials in Fond 2 have not yet been declassified is one of the reasons that TsKhSD has been allowing researchers to use the original, bound transcripts and documents, rather than microfilms of them. The listing of sequential numbers for microfilm reels in the *opisi* leaves no doubt that all the *dela* in Fond 2 have been filmed, but the reels mix classified with declassified materials. Hence, only the hard copies are being loaned out.⁹ Although the continued classification of some materials in Fond 2 is vexing and unwarranted, the opportunity for scholars to use the original documents (rather than the more cumbersome and, in certain cases, barely legible microfilms) is a welcome, if perverse, benefit of this obsessive secretiveness.

The Context of the Plenum Materials

Through almost the whole of the Soviet era, very little information about CPSU Central Committee plenums was released to the public. During the long reign of Josif Stalin (1929-1953), virtually nothing about Central Committee plenums was disclosed. That pattern continued for several years after Stalin's death. Transcripts of key plenums during Nikita Khrushchev's consolidation of power (e.g., the sessions in July 1953, January 1955, July 1955, February 1956, June 1957, and October 1957) were not publicly disseminated at all. This policy of strict secrecy was eased during the final years of Khrushchev's tenure, when edited "stenographic accounts" of some plenums were published. Although the appearance of these transcripts was a major step forward, the accounts did not always enable readers to determine precisely what went on at the plenums. Moreover, the publication of stenographic accounts ceased in March 1965, five months after Leonid Brezhnev displaced Khrushchev; and from that point until the end of the 1980s information about Central Committee plenums was as exiguous as it had been in Stalin's time. The only materials released during the two decades under Brezhnev and his immediate

successors, Yurii Andropov and Konstantin Chernenko (and even during the first few years of the Gorbachev era), were brief announcements (*informatsionnye soobshcheniya*) that Central Committee plenums had been held, lists of those who had spoken, and the resolutions (*postanovleniya*) and theses (*tezisy*) adopted by the plenums, which revealed nothing about the tenor of the meetings.¹⁰ The opening of Fond 2 thus fills an important gap in the historical record.

Nevertheless, scholars who use the newly declassified plenum materials should bear in mind a number of caveats. First, it is important to recognize that the Central Committee was not a decision-making body.¹¹ The list of plenums in Opis' 1, provided in Note 5 below, underscores just how limited the Central Committee's role was in Soviet policy-making, especially during the Stalin era, when the Central Committee almost never met. During the final twelve years of Stalin's life, the Central Committee convened only six times, for a total of ten days. The extremely infrequent and perfunctory nature of Central Committee plenums was part of Stalin's general policy of weakening subordinate structures that might in some way infringe on his immense personal power. Under Khrushchev, the frequency of plenums increased, but the Central Committee still convened no more than a total of fifteen days in a given year, and usually far less. Moreover, the timing of plenums did not settle into a particular pattern. All members of the Central Committee had full-time jobs elsewhere, which consumed the vast bulk of their energies and attention.

Even on the rare occasions when the Central Committee met, it usually functioned as little more than a rubber stamp for the Presidium/Politburo's decisions. As interesting and valuable as the plenum documents are, they clearly show that, with the exception of the June 1957 plenum, all key decisions had been arranged in advance by the Presidium/Politburo, which met shortly before the plenums to iron out any differences and approve the plenum agenda and resolutions. It is telling that in some instances the drafts of resolutions, prepared several days before the Central Committee convened, would already say that the resolutions had been "adopted unanimously"—a result that clearly was not in doubt.¹²

The June 1957 plenum was a special case because Khrushchev had been outvoted on the Presidium by what became known as the "Anti-Party Group." During a session of the Presidium from 18 to 21 June 1957, only three of the ten other full Presidium members—Anastas Mikoyan, Mikhail Suslov, and Aleksei Kirichenko—had supported Khrushchev. Through last-ditch maneuvers, Khrushchev was able to stave off his dismissal by forcing the convocation on June 22 of a Central Committee plenum, which he knew would take his side in the dispute. That session marked the only time from the mid-1920s onward when the top leaders had failed to reach a consensus beforehand about the results they hoped to achieve at the plenum.

The fact that the general outcomes of the plenums were arranged in advance does not mean that the discussions were dull and lacking in substance. On the contrary, in many cases the debates were very lively and the top leaders provided important information to the rank-and-file Central Committee members about salient issues and controversies. Even so, it is clear from the transcripts and other materials that the Presidium/Politburo carefully stage-managed and orchestrated the plenums to produce a desired result. The plenums were extremely useful for the top leaders in many ways—by giving ordinary Central Committee members a sense of involvement in the policy-making process, by ensuring wide support within the party for the top leaders' policies and objectives, and by conferring a formal stamp of legitimacy on the Presidium/Politburo's actions—but this does not change the basic fact that key decisions were actually made by the Presidium/Politburo, not by the Central Committee.

The highly circumscribed nature of the Central Committee's role was broadly understood even before any of the plenum materials were declassified. It is not at all surprising that the plenum transcripts would confirm that the Central Committee routinely complied with the Presidium/Politburo's wishes. The notion of a "circular flow of power"—whereby the top party leader and his allies chose (and had the power to dismiss) lower-ranking personnel, who in turn were empowered to vote for delegates to the party congress, who in turn elected the members of the Central Committee, who in turn were responsible for electing the highest party organs—had long enabled Western scholars to understand why the Central Committee, despite nominally being empowered to countermand the Presidium/Politburo, instead was staunchly supportive of the top leaders' preferences.¹³ The members of the Central Committee had an in-built incentive to be loyal, resting on self-interest.

The thing that researchers need to bear in mind, then, is that the sudden availability of the plenum materials should not lead to an exaggeration of the Central Committee's role. The documents must be seen in context. Some of the plenum transcripts and supplementary materials contain valuable information that is not readily available from other declassified documents, and this will be of great benefit. But unless the plenums are evaluated against the wider backdrop of Soviet politics (in which the Presidium/Politburo was the dominant organ), there is a danger that some scholars will end up "looking for their keys where the streetlight is."¹⁴

This temptation may be particularly strong because the vast majority of records of Presidium/Politburo meetings from the post-Stalin era have not yet been released. Detailed notes from Presidium meetings during the Khrushchev era, compiled by the head of the CPSU CC General Department, Vladimir Malin, exist in Fond 3 at TsKhSD, but only a tiny fraction of these had been released as of late 1997, despite earlier promises that the full collection would be declassified by the end of 1996.¹⁵

Verbatim transcripts were kept for Politburo meetings during the Brezhnev era and afterwards, but only a minuscule portion of these have been released so far. In late 1991 and 1992, some Politburo transcripts (or portions of transcripts) were declassified for a short-lived trial of the Soviet Communist Party at the Russian Constitutional Court.¹⁶ The bulk of the selected transcripts were from the Gorbachev era (mainly because Russian president Boris Yeltsin hoped they would embarrass Gorbachev), but even these materials represented only a small fraction of the sessions held between 1985 and 1991. Although a few additional Politburo transcripts from the Gorbachev era have been published since the early 1990s—some were put out by the Gorbachev Foundation to offset the impact of the materials released by the Yeltsin administration, and others were featured in the Russian archival service's journal *Istochnik*—these scattered documents are no substitute for access to the full collection.¹⁷ Moreover, only a handful of transcripts have been released for Politburo meetings from the Brezhnev, Andropov, and Chernenko periods (though a few well-placed Russian officials have been given access to the full collection of transcripts). The unavailability of most of the Politburo notes and transcripts may create at least some temptation to ascribe too large a role to the Central Committee and other agencies whose records are now available.

The dominance of the CPSU Presidium/Politburo in the Soviet policymaking process was necessarily reflected in the Central Committee plenums. The context of each plenum can be understood only by answering several questions: What was the Presidium/Politburo hoping to derive from the plenum? Why did the Presidium/Politburo decide to convene the Central Committee? What steps were taken to ensure that the plenum bolstered the Presidium/Politburo's aims? So long as the Politburo's records remain largely sealed, definitive answers to these questions may not always be possible; but the transcripts of the plenums and other documents often permit well-founded conclusions. For example, it is now clear that the plenum in early July 1953 which denounced the "criminal anti-party and anti-state activities of [Lavrentii] Beria" was convened by Beria's rivals to reassure the Central Committee that Beria's arrest had been a matter of high principle, and not simply part of a power struggle. The Presidium members who had ordered Beria's arrest outdid one another at the plenum in recounting the alleged iniquities of their deposed colleague, accusing him of actions that they themselves had initiated (or at least strongly backed) during the previous few months. Khrushchev, Vyacheslav Molotov, Georgii Malenkov, Nikolai Bulganin, and their allies orchestrated the plenum to cover up their own roles in promoting policies for which they were now holding Beria solely accountable. So egregious was their abrupt disavowal of their own actions and views that the plenum often took on a surreal quality.¹⁸ The rank-and-file members of the Central Committee, having long been accustomed to accept whatever they

were told by the highest party authorities, went along obediently this time as well.

The stenographic account of the July 1953 plenum was declassified and published in early 1991, and it has been cited by many Western and Russian scholars since then.¹⁹ Unfortunately, most of these scholars have failed to take due account of the context of the plenum. Rather than seeing the plenum for what it was—namely, an attempt by Beria's rivals to rationalize their actions by blaming the ousted security chief for a host of purported "crimes"—many researchers have taken at face value the allegations made against Beria. This has been especially true of the claims about Beria's supposed effort to "destroy the people's democratic regime in [East Germany]." Beria's real views about Germany in the spring of 1953 bore little resemblance to the accusations lodged against him. It was Molotov, not Beria, who had taken the lead in forging the new Soviet policy toward Germany after Stalin's death, and all the other top Soviet officials, including Beria, had supported him.²⁰ The views attributed to Beria were contrived by Molotov to gloss over his own responsibility for having drastically reshaped Soviet *Deutschlandpolitik* just before the June 1953 uprising in East Germany. Numerous Western and Russian scholars who have used the published stenographic account of the July 1953 plenum have been far too accepting of Molotov's tendentious portrayal of Beria and Germany.²¹

The misunderstandings that have arisen from the declassified account of the July 1953 Central Committee plenum underscore the need for circumspection when drawing on the materials in Fond 2. Unless scholars constantly bear in mind the purpose and context of each plenum, they risk going astray in their interpretations of substantive issues as well as of the dynamics of Soviet policy-making.

One additional problem that researchers may encounter when using the new plenum materials is the distortions that sometimes crept in during the editing of the Central Committee transcripts. As noted above, Fond 2 contains two or more versions of most of the plenums. For research purposes, the most useful version is the "author's copy," which contains a verbatim transcript with handwritten changes and handwritten or typed insertions. This version of the transcript enables scholars to see both the original proceedings and the changes that senior officials wanted to make. If scholars consult only the "corrected copy" or the "stenographic account," they are likely to miss some important nuances in the original proceedings. For example, by the time a stenographic account was issued for the July 1953 plenum, numerous modifications had been made to cast as sinister a light as possible on Beria's actions. A comparison with the verbatim transcript shows that, among other things, Beria's views about Germany were depicted in far more extreme terms in the edited account. At one point in the verbatim transcript, Molotov claimed that Beria had supported a united Germany "which will be peaceloving and under the control of the

four powers."²² (Molotov conveniently neglected to mention that this was precisely the position he himself had long supported.) To be on the safe side, the words "and under the control of the four powers" were omitted from the stenographic account, thus implying that Beria had wanted the Soviet Union simply to abandon East Germany. Numerous other changes of this sort were made, including some of much greater length. All of them were designed to bring even greater discredit upon Beria.

For most of the other plenums as well, extensive changes were made in the transcripts before stenographic accounts were issued. In some cases lengthy portions were rewritten, and several new paragraphs or even new pages were added. On occasion, entirely new speeches were inserted.²³ The finished product is valuable, indeed essential, for scholars to consult, but it can be highly misleading unless it is compared with the verbatim transcript. Only the "author's copy" permits researchers to examine simultaneously the original proceedings and the subsequent editing.²⁴ If that version is not available, it is important to look at both the "uncorrected stenogram" and the "stenographic account." In a few cases (e.g., the December 1959 plenum) these two versions do not differ markedly, but in the large majority of cases the differences can be of great importance.

Selected Plenum Highlights

Most of the Central Committee plenums between 1941 and 1966 had no direct bearing on foreign policy. Instead they focused on agricultural policy, economic problems, local party management, and the like. A number of the plenums, however, dealt at length with foreign policy issues. Some plenums covered two or more topics, both external and internal, whereas other plenums focused exclusively on important foreign developments. Plenums that approved changes (or impending changes) in the leadership, as in March 1953, July 1953, January 1955, June 1957, October 1957, and October 1964, also are of great importance for studies of the Cold War. In a brief article of this sort it would be impossible to give an exhaustive overview of the many issues covered by the plenums, but a few highlights will suffice to indicate how rich some of the material is.

Intensity of the Post-Stalin Leadership Struggle

One of the most intriguing aspects of the plenums from 1953 through 1957 is what they reveal about the leadership struggle. Western observers had long surmised that a fierce struggle was under way behind the scenes, but the only direct evidence for this at the time was the occasional announcement that a senior official had been dismissed or demoted. The declassified transcripts of Central Committee plenums, as well as other new documents and first-hand accounts, reveal that the leadership struggle was even more intense than most analysts had suspected. At some plenums, notably those in July 1953, when the Central Committee denounced Beria, in January

1955, when Malenkov came under sharp criticism prior to his dismissal as prime minister, in February 1956, when preparations were under way for Khrushchev's "secret speech" condemning Stalin, in June 1957, when Khrushchev ousted the Anti-Party Group, and in October 1957, when Khrushchev removed his erstwhile ally and defense minister, Marshal Georgii Zhukov, the leadership struggle dominated the sessions. Yet even at plenums that were ostensibly convened for other reasons, the ferocity of the leadership struggle often affected the entire proceedings.

One of the best examples came at the lengthy plenum in July 1955, which focused on several topics, including the recent *rapprochement* with Yugoslavia. [Ed. Note: For extensive excerpts, see below in this *Bulletin*.] During the debate about Yugoslavia, one of Khrushchev's chief rivals, Vyacheslav Molotov, came under fierce attack. At this juncture, barely a year-and-a-half after Beria had been executed, the prospect of losing out in the power struggle still implied potentially grave risks. Even so, Molotov largely held his ground and only grudgingly, at the very end of the plenum, sought to propitiate his attackers. The segment of the plenum that dealt with Yugoslavia featured a lengthy (138-page) opening speech by Khrushchev, which provided a detailed, highly informative (albeit selective and tendentious) overview of the reasons for the Soviet-Yugoslav split under Stalin.²⁵ (Much of the blame was laid on "the provocative role of Beria and Abakumov.") Toward the end of the speech, Khrushchev revealed to the Central Committee that the Presidium had "unanimously" decided to report that Molotov had "consistently adopted an incorrect position" on the Yugoslav question and had "refused to disavow his incorrect views."²⁶ Khrushchev read aloud the Presidium's conclusion that "Com. Molotov's position on the Yugoslav matter does not serve the interests of the Soviet state and the socialist camp and does not conform with the principles of Leninist policy."

Khrushchev's comments touched off a spate of denunciations of Molotov's views on Yugoslavia. One such attack came from Georgii Malenkov, who, despite having lost his post as prime minister four months earlier, was still a key figure on the CPSU Presidium:

If we speak about Com. Molotov's main mistake, I would say it is that, contrary to new facts and contrary to everything that has happened over the past two years—and contrary to the overwhelmingly positive results that the CC Presidium has achieved from the steps it has taken to develop friendly relations with Yugoslavia—contrary to all this, he persists in embracing the position laid out by him and by Comrade Stalin in 1948-1949 in their letters to the Yugoslav leadership.²⁷

Malenkov emphasized that "Com. Molotov still does not acknowledge that his errors in the tactics of struggle

played a huge and decisive role in bringing about the split with Yugoslavia." Malenkov noted that Molotov had "blatantly disregarded the instructions of the CC Presidium" during the preparations for the *rapprochement* with Yugoslavia, adding that "this is typical of him." Molotov's views, according to Malenkov, were "weakening the forces of the camp of socialism and strengthening the forces of the imperialist camp." Malenkov "demanded from [Molotov] a full-fledged explanation and a statement about his obligation to rectify his behavior and to disavow his erroneous views in an unequivocal manner."²⁸

Some of the other condemnations of Molotov during the sessions on Yugoslavia extended far beyond the Yugoslav question alone. Maksim Saburov argued that Molotov's "ridiculous" position on Yugoslavia was "one in a long series of issues on which Com. Molotov does not agree with the CC Presidium." Saburov cited the virgin lands scheme (which, he said, Molotov believed would be a "largely ineffective and dubious pursuit"), the new planning system for agriculture, the negotiations on the Austrian State Treaty, and the appointment of a new prime minister as issues "on which Com. Molotov disagreed with the principled and correct stance adopted by the CC Presidium."²⁹ Saburov claimed that Molotov's "deviations" on these matters were far from innocent, being "directed against Com. Khrushchev. . . . I personally believe that Com. Molotov regards Com. Khrushchev as an unsuitable official." Saburov then likened Molotov to Beria and implied that Khrushchev should deal with Molotov in the same way they had treated Beria:

I don't want to say that Com. Molotov is simply repeating what Beria said; I'm not equating him with Beria, but this is indeed like what we heard from Beria. Com. Molotov, by the logic of his struggle, objected to any question considered by the CC that had been proposed—coincidentally or not so coincidentally—by Com. Khrushchev. I believe that one might draw the conclusion that Com. Molotov would not be objecting to these proposals if Com. Khrushchev did not enjoy the level of trust and support that everyone has in him.³⁰

Coming so soon after the execution of Beria, Saburov's statements clearly were intended as a threat, which may well have been coordinated with Khrushchev. On some matters, Saburov certainly was acting at Khrushchev's behest, and the whole speech was designed not only to deprecate Molotov, but to bolster Khrushchev's standing. Saburov insisted that he was not trying "to give undue glory to Com. Khrushchev; he doesn't need that sort of glorification. We know that he commands trust not only in the Presidium, but in our whole party," a line that drew sustained applause.

By the end of the plenum, when sharp exchanges ensued between Khrushchev and Molotov just before Khrushchev's closing speech (which "condemned the line

advanced by Com. Molotov as inimical to our party and a non-Leninist and sectarian position”), it was clear that Molotov had experienced a major setback. But what is perhaps most striking, in view of the intense criticism Molotov encountered, is that he was able to hold onto his position for another two years and that he very nearly won out over Khrushchev in June 1957. The transcript of the July 1955 plenum thus provides crucial evidence that Khrushchev, despite having consolidated his position a good deal, had by no means overcome his most formidable challenger. Anyone who could withstand and recover from the attacks that Molotov endured during the July 1955 plenum was obviously well-suited to be a constant threat.

Fissures in the Communist World (I): Yugoslavia and Poland

Quite apart from what the plenum documents reveal about the post-Stalin leadership struggle, they shed intriguing light on the priorities of Soviet foreign policy. One thing that quickly becomes evident from the 822 files in Opis’ 1 is the importance that CPSU officials attached to ideological relations with other Communist countries. Although no plenums dealt at length with the crises in East Germany in 1953 and Poland and Hungary in 1956 (in contrast to the much more prolonged crisis with Czechoslovakia in 1968-69, which was the main subject of three separate plenums), numerous plenums during the Khrushchev and early Brezhnev periods focused exclusively, or at least extensively, on the nettlesome problem of relations with Yugoslavia, China, and the world Communist movement. The momentous decision to seek a *rapprochement* with Yugoslavia in May 1955 was regarded as such an abrupt and, from the ideological standpoint, potentially disorienting change of course that Soviet leaders believed they should explain the move to the full Central Committee.³¹ At a plenum in July 1955, Khrushchev and numerous other Presidium members laid out the basic rationale—that “because of serious mistakes we lost Yugoslavia [*my poteryali Yugoslaviyu*] and the enemy camp has begun to lure that country over to its side”—and emphasized the “enormous importance of winning back our former loyal ally.” Not surprisingly, the Central Committee voted unanimously in support of the Presidium’s actions.

Similarly, in later years when tensions reemerged with Yugoslavia (in large part because of the crises in 1956), Khrushchev and his colleagues again believed it wise to explain these tensions to the Central Committee. One such occasion came in December 1957, when a plenum was convened to inform Central Committee members about a two-part conference held in Moscow the previous month to mark the 40th anniversary of the Bolshevik takeover. The leaders of the thirteen ruling Communist parties had been invited to the first part of the conference on 14-16 November, but Yugoslav officials had declined to take part. When the other twelve parties met and issued a statement reaffirming the CPSU’s preeminent role in the

world Communist movement, Yugoslav leaders refused to endorse it.³² At the CPSU Central Committee plenum a few weeks after the conference, one of the highest-ranking party officials, Mikhail Suslov, who was broadly responsible for ideology and intra-bloc relations, explained to the members that “Yugoslavia’s failure to participate . . . attests to the continuing ideological disagreements between the League of Communists of Yugoslavia [LCY] and the other Communist parties of the socialist countries.”³³ He cited several areas in which “ideological disagreements remain:” the “unwillingness of the Yugoslav comrades to speak about a socialist camp, especially a socialist camp headed by the Soviet Union”; the desire of the Yugoslav authorities to “play their own special and exalted role between West and East”; and the “unduly close relationship” Yugoslavia had established with the United States, a country that was “applying pressure” on the Yugoslavs to “serve as a counterweight to the Soviet Union.” Although he insisted that “we have not retreated, and will not retreat, one step from our fundamental positions,” he assured the Central Committee that “Yugoslavia’s failure to sign the Declaration does not mean that our relations have deteriorated. . . . There is no need to stir up new tensions.”³⁴

When the matter came up again five months later, at a plenum on 7 May 1958, Soviet officials were less accommodating. Although the plenum dealt mostly with other matters, Khrushchev initiated a discussion about Yugoslavia toward the end of the third session.³⁵ He argued that the recent LCY congress had been a “step back toward revisionist, anti-party, and anti-Marxist positions,” and he condemned Yugoslavia’s close ties with Imre Nagy, the Hungarian leader who had been removed during the Soviet invasion of Hungary in November 1956 and who was put to death in Hungary in June 1958, a few weeks after the CPSU Central Committee plenum. Khrushchev also denounced statements by the Yugoslav leader, Josip Broz Tito, particularly a speech Tito had given in Pula on 11 November 1956, which raised serious concerns about the Soviet intervention in Hungary. Khrushchev informed the Central Committee that the CPSU Presidium had decided not to send a delegation to the LCY congress after the Yugoslavs had changed the agenda at the last minute. He received lengthy applause from the Central Committee when he affirmed that the Soviet Union would continue to offer “principled and constructive criticism” of Yugoslav policy whenever necessary.

It may seem peculiar that Khrushchev would have included these detailed comments about Yugoslavia after a plenum that had dealt with agricultural policy, but his remarks are indicative of the efforts that Soviet leaders made to ensure strong, unwavering support within the CPSU for the latest ideological twists and turns in relations with Yugoslavia. This is one of many instances in which documents from the former Soviet archives reveal that Yugoslavia was a more important factor for Soviet leaders during the Cold War than most Western observers had

realized.³⁶

The plenum documents also reveal that Yugoslavia was not the only East European country that complicated Moscow's efforts in the late 1950s to unite the world Communist movement under explicit Soviet leadership. The standoff with Poland in October 1956 had induced Khrushchev to reach a *modus vivendi* with the Polish leader, Wladyslaw Gomulka, which provided for Poland's continued status as a loyal member of the Soviet political and military bloc.³⁷ This arrangement was briefly strained in late October and early November 1956 when Gomulka insisted on the withdrawal of Marshal Konstantin Rokossowski, the Soviet officer who had been serving as Polish defense minister for the previous seven years; but Khrushchev eventually acceded to Gomulka's demand. Despite this breakthrough, the plenum materials confirm that Soviet-Polish relations were still marred by occasional frictions. Suslov's report at the December 1957 plenum indicated that the Polish representatives at the world conference of Communist parties in Moscow had been at odds with the Soviet Union on several key issues:

During the preparation of the documents—the Declaration and the Peace Manifesto—the Polish comrades tried to introduce their own slant by ensuring there was no reference to the leading role of the Soviet Union and by avoiding harsh attacks against imperialism, especially against American imperialism. They steadfastly objected to the passage in the Declaration that said American imperialism has become the center of international reaction. The Polish comrades argued that the peculiar circumstances they face in Poland do not yet enable them to embrace the formula “under the leadership of the Soviet Union.” They claimed that the Declaration is supposedly too bellicose a document and that it could damage relations with the imperialists.³⁸

Suslov also complained that the Polish delegation's draft of the so-called Peace Manifesto, the document that was due to be approved by the 64 Communist parties attending the second phase of the conference (on 16-19 November), was “seriously deficient” because “it made no mention of where the threat of war originated.” He emphasized that the “document prepared by the Polish comrades had to be drastically revised” because “the representatives of the other fraternal parties [including the CPSU] did not support the Polish comrades on even a single point that they raised.”

Suslov did not directly impugn the motives of the Polish authorities, but he maintained that “these allusions to some sort of special circumstances in their country don't seem particularly convincing.” Khrushchev, for his part, implied that the main reason Polish officials did not want to antagonize the United States is that they were uncertain whether U.S. banks would “still give credits” to Poland if relations deteriorated.³⁹ Despite these skeptical com-

ments, both Suslov and Khrushchev acknowledged that “the important thing is that the Polish comrades in the end signed the Declaration, which undoubtedly will have an enormous impact in Poland.”

In subsequent years, especially after the emergence of the Sino-Soviet split in the 1960s, Gomulka came more closely into line with the Soviet point of view. Even so, the plenum materials indicate that Khrushchev remained concerned that the defiance Gomulka displayed in 1956 and the unorthodox positions he adopted in 1957 might someday resurface.

Fissures in the Communist World (II): China and Albania

As important as the ideological challenge posed by Yugoslavia may have been, it was nothing compared to the rift that emerged with China at the end of the 1950s. From December 1959 on, an inordinately large number of Central Committee plenums were devoted to the subject of China and the world Communist movement. At a plenum on 22-26 December 1959, Suslov presented a detailed report on “the trip by a Soviet party-state delegation to the People's Republic of China” in October 1959.⁴⁰ This report, which had been commissioned by the CPSU Presidium on 15 October (shortly after Khrushchev and the other members of the delegation had returned to Moscow) and was approved in a draft version by the Presidium on 18 December, gave many Central Committee members the first direct inkling they had received of how serious the incipient problems with China were. Although Suslov's report did not feature the strident rhetoric and harsh polemics that would soon characterize Sino-Soviet relations, he spoke at length about the “dangerously foolish ideas of the Chinese comrades,” the “egregious economic and intra-party mistakes committed by the Chinese comrades,” and the “acute disagreements” between Moscow and Beijing on “basic matters of socialist construction.”

In addition to highlighting ideological differences, Suslov enumerated many “foreign policy issues on which major disagreements have surfaced between us and the Chinese comrades,” including Mao Zedong's rhetorical dismissal of nuclear weapons as “a paper tiger” (a claim that, in Suslov's view, was “leading the Chinese people to believe that a nuclear war would be an easy matter and that no preparations were needed”); China's aversion to peaceful coexistence with the United States (a policy that, according to Suslov, Chinese leaders “regard as merely a convenient tactical maneuver” rather than a “profound Leninist principle”); China's clumsy handling of negotiations with Japan; the recent exacerbation of tensions between China and India despite Moscow's efforts to mediate (efforts which, Suslov complained, had “not been matched by the requisite understanding on the part of Chinese leaders” because “the Chinese comrades cannot properly evaluate their own mistakes”); and the deterioration of China's relations with Indonesia, Burma, Thailand, and other East Asian countries (a trend that, in Suslov's

view, had left China “isolated in the international arena”). Of particular interest were Suslov’s comments about Mao’s “completely incomprehensible” retreat during the Sino-American crisis that erupted in August 1958 when China began bombarding the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu in the Taiwan Straits:

We [in Moscow] regarded it as our internationalist duty to come out decisively in support of the fraternal Chinese people, with whom our country is bound by alliance obligations. According to secret documents that we had intercepted, it had become clear that the ruling circles in America were already psychologically prepared to relinquish the offshore islands to the PRC. However, after precipitating an extreme situation in the vicinity of the offshore islands and making far-reaching statements, the Chinese comrades backed down at the critical moment. . . . It is obvious that in backing down, the Chinese comrades squandered things. The perception abroad was that they had caved in.⁴¹

In all these respects, Suslov argued, “the Chinese comrades are at odds with the common foreign policy line of the socialist camp. The lack of needed coordination between the two most powerful Communist parties on questions of foreign policy is abnormal.”⁴²

After recounting this litany of “serious disagreements,” Suslov emphasized that long-standing efforts to increase the appearance and reality of unity within the socialist camp made it imperative to curtail China’s deviations in foreign policy:

The incorrect actions of one of the socialist countries affects the international situation of the entire socialist camp. We must bear in mind that imperialist propaganda directly links the actions of the Chinese comrades with the policy of the USSR and other socialist countries. And indeed, our Communist parties, too, always emphasize that the socialist camp has only one foreign policy course.⁴³

Suslov declared that the Soviet Union would try to restore “complete unity” by continuing “to express our candid opinions about the most important questions affecting our common interests when our views do not coincide.” Although the aim would be to bring China back into line with the USSR, Suslov argued that if these efforts failed, the CPSU Presidium would “stick by the positions that our party believes are correct.”

Throughout the report, Suslov insisted that the disagreements were not yet irreparable. He noted several measures that could rapidly improve Sino-Soviet ties, and he pledged that the CPSU Presidium would do all it could to “strengthen and develop Soviet-Chinese friendship and unity” on the basis of “Leninist principles of equality and mutual cooperation.” Nevertheless, a key passage in his

report may have left some Central Committee members wondering whether relations with China could really be mended, at least while Mao Zedong remained in power:

It has to be said that all the mistakes and shortcomings in the internal and foreign policies of the Chinese Communist Party can be explained in large part by the cult of personality surrounding Com. Mao Zedong. Formally, the CC of the Chinese Communist Party abides by the norms of collective leadership, but in reality the most important decisions are made by one man and therefore are often plagued by subjectivism and, in some instances, are simply ill-conceived. By all appearances, the glorification of Mao Zedong in China has been growing inexorably. More and more often, statements appear in the party press that “we Chinese live in the great era of Mao Zedong.” Comrade Mao Zedong is depicted as a great leader and a genius. They call him the beacon, who is shining the way to Communism and is the embodiment of the ideas of Communism. The name of Mao Zedong is equated with the party, and vice versa. The works of Com. Mao Zedong are presented in China as the final word of creative Marxism and are placed on a par with the classic works of Marxism-Leninism.... All of this, unfortunately, impresses Com. Mao Zedong, who, judging from everything, is himself convinced of his own infallibility. This is reminiscent of the situation that existed in our country during the final years of J. V. Stalin. We, of course, weren’t able to speak with the Chinese comrades about this, but the [CPSU] plenum must be aware of these aspects of life in the Chinese Communist Party.⁴⁴

This part of Suslov’s report went well beyond any previous statements that Soviet leaders had made in forums larger than the CPSU Presidium. Up to this point, Soviet officials had said nothing in public about the problems with China, and even in private Moscow’s criticism of Mao had been subdued. Despite Suslov’s willingness to voice much stronger complaints at the Central Committee plenum, he indicated that a low-key policy should be maintained in public. Although he acknowledged that the Soviet Union would not praise or overlook what it believed to be “profound mistakes,” he averred that “we shouldn’t engage in direct criticism, since this would lead to an unnecessary public discussion which might be construed as interference in the internal affairs of the Chinese Communist Party and would induce our enemies to gloat over the discord between the CPSU and the Chinese Communist Party.” Suslov argued that, at least for the time being, the CPSU must “avoid public discussions and rely instead on private meetings and other contacts between the two parties to explain our position to the Chinese comrades.”

Despite Suslov’s hopes that the situation could be rectified and that public polemics could be avoided, the

Sino-Soviet split continued to widen. Tensions increased rapidly in the first few months of 1960, culminating in the publication of a lengthy statement by Chinese leaders in April 1960 during celebrations of the 90th anniversary of Lenin's birthday.⁴⁵ The statement, entitled "Long Live Leninism," removed any doubts that Soviet officials and diplomats still had about the magnitude of the rift between the two countries.⁴⁶ Soon thereafter, in early June 1960, all the East European governments became aware of the conflict when Chinese officials voiced strong criticism of the Soviet Union at a meeting in Beijing of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU). The dispute escalated a few weeks later at the Third Congress of the Romanian Communist Party in Bucharest, where Khrushchev sought to rebut the comments expressed at the WFTU meeting and to retaliate for China's decision to provide other delegates with copies of a confidential letter that Khrushchev had sent to the CCP leadership. The top Chinese official in Bucharest, Peng Zhen, responded in kind.⁴⁷

This confrontation was the main topic of discussion at the next CPSU Central Committee plenum, on 14-16 July 1960. Khrushchev designated one of his closest aides on the Presidium, Frol Kozlov, to present a lengthy report to the plenum outlining "the mistaken positions of the CCP CC on fundamental questions of Marxist-Leninist theory and current international relations."⁴⁸ Kozlov reiterated all the complaints voiced by Suslov seven months earlier, but the tone of his speech was much more pessimistic. Kozlov accused the Chinese leadership of "acting surreptitiously, behind the backs of the CPSU and the other fraternal parties, to create fissures and rifts in the international Communist movement and to spread its own special views, [which] contravene sacred Leninist principles." His speech prefigured the harsh rhetoric that would soon pervade Sino-Soviet exchanges.

At the next CPSU Central Committee plenum, on 10-18 January 1961, the growing acrimony in the world Communist movement was again the main topic of discussion. By this point, the Soviet Union had withdrawn all its military technicians and advisers from China, and had begun recalling its thousands of non-military personnel, causing disarray in many of China's largest economic and technical projects and scientific research programs.⁴⁹ At the plenum, Suslov presented a lengthy and—on the surface—surprisingly upbeat assessment of the "world conference" of 81 Communist parties in Moscow in November 1960. He claimed that the meeting had "successfully resolved all these problems [of disunity in the Communist world] and had marked a new, spectacular triumph of Marxism-Leninism in the international Communist movement."⁵⁰ The Soviet Union, he declared, could now "tirelessly work to strengthen the unity, cohesion, and friendship" among socialist countries.

Despite this optimistic gloss, much of Suslov's speech at the plenum actually gave grounds for deep pessimism. Although Soviet and Chinese officials had been able to

achieve a last-minute compromise that temporarily papered over their differences, this fragile "solution" had been preceded by venomous exchanges. Suslov acknowledged that, from the outset of the conference, "the Chinese Communist leaders not only had declined to reassess their mistaken views, but had grown even more adamant in espousing anti-Leninist and anti-Marxist" policies. Suslov maintained that the CPSU Presidium had "done its best to overcome its disagreements with the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party" through a series of preliminary meetings and contacts, but had failed to persuade the Chinese delegates to alter "their mistaken views on crucial matters."⁵¹ All the preparatory work for the conference, according to Suslov, had been turned by the Chinese into "a source of discord." The proceedings of the conference itself had not been made public, but Suslov informed the Central Committee that the head of the Chinese delegation, Deng Xiaoping, had delivered two speeches that were sharply at odds with the CPSU's positions, demonstrating "a complete unwillingness to find some way of overcoming the two parties' disagreements." Suslov also noted that the Albanian delegation, led by Enver Hoxha, had sided with the Chinese participants and had expressed "bizarre, malevolent, and dogmatic views aimed solely at causing tension and dividing the conference."⁵² Although Soviet leaders had been aware since mid-1960 that Albania was aligning itself with China, Hoxha's speech at the November 1960 conference, according to Suslov, had shown for the first time what a "monstrous" form this realignment was taking.

The speeches of the Chinese and Albanian delegations, Suslov told the Central Committee, had been greeted by a torrent of angry criticism. "Everyone at the conference," he claimed, "understood that the Chinese delegation's opposition to certain points," especially to a proposed statement regarding the need to overcome the "pernicious consequences of [Stalin's] personality cult," was motivated by "an awareness that this statement could be directed against all forms of personality cults, including the one in the Chinese Communist Party."⁵³ Suslov argued that the "mistaken views of the Chinese comrades" would persist so long as Mao Zedong demanded "endless glorification" and "aspired to claim a special role in the development of Marxist-Leninist theory" and the policies of the socialist bloc:

With the obvious guidance of the CCP leadership, the Chinese press is fanning the personality cult of Com. Mao Zedong and proclaiming him "the greatest Marxist-Leninist of our time" (*Renmin Ribao*, 7 October 1960), in the hope of staking out a special role for Mao Zedong in the international Communist movement. It is hardly accidental that CCP leaders have geared their actions over the past year toward the assumption of a dominant place among the fraternal Communist parties.⁵⁴

Suslov acknowledged to the Central Committee that the impasse resulting from the “obduracy” of the Chinese leadership had nearly caused the conference to collapse. Although Khrushchev was able to reach a compromise with the Chinese delegation in last-ditch talks on 30 November, the bulk of the conference had given little reason to believe that the dispute was genuinely resolved. Suslov tried to put the best face on the whole matter—claiming that “our party achieved a great moral-political victory from the conference” and that “one of the most important results of the Moscow Conference was the resumption of close contacts between the CPSU CC and the Chinese Communist Party CC”—but his lengthy account of the conference belied his expressed hope that “there is now a solid basis for the strengthening of Soviet-Chinese friendship and the unity of our parties.”⁵⁵

The precariousness of the outcome in November 1960 became evident soon after the January 1961 plenum, as the polemics and recriminations resumed behind the scenes with ever greater stridency. Before long, the dispute flared into the open, and news of the Sino-Soviet conflict spread throughout the world. Khrushchev and Mao made a few additional attempts to reconcile their countries’ differences, but the rift, if anything, grew even wider. Hopes of restoring a semblance of unity in the international Communist movement were dashed. At CPSU Central Committee plenums from late 1962 on, Soviet leaders no longer held out any hope that the split could be surmounted. Instead, they used the plenums to marshal broad support within the party for what was projected to be a long and dangerous struggle against China.

A typical session occurred in December 1963 when Khrushchev, Suslov, and a number of other CPSU Secretaries—Boris Ponomarev, the head of the CPSU CC International Department, Yurii Andropov, the head of the CPSU CC department for intra-bloc relations, and Leonid Il’ichev, the head of the CPSU CC Ideology Department—spoke at length about the “disagreements connected with the willfully divisive actions of the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party.”⁵⁶ Coming after a year of acrimonious polemics between the Soviet Union and China, the December 1963 plenum featured endless condemnations of “the CCP leadership’s resort to open polemics and other actions that, in both form and method, are unacceptable in relations between Marxist-Leninists.” The speakers at the plenum claimed that “the CCP leaders are now increasingly trying to carry their profoundly mistaken views on ideological matters into interstate relations [so that] they can destroy the friendship and cohesion of the Communist movement and weaken the anti-imperialist front.” To ensure that CPSU members at all levels would be prepared for a confrontation with China, the CPSU Secretariat decided on 16 December 1963 to expand the distribution list for the major speeches given at the plenum.⁵⁷

One of the consistent themes about Sino-Soviet relations at the Central Committee plenums in 1963, 1964,

and 1965 was the effort China had been making to lure other Communist states and parties to its camp, building on its success with Albania. As early as the January 1961 plenum, Suslov reported that China had done its best at the November 1960 conference to line up broad support for its “mistaken and divisive” positions:

I have to acknowledge that there was a small group of waverers. In addition to the Albanians, the Burmese and Malayan representatives usually followed the lead of the Chinese comrades. The reasons for this are clear: namely, that they lived and worked for a long time in Beijing. Besides the Burmese and Malaysians, the delegates from the Vietnamese Workers’ Party and the Communist parties of Indonesia, Japan, and Australia also showed signs of wavering. These parties are from countries that are geographically close to the PRC, and they have close traditional ties with the CCP. Unusual pressure was applied on their representatives [by the Chinese].⁵⁸

Over the next few years, Soviet concerns about the fissiparous effects of the Sino-Soviet split greatly increased. At the Central Committee plenum in December 1963, Yurii Andropov, the head of the CPSU CC department for intra-bloc relations, claimed that China had been secretly attempting to induce other East European countries to follow Albania’s lead. He noted that the Chinese had been focusing their efforts on Poland, Hungary, and East Germany:

The Chinese leaders are carrying out a policy of crude sabotage in relation to Poland, Hungary, and the GDR. Characteristic of this is the fact that in September of this year, during conversations with a Hungarian official in China, Politburo member Zhu De declared that China would welcome it if the Hungarian comrades diverged from the CPSU’s line. But, Zhu De threatened, if you remain on the side of the revisionists, we will have to take a stance against you.⁵⁹

Beijing’s contacts with these three countries bore little fruit in the end, but Soviet leaders obviously could not be sure of that at the time. The mere likelihood that China was seeking to foment discord within the Soviet bloc was enough to spark heightened vigilance in Moscow.

Soviet concerns increased still further over the next several months when another Warsaw Pact country, Romania, began seeking a neutral position in the Sino-Soviet dispute. Although the Romanians never went as far as the Albanians in pursuing outright alignment with China, the Romanian leader Nicolae Ceausescu refused to endorse Moscow’s polemics or to join in other steps aimed at isolating Beijing. This policy had been foreshadowed as early as February 1964, when Suslov warned the CPSU Central Committee that China was redoubling its efforts to split the Soviet bloc:

These efforts by the CCP leaders, far from being limited to the ideological sphere, extend into the sphere of practical politics among socialist countries and Communist parties. In seeking to enervate the unity and cohesion of the socialist commonwealth, the CCP leadership resorts to all manner of tricks and maneuvers to disrupt economic and political relations among the socialist countries and to sow discord in their activities on the international arena. Recently, the fissiparous and subversive actions of the Chinese leaders in the world Communist movement have drastically increased. There is no longer any doubt that Beijing is seeking to achieve a schism among the Communist parties and the creation of factions and groups that are hostile to Marxism-Leninism.⁶⁰

Suslov's warning seemed even more pertinent a year later, when Romania's defiance had become more overt. In April 1964 the Romanian government issued a stinging rejection of Khrushchev's scheme for supranational economic integration within the socialist bloc (a scheme that would have relegated Romania to being little more than a supplier of agricultural goods and raw materials for the more industrialized Communist countries).⁶¹ From then on, the Romanian authorities began reorienting their foreign trade away from the Soviet Union. By 1965, Romania's divergence from the basic foreign policy line of the Warsaw Pact countries was extending well beyond foreign economic matters. In March 1965, Ceausescu declined to take part in a Consultative Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties in Moscow, which was designed to lay the groundwork for another world conference of Communist parties, following up on the November 1960 session. Romania's refusal to attend was based, at least in part, on China's boycott of the meeting. Soviet leaders had assured Ceausescu and the Chinese authorities that, in the wake of Khrushchev's ouster in October 1964, there was an opportunity to search for "new approaches and new means of achieving unity in the world Communist movement," but neither the Chinese, nor Ceausescu, agreed to take up the offer. Romania's absence from the meeting was conspicuous as the only ruling Communist party other than China and Albania that failed to show up. (Officials from Cuba, North Vietnam, Mongolia, and North Korea all attended, as did representatives of several non-ruling Communist parties.)

At a CPSU Central Committee plenum on 24-26 March 1965, Suslov praised the consultative meeting, but noted regretfully that Romania had not taken part. He then accused the Chinese of trying to sow discord within the Warsaw Pact:

The leadership of the CCP not only is directly supporting factional groups in the fraternal countries, but is also saying that "in the future this sort of work must be greatly stepped up." The Chinese leaders declare that their disagreements with the CPSU and the other

parties are "disagreements between two hostile classes, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie," and hence they reject any attempts to improve relations between our parties.⁶²

The tone of Suslov's presentation at this plenum was far more somber than his earlier reports. He even warned of Chinese efforts to stir up unrest in the Soviet Union itself, alluding to a student demonstration that Chinese officials had orchestrated in Moscow in early March 1965 to try, as Suslov put it, to "incite an anti-Soviet hysteria."⁶³ No longer did he hold out any hope that relations with China could be ameliorated. Although Suslov affirmed that "the CPSU Presidium believes it necessary to move ahead patiently without giving in to provocations. . . to show the Chinese people our sincere desire to live with them in friendship," he acknowledged that "the Chinese leadership has completely rejected all the positive suggestions in the communiqué from the Consultative Meeting."

The increasingly harsh tone of the speeches given by Suslov and other Soviet leaders at Central Committee plenums provides a valuable way to track the deterioration of Soviet ties with China. After having sought, at the December 1959 plenum, to caution against public denunciations of China, Suslov over time had to embrace the hostile rhetoric that characterized Sino-Soviet relations. This trend corresponded with the shift in bilateral ties from the amity of the mid-1950s to the tensions in the late 1950s to the bitter dispute of the early and mid-1960s. Once the conflict was fully under way, the pronouncements by Suslov and others at the plenums were intended not only to warn about real dangers from China, but also to reassure the Central Committee that the top leaders would not compromise Soviet interests.

The Zhukov Affair

Normally, the Central Committee was not involved in military policy. That sphere of activity was left to the CPSU Presidium/Politburo, the Defense Council, the Ministry of Defense, and the CPSU CC Administrative Organs Department. Military issues were not brought before the Central Committee even for nominal approval. A partial exception came in late October 1957, when Khrushchev decided to oust Soviet defense minister Marshal Georgii Zhukov from all his senior party and ministerial positions. Khrushchev took this step to consolidate his own power, but the affair inevitably had some bearing on civil-military relations. Although it did not represent an institutional clash between civilian and military authorities (and clearly was not motivated by fears that Zhukov would try to seize power in a *coup d'état*), it reinforced the norm of the army's subordination to civilian (i.e., Communist Party) control.⁶⁴

The declassification of the October 1957 plenum materials, amounting to several thousand pages, does not fully dispel the mystery that has long surrounded the Zhukov affair. Just four months earlier, in June 1957,

Zhukov had sided with Khrushchev against the “Anti-Party Group” and had been rewarded for his efforts by being promoted to full membership on the CPSU Presidium. Khrushchev’s abrupt shift against Zhukov in October 1957 came as a shock both inside and outside the Soviet Union. The decisive maneuvers to remove Zhukov occurred while the defense minister was on an extended trip to Yugoslavia and Albania in the last few weeks of October, a trip that had been authorized by the CPSU Presidium. When Zhukov began his travels he had no inkling that he was about to be dismissed, as he acknowledged at the plenum:

Some three weeks ago, when I was instructed to set off for Yugoslavia and Albania, I said goodbye to all the members of the CC [Presidium], or at least to most of them, and we spoke as though we were the closest of friends. No one said a word to me about any problem. . . . I was not given the slightest hint that my behavior was somehow deemed improper. Only now are they saying this to me. . . . We all parted in such good spirits and warm friendship three weeks ago that it’s still hard to believe all this has suddenly happened.⁶⁵

In a remarkably short period of time after Zhukov’s departure, Khrushchev arranged with the other Presidium members (and with senior military officers) to deprive the defense minister of all his top posts. The CPSU Presidium formally endorsed the ouster of Zhukov and the appointment of a successor, Marshal Rodion Malinovskii, at a meeting on 26 October, which Zhukov was hastily summoned to attend while he was still in Albania. The announcement of his dismissal and the appointment of Malinovskii as defense minister was carried by the TASS news agency later that day. Only after Zhukov’s fate was sealed did Khrushchev convene the Central Committee.

Because the notes from Khrushchev’s earlier discussions and from the relevant Presidium meetings (especially the meetings on 19 and 26 October) have not yet been released, key information about Khrushchev’s motives in the affair is still unavailable.⁶⁶ The plenum documents show only what Khrushchev wanted the Central Committee to hear, not necessarily what he really believed. Nevertheless, the plenum materials do add some intriguing details to previous accounts and, if used circumspectly, shed considerable light on the reasons for Khrushchev’s move against his erstwhile ally.

One of the most valuable aspects of the declassified documents, repetitive and turgid though they may be, is that they clarify the allegations against Zhukov. The general case against Zhukov had been known since a few days after the plenum, when summary materials were published in the CPSU daily *Pravda*.⁶⁷ Official histories of the Soviet Army’s political organs, published in 1964 and 1968, had provided some additional information.⁶⁸ Even so, a few of the allegations were at best unclear, and in some cases it was not known precisely what Zhukov

had been accused of. Nor was it known whether Zhukov had tried to defend himself against the charges. The vast quantity of declassified testimony and supporting documentation introduced at the plenum, beginning with Suslov’s opening speech (which outlined all of Zhukov’s alleged transgressions), gives a much better sense of what the charges entailed.

For example, it had long been known that Zhukov was denounced for having proposed certain changes in high-level military organs, but it was not known precisely what his alleged intentions were. The plenum materials indicate that Zhukov was accused of having wanted to abolish the Higher Military Council, a body consisting of all the members and candidate members of the CPSU Presidium as well as all the commanders of military districts, groups of forces, and naval fleets. The Higher Military Council was under the direct jurisdiction of the Defense Council, the supreme command organ in the USSR, whose existence had not yet been publicly disclosed. According to Suslov’s speech at the plenum, Zhukov had refrained from convening the Higher Military Council and had then proposed to disband it. The CPSU Presidium, Suslov added, “rejected the defense minister’s unwise proposal.”⁶⁹

The plenum materials also clarify what Zhukov allegedly wanted to do with the extensive system of Military Councils. Each military district, group of forces, and naval fleet had its own Military Council, which consisted of regional party secretaries as well as senior commanders and political officers from the local military units. The Military Council was responsible for “upholding the constant combat and mobilization readiness of troops, the high quality of combat and political training, and the strictness of military discipline.”⁷⁰ According to Suslov, Zhukov wanted to “transform the Military Councils into informal consultative organs under the [military] commanders,” a step that supposedly would have relegated the Communist party to a subordinate role in military affairs:

It didn’t bother Com. Zhukov that the members of the Military Councils in the [military] districts include secretaries of the party’s oblast and territorial committees and secretaries of the Central Committees of the union-republic Communist parties. It was perfectly fine with him that the secretaries of oblast committees, territorial committees, and Communist party CCs would be placed “under the commanders and not given an equal voice” in the Military Councils.⁷¹

Suslov emphasized that “the existence of full-fledged Military Councils in no way detracts from the dignity and role of [military] commanders. On the contrary, the Military Councils allow the commanders to be certain that the decisions they make are appropriate.”⁷² Only a “petty tyrant,” Suslov added, would have tried to scale back the Military Councils.

Another allegation discussed at great length at the plenum was Zhukov's supposed desire to establish a "cult of personality" around himself. One of the main things cited as evidence for this accusation was the efforts that Zhukov allegedly made to highlight the depiction of his own feats in the film "Velikaya bitva" ("The Great Battle"), a documentary about the Battle of Stalingrad. The film had been commissioned in October 1953 to replace the 1943 film "Stalingrad," which was deemed to give undue prominence to Stalin's role in the campaign. The new documentary was completed in early 1957 but was then subject to a number of revisions. At the CPSU Presidium meeting on 26 October, Zhukov insisted that he had not been involved in the production of "Velikaya bitva," but Suslov argued at the plenum that Zhukov's denials "do not correspond to reality."⁷³ Relying on a letter from the Soviet minister of culture, Nikolai Mikhailov, which was drafted at Khrushchev's request after the decision to remove Zhukov had been made, Suslov claimed that the defense minister had "directly and actively intervened in the film-making" numerous times to "propagandize [his own] cult of personality."⁷⁴ Suslov cited a few other items as well—notably, the preparation of an article about World War II for the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, and the majestic depiction of Zhukov in a painting in the Soviet Army Museum—to bolster his claim that "Zhukov was deeply concerned to aggrandize his persona and his prestige, without regard for the interests of the [Communist] Party." Having waged "a struggle against the well-known abuses resulting from J. V. Stalin's cult of personality," Suslov declared, "our Party must never again permit anyone to build up a cult of personality in any form whatsoever."⁷⁵

Perhaps the most serious allegation put forth by Suslov and Khrushchev was that Zhukov had been trying to "take control of the army away from the party and to establish a one-man dictatorship in the armed forces."⁷⁶ Khrushchev argued that there was supposed to be "a division of responsibilities among [senior] members of the party," and that no single official, not even the CPSU First Secretary (much less the defense minister), could "take on all the functions of the Central Committee."⁷⁷ He condemned Zhukov for allegedly having sought to "place everything, the Committee on State Security as well as the Ministry of Internal Affairs, under the Ministry of Defense." Khrushchev added that if the situation had continued this way "for another month or so", Zhukov would have been insisting that "the Central Committee, too, must be brought under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defense."⁷⁸

Khrushchev produced no concrete evidence to substantiate these claims, but both he and Suslov specifically accused Zhukov of having sought to establish military jurisdiction over the main security organs:

Com. Zhukov recently proposed that the chairman of the Committee on State Security and the Minister of

Internal Affairs be replaced by military officers. What lay behind this suggestion? Wasn't it an attempt to fill the leading posts in these organs with his own people, with cadres who would be personally beholden to him? Isn't he seeking to establish his own control over the Committee on State Security and the Ministry of Internal Affairs?⁷⁹

Newly available evidence suggests that this charge was disingenuous, or at least highly misleading. The KGB's own top-secret history of its activities and organization, compiled in 1977, makes no mention of any such effort by Zhukov. On the contrary, the KGB textbook emphasizes that in the mid- and late 1950s "the CPSU Central Committee and the Soviet government" themselves sought to "fill the ranks of the state security organs with experienced party *and military* personnel" in order to "eliminate the consequences of the hostile activity of Beria and his accomplices."⁸⁰ To the extent that military officers were brought into the KGB and MVD after 1953, this trend was initiated and encouraged by the top political leadership. (Khrushchev and his colleagues, after all, had learned at the time of Beria's arrest that they could count on Zhukov and other senior military officers to support the CPSU.)

The spuriousness of this particular accusation reflected a more general pattern. As valuable as the plenum materials are in spelling out the case against Zhukov, the main conclusion one can draw from the documents is that the affair was little more than a personal clash between Khrushchev and Zhukov. Despite the sinister veneer that Khrushchev gave (both at the plenum and later on in his memoirs) to Zhukov's actions, the documents leave no doubt that the charges against Zhukov were largely contrived. Zhukov was justified in pointing this out during his first speech at the plenum:

I think we have gathered here not to review individual offenses. . . . That's not what this is all about. In the end, the question here is political, not juridical.⁸¹

Khrushchev's motive in convening the Central Committee was similar to his (and others') motives in orchestrating the July 1953 plenum to denounce Beria. Rather than acknowledge that the ouster of Zhukov was the latest stage in a consolidation of power, Khrushchev used the October 1957 plenum to suggest that the defense minister had been removed because of genuine concerns about the Communist Party's supervision of the army.

It is true, of course, that numerous problems existed in the Soviet armed forces in 1957, and that the military's political organs were not functioning as well as most officials had hoped. It is also true that Zhukov wanted to enforce stricter discipline in the army by establishing a more orderly chain of command and by mitigating the opportunities for insubordination. And it is true that Zhukov tended to be impatient and abrasive with his

colleagues and subordinates (both fellow soldiers and party officials), and that he went along with efforts to play up his own role in World War II. Nevertheless, these deficiencies hardly amounted to a broad indictment of Zhukov's tenure as defense minister. The activities that Suslov claimed were an attempt by Zhukov to establish a "cult of personality" were not at all unusual in the context of Soviet politics. The routine glorification of Khrushchev in the late 1950s far exceeded anything that Zhukov may have been promoting for himself. Similarly, most of the other problems that were highlighted at the plenum, both in the armed forces as a whole and in the political organs, had long existed. Zhukov may have marginally worsened a few of these problems, but he also seems to have rectified certain key deficiencies, notably by boosting morale and increasing the combat readiness of frontline units. During the one major operation that Zhukov oversaw as defense minister, the large-scale intervention in Hungary in November 1956, Soviet troops accomplished their mission within a few days despite encountering vigorous armed resistance from Hungarian insurgents.

The flimsiness of the allegations against Zhukov undoubtedly accounts for Khrushchev's decision to raise questions about Zhukov's military abilities and accomplishments. Although Khrushchev and Suslov both claimed that they "deeply value Com. Zhukov's performance during the Great Patriotic War," they also wanted to ensure that Zhukov's legendary reputation and stature would not cause members of the Central Committee to be hesitant about criticizing him. To this end, Khrushchev downplayed Zhukov's role in World War II by arguing that Vasilii Chuikov, not Zhukov, was the "chief hero" of the Stalingrad campaign. Khrushchev also rebuked Zhukov for dwelling solely on the positive aspects of his military career:

Com. Zhukov, I don't want to disparage your military accomplishments, but you should think about it a bit. You had both your successes and your failures, just as all the other generals and marshals did. Why do you insist on talking only about the successes and victories, and completely glossing over the failures?⁸²

Amplifying on this point later on, Khrushchev declared that "our [other] generals and marshals know at least as much as Zhukov does, and perhaps much more, about military organization and the other military sciences. Com. Zhukov has only a poor understanding of the latest technology."⁸³

In addition to expressing doubts about Zhukov's military prowess, Khrushchev alleged that Zhukov had advocated certain foreign policy steps that "bordered on treason." In particular, Khrushchev claimed that Zhukov "wrote a memorandum to the party's Central Committee recommending that we accept [the U.S. government's] 'Open Skies' proposal," which would have entitled the United States and the Soviet Union to fly reconnaissance

flights over one another's territory to monitor compliance with nuclear disarmament agreements. Khrushchev averred that the other members of the Presidium were startled to learn that "the defense minister, of all people, could have favored such a thing," and they "reacted with heated protests against Zhukov's proposal."⁸⁴ Khrushchev's efforts to impugn Zhukov's "adventurist" positions on "the most important foreign policy issues facing the Soviet Union" (in the phrasing of the plenum resolution) were not altogether different from the attempts in July 1953 to portray Beria's alleged views about Germany in the most unsavory light possible.

Despite the many similarities between the October 1957 plenum and the July 1953 plenum, there was one fundamental difference. Unlike Beria, who was held in prison during the July 1953 sessions and executed five months later, Zhukov was given the opportunity to speak twice at the October 1957 plenum and to interject comments from time to time during others' remarks. His first speech came after the main allegations against him had been laid out, and his second, much briefer (and more contrite) statement came just before Khrushchev's lengthy speech at the fourth session of the plenum, on the evening of October 29. On neither occasion did Zhukov project an air of angry defiance or even take as firm a stand as Molotov did in July 1955, but he defended his record at some length and rebutted the most lurid accusations against him. Overall, he left no doubt that he strongly disagreed with the grounds for his dismissal. At the same time, Zhukov had decided beforehand that it would be best if he accepted responsibility for certain "mistakes" (whether real or not) and indicated his willingness to comply with the party's wishes:

I request that you understand that [my] mistakes were not the result of any sort of deviation from the line of the party, but were the sorts of mistakes that any working official might make. I assure you, comrades (and I think I will receive appropriate support in this regard), that with the help of our party I will be able, with honor and dignity, to overcome the mistakes I have committed, and I absolutely will be a worthy figure in our party. I was and always will be a reliable member of the party.⁸⁵

Zhukov's willingness to acknowledge unspecified shortcomings reinforced the long-standing pattern of civil-military relations in the Soviet Union. If the most renowned figure in the Soviet armed forces was willing to submit himself to the discipline of the Communist Party, the norm of civilian supremacy was clearer than ever.

This is not to suggest, however, that the affair was in any way an institutional clash between the party and the military. On the contrary, the declassified plenum materials show, more strongly than ever, that the Zhukov affair was *not* a confrontation between civilian officials and military commanders. During the plenum, senior military

officers went out of their way to emphasize that Khrushchev “is not only First Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, but is also chairman of the Defense Council,” a position equivalent to commander-in-chief of the Soviet armed forces.⁸⁶ Although it is now clear that General A. S. Zheltov, the chief political officer in the Soviet Army in 1957, was instrumental in pressing for Zhukov’s ouster, a substantial number of career military officers were also behind the move. (The plenum documents suggest that Zheltov resented Zhukov mainly because Zheltov had been left off the Central Committee at the 20th Party Congress in 1956, an omission that Zheltov evidently blamed on Zhukov.⁸⁷) Zheltov’s report at the CPSU Presidium meeting on October 19 was a catalyst for the final actions to remove Zhukov, but it is clear that the preliminary maneuvering had begun well before then, with the involvement of senior military commanders. Khrushchev was able to secure a political-military consensus on the need to dismiss Zhukov.

The lack of any civilian-military disagreements on this issue is well illustrated by the plenum itself, where not a single military officer spoke in defense of Zhukov. The norm of subordination to party control outweighed any inclination that senior commanders might have had to speak even mildly in favor of the deposed minister.⁸⁸ All of Zhukov’s military colleagues and subordinates joined with Khrushchev and Suslov in denouncing Zhukov’s alleged efforts to foster a “cult of personality” and to “take control of the army away from the party.” Zhukov’s successor, Malinovskii, expressed regret that Zhukov had allowed problems in the military to become so acute that the Central Committee was forced to step in to resolve matters:

Comrades, we military officers are very glad that the plenum of the Central Committee is discussing the matter of strengthening party-political work in the Soviet Army and Navy. On the other hand, it is regrettable that we, as military officers and members of the party, have reached the point where the Central Committee itself has been compelled to intervene in this matter.⁸⁹

Even military officers who had benefited greatly during Zhukov’s tenure, such as Fleet Admiral Sergei Gorshkov, who had been appointed commander-in-chief of the Soviet navy in 1956, argued that Zhukov’s “leadership of the ministry has created an extremely agonizing, oppressive, and distasteful situation, which is totally at odds with party and Leninist principles of leadership.” Gorshkov insisted that Zhukov “regards himself as absolutely infallible” and “refuses to tolerate views different from his own, often reacting with uncontrolled rage, invective, and abuse.”⁹⁰ Other officers expressed even stronger criticism, doing their best to side completely with the party hierarchy.

So clear was the party’s dominance of the military that

even the officers who had known Zhukov the longest—Marshal Semyon Budennyi, Marshal Ivan Konev, and Marshal Sergei Biryuzov, among others—disavowed their past ties with him.⁹¹ After one of the speakers on the first day of the plenum referred to the “special friendship between Com. Konev and Marshal Zhukov,” Konev spoke with Khrushchev and sent a note to the CPSU Presidium insisting that it would be a “profound mistake to believe I was ever particularly close to Zhukov.” Konev’s denials prompted Khrushchev to begin his own speech at the plenum by “correcting the record” along the lines that Konev sought:

We don’t have any basis for suggesting that Com. Konev’s past relationship with Com. Zhukov should cast any sort of pall on Com. Konev. Com. Konev is a member of the CPSU CC and a long-time member of the party, and he always was a loyal member of the party and a worthy member of the CPSU CC. He remains so now.⁹²

By highlighting Konev’s eagerness to renounce his previous ties with Zhukov, Khrushchev underscored the consensus against the deposed minister and let the full Central Committee see that, despite Zhukov’s misdeeds, high-ranking military officers were no different from other “true Communists” in placing party loyalty above personal relationships.

One final point worth mentioning about the October 1957 plenum is the valuable light it sheds on the state of the Soviet armed forces in the mid- to late 1950s. Intriguing information about this matter can be found not only in the proceedings, but in the collection of documents associated with the plenum. These documents consist mainly of various drafts of the plenum resolution and the “Closed Letter” that was eventually distributed to all CPSU members about the Zhukov affair.⁹³ The letter itself adds nothing to the many charges outlined at the plenum, but one of the other documents released to the Central Committee, a top-secret “Order of the USSR Minister of Defense,” signed by Zhukov and the chief of the Soviet General Staff, Marshal Vasilii Sokolovskii, on 12 May 1956, provides an interesting assessment of “the state of military discipline in the Soviet Army and Navy” in the mid-1950s.⁹⁴ Zhukov and Sokolovskii highlighted problems in the Soviet armed forces that seem remarkably similar to many of the ills afflicting today’s Russian armed forces:

Both the army and the navy are plagued by a huge number of crimes and extraordinary incidents, of which the most serious dangers are posed by: cases of insubordination to commanders and, what is particularly unacceptable in the army, the voicing of insults to superiors; outrageous behavior by servicemen vis-à-vis the local population; desertion and unexplained leaves of absence by servicemen; and accidents and

disasters with aviation transport, combat aircraft, and ships.

The problem of drunkenness among servicemen, including officers, has taken on vast dimensions in the army and navy. As a rule, the majority of extraordinary incidents and crimes committed by servicemen are connected with drunkenness.

The extremely unsatisfactory state of military discipline in many units and formations of the army, and especially in the navy, prevents troops from being maintained at a high level of combat readiness and undermines efforts to strengthen the Armed Forces.⁹⁵

The standards used by Zhukov and Sokolovskii may have been a good deal higher than those used today, and the pervasiveness of “unsavory phenomena” is undoubtedly greater now than it was then. Some of these problems had been known earlier from the testimony of emigres/defectors and occasional articles in the Soviet press.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, it is striking (and comforting) to see that dissatisfaction about the state of military discipline was nearly as great in Moscow some 40-45 years ago as it is today.

Concluding Observations

This overview of the structure, context, and content of declassified materials from Central Committee plenums shows both the limitations and the potential value of these documents. So long as scholars bear in mind that the Central Committee was not a decision-making body and that the plenums were carefully managed by top CPSU officials for their own purposes, the documents can yield a good deal of useful information. Some of the materials provide fresh insights into key trends and events, including domestic changes in the Soviet Union and important episodes from the Cold War. Other documents are important mainly because of what they reveal about the manipulation of the plenums by senior officials. One of the most salient features of the plenums during the first five years after Stalin’s death was the spillover from the leadership struggle. Even when the plenums were supposed to focus on crucial domestic or foreign issues, the divisions among top leaders had a far-reaching effect on the proceedings. By the late 1950s, after Khrushchev had dislodged his major rivals and consolidated his position as CPSU First Secretary, the plenums increasingly were devoted to the growing rift between the Soviet Union and China. This theme continued even after Khrushchev was unexpectedly removed in 1964.

The plenum materials cover only selected portions of Soviet history and Soviet foreign policy. Many topics were barely considered at all by the Central Committee. The plenum documents are no substitute for the vastly more important and far more voluminous records of the supreme decision-making body in the Soviet Union, the

CPSU Presidium/Politburo. Those records, unfortunately, are still largely sealed. Yet even if the Politburo archives are eventually made fully accessible, the plenum materials will remain a valuable, indeed indispensable, source. Although the plenum transcripts and supplementary documents must be used with great caution, they provide a wealth of insights into the role of the Central Committee in Soviet policy-making.

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¹ The materials at RTsKhIDNI for Central Committee plenums from 1918 to 1941 are stored in Opis’ 2 of Fond 17. Unlike at TsKhSD, the items at RTsKhIDNI do not constitute a separate *fond*.

² In the Soviet/Russian archival lexicon, the word *opis*’ refers both to a segment of a *fond* and to the finding aid or catalog that specifies what is contained in that segment.

³ “Perechen’ dokumentov Arkhiva Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii, Tsentra khraneniya sovremennoi dokumentatsii, Rossiiskogo tsentra khraneniya i izucheniya dokumentov noveishei istorii, Tsentra khraneniya dokumentov molodezhnykh organizatsii, rassekrechennykh Komissiei po rassekrechivaniyu dokumentov, sozdannykh KPSS, v 1994-1995,” Moscow, 1996. A slightly abridged version of this list was published in *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya* (Moscow), No. 3 (May-June 1996), pp. 249-253.

⁴ Conversation in Moscow between the author and Natal’ya Tomilina, director of TsKhSD, 14 July 1997. This was not the only aspect of the commission’s report that was highly misleading. The report contains *fond* and *opis*’ numbers of collections that supposedly have been “declassified,” but it fails to mention that a large number of *dela* in many of these *opisi* are in fact still classified. For example, the commission’s list of “declassified documents” includes Opis’ 128 of Fond 17 at RTsKhIDNI, which is divided into two volumes. One would expect, based on this listing, that all documents from both volumes of the *opis*’ would be freely accessible, but it turns out that the entire second volume, amounting to 504 *dela*, is still classified, and even in the first volume only some of the 702 *dela* are actually available to researchers. (The only way to determine which files in the first volume are really declassified is to ask the head of the RTsKhIDNI reading room before submitting a request.) Similarly, at TsKhSD only a small fraction of the *dela* in many of the purportedly “declassified” collections are genuinely accessible. Even when files at TsKhSD are nominally “declassified,” they may still be off limits because they supposedly contain “personal secrets” (*lichnye tainy*), which have to be processed by an entirely separate commission. Because of the barriers posed by classified files and files that allegedly contain personal secrets, very few files from some of the “declassified” *opisi* at TsKhSD are actually given out. (This problem is compounded when, as in the case of Opisi 22 and 28 of Fond 5 at TsKhSD, only the film reels are lent out. If one *dela* on a reel is proscribed, all other *dela* on the reel are also off limits unless a researcher can convince the archivists to have a staff member serve as a monitor for several hours while the researcher uses the “permitted” *dela* on the reel.)

⁵ 5 May 1941 (Delo 1a); 10 October 1941 (Delo 2); 27 January 1944 (Dela 3-5); 11, 14, and 18 March 1946 (Dela 6-8); 21, 22, 24, and 26 February 1947 (Dela 9-20); 16 October 1952 (Dela 21-22); 5 March 1953 (Dela 23-24); 14 March 1953 (Dela 25-26); 2-7 July 1953 (Dela 27-45); 3-7 September 1953 (Dela 46-61); 23 February-2 March 1954 (Dela 62-89); 21-24 June 1954 (Dela 90-109); 25-31 January 1955 (Dela 110-138); 4-12 July 1955 (Dela 139-180); 13

February 1956 (Dela 181-184); 27 February 1956 (Dela 185-187); 22 June 1956 (Dela 188); 20-24 December 1956 (Dela 189-208); 13-14 February 1957 (Dela 209-221); 22-29 June 1957 (Dela 222-259); 28-29 October 1957 (Dela 260-272); 16-17 December 1957 (Dela 273-284); 25-26 February 1958 (Dela 285-298); 26 March 1958 (Dela 319-327); 6-7 May 1958 (Dela 304-318); 17-18 June 1958 (Dela 319-327); 5 September 1958 (Dela 328-332); 12 November 1958 (Dela 333-338); 15-19 December 1958 (Dela 339-360); 24-29 June 1959 (Dela 361-397); 22-26 December 1959 (Dela 398-448); 4 May 1960 (Dela 449-452); 13-16 July 1960 (Dela 453-485); 10-18 January 1961 (Dela 486-536); 19 June 1961 (Dela 537-543); 14 October 1961 (Dela 544-548); 31 October 1961 (Dela 549-553); 5-9 March 1962 (Dela 554-582); 23 April 1962 (Dela 583-587); 19-23 November 1962 (Dela 588-623); 18-21 June 1963 (Dela 624-658); 9-13 December 1963 (Dela 659-696); 10-15 February 1964 (Dela 697-743); 11 July 1964 (Dela 744-747); 10 October 1964 (Dela 748-753); 16 November 1964 (Dela 754-764); 24-26 March 1965 (Dela 765-786); 27-29 September 1965 (Dela 787-805); 6 December 1965 (Dela 806-812); 19 February 1966 (Dela 813-817); and 26 March 1966 (Dela 818-822).

⁶ See, for example, the standardized form (classified “sekretno”) that was circulated along with appropriate transcript pages to each speaker, in TsKhSD, Fond (F.) 2, Opis’ (Op.) 1, Delo (D.) 268, List (L.) 15.

⁷ The name of the CPSU CC Politburo was changed to the “CPSU CC Presidium” at the 19th Party Congress in October 1952. The name was changed back to the Politburo just before the 23rd Party Congress in March 1966.

⁸ See, for example, “Tov. Sukovoi E. N.,” 18 March 1958, memorandum on materials to include in the final stenographic account of the plenum held on 28-29 October 1957, in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 269, L. 79, as well as the attachment on Ll. 80-145.

⁹ This is in contrast to the plenum documents in Opis’ 2 of Fond 17 at RTsKhIDNI. RTsKhIDNI gives out only the microfilms of these documents.

¹⁰ Useful compilations of the materials published after Central Committee plenums from 1953 through the late 1980s are available in two sources: *Kommunisticheskaya partiya Sovetskogo Soyuza v rezolyutsiyakh i resheniyakh s’ezdov, konferentsii, i plenumov TsK*, various editions (Moscow: Politizdat, various years); and the 29 volumes of the CPSU yearbook published between 1957 and 1989, *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika* (Moscow: Politizdat, published biennially until the mid-1960s and annually thereafter). From 1989 to 1991, the new Central Committee journal *Izvestiya TsK KPSS* featured stenographic accounts of selected plenums, including some from the pre-Gorbachev era.

¹¹ The term “Central Committee” refers here exclusively to the body comprising 200-300 people who convened for plenums. Even when plenums were not in session, many resolutions and directives were issued in the name of the Central Committee, but these were actually drafted and approved by the Politburo or Secretariat, not by the Central Committee itself. Soviet officials also frequently used the term “Central Committee” to refer to the whole central party apparatus, but this, too, gives a misleading impression of the Central Committee’s role. The term is used here only in its narrowest sense.

¹² See, for example, the marked-up draft “Postanovlenie plenuma TsK KPSS: Ob uluchshenii partiino-politicheskoi raboty v Sovetskoi Armii i Flote,” October 1957 (Secret), in “Materialy k Protokolu No. 5 zasedaniya plenuma TsK KPSS 28-29. 10. 1957 g.,” in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 261, Ll. 69-74.

¹³ The term “circular flow of power” was coined by Robert V. Daniels in “Soviet Politics Since Khrushchev,” in John W. Strong, ed., *The Soviet Union Under Brezhnev and Kosygin* (New York: Van Nostrand-Reinhold, 1971), p. 20. Daniels had developed the basic interpretation at some length more than a decade earlier in his *The Conscience of the Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), and similar views had been elaborated by numerous

scholars such as Merle Fainsod and Leonard Schapiro.

¹⁴ On this general problem, see Mark Kramer, “Archival Research in Moscow: Progress and Pitfalls,” *Cold War International History Bulletin*, Issue No. 3 (Fall 1993), p. 34.

¹⁵ For an analysis and translation of these notes and supplementary materials, see Mark Kramer, “Special Feature: New Evidence on Soviet Decision-Making and the 1956 Polish and Hungarian Crises,” *Cold War International History Bulletin*, Issue No. 8-9 (Winter 1996/1997), pp. 358-410.

¹⁶ Almost all of the transcripts that were released in the early 1990s are now accessible in Fond 89 of TsKhSD. For a convenient, cross-indexed, and chronological list of these transcripts compiled by I. I. Kudryavtsev and edited by V. P. Kozlov, see *Arkhivy Kremlya i Staroi Ploshchadi: Dokumenty po “Delu KPSS”*—Annotirovannyyi spravochnik dokumentov, predstavlenykh v Konstitutsionnyi Sud RF po “Delu KPSS”, (Novosibirsk: Siberskii Khronograf, 1995).

¹⁷ The two most valuable collections put out by the Gorbachev Foundation are Mikhail Gorbachev, ed., *Gody trudnykh reshenii* (Moscow: Alfa-Print, 1993); and A. V. Veber et al., eds., *Soyuz možno bylo sokhranit’—Belaya kniga: Dokumenty i fakty o politike M. S. Gorbacheva po reformirovaniyu i sokhraneniyu mnogonatsional’nogo gosudarstva* (Moscow: Aprel’-85, 1995). Some relevant items also have appeared in the Foundation’s journal *Svobodnaya mysl’*. The items published in *Istochnik* (e.g., about the Politburo’s immediate reaction to the Chernobyl accident) seem to have been released for the same reason that materials were turned over earlier to the Constitutional Court.

¹⁸ In a typical case, Khrushchev attributed to Beria “dangerous and counterrevolutionary” policies that Khrushchev himself had devised only a few weeks earlier for Latvia, Estonia, and Moldavia. See “Voprosy Latviiskoi SSR (Proekt),” 7 June 1953 (Top Secret), “Voprosy Estonskoi SSR (Proekt),” 8 June 1953 (Top Secret), and “Voprosy Moldavskoi SSR (Proekt),” 8 June 1953, all from N. S. Khrushchev to the CPSU Presidium, in TsKhSD, F. 5, Op. 30, D. 6, Ll. 20-29; F. 5, Op. 15, D. 445, Ll. 46, 267-277; and F. 5, Op. 15, D. 443, Ll. 29-59, respectively.

¹⁹ For the published version, see “Delo Beria,” two parts, in *Izvestiya TsK KPSS* (Moscow), No. 1 (January 1991), pp. 139-214, and No. 2 (February 1991), pp. 141-208. As discussed below, the published stenographic account differs substantially from the verbatim transcript, though the comments here apply just as much to the verbatim transcript.

²⁰ For extensive evidence of this, see my forthcoming article on “The Post-Stalin Succession Struggle and Upheavals in East-Central Europe: Internal-External Linkages in Soviet Policy-Making.”

²¹ Even a prominent scholar like Amy Knight, who is deservedly skeptical of many of the charges lodged against Beria, uncritically accepts the statements made about East Germany. See her *Beria: Stalin’s First Lieutenant* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 193-200.

²² “Plenum Tsentral’nogo Komiteta KPSS, 2-7 iyulya 1953 g.,” July 1953 (Strictly Secret), in TsKhSD, Fond (F.) 2, Opis’ (Op.) 1, Delo (D.) 29, List (L.) 51.

²³ This was the case, for example, with the plenum on 24-26 March 1965. A new, 22-page text was inserted by Mikhail Suslov in place of his original report to the plenum, “Soobshchenie ob itogakh Konsul’tativnoi vstrechi kommunisticheskikh i rabochikh partii,” in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 766, Ll. 81-102. Suslov indicated at the bottom of the new version that “[t]his text should be used in place of the stenogram.”

²⁴ Sometimes, the changes that turn up can be both amusing and revealing about events and individual leaders. For example, at the plenum in late October 1957, a few weeks after the Soviet “Sputnik” had been launched into orbit, Khrushchev boasted that “we now have European missiles, which can strike targets all over Europe without leaving our territory.” In the left-hand margin of the verbatim transcript, the first editor wrote a large question mark next to this

passage. The second editor changed it to read: "We now have medium-range missiles, that is, European missiles, which can strike targets all over Europe after being launched from our territory." See the marked-up verbatim transcript "Rech' tov. N. S. Khrushcheva na plenum TsK KPSS, 29 oktyabrya 1957 goda," 29 October 1957 (Strictly Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 269, L. 66.

²⁵ Khrushchev's speech, "Doklad Pervogo sekretarya TsK KPSS Khrushcheva N. S. 'Ob itogakh sovetsko-yugoslavskikh peregovorov,'" is in "plenum TsK KPSS—XIX Sozyv: Stenogramma desyatogo zasedaniya 9 iyulya 1955 g. (utrennego)," July 1955 (Strictly Secret), TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 172, Ll. 1-138.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, L. 105.

²⁷ "Plenum TsK KPSS—XIX Sozyv: Stenogramma trinadtsatogo zasedaniya 11 iyulya 1955 g. (vechernego)," July 1955 (Strictly Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 175, Ll. 135-136.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, L. 149.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, Ll. 172-183.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, L. 179.

³¹ The sessions on Yugoslavia in July 1955 were designed to inform the Central Committee about actions already taken, not to consult it in advance. This is fully in line with the analysis above of the Central Committee's role in Soviet policy-making.

³² "Deklaratsiya Soveshchaniya predstavitelei kommunisticheskikh i rabochikh partii sotsialisticheskikh stran, sostayavshegosya v Moskve 14-16 noyabrya 1957 goda," *Pravda* (Moscow), 22 November 1957, pp. 1-2.

³³ "Plenum TsK KPSS—XX Sozyv: Stenogramma tret'ego i chetvertogo zasedanii plenuma TsK KPSS 16-17 dekabrya 1957 g.," in F. 2, Op. 1, D. 282, Ll. 161-182.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, L. 172.

³⁵ "Plenum TsK KPSS—XX Sozyv: Stenogramma tret'ego zasedaniya 7 maya 1958 g. (vechernego)," May 1958 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 317, Ll. 57-93.

³⁶ Among numerous other examples of the important ideological role that Yugoslavia played in Soviet policy-making was the close attention that Soviet leaders paid in 1968 to Yugoslavia's influence on the reformist officials in Czechoslovakia. See, for example, the plethora of documents in TsKhSD, F. 5, Op. 60, Dd. 279 and 284. Whenever Soviet leaders detected hints (or what they construed as hints) that "Titoist" ideology was filtering into Czechoslovakia, they raised the issue with the Czechoslovak authorities and discussed the matter at length during CPSU Politburo meetings.

³⁷ See Kramer, "New Evidence on Soviet Decision-Making and the 1956 Polish and Hungarian Crises," pp. 360-362.

³⁸ "Plenum TsK KPSS—XX Sozyv: Stenogramma tret'ego i chetvertogo zasedanii plenuma TsK KPSS 16-17 dekabrya 1957 g.," in F. 2, Op. 1, D. 282, Ll. 173-174.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, L. 174.

⁴⁰ "O poezdke sovetskoj partiino-pravitel'stvennoi delegatsii v Kitaiskuyu Narodnuyu Respubliku," plus extensive modifications and insertions incorporated by Suslov, in "Materialy k Protokolu No. 15 zasedaniya plenuma TsK KPSS," 22-26 December 1959 (Strictly Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 447, Ll. 57-91. For background on this trip, see Mark Kramer, "Sino-Soviet Relations on the Eve of the Split," *Cold War International History Bulletin*, Issue No. 6-7 (Winter 1995/1996), pp. 170-186.

⁴¹ "O poezdke sovetskoj partiino-pravitel'stvennoi delegatsii v Kitaiskuyu Narodnuyu Respubliku," L. 71. The sentence referring to the interception of secret documents and the U.S. government's alleged readiness to surrender Quemoy and Matsu did not appear in Suslov's initial draft. It was added during the revisions shortly before the plenum.

⁴² *Ibid.*, L. 80.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, L. 81.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Ll. 88-89.

⁴⁵ "Long Live Leninism!" was first published in *Hongqi* (Beijing), No. 8 (16 April 1960), and then republished in translation in *Peking*

Review, Vol. III, No. 17 (April 1960), pp. 14-22.

⁴⁶ See, for example, the interview with the former head of the Soviet "missile group" in China, General Aleksandr Savel'ev, in Aleksandr Dolinin, "Kak nashi raketniki kitaitsev obuchali," *Krasnaya zvezda* (Moscow), 13 May 1995, p. 6.

⁴⁷ For a lively account of the Bucharest session, which includes details omitted from the official transcript, see Edward Crankshaw, *The New Cold War: Moscow v. Peking* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1963), pp. 97-110.

⁴⁸ "Doklad na plenum TsK KPSS ob itogakh Soveshchaniya predstavitelei bratskikh partii v Bukhareste i ob oshibochnykh pozitsiyakh rukovodstva TsK KPSS po nekotorym printsipial'nym voprosam marksistsko-leninskoi teorii i sovremennykh mezhdunarodnykh otnoshenii," 13 July 1960 (Strictly Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 472, Ll. 2-74.

⁴⁹ For a useful account of this process by a participant, see Mikhail A. Klochko, *Soviet Scientist in Red China* (Montreal: International Publishers Representatives, 1964), esp. pp. 164-188. See also Dolinin, "Kak nashi raketniki kitaitsev obuchali," p. 6.

⁵⁰ "Ob itogakh Soveshchaniya predstavitelei kommunisticheskikh i rabochikh partii," in "Materialy k Protokolu No. 18 zasedaniya plenuma TsK KPSS, 10-18 yanvarya 1961 g.," January 1961 (Strictly Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 495, Ll. 11-85. The quoted passage is on L. 12.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, L. 33.

⁵² *Ibid.*, Ll. 55-57.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, L. 45.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, Ll. 65-66.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, Ll. 78, 87.

⁵⁶ See the marked-up versions of the presentations in "Materialy k Protokolu No. 6 zasedaniya plenuma TsK KPSS, 13 dekabrya 1963 g.: O deyatelnosti Prezidiuma TsK KPSS po ukrepleniyu edinstva kommunisticheskogo dvizheniya, postanovlenie Sekretariata TsK KPSS ob izdanii tekstov vystuplenii na plenum TsK Ponomareva B. N., Andropova Yu. V., i Il'icheva L. F., rechi sekretarei TsK KPSS Ponomareva, Andropova, Il'icheva, i Khrushcheva N.S.," 9-13 December 1963 (Strictly Secret), F. 2, Op. 1, D. 665.

⁵⁷ "Vypiska iz protokola No. 90/257gs zasedaniya Sekretariata TsK ot 16.XII.1963 g.," 16 December 1963 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 693, L. 4.

⁵⁸ "Ob itogakh Soveshchaniya predstavitelei kommunisticheskikh i rabochikh partii," Ll. 61-62.

⁵⁹ "Rech' Sekretarya TsK KPSS tov. Andropova Yu. V. na dekabrskom (1963 g.) plenuma TsK KPSS," No. P2002, (Top Secret), 9-13 December 1963, in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 665, L. 30.

⁶⁰ "Bor'ba KPSS za splochnost' mirovogo kommunisticheskogo dvizheniya: Doklad tovarishcha M. A. Suslova na plenum TsK KPSS 14 fevralya 1964 goda," P. 480, in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 731, L. 158ob.

⁶¹ Romanian Press Agency, *Statement on the Stand of the Romanian Workers' Party Concerning Problems of the World Communist and Working Class Movement* (Bucharest: Agerpres, 1964).

⁶² "Soobshchenie ob itogakh Konsul'tativnoi vstrechi kommunisticheskikh i rabochikh partii," Ll. 98-99.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, Ll. 105-106.

⁶⁴ For an excellent analysis of the Zhukov affair written long before the archives were opened, see Timothy J. Colton, *Commissars, Commanders, and Civilian Authority: The Structure of Soviet Military Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 175-195. Colton's account holds up very well in the light of the new evidence.

⁶⁵ "Plenum TsK KPSS 28-29 oktyabrya 1957 g. XX Sozyv: Stenogramma vtorogo zasedaniya," 27-29 October 1957 (Strictly Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 266, L. 57.

⁶⁶ One item that *has* been released in the materials gathered for the plenum, a letter from the Soviet minister of culture, Nikolai Mikhailov, to the CPSU Presidium, indicates that Zhukov's ouster

was assured as of 25 October, the day before the CPSU Presidium formally approved the measure. See “V Prezidium TsK KPSS,” 25 October 1957 (Secret), from N. Mikhailov, in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 261, Ll. 45-51. No doubt, other documents, not yet released, will shed greater light on the timing and motives of Khrushchev’s actions.

⁶⁷ “Informatsionnoe soobshchenie o plenum Tsentral’nogo Komiteta KPSS” and “Postanovlenie plenuma TsK KPSS ob uluchshenii partiino-politicheskoi raboty v Sovetskoii Armii i Flote,” *Pravda* (Moscow), 3 November 1957, pp. 1-3.

⁶⁸ Yu. P. Petrov, *Partiinoe stroitel’stvo v Sovetskoii Armii i Flote (1918-1961)* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1964), pp. 460-462; and Yu. P. Petrov, *Stroitel’stvo politorganov, partiinykh i komsomol’skikh organizatsii Armii i Flota (1918-1968)* (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1968), pp. 434-439.

⁶⁹ “Doklad tov. Suslova M. A.: Ob uluchshenii partiino-politicheskoi raboty v Sovetskoii Armii i Flote,” 28 October 1957 (Strictly Secret), in “plenum TsK KPSS 28-29 oktyabrya 1957 g., XX Sozyv: Stenogramma pervogo zasedaniya (utrennego),” 27-29 October 1957 (Strictly Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 266, L. 14.

⁷⁰ Marshal S. F. Akhromeev, et al., eds., *Voennyi entsiklopedicheskii slovar’*, 2nd ed. (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1986), p. 146.

⁷¹ “Doklad tov. Suslova M. A.,” Ll. 15-16.

⁷² *Ibid.*, L. 16.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, L. 21.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* For the letter from Mikhailov, see “V Prezidium TsK KPSS,” as cited in Note 61 *supra*. When evaluating Mikhailov’s letter, it is important to bear in mind that the letter was not written spontaneously. Mikhailov had been instructed by Khrushchev to write such a letter, and his detailed assertions must be judged accordingly.

⁷⁵ “Doklad tov. Suslova M. A.,” Ll. 4, 17-18.

⁷⁶ “Materialy k Protokolu No. 5 zasedaniya plenuma TsK KPSS,” L. 72.

⁷⁷ “Rech’ tov. N. S. Khrushcheva,” Ll. 60-61. This passage in the verbatim transcript was deleted from the stenographic account.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, L. 61.

⁷⁹ “Doklad tov. Suslova M. A.,” L. 21.

⁸⁰ Lieut.-General V. M. Chebrikov et al., eds., *Istoriya sovetskikh organov gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti*, No. 12179, Top Secret (Moscow: Vysshaya Krasnoznamenayaya Shkola Komiteta Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti, 1977), p. 532 (emphasis added). This lengthy textbook is still classified in Moscow, but a copy was unearthed in Riga by the Latvian scholar Indulis Zalite, who is now head of the Center for Documentation of the Consequences of Totalitarianism, a leading research institute in Riga. He generously allowed me to photocopy it and many other Soviet KGB documents that are currently inaccessible in Moscow.

⁸¹ “Plenum TsK KPSS, oktyabr’ 1957 goda: Stenogramma tret’ego zasedaniya (utrennego),” in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 266, L. 60.

⁸² “Rech’ tov. N. S. Khrushcheva na plenum TsK KPSS, 29 oktyabrya 1957 g.,” 29 October 1957 (Strictly Secret), in “plenum TsK KPSS, oktyabr’ 1957 goda: Stenogramma chetvertogo zasedaniya plenuma TsK KPSS,” in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 269, L. 45.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, L. 65. This passage in the verbatim transcript was toned down in the final stenographic account.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, Ll. 58-59.

⁸⁵ “Plenum TsK KPSS 28-29 oktyabrya 1957 g. XX Sozyv: Stenogramma vtorgogo zasedaniya,” L. 76.

⁸⁶ “Plenum TsK KPSS, oktyabr’ 1957 goda, XX Sozyv: Stenogramma tret’ego zasedaniya plenuma TsK KPSS, 28-29.10.1957 g.,” in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 268, L. 77.

⁸⁷ See the comments to this effect in “Rech’ tov. N. S. Khrushcheva,” Ll. 5-6.

⁸⁸ Malinovskii, who had been a first deputy minister during Zhukov’s tenure, started his remarks with a positive observation (saying that “he had no ill feelings toward Com. Zhukov” and had

“always gotten along well” with him), but then offered a highly critical assessment. “Plenum TsK KPSS, oktyabr’ 1957 goda, XX Sozyv: Stenogramma vtorgogo zasedaniya plenuma TsK KPSS,” 28 October 1957 (Strictly Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 267, Ll. 63-64.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, L. 64.

⁹⁰ “Plenum TsK KPSS, oktyabr’ 1957 goda, XX Sozyv: Stenogramma pervogo zasedaniya plenuma TsK KPSS,” 28 October 1957 (Strictly Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 266, Ll. 123-124.

⁹¹ See, for example, the speeches recorded in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, Dd. 267, 268, and 269.

⁹² “Rech’ tov. N. S. Khrushcheva,” Ll. 4-5.

⁹³ “Materialy k Protokolu No. 5 zasedaniya plenuma TsK KPSS 28-29. 10. 1957 g.,” in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 261. The drafts of the closed letter, “Zakrytoe pis’mo Tsentral’nogo Komiteta KPSS ko vsem partiinym organizatsiyam predpriyatii, kolhozov, uchrezhdenii, partiinym organizatsiyam Sovetskoii Armii i Flota, k chlenam i kandidatam v chleny Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soyuza,” are found on Ll. 99-122ob.

⁹⁴ “Prikaz Ministra oborony SSSR No. 0090, 12 maya 1956 g., o sostoyanii voinskoi distsipliny v Sovetskoii Armii i Voenno-Morskoi Flote i merakh po ee ukreplenyu,” 12 May 1956 (Top Secret), signed by G. Zhukov and V. Sokolovskii, in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 1, D. 261, Ll. 31-35.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, L. 32.

⁹⁶ Herbert Goldhamer, *The Soviet Soldier: Soviet Military Management at the Troop Level* (New York: Crane, Russak & Company, 1975), pp. 141-169.

Central Committee Plenums, 1941-1966: Contents and Implications

By Gael Moullec

Since the collapse of the USSR, the doors of the Soviet archives are partially open to Russian and foreign researchers and we can say that the balance sheet is, for today, “on the whole, positive.” At the same time, however, faced with the multiplicity and diversity of meticulous scientific publications,¹ the historian has the right to ask: Is Soviet history hiding collections of unedited documents, worthy of publication in full?

In order to better grasp the importance of this question, we must keep in mind the fact that we are studying a system that made a veritable religion of secrecy. Currently, we are only in possession of very weak documentation on Soviet decision-making and on the exact terms of the decrees adopted at the top of the State-Party pyramid. In contrast to historians of France, we have neither an official journal nor a complete anthology of laws. Thus, after five years of a democratic regime, the collection of the joint decisions of the Soviet Central Committee and Council of Ministers is still stamped “for official use” and doesn’t include any secret decisions, clearly the most important ones.² Still more serious, the titles, (let alone the texts) of Politburo resolutions made after 1953 have not yet been declassified and the preparatory materials for these resolutions (notes, reports, etc.) remain inaccessible in the Archive of the President of the Russian Federation (APRF).

Happily, in February 1995, the files containing the documents of the plenary sessions of the Central Committee of the VKP(b)-CPSU³ which took place between 1941 and 1966 were declassified and transferred from the APRF to the Center for the Storage of Contemporary Documentation (TsKhSD).⁴

[A chronological classification of plenum files follows and can be found in the CWIHP Electronic Bulletin.]

Four major themes run through the plenum materials. The first has to do with major reports about the economic life of the country, especially agricultural reforms. Thus, we note the importance of the plenary session of 23 February to 2 March 1954 dedicated to the development of the “virgin lands” of northern Kazakhstan, of Siberia, of the Altai, and of the southern Urals. Less than a year later, at the 25-31 January 1955 plenum, Khrushchev returned again to the necessity of launching a major campaign to grow corn. In addition to agricultural reform, Khrushchev’s project also emphasized expanding the production of consumer goods. In this respect, the 6-7 May 1958 plenums sanctioned the reorientation of the chemical industry towards the production of synthetic

material to meet the needs of the population. This subject deserves a special study of its own.

These transcripts also offer a view into the inner-workings of the *nomenklatura*. Personnel changes at the head of the Soviet Party and State resulted in particularly violent settlements of accounts. Strong language was employed to discredit adversaries in the eyes of the Party “Parliament” which at least on paper made the final decision regarding the nomination and dismissal of leaders. Plenum transcripts concerning the dismissal of Beria, the demise of the antiparty group, and the removal of Khrushchev have already appeared in the journal *Istoricheskii archiv*.⁵ Therefore I use as an example the dismissal of Bulganin, decided by the 26 March 1958 plenum without even a hint of discussion. During the 5 September 1958 plenum, Suslov returned to this issue in order to justify this decision, certainly imposed by the Presidium on a Central Committee that possibly still needed convincing.

[The full citation is available on the CWIHP website.]

Another aspect of these transcripts is to present, from the inside, the formulation of Soviet foreign policy. One cannot hope to find in these transcripts “revelations” on the diverse interventions of Soviet troops which adorned the period or on major international crises. These subjects are part of the “private preserve” of the Politburo and they never directly appear in the plenum debates. These documents, however, do furnish us with supplementary information about specifics of Soviet foreign policy. An example of this is the angry altercation given below between Khrushchev and Molotov during the 4-12 July 1955 plenum devoted to the results of the Soviet-Yugoslav discussions.⁶

[The citation is available on the CWIHP website.]

The question of Soviet-Chinese relations was also broadly discussed during the 13-16 July 1960 plenums on the eve of the withdrawal of Soviet experts from China. [Ed. note: On this, see Chen Jian, “A Crucial Step Toward the Sino-Soviet Schism: The Withdrawal of Soviet Experts from China, July 1960” in *CWIHP Bulletin* 7, pp. 246-250.] More than Suslov’s report on the ideological differences between the two parties, it is the statements of Khrushchev which clarified the lack of understanding between Mao and the Soviet leader.⁷

Finally, these transcripts also shed some light on more specific questions about the organization of cultural life in

the Soviet Union, the circuitous route that a non-conformist manuscript had to follow to be published, and the resistance of certain sectors to all forms of change.

Khrushchev: A number of you have most certainly read the novel by Solzhenitsyn, *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, published in the last issue of *Novyi Mir*⁸ ...

[A few months ago] Comrade Tvardovskii, the editor in chief of *Novyi Mir*, sent me a letter and the manuscript of this new author, and asked me to read it. I read it, and it seemed to me that it was worth publishing the manuscript. I gave the manuscript to other comrades and asked them to read it. A little while later, I met these comrades and asked them their opinion: they were quiet [movement in the room].

They didn't say that they were against it—no, nobody said anything openly—they simply said nothing. But me, the First Secretary, I realized what this really means and I convened them to review the situation.

One discussant said to me, “We should be able to publish it, but there are certain passages ...”

I said to him: “We ban books precisely because they have this type of passage. And if it didn't have such passages, the editor in chief wouldn't have asked our opinion. Which passages bother you?”

-Yes, he said, the [security] organ officials are presented in a bad light.

-What do you want, it was exactly these people who were the executors of the orders and the wishes of Stalin. Ivan Denisovich dealt with them and why would you want him not to talk about it? Moreover, Ivan Denisovich does not have the same sentiment towards all of these people. In this novel, there is also the moment where the captain of the ship, the second rank captain, this Soviet sailor, who finds himself in a camp just because an English admiral sent him a watch as a souvenir, says to the head of the camp, Beria's henchman: “You don't have the right, you're not a real Soviet, you are not a communist.”

Buinovskii, this communist sailor, speaks on behalf of the prisoners, to a soulless being and calls for justice in calling to mind the high standards of communism. What has to be softened here? If we have to make it milder, and take this away, then nothing will remain of this novel.

Following that, I asked the members of the Presidium to read *A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* and we reached a consensus: we had the same positive opinion of this work as Comrade Tvardovskii ... Why did certain of our comrades fail to understand the positive contribution of Solzhenitsyn's book? Because once more we have before us some people branded by the period of the personality cult, and they haven't yet freed themselves from it, and that's all ...⁹

This brief overview of the broad range of questions raised by these transcripts testifies to their importance for a better understanding of the last four decades of the Soviet Union. Publication and a complete study of this body of

documents would permit us, to borrow the apt expression that Nicolas Werth applied to the 1930s, “to scrape off the many layers of vagueness, of factual error, and of hypotheses based on second-hand accounts, [the very source] on which the history of the USSR had been founded.”¹⁰

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[Translated from French by Christa Sheehan Matthew]

¹ See, e.g., *Stalin's Letters to Molotov* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1995); *Stalinskoe Politbiuro v 30-e gody* [Stalin's Politburo During the 1930s] (Moscow, AJRO-XX, 1995); *The "Special Files" for I.V. Stalin*, (Moscow, Blagovest, 1994); N. Werth, G. Moullec, *Rapports secrets soviétiques (1921-1991)* [Secret Soviet Reports], *La société russe dans les documents confidentiels* [Russian Society Revealed in Confidential Documents] (Paris: Gallimard, 1994); *Neizvestnaia Rossiia XX vek, Arkhivi, Pis'ma, Memuary, Istoricheskoe nasledie*, [The Unknown Russia in the 20th Century: Archives, Letters, Memoirs, Historical Heritage] (Moscow, vol. 1: 1992, vol. 2: 1992, vol. 3: 1993); also the reviews of *Istoricheskii arkhiv* [Historical Archives] and *Istochnik* [Sources].

² See, e.g., *Postanovleniia Soveta Ministrov SSSR za oktiabr' 1981*, No. 957-1051. *Dlia sluzhebnogo pol'zovaniia* [The Decisions of the Soviet Council of Ministers in October 1981] [for official use]. Also decisions No. 961 (On Obligatory Insurance) and No. 964 (Nomination of the Vice-Minister of Energy) are in this collection; decisions 962 and 963 are not included.

³ We review here the definitions given by Soviet works: “The Central Committee of the CPSU: supreme organ of the Party in the interval between two congresses. It is elected by the congress. It elects the Politburo of the Central Committee, the Secretariat of the Central Committee, and the Secretary General of the Central Committee.” [*Sovetskii Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar'*, p. 1483] “Plenum of the Central Committee: plenary meeting of the Central Committee. It meets at least once a semester to resolve the political questions that are of the utmost importance for the Party” [*Sovetskii Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar*, p. 1025].

⁴ See essay by Mark Kramer in this issue for full list of plenums and fond numbers.

⁵ “Poslednaia antipartiinaia grupa” [The Last Antiparty Group], *Istoricheskii arkhiv* 2-3-4-5-6 (1993).

⁶ TsKhSD, f. 2, op. 1, d. 180, ll. 132-202. A Soviet delegation led by Khrushchev, Bulganin, and Mikoian went to Yugoslavia from 26 May to 3 June 1955. This was the first visit of Soviet leaders since the 1948 rupture of relations between the two countries. On the rupture, see, *The Cominform, Minutes of the Three Conferences 1947/1948/1949* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1994).

⁷ TsKhSD, f. 2, op. 1, d. 469.

⁸ The novel was published in the journal *Novyi mir* 11 (November 1962).

⁹ CC Plenum 19-23 November 1962, TsKhSD, f. 2, op. 1, d. 623, l. 990b.

¹⁰ See the preface of N. Werth in O. Khlevniuk, *The Kremlin's Circle, Stalin and the Politburo in the 1930s*.

CPSU Plenums, Leadership Struggles, and Soviet Cold War Politics

by *Vladislav M. Zubok*

The transcripts of plenums of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is perhaps the most valuable collection released during the second (after 1991-92) declassification campaign in the Russian archives. Pressure from central media and his approaching re-election campaign made Russian President Boris Yeltsin deliver on his promise to transfer documents of “historical” value from the closed Kremlin archive (now the Archive of the President of the Russian Federation) to the open state archives for public scrutiny and publication. In fulfillment of Yeltsin’s decree of September 1994, no less than 20,000 files arrived at the Russian Center for the Study and Preservation of Documents of Contemporary History (RTsKhIDNI) and the Storage Center for Contemporary Documentation (TsKhSD). Among them are the files of CPSU plenary meetings (plenums) declassified in February 1995, organized as “Fond 2,” and made available in the fall of 1995 in the TsKhSD reading room. This event brought surprisingly little attention in the press, so several months passed before researchers took notice of it.

The significance and role of CPSU plenums varied dramatically: in the early years of the Bolshevik regime they were reminiscent of the Jacobean club with its lively and sometimes vituperative debates. The Stalin plenums, along with Party congresses, became stages for the orchestrated character assassination of “deviationists,” yet only at the February-March 1937 plenum, the last of any political significance, did Stalin manage to crush the lingering resistance of the Bolshevik political elite to his absolute tyranny and continuing purges.¹ The next plenum known for its political drama took place only in October 1952, when Stalin feigned an attempt to resign, then before the stunned audience he denounced his staunchest, most senior lieutenants, Viacheslav Molotov and Anastas Mikoian, and excluded them from a proposed new political structure, the Bureau of the Presidium.²

In the years after Stalin’s death the plenum’s importance increased. Stalin’s former lieutenants, the oligarchs of the regime, mauled and bruised each other, seeking to change the power balance by appealing to the party and state elites, heads of the central CPSU apparatus, secretaries of regional party committees, leaders of powerful branches of the economic, military and security structures. Khrushchev’s son Sergei concluded that “in June 1957 [as a result of the plenum on the “anti-party group”] a totally new correlation of forces emerged. For the first time after many years the apparatus...from passive onlooker became an active participant that defined the balance of power.”³ In fact, this happened not just in June 1957, but gradually,

as the CC members recognized the importance of their role in demystifying, dislodging, and dismissing formidable oligarchs to the political profit of the half-baffoon N.S. Khrushchev. After Khrushchev’s ouster there was yet another period of “collective leadership” during which Kremlin infighting continued into the late 1960s, ending only with the victory of Leonid Brezhnev.

The “thirty-year rule” embedded in Russian legislation on secrecy allowed the release of plenum files up to 1966. Most of the documents contain copies of stenographic minutes of discussions that had been sent by the CC General Department to all members of the Secretariat and Politburo as well as other plenum speakers so that they could insert their corrections. After that, additional editing was done by professional editors and the copies were published in bound volumes for internal consumption. It is therefore possible to see to what extent the initial “unvarnished” discussion changed in the process of editing. In general, there was no deliberate policy to distort or excise texts (with a few important exceptions to which I will return later). In quite a few cases some speakers objected to cuts and editorial remarks and reinserted the passages from the verbatim transcripts. The guiding principle in this editorial game was, no doubt, political opportunism and (for some) ideological correctness.

The first important plenum reflecting the power struggle after Stalin’s death is the one devoted to the “Beria affair” in July 1953. It was published in 1991 in “*Vestnik TsK KPSS*” [CC CPSU News] and then translated into English and published in the United States by Nova Science Publishers, Inc.⁴

After Beria’s removal the next to fall was Georgii Malenkov who had first slipped in March 1954 when he made a controversial statement in his “electoral” speech that nuclear war might bring about the end of civilization. He was roundly criticized for this by Molotov and Khrushchev. However, this criticism did not leave the narrow confines of the CC Presidium. Only when the fate of Malenkov had been decided by political intrigues and coalition-building, his “sins” became a subject for discussion at the plenum on 31 January 1955. The scenario, like that of the “Beria affair” is easily recognizable: in fact, its prototype had been honed to perfection by Stalin and his assistants during the “party deviations” struggle in the second half of the 1920s. The victorious group, that is Khrushchev and Molotov, revealed, with well-rehearsed indignation, facts and judgments that led them to believe that Malenkov was unfit to occupy the leadership position.

Then a chorus of supporting voices chimed in. But in contrast to Beria's affair, where the object of criticism was safely incarcerated in a military prison on the other side of the Moscow River, Malenkov could speak, and in the comparatively open spirit of the times, even attempted to defend himself.

Malenkov: I have no right to not say that I was wrong, when in April or May [of 1953], during the discussion of the German question, I believed that in the existing international situation, when we had started a big political campaign ["peace initiative" after Stalin's death—trans.], we should not have put forward the task of socialist development in Democratic Germany [i.e. the GDR—trans.] in the question of Germany's reunification.¹¹

I viewed this question at that time from a tactical side. I fully understand that defending this view essentially is politically harmful, politically dangerous, incorrect. And I did not adopt such a position. The decision that was passed at that time at the suggestion of comrade Molotov I consider to be the correct one.

Bulganin: At that time you thought it was incorrect.

Malenkov: In the course of discussion I considered it to be incorrect.

Bulganin: You then said: For how long will we feed ourselves with the cud from Molotov's mouth, why do you read Molotov's lips.

Malenkov: You must have confused my words with Beria's.

Khrushchev: You simply lack courage even now to admit it, and Bulganin told me about [your words] exactly at that time.

Malenkov: Today I admit that I essentially took a wrong position on the German question.

Most remarkably, the Plenum transcript confirms that two leaders of the ruling triumvirate, and not only Beria, proposed to renounce the slogan of "socialist" Germany. This could hardly be "a confession" of the kind elicited by torture and terror in Stalin's times, although Malenkov must have been filled with dread when placed in the same category with "the spy and traitor" Beria, who wanted, according to the verdicts of the July 1953 plenum, to sell the GDR to the imperialists. Hence, his lame explanation that his support of Beria's proposal was dictated only by tactical expediency. [Ed. Note: After all, Malenkov would be the first top leader to be demoted in a non-fatal manner. But there was no way to know of this distinction in advance.]

After just six months of relative peace, infighting within the Presidium spilt over again onto the plenum floor. Khrushchev's growing annoyance with Molotov's seniority and the fact that Molotov was the permanent critic of Khrushchev's foreign and domestic initiatives led to frictions in February-April 1955 over the conclusion of

a peace treaty with Austria and, to a real showdown over Khrushchev's decision to reconcile with Tito's Yugoslavia. Molotov had since 1953 given lip service to the idea of "normalizing state relations" with Yugoslavia, while treating "the Tito clique" there as renegades of the communist movement. Khrushchev, however, insisted that there should be an attempt to bring Yugoslavia back into the communist camp. Molotov finally agreed to a trip of the Soviet party-state delegation to Yugoslavia in April 1955, but refused to support the resolution on the results of the visit and, according to his accusers, threatened "to go to the plenum" to explain his dissent,⁵ but Khrushchev and his growing camp of supporters pilloried Molotov. Again, in the best traditions of Stalinist politics, everyone had to spit on the fallen leader, only Klement Voroshilov among the Presidium members attempted to protect his old friend Molotov from the pack of party wolves.⁶

The July 1955 plenum was a remarkable discussion, for such a large forum, of underlying principles, aims, and tactics of Soviet foreign policy. Perhaps it was the most extensive airing of such topics for the entire period of the Cold War. Khrushchev defended his initiative on Yugoslavia from two angles—geo-strategic and political: "The United States of America has in mind for a future world war, as in the past war, to let others fight for them [chuzhimi rukami], let others spill blood for them, with the help of equipment supplied to future 'allies.' Knowing the combative mood of the Yugoslav people...American top brass considered that the Yugoslavs, along with the Germans, could be a serious force that could be used against the Soviet Union. It is known that in an emergency Yugoslavia is capable of mobilizing from 30 to 40 divisions."⁷

Besides this concern about the Yugoslavs as a factor in the future, Khrushchev evoked memories of World War II, so important for the vast majority of the people in the audience: he indignantly reminded them that the Yugoslav communists were the only force that fought the Nazis right until 1944, only to be rewarded with excommunication from the communist camp in 1948.⁸

Although Khrushchev had won the power game against Molotov even before the plenum began, it was not enough. The man had been a member of Lenin's Secretariat and Politburo, the second most respected and visible politician in the Soviet Union for at least two decades—therefore it was necessary to destroy his *political* authority in the eyes of the elite gathering. The Khrushchev group was prepared to do it by all means, including ideological polemics. Their goal was to prove that Molotov became hopelessly dogmatic and lost touch with the "ever-evolving and live" ideology of Marxism-Leninism. But the old party horse Molotov was unusually well prepared for this kind of battle and delivered a broadside of Lenin quotations.

In the political discussion about Titoism, Molotov also held strong cards. His main thesis was about the political danger of the Yugoslav version of "nationally-oriented

socialism” for the Soviet empire in the past and the future. He made it clear that Stalin’s reaction against Tito was not a costly mistake, as Khrushchev maintained, but an absolutely rational preemptive measure against the growing threat of nationalist deviations in the communist camp, led by the Soviet Union. “Nationalist vacillations took place in other communist parties. For instance, in Poland—Gomulko (sic), then the First Secretary of the Polish United Workers Party. It is easy for all of us to understand how dangerous and negative such a nationalist deviation [*uklon*] can be, if it contaminated the leadership of the Polish United Workers Party. As we know, the Polish population is one and a half times as large as Yugoslavia’s population. One should keep in mind other countries as well.”⁹

Ultimately the most effective weapon of Khrushchev against Molotov proved to be neither ideological, nor political theses, but something else. First, he made revelations of Molotov’s “errors” in the past and thereby demystified his aura as a world statesman. If Stalin’s aura had to be damaged in the process, so much the better. At one point, irked by the cold logic of Molotov’s presentation on the dangers of Yugoslav-style national-communism, Khrushchev burst out:

Khrushchev: Viacheslav Mikhailovich, if you, as minister of foreign affairs, analyzed a whole series of our steps, [you would see that] we mobilized people against us. We started the Korean War. And what does this mean? Everyone knows this.

[Anastas] Mikoian. Aside from our people, in our country.

Khrushchev. Here, Viacheslav Mikhailovich, this must be borne in mind; everything must be understood, everything analyzed, [and] only then can one come to the correct conclusion. We started the war. Now we cannot in any way disentangle ourselves. For two years there has been no war. Who needed the war?...¹⁰

This exchange appeared in the final version of the stenographic report distributed among the party elite, but the passage about “who started the Korean War” disappeared. Presumably, somebody reminded Khrushchev of the complications this revelation might cause for relations with North Korea and the People’s Republic of China.

In another exchange, Khrushchev, in the heat of debate, blurted out what was beginning to dawn on him regarding the role of Stalin in Soviet foreign policy. In April 1955 during his visit to Yugoslavia, Khrushchev still professed to believe that the Soviet-Yugoslav split had been caused by the machinations of the “Beria-Abakumov gang.” The transcript of the plenum discussion reveals what really was on the mind of the Soviet leadership.

Molotov: In a discussion of this issue in the CC Presidium, some doubt was expressed in relation to the awkwardness and incorrectness of the given explanation.

However, the following arguments followed in defense of the given explanation of the reasons for the rupture: that if we did not say that the main reason was Beria’s and Abakumov’s intrigues, then the responsibility for the rupture would fall on Stalin, and that was impermissible.

These arguments should not be accepted.

Khrushchev. On Stalin and Molotov.

Molotov. That’s new.

Khrushchev. Why is it new?

Molotov. We signed the letter on behalf of the party CC.

Khrushchev. Without asking the CC...¹¹

Molotov. Com. Khrushchev is speaking imprecisely [*netochno*].

Khrushchev. I want once again to repeat: I was not asked, although I [was] a member of the Politburo.

Only eight months later, in February 1956 Khrushchev attacked Stalin for his mistakes and crimes, but then he spared Molotov. [Ed. note: For Khrushchev’s second secret speech given in Warsaw in March 1956, see below in this *Bulletin* section.] De-Stalinization was a turning point in the history of international communism and the Soviet Union itself. Yet, plenums did not play any noticeable role in this revolutionary development. Khrushchev chose a larger forum, the party congress, to deliver his speech against Stalin. Growing reaction to Khrushchev’s political radicalism and growing ambitions reflected itself, for a time, in heated discussions within the CC Presidium which, with the exception of the debates on the 1956 Polish and Hungarian crises, are still hidden from historians’ eyes. [Ed. Note: For “Malin notes” on 1956 Presidium meetings regarding Poland and Hungary, see *CWIHP Bulletin* 8-9 (Winter 96-97)]

Khrushchev’s rivals correctly feared that his combination of populist style, control over the KGB, military support from Marshal Georgii Zhukov, and the pivotal position as head of the party machinery would soon reduce all adversaries. Materials from the June 1957 plenum published in the Russian journal *Istoricheskii arkhiv* [*Historical Archive*] in 1993-94, offer a remarkable insight into the final stage of the post-Stalin power struggle and reveal the nature of Khrushchev’s victory.¹² The opposition, particularly Molotov blamed Khrushchev for destroying the “collective leadership” and monopolizing decision-making on all issues, from economy to diplomacy. Molotov attempted to direct Khrushchev’s denunciation of Stalin against its author by warning about a new cult of personality and wondering out loud where the radical de-Stalinization could lead.¹³ Molotov disparaged Khrushchev’s new doctrine that an agreement between the two nuclear powers, the Soviet Union and the United States, could be a solid foundation for an international détente.¹⁴ He stated his belief that a next world war could be “postponed and prevented,” even while there still existed war-spawning “imperialism.” Besides, said

Molotov, “this formula of com. Khrushchev ignores all other socialist countries, besides the USSR. However, one should not ignore the People’s Republic of China, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and other communist countries.”¹⁵

In one instance Molotov was right on the mark: radical de-Stalinization and the new doctrine of “peaceful coexistence” did annoy the Chinese leadership and the pressure from within the communist camp forced

Khrushchev on a number of occasions to make drastic, if only momentary, detours from his preferred policies. One was during the Hungarian crisis on 19-30 October 1956, when Khrushchev had to cave in, at first, to Beijing’s insistence that Soviet troops should be withdrawn from Hungary and the practice of “great power chauvinism” with regard to Eastern Europe in general should be renounced in words, if not in deeds. Molotov reminded the plenum of another episode, when Khrushchev had to

Eisenhower, “Open Skies” and Khrushchev’s Global “Peace Offensive” : New Evidence from the 6th Polish Party Plenum (20 March 1956)

[Ed.Note: Although Khrushchev’s speech to the 6th Plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party was, in largest part, devoted to Stalin, the First Secretary of the CC CPSU also found time to discuss the international situation in a frank manner with the Polish comrades. A longer excerpt regarding Stalin is elsewhere in this section. One can only speculate about the relationship between Eisenhower’s request to “Ask Zhukov” and the role of “Open Skies” in Zhukov’s dismissal 19 months later. On this, see next page.]

“Concerning the propositions of Mr. [US President Dwight D.] Eisenhower and “open skies,” among us I tell you, that we tell the Americans that this proposition deserves some attention. But [strictly] among us, I tell you, it deserves attention so that it can be thrown into the garbage. What does it mean to fly? What do you think—nothing else better to do.....this is nonsense. Its only advantage is to avoid concrete propositions about the reduction of arms. They gave us nonsense and they are trying to confuse us.

I’m not letting you in on a secret. I said it to Eisenhower as soon as he finished his presentation, when we met at the buffet which he organized for the meeting. We had a glass of cognac and he asks me: “So?” And I told him: “In my opinion, your proposition is no good.” “Why?” “Because it does nothing good. All you are proposing is nonsense.” He replied: “Well, maybe the military judge it differently. Let’s ask Marshal [and Minister of Defense Georgii] Zhukov. What will he say?” And I said: “Ask Zhukov, let him judge. If such things were done during the war, right before the attack.....Comrade [Marshal Konstantin] Rokossowski.....then you have to know where.....during the war and for sometime since.....then we already cannot imagine, because the enemy can always re-group his troops or use camouflage and then totally confuse us. But, what do you think, if we want to show you a factory then we can show you some kind of dummy; different lighting and you’ll photograph it all, and what will you get? It will be an empty place. But, we can do it, and you can do it, so why should we do such nonsense. Someone can ask, then why did we write that this proposition deserves attention? Because this capitalist language is such that you cannot just say, to hell with it. You have to say that this problem demands deep investigation, and will be discussed.....follow the rule, and it was written like this.....

I think we have very good prospects on this matter [dealing with the capitalists] and we will, with pleasure, conduct the discussion with [Nikolai] Bulganin in London, with [British Prime Minister Anthony] Eden, and other friends. We are placing great hopes on the arrival of [French President Guy] Mollet and [Foreign Minister Christian] Pineau, and the delegation from the [French] Socialist Party, which shows that we have achieved so many contacts.

Of course, comrades, I have to tell you that we correctly understand our position and our responsibility. We have to smartly lead this policy and move toward disarmament. But, we should never cross the line, which would endanger the survival of our conquests. We have to do everything to strengthen defense, to strengthen the army. Without these things, nobody will talk to us. They are not hiding the fact that they have the hydrogen bomb, nuclear arms, and jet-propulsion technology. They know that we have all these things, and therefore, they have to talk to us, fight with us; but not be afraid.....this is a game, in which nobody will be a winner. If Lenin would arise he would have been pleased to see his cause become so strong, that the capitalistic world admits being unable to win the war against the socialist countries.

Comrades, this is the power of Marxist-Leninist teaching. We did not work for nothing; not for nothing used the strength of this form of government. Therefore, we must continue working. We must work, work, work to reduce the troops and increase defense, Comrade Rokossowski. It is difficult to agree with marshals on this matter, they’re rather hot-tempered.

Right now, we have to work on the demoralization of their camp. The demoralization of NATO, the Baghdad pact, SEATO. I think we have a great opportunity to carry it out. And the stop of Comrade [Anastas] Mikoian stirred up everybody, his trip to Karachi. Yesterday morning, he flew out to Pakistan.”

[Source: AAN (Archiwum Akt Nowych, Archive of Modern Records), PZPR 2631 Materiały do stosunków partyjnych polsko-radzieckich z lat 1956-1958, “Przemówienie tow. Chruszczowa na VI Plenum K.C.,” k. 14-87 Translated from Russian by L.W. Gluchowski.]

praise Stalin in the presence of Zhou Enlai, during a visit of the Chinese delegation to Moscow in January 1957, but “after Zhou Enlai left, we stopped [praising Stalin].”¹⁶ Finally, Molotov could not contain his disdain for Khrushchev’s homespun style of diplomacy, particularly his use of inappropriate words and what he called lack of “dignified behavior” in meeting foreigners. As an example, Molotov mentioned that Khrushchev spent a whole night with Finnish President Urkho Kekkonen in a Finnish sauna, naturally without a jacket and a tie!¹⁷

Anastas Mikoian gave the most consistent rebuff to the opposition. He recalled the recent series of crises in Poland, Hungary and Egypt and concluded that both the unity of the Soviet leadership and Khrushchev’s bold initiatives contributed to their successful resolutions. In a most revealing insight into a little known dimension of Soviet Cold War policies, Mikoian gave a detailed account of the discussions in the Presidium about trade and economic relations with East bloc countries as well as with neutral Austria and Finland. He blamed Molotov, Malenkov, and Kaganovich for a narrow, purely budgetary, approach to the issue of foreign policy. Khrushchev, on the contrary, regarded foreign trade and subsidies to these countries as a vital necessity, dictated by Soviet security interests. “We believe we must create an economic base for our influence on Austria, to strengthen its neutral status, so that West Germany would not have a [economic and trade] monopoly in Austria.” And as to the Soviet bloc, “if we leave East Germany and Czechoslovakia without [purchase] orders, then the entire socialist camp will begin to collapse.”¹⁸

Yet support of the majority of the plenum for Khrushchev was not dependent on considerations of “high policy” and the strategies of the Cold War. Rather most of delegates wanted to get rid of the oligarchs and the sense of fear, stress and subservience that had been prevalent for so many years. Career considerations mattered as well: members of the CC, particularly the Secretaries were not much younger than the oligarchs and had waited too long to switch from the junior league to the top league. One of them complained that Molotov “still considers us as wearing short pants.”¹⁹ These complaints, repeated, among many, by CC Secretary Leonid Brezhnev, reflected the drive that in 1964 propelled the younger group of Stalin’s appointees to power.

The 28-29 October 1957 plenum that discussed the “Zhukov affair” crowned Khrushchev’s ascent to power. The plenum transcripts do not shed much light on the murky details of this affair, but indicate that there were enough “grave” (at least in the immediate post-Stalinist atmosphere pregnant with power struggle) reasons for Khrushchev to suspect that the minister of defense Georgii Zhukov together with the head of the GRU Shtemenko were plotting against him. Of greater relevance for Cold War historians, the plenum gives some valuable insights into the thinking and discussions at the highest level of the Soviet political-military leadership. For instance, head of

the General Staff Marshal Vasilii Sokolovskii said that:

Sokolovskii: Zhukov insisted [in 1955-57] on granting “open skies” for Americans to fly over our territory, over our country, i.e. to create a situation that would give Americans certain superiority in intelligence. I must say that the Americans do not know our coordinates [of our military objects]. Maps do not reflect the truth [*ne skhodiatsia*]. They cannot bomb our cities with precision. This is absolutely definitive and absolutely clear. The General Staff opposed [Zhukov’s proposal], insisting that this should not be done. Nevertheless, Zhukov confused [Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei] Gromyko and together with Gromyko sent to the CC proposals so that Americans could fly over our territory and make aerial reconnaissance.”

Khrushchev: I should correct. Gromyko did not sign [this proposal]. Zhukov signed it alone. Gromyko opposed it.

Sokolovskii: I know very well that, at the suggestion of Nikita Sergeevich, the Presidium rejected [*zabrakoval*] this proposal of com. Zhukov.”²⁰

The importance of the plenum discussions for Cold War studies should not be underestimated. Not only do they recreate almost in flesh and blood the atmosphere inside the Soviet ruling elite, but they demonstrate the impact of power struggle on Soviet Cold War behavior. The outcome of this struggle defined the boundaries for decision-making and debates. Once denounced at a plenum, any initiative, be it the one of Beria and Malenkov on “construction of socialism” in East Germany, or Zhukov’s on “open skies” became a taboo, at least for a considerable period of time. The very notion of “state interests” changed as did the names of the Kremlin powerholders. A speech by Andrei Gromyko in July 1955 illustrates this point.²¹ The influence of plenums as an important tool in power struggles also led to the reinforcement of the ideological underpinnings of Soviet foreign policy after Stalin’s death. While rejecting the dogmatism of Molotov and denouncing his and Stalin’s foreign policy errors, plenums, in general, helped to preserve the “ideologized” climate in debating international affairs and military security. Through plenums, as well as through the permanent party apparat permeating all state structures, ideology survived—not as a set of guidelines for action, but as a normative set of assumptions that weighed on the minds of Soviet statesmen during the Cold War. For historians, particularly for those with “realist” perspectives, plenums present a problem that is difficult to ignore—how to factor the “politics” of the Kremlin, together with the relationships inside the communist camp, most crucially the Sino-Soviet and Soviet-Yugoslav relationship, into the explanatory schemes of the Cold War.

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¹ Materialy fevral'sko-martovskogo plenuma TsK VKP(b) 1937 g. [Materials of the February-March CC VKP(b) Plenum of 1937], *Voprosy istorii*, Moscow, 1995, no. 2-8, 10-12.

² See the plenum files in TsKhSD, fond 2, op. 1, dd. 21-22; for substantive recollections on Stalin's speech there (not in the records of the plenum) see Konstantin Simonov, "Glazami cheloveka moego pokoleniia. Razmishleniia o I.V. Staline" [Through the eyes of a man of my generation. Reflections on I.V. Stalin], *Znamia*, 1988, no. 4, pp. 96-99; Aleksandr Shepilov in *Neizvestnaia Rossiia: XX vek* [Unknown Russia; the twentieth century] (Moscow: Istoricheskoe nasledie, 1992), vol. 1, p. 275.

³ Sergei Khrushchev, *Nikita Khrushchev: krizisy i raketi* (Moscow, Novosti, 1994), p. 320.

⁴ D.M. Sickle, *The Beria Affair. The Secret Transcripts of the Meetings Signalling the End of Stalinism*, translated from Russian by Jean Farrow (New York, Nova Science Publishers, Inc, 1992). A researcher Svetlana Savranskaya cross-checked the original transcripts and the published text at the request of the Cold War International History Project and found no major cuts and changes.

⁵ See the speech of A. Mikoian on 11 July 1955, TsKhSD, fond 2, op. 1, d. 174, l. 99.

⁶ His speech on 12 July 1955, TsKhSD, fond 2, op. 1, d. 176, ll. 141-142.

⁷ Khrushchev's speech at the CC CPSU Plenum, 9 July 1955, TsKhSD, fond 2, op. 1, d. 172, l. 87.

⁸ TsKhSD, fond 2, op. 1, d. 172, ll. 88, 100-101.

⁹ Molotov's speech at the CC CPSU Plenum, 9 July 1955, TsKhSD, fond 2, op. 1, d. 173, l. 3.

¹⁰ TsKhSD, fond 2, op. 1, d. 173, l. 40.

¹¹ TsKhSD, fond 2, op. 1, d. 173, l. 4.

¹² "Posledniaia 'antipartiinaia' gruppa. Stenograficheskii otchet iun'skogo (1957) plenuma TsK KPSS" [The last "anti-party" group. Stenographic report of the June 1957 Plenum of CC CPSU], *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, no. 3, 4, 5, 6 (1993) and 1, 2 (1994). This huge document still fails to attract serious attention from historians and Soviet studies experts, although it has already been published in Chinese in full.

¹³ *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 3 (1993), pp. 74-75.

¹⁴ *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 4 (1993), p. 4.

¹⁵ *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 4 (1993), p. 6.

¹⁶ *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 4 (1993), p. 12.

¹⁷ *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 4 (1993), p. 7.

¹⁸ *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 4 (1993), p. 27, 29.

¹⁹ *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 3 (1993), p. 79.

²⁰ TsKhSD, f. 4, op. 1, d. 271, l. 33.

²¹ "I must declare with all the determination of which I am capable that the position of Molotov in this question [on Yugoslavia] is erroneous, profoundly mistaken and does not correspond to the interests of our state...Comrades, in conclusion I must declare with all determination that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs only then will become a communist [partiinim] Ministry of Foreign Affairs, when it follows the line of the Central Committee of our party." Gromyko's speech at the July 1955 Plenum, TsKhSD, f. 2, op. 1, d. 176, l. 202.

New Sources and Evidence on Destalinization and the 20th Party Congress

By V. P. Naumov

[Ed. Note: Although the Cold War International History Project specializes in the publication of newly-declassified documents, a prerequisite to this activity is knowledge regarding which key materials are likely to emerge from the vault in the near future. Among the best predictors (though far from guaranteed) are citations in the published work of Russian scholars with privileged access. In this respect, as well as for its innate historical value, the appearance of V. P. Naumov's article "Towards a history of N.S. Khrushchev's Secret Report [on 25 February 1956] to the 20th Congress of the CPSU" in *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia* 4 (1996) and its subsequent reprint in German was of exceptional importance.

Although Naumov made use of many new sources, three stand out both for their significance in the context of his article, but also for their potential as resources for scholars working on many aspects of Cold War history. The first is the dictated memoirs of longtime Politburo/Presidium member A. I. Mikoian covering his activities from the 1920s until the ouster of Khrushchev in October 1964.¹ Prior to its transfer to the archives, this folder had been read by only four men: Iu. V. Andropov, M. A. Suslov, K. U. Chernenko and V. A. Pribytkov (Chernenko's top assistant). As featured in *CWIHP Bulletin* 8-9's treatment of the 1956 crisis, with translation and introduction by Mark Kramer, the "Malin notes" offer remarkable "fly-on-the-wall" vision of Presidium decision-making. V. N. Malin, the head of the CC CPSU General Department under Khrushchev, kept notes on the discussions at which he was present, often with verbatim excerpts.² Finally, the original draft of N. S. Khrushchev's secret speech to the 20th Party Congress is a marvelous supplement to the "second secret speech" (See below in this *Bulletin* section) presented by Khrushchev in Poland a month later.³

Below are a few excerpts from Naumov's article.]

Concluding the [1 February 1956 Presidium] discussion, Khrushchev said, we must decide this in the interests of the party. "Stalin," he stressed, "[was] devoted to socialism, but he did everything by barbaric means. He destroyed the party. He was not a Marxist. [Ed. Note: Khrushchev changed his mind on this 180 degrees as can be seen in the "second secret speech," excerpted below in this *Bulletin*.] He wiped out all that is sacred in man. He subordinated everything to his own caprices."

"At the Congress, [we] should not speak of the terror," Khrushchev continued. "It is necessary to clarify the [party] line of giving Stalin his own place [*otvesti Stalin svoe mesto*]." He called for "strengthening the attack on the personality cult."⁴

On 9 February 1956 the CC Presidium heard the report of the Pospelov Commission [on Stalin's crimes]. Mikoian remem-

Continued on page 41

Plenum Transcripts, 1955-1957

[Ed. Note: Thanks to Benjamin Aldrich-Moodie, Leo Gluchowski and Vladislav Zubok for expert translation from Russian. Khrushchev's impromptu remarks are always a special challenge.]

Central Committee Plenum of the CPSU Ninth Session

Morning, 31 January 1955

Khrushchev: ... Comrades, now the issue of Germany of which we spoke [in July 1953].¹ We then calculated, comrade Malenkov, we debated about Beria and Germany, but, I should say here bluntly, if it comes down to this, that comrade Malenkov had been entirely together with Beria on this issue. Voroshilov was not [a supporter of Beria on the German issue], because this issue was discussed not at the CC Presidium, but at the Presidium of the Council of Ministers.² All the members of the CC Presidium, who were members of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, were against [the proposal to abrogate “the construction of socialism in the GDR”], except for Beria and Malenkov. And all argued, comrades. It was a big fight [*bol'shaia draka*]. But what was actually Malenkov's stand? Sometimes a person can get things wrong, can let himself slip in a big issue and this should not always be held against him. But what did Malenkov do when he saw that everyone was against [Beria's proposal] and not only that they voted against it, but argued against it? He continued to fight for this proposal, along with Beria.

Bulganin later calls me, I do not remember, it was a day or two afterwards, and asks: So, have they called you?³ I respond: No, they have not. And they have already called me, he says. First the one, then the other called and warned: if you behave like this and if you read Molotov's lips—since it was about Molotov's proposal [that Beria and Malenkov opposed], well, you would not remain the minister [of Defense] for long. That was the gist [of that conversation]. This is a fact, although I do not know who of the two of them called first. He [Bulganin] asks me—have they called you? I said: they will not call me. Indeed, they did not call. They believed I would come over to their side.

After the session [of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers] there was a talk that if Molotov speaks this way [i.e. stubbornly fights against Beria's proposal on the GDR—trans.], then he should be relegated to be minister of culture. I then said: comrade Malenkov, if there were a proposal to remove Molotov, I would consider this as an attempt [to overthrow the collective] leadership and to smash the leadership of the Presidium.

This is the fact how far [the power struggle] reached. It was no good at all. [*Kuda zhe eto goditsia?*]

Now, comrades, I will speak on [Malenkov's] speech [on 8 August 1953].⁴ We all read it, and I read it, too. It is cheap stuff [*deshovka*]. Malenkov told us later: you read it [before he presented it—trans.]. Yes, we read it. I read it, too. Am I responsible for this speech? Yes, I am, but the author should be a bit more responsible. It is one thing, when you read the speech and it sounds to you sort of fine and even attractive. But the author, who composes it—he is more responsible, since he thinks it [and its implications] through. So, when we later looked at it again and read it, it became clear to us what that speech was driving at. It was designed to buy personal popularity. It was not a leader's speech. It was a truly opportunistic speech. Perhaps comrade [I.F.] Tevosian remembers, when the commission [probably of the Presidium of Council of Ministers or the CC Presidium—trans.] discussed [the production of] “shirpotreb” [consumer goods of great demand—trans.], Malenkov then said: I will not let anybody disrupt this decision. Then I said in passing: Of course, “shirpotreb” is necessary, but we must develop metal and coal industries. Did I say it?⁵

Tevosian: That is correct.

Khrushchev: That's how it was...

Now, about the speech [i.e.] with regard to the destruction of civilization [on 12 March 1954]. He [Malenkov] says again, why, you looked at it [in advance].⁶ He managed to confuse several comrades, because his speech was quoted abroad and our comrades considered it was the line of the Central Committee to a certain extent since Malenkov spoke this way. And we must protect our authority, which is a great authority for brotherly communist parties. That assumption was theoretically incorrect and it did not work to the benefit of our party.

Com. [Semen D.] Ignat'ev is present here. In another two weeks or so, Beria would have probably locked him up, because everything was ready by the moment he was removed.⁷ [Nevertheless] I believe that he [Ignat'ev] was correctly removed from the post of Minister of State Security. He is anybody but the minister of State Security. Do not take offense at me, com. Ignat'ev. You should not have accepted the ministerial post; you are not qualified for it.

Kaganovich: He did not want to accept it.

Khrushchev: He did not want it, but he was offered the post.⁸

I'll speak directly—I do not doubt the integrity of com. Malenkov, but I doubt very much his abilities in

pursuing the [policy] line: he lacks character and backbone [*kharaktera i khrebt ne khvataet*].

I used to say to other comrades, in particular to comrade Molotov: now [in April-May 1953] Churchill is so terribly eager to have a [summit] meeting⁹ and I, by golly, am afraid that if he comes [to Moscow] to speak face to face with Malenkov, then Malenkov would get frightened and surrender. I do not ask comrade Malenkov to prove the opposite, since this cannot be confirmed or proved like a mathematical formula. However, I see that if a person gets confused, if he tries to ingratiate himself, [it means] he lacks character.

This is a serious matter, and I look at it in a straightforward way. The leadership of such a great party, of such a great country, growth and further development [of everything] that has been accumulated by our party, all this will depend, comrades, again on who will stand at the head of the leadership.

...You can see for yourselves what is the situation today, how skillfully the Americans stewed the porridge [*zavarili kashu*] in Taiwan,¹⁰ how they sent [publisher Randolph] Hearst and [other] messengers [to Moscow]. What for? To deafen us, to test if we have guts, if we are nervous or not. This is being done to test us.

Malenkov: I have no right to not say that I was wrong, when in April or May [of 1953], during the discussion of the German question, I believed that in the existing international situation, when we had started a big political campaign [“peace initiative” after Stalin’s death—trans.], we should not have put forward the task of socialist development in Democratic Germany [i.e. the GDR—trans.] in the question of Germany’s reunification.¹¹

I viewed this question at that time from a tactical side. I fully understand that defending this view essentially is politically harmful, politically dangerous, incorrect. And I did not adopt such a position. The decision that was passed at that time at the suggestion of comrade Molotov I consider to be the correct one.

Bulganin: At that time you thought it was incorrect.

Malenkov: In the course of discussion I considered it to be incorrect.

Bulganin: You then said: For how long will we feed ourselves with the cud from Molotov’s mouth, why do you read Molotov’s lips.

Malenkov: You must have confused my words with Beria’s.

Khrushchev: You simply lack courage even now to admit it, and Bulganin told me about [your words] exactly at that time.

Malenkov: Today I admit that I essentially took a wrong position on the German question.

Khrushchev: At that time you and Beria believed you could get away with anything.

Molotov: You should summon your courage and speak more frankly. Even now you beat around the bush

[*pletesh*], even now you prevaricate [*krutish*].

Malenkov: Where exactly?

Molotov: You did not make the distinction between communism and capitalism.

Malenkov: Had we dug deeper, then this question would have been discussed in this way.

Khrushchev: That was how the question was discussed: so what, we had spilt our blood and now we should retreat to the [Polish] borders. If we withdraw behind the Polish borders, then the enemy would say: If they are leaving, then one must chase them to the devil [*k chortovoi materi*]. You took the position of capitulationism, and now you are afraid to admit it...

Pervukhin: [to Malenkov] You have explained nothing about why it happened this way on the German question.

Malenkov: I misunderstood this question from a tactical viewpoint.

Bulganin: Fuzzy...The discussion was about liquidating the GDR and turning it over to Western Germany.

Malenkov: We spoke then about conducting a political campaign on the question of German reunification and I believed that one should not have set the task of the development of socialism in the Democratic Germany.

Molotov: Comrades, we have heard the draft resolution proposed by the Central Committee’s Presidium for approval of the Plenum and we have heard two speeches of comrade Malenkov on this issue. I think that there is a very big difference between them, and to put it simply, both the first and the second speeches of comrade Malenkov are fraudulent. Fakes!

Both the first and the second speeches are not truthful, not quite honest. This is a shortcoming to which I would like to draw your attention. But we must look at this issue fundamentally. Comrades, we are discussing, in essence, a political issue. We should draw lessons from it, to learn certain things for the future.

What is the main fault of comrade Malenkov? It seems (and it is written in the decision of the Presidium of the Central Committee that is proposed for your consideration and approval) that the main errors of comrade Malenkov are the following. First: absence of principles in policy-making. Second, carelessness in the realm of theory. This is not simply a mistake, comrades, not simply a drawback: a communist cannot be unprincipled, a leading figure cannot be careless on the questions of theory. It will not do, comrades. I can admit everything: blindness, blindness. But no, it is not blindness, it is the lack of principles. No, it was not blindness, when comrade Malenkov was in cahoots, was inseparable for a decade with that scoundrel Beria. It was not blindness, comrades, but the absence of political principles, and for that he received the post of Chairman of the Council of Ministers [from Beria—trans.]. He did not stay in cahoots [with Beria] for free; it was not all that simple an enterprise: Lavrentii and Georgii. Lavrentii and Georgii drank

together, drove in a car together, traveled from dacha to dacha, etc. No, comrades, we should admit that we are dealing with a very profound phenomenon that exists not only inside the CC, but exists even lower: in regional committees, in district committees, but here it took a very dangerous turn, comrades. The absence of principles in party life, particularly for the leader of the whole party, the whole state—this is a dangerous affair. And that comrade Malenkov overlooked criminal tendencies in Beria's activities—this was not a coincidence, not merely blindness. Regarding this blindness we all share the blame, here are all the members of the Presidium—we all were a little bit blind, even too much, since we took Beria until Stalin's death (I am speaking for myself) for an honest communist, even though a careerist, even though a crook, who would frame you up behind your back [*okhulki na ruku ne dast*]. As a careerist, he would not stop at any machinations, but on the surface, he seemed an honest person. I must say that on the day of Beria's arrest, when we sat at the Presidium, and Beria sat in the CC Presidium, here in the Kremlin, I gave a speech: here is a turn-coat [*pererozhdenets*], but comrade Khrushchev turned out to be more correct and said that Beria was not a turn-coat, but he was not a communist and had never been, which is more correct.

(Voice from the audience: That is right).

I was convinced myself. This is a more correct, sensible, truthful assessment. He was not a communist, he was a scoundrel, rogue to the core, who insinuated his way into our party, a smart fellow, a good organizer, but he made it to the top, ingratiated himself with comrade Stalin so that his role was very dangerous, not to mention that it was mean and depraved. Yet I must say that I did not take part in the talks between Malenkov and Beria, and they were in communication every day, between them two, and they must have spoken about certain subjects which would make comrade Malenkov blush, but we do not ask him to speak about them.

What happened, comrades? Comrade Stalin's death. We stand at the bed of the sick, dying man. An exchange of opinions would be appropriate, but nobody talks to us. Here are the two [who talk to each other—trans.]—Malenkov and Beria. We sit on the second floor: me, Khrushchev, Bulganin, Voroshilov, Kaganovich, and these two are up there. They bring down the prepared, well-formulated proposals, an announcement of the CC, draft decisions of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, the composition of the government, the head of the government, of the Ministry [of Security], such and such ministries should be merged, etc. All that was presented to us by Beria and Malenkov. And they were not people of some special tone. We do not need a special tone, but we need the truth, principles, integrity in policy.

So this shortcoming has reached so far that he [Malenkov] did not stand out. He worked as a CC secretary for decades and happened to become Chairman of the Council of Ministries, and we should admit now,

before all the people—we made a mistake, we are removing [him] from the post of Chairman of the Council of Ministers. This is what lack of principles can lead to, but it will not make a home for itself in our party. The party will sort it out and will take measures.

The second shortcoming of comrade Malenkov is carelessness on issues of theory. Comrades, for the leading cadres of the party this is inadmissible. One can not simply say about Marxism—this is wrong, let's turn it upside down; or this is Leninism and this is not; this does not fit; communism or capitalism—let me try communism. What kind of a party leader are you if you do not know on the elementary level which way you are going—towards communism or capitalism—and have to choose. What kind of party secretary are you then? Can such a man be a secretary of a [low-level party] cell? I believe not. In the regional committee, in the district committee there is no place for such a man, not to mention the Central Committee...

Another issue is about the destruction of civilization. This [was] a very dangerous theoretical error. Comrade Malenkov remarked: "I overlooked it." We also fear responsibility for what he said in the speech. But what is this actually about? That allegedly if there were a third world war, atomic war, the conclusion is only one—the death of civilization, the death of mankind. [The French physicist], Joliot Curie, wrote some goddamn gibberish: "the destruction of humankind." When we looked [at his pronouncement—trans.] we did not even know if we should publish it or not. Joliot Curie said, they published it there [abroad]. We reflected on it and finally published it with all that gibberish, because we did not want to put Joliot Curie in an uncomfortable situation. But not only Joliot Curie commits such errors. Read the newspaper "For stable peace, for people's democracy." Comrade Mitin, a CC editor is present here. In the issue dated 21 January of this year the newspaper "For stable peace, for people's democracy" published a speech of comrade [Palmiro] Togliatti [leader of the Italian communist party—trans.] and again [he repeats] the same gibberish, that the war would be the end of civilization. We confused even such outstanding leaders of communism as Togliatti. We have no better than him. This speech [of Malenkov] was politically incorrect, and even today it plays a demoralizing role, although almost a year has passed. We took measures to correct [Malenkov's statement, but nevertheless] comrade Togliatti got himself confused.

That this [statement] is theoretically illiterate is apparent—communists simply should not exist in this world for any other reason than overthrowing capitalism. We have the Communist Manifesto that Marx had written more than 100 years ago. He wrote that the crash of capitalism was nearing and that communism would triumph. And if we, with the countries of people's democracy and with such a powerful mechanism as the Soviet Union and the Communist Party, if we talk our-

selves into admitting that some kind of war allegedly would lead to the end of capitalism and the end of civilization, it means that we do not have our head on our shoulders, but on the totally opposite part of the body (laughter). Therefore, no science, no political considerations can justify [such a statement of Malenkov]. It merely proves how harmful is carelessness in the questions of theory and the lack of principles in politics.

[Source: *TsKhSD*, f. 2, op. 1, d. 127. Translated by Vladislav Zubok.]

¹ Khrushchev is probably referring to the discussion of Beria's role in the debate on the future of Soviet policy in Germany at the July 1953 Plenum [see the publication in *Izvestiia TsK KPSS*, no. 1-2, (1991)]. In the following paragraph Khrushchev criticizes Malenkov's position on the "construction of socialism in the GDR" during the meeting of the Soviet leadership on 28 May 1953, when Lavrentii Beria and Viacheslav Molotov presented two rival proposals. Beria suggested renouncing the goal of constructing socialism altogether and, according to some sources, even contemplated a neutral, democratic, bourgeois Germany. The rest of the leadership, however, opposed this proposal and agreed with Molotov who only suggested rejecting the course of "forced" construction of socialism that had been earlier sanctioned by Joseph Stalin for the GDR communist leadership. The debate resulted in the behind-the-scenes negotiations that led to the "New Course" proposals of the Soviet leadership. The following excerpts from Khrushchev's speech at the plenum highlight Malenkov's role in the debate. Khrushchev, clearly for the purpose of undermining Malenkov's authority, "reveals" that he had been supportive of Beria's proposal. On historians' debate about the significance of this episode see: Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War. From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 160-162; James Richter, "Re-examining Soviet Policy Towards Germany in 1953," *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol. 45, no. 4 (1993), pp. 671-691. On Beria contemplating a "neutral reunified" Germany, see Pavel Sudoplatov et al., *Special Tasks*. pp. 363-364.

² Khrushchev makes an important distinction between the two bodies that ruled the Soviet Union after Stalin's death. Malenkov as a chairman of the Council of Ministers presided over the meeting of May 28, while Khrushchev was there only by invitation as a Secretary of the CC. Voroshilov who did not get any important government job in the post-Stalin setup was not apparently invited to the meeting, although he was a member of the CC Presidium (Politburo). Khrushchev's statement generally corroborates the view that immediately after Stalin's death Beria and Malenkov sought to continue Stalin's tradition in putting the state government above the party "collective" decision-making body.

³ "They" meaning Beria and Malenkov. On the details of these behind-the-scenes negotiations and threats, see "Memuary Nikiti Sergeevicha Khrushcheva," *Voprosy Istorii*, no. 2-3 (1992), pp. 93-94; Feliks Chuev, *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym*, (Moscow: Terra, 1990), pp. 332-335.

⁴ In this speech Malenkov proposed substantial measures to improve living standards of Soviet people, particularly the collectivized peasantry, by reducing taxes, increasing the size of private plots of land for peasants' households. He also proposed, for the first time since 1928, to increase investments into "light"

industries' production of consumer goods at the expense of "heavy" industries, producing armaments.

⁵ I.F. Tevosian was a minister of "black" metallurgy and first deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR. He made his career as one of Stalin's favored "captains" of "industrialization." Khrushchev in this episode poses as a defender of the interests of heavy industry against Malenkov.

⁶ This discussion of yet another "political error" by Malenkov reveals, incidentally, the negligence of the "collective leadership" to peruse carefully routine speeches delivered by all members of the top Soviet leadership who, by the Constitution, had to run for elections for the Supreme Soviet—nominally the highest power of the land. Malenkov said that "a new world war...with modern weapons means the end of world civilization." On the background of Malenkov's remarkable initiative, see David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 337-339; Zubok and Pleshakov, pp. 166-167.

⁷ The sentence is unclear in the Russian original, but Khrushchev talks here about Beria's attempt to make Ignat'ev, minister of the MVD or Internal Security a scape goat for the Kremlin doctors' affair in 1952. In his proposal to the Council of Ministers on 3 April 1953 to free the arrested doctors and close the affair, Beria specifically blamed Ignat'ev and the leadership of the "old" MVD. Later, when he was arrested, this gesture came to be regarded as a clever ruse to earn popularity in the country and to restore Beria's personal control over the secret police machinery. For the text of Beria's proposal and the comments, see G.Kostyrchenko, *V plenu u Krasnogo Faraona*, pp. 358-60.

⁸ Both Khrushchev and Kaganovich confirm that it was Stalin who hand-picked Ignat'ev after he removed and arrested his much stronger predecessors, Beria and Abakumov. See Gennadi Kostyrchenko, *V plenu u krasnogo faraona; Politicheskii presledovaniia evreev v SSSR v poslednee stalinskoe desiatiletie. Dokumental'noe issledovanie*. (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnie otnosheniia, 1994), pp. 289-357 or the English-language version *Out of the Red Shadows: Anti-Semitism in Stalin's Russia* (Prometheus Books, 1995).

⁹ In April-May 1953 Churchill, before he was incapacitated by a stroke, advocated an early summit of Western powers with Stalin's successors without a definite agenda.

¹⁰ This paragraph contains Khrushchev's reference to the "Taiwan crisis" unleashed by the PRC's leadership in September 1954 with bombardment of Quemoy and Matsu, two offshore islands occupied by the Nationalist troops. The crisis ended on 23 April 1955. American newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst came to Moscow and talked to Khrushchev in 1955.

¹¹ This admission is the first "hard" evidence that Malenkov, along with Beria, was the principal architect of the Soviet "peace initiative" of the Spring of 1953. Although Malenkov adhered here to the infamous party tradition of "self-criticism," in this case he must have told the truth—he denied other "sins," but there was simply no reason for him to frame himself on such a serious issue. For more extensive comment on the significance of Malenkov's statement here, see Vladislav Zubok, "'Unacceptably Rude and Blatant on the German Question': The Succession Struggle after Stalin's Death, Beria and the debate on the GDR in Moscow in April-May 1953," presented at a conference "Das Krisenjahr 1953 und der Kalte Krieg in Europa," Potsdam, 10-12 November 1996.

N.A. Bulganin Address to the Plenum of the CC CPSU 9 July 1955

Bulganin. [Ed. note: Bulganin begins his speech by laying out the 31 May 1954 Presidium resolution on the turn towards friendly relations with Yugoslavia. He then summarizes the positive reactions of key socialist leaders consulted, including Ulbricht, Mao Zedong and others.] As for military potential, we lost the strongest country in Europe. Not one state in Europe has an army like Yugoslavia's, which today has 42 divisions. The Yugoslav army has modern equipment, including artillery, tanks, air power, even jets supplied for free by the Americans.

By its geographical position, Yugoslavia occupies a very important and very vulnerable place for the Soviet Union. If you look at a map, you will see that Yugoslavia has driven a wedge deep into the east. And now imagine future military events. Let's assume that we had to rush our military forces toward the west. In such a case, we would have 40-50 divisions of the Yugoslav army on our left flank.

Khrushchev. Plus American ones.

Bulganin. We would be so pinned down that we would have to send a covering force of at least 70-80 divisions there.

Mikoian. And not on plains, but in the mountains.

Bulganin. And if we must fight in the south...

Khrushchev. With the Turks, for instance. Such a possibility is not ruled out, either.

Bulganin. Yes, such a possibility is not ruled out... Then on our right flank we would have the Yugoslav army with a contingent of 50, and perhaps more, divisions.

Yugoslavia controls the Adriatic Sea, which is connected with the Mediterranean Sea, one of the very important, decisive lines of communication of the Anglo-American military forces, since the Americans and English receive vital strategic raw materials and other sorts of supplies through the Suez canal and across the Mediterranean. Controlling the Adriatic, Yugoslavia threatens the Mediterranean.

It must be remembered how significant this state is.

And, finally, comrades, there are the people and the cadres. The Yugoslavs are superb fighters, superb people, who like us.

Khrushchev. It would be well if com. Molotov looked at these cadres, and saw what sort of people they are, what sort of life path they have traveled...

[Ed. note: Khrushchev and Bulganin then begin to sing the praises of Yugoslav comrades in counterpoint, remembering shared service in the Spanish Civil War, earlier meetings in the USSR, etc.. Discussion then turned to the origins of the split and the withdrawal of Soviet military advisers from Yugoslavia.]

Bulganin. The [Soviet] military and civilian advisers who were told to leave were perplexed. What was going on? They believed that there would be a military confrontation, even war, and some wept.

Khrushchev. Tito told us that when the military advisers left Yugoslavia, some of them wept.

Bulganin. Here, then, comrades, is the reason. There was no mention of internationalism at all. There was pride and ambition. This is how the rupture began. Com. Molotov was there then; he should know.

At the same time [as the withdrawal of advisers] there came a communication from Albania that Tito had decided to move a division into Albania, without having asked Stalin about it. That poured even more oil on the fire. And, finally, the third reason is the one about which com. Molotov spoke, although entirely incorrectly. He correctly depicted the fact, but gave the issue his own evaluation. That is in relation to Trieste. On Trieste, I will say that com. Molotov's position was incorrect both then and recently. [Ed. note: For more on Yugoslav-Albanian relations and the Trieste issue, see the Yugoslavia section of this *Bulletin*.]

Khrushchev. Both the beginning and the end were incorrect.

Bulganin. The beginning was incorrect and the end was especially incorrect. Tito wanted to get Trieste.

Khrushchev. And at that time we wanted Yugoslavia to get Trieste.

Bulganin. But what's wrong here? God grant that he get two Triestes [*Dai bog, chtoby dva Triesta poluchil*], but we objected to it then.

In 1954 there was also a scandal regarding Trieste. In October 1954, under pressure from the Americans and the English, Yugoslavia and Italy agreed on a division of the Trieste zone. The agreement did not wholly satisfy the Yugoslavs, but all the same Tito decided to agree to what they proposed. It would seem that we should have then, at the beginning and in 1954, supported the Yugoslavs and said that we were "for" [it]. But our MID [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] decided to protest and to submit the issue to the UN; it was said that they were violating the interests of the Soviet Union as an allied power and were undermining our prestige, because they didn't ask us.

In the Presidium it was decided that the MID's point of view was incorrect.

Khrushchev. That was the period when no one was any longer recognizing our allied rights in relation to Trieste.

Bulganin. We did not support MID's proposals, but proposed that we write that the Soviet Union agreed to support the Yugoslavs, for which our Yugoslav comrades thanked us when we were there.

That is how the rupture began. There were no facts to the effect that the Yugoslavs were creeping away from a Marxist-Leninist position, from internationalism, and were taking a nationalist path. There was nothing of the sort. Simply ambition, pride, and only afterwards the letters which you know about were written to the Yugoslavs. Com. Molotov wrote at Stalin's dictation. We all helped however we could.

Khrushchev. And the main material for this de-

scended from the ceiling [*bralsia s potolka*], that is, was thought up.

Bulganin. Yes, the material was a fabrication. It was then that they made fabrications about Marxism-Leninism and nationalism. Let's speak plainly. After all, it was so. I understand that com. Molotov will say that Bulganin is simplifying. I am not simplifying; I am saying how it was. That is how the disagreements with Yugoslavia began, as a result of which we lost the friendship of this country.

Com. Molotov spoke here about 1945, about Trieste. The disagreements started, he said, not in 1948, but back in 1945.

From 1945 to 1948, we lived like great friends with Tito; both during the war and afterward, we had very good relations. Tito visited Moscow. You introduced him to me, com. Molotov; incidentally, together we drove with him to [visit] Stalin. We lived like friends. What sort of conflict did we have with Tito in 1945? There was no conflict. Everything happened in 1948.

I already talked about Albania, and now I will talk about the Balkan federation. Comrade Molotov spoke about how the idea arose, but he forgets that there were witnesses: myself, Mikoian, Malenkov and other members of the Presidium, Kaganovich, Voroshilov; Khrushchev at that time was not there; he was in the Ukraine.

Khrushchev. Yes, I was not there; at that time I was in the Ukraine.

Bulganin. Now com. Molotov is ascribing the Balkan federation to Tito. [Ed. Note: For more on this, see the article by Gibianskii in this *Bulletin*.] But the issue was first raised by Stalin in a conversation with Dimitrov—what if, he said, you united the Balkans, created a federation[?]

Khrushchev. There, in Yugoslavia, they almost built an office building for the federation's institutions, but did not finish it.

Bulganin. You would be supported, said Stalin to Dimitrov; try talking with Tito. Dimitrov went home, visited Tito, spoke with him, and then it [i.e. the federation] got underway [*poshlo*].

Khrushchev. And now he is being accused of straying from Leninism for that.

Bulganin. I state that with all responsibility. Let the other members of the Presidium confirm where the idea came from. Now com. Molotov is foisting the idea on com. Tito.

Malenkov. That's right.

Khrushchev. How is that! They directed such actions by com. Tito against Leninism.

Bulganin. That is how the matter stood. Now I want to speak about Yalta.¹ We were not there. Coms. Stalin and Molotov were there. Was Voroshilov there or not?

Voroshilov. I was not.

Bulganin. How did they divide Yugoslavia between England and the Soviet Union and how did Tito find out about it? This is a major embarrassment. Com. Khrushchev spoke about this in his report, [and] I will not

dwell on it. A tactical conversation [*takticheskii razgovor*] with Churchill took place, but it came into the open.²

Khrushchev. Tito should have been informed in time.

Bulganin. Yes, Tito should have been informed. Churchill divulged the fact in his memoirs, which were recently published.

Khrushchev. The Yugoslav leaders found out from Churchill and not from us what we should have told them

Bulganin. I want to return somewhat to the beginning, when a letter of 31 May 1954 on the Yugoslav issue was written by the CC Presidium. At first we ordered the MID to write the letter. To write a draft and present it to us. Unfortunately, I do not have the text of the letter; com. Suslov has it. If only you knew what sort of letter it was! Com. Zorin wrote it on the order of com. Molotov. I do not know whether he reported on it to Molotov or not. Com. Molotov was then in Geneva. Zorin came to the Presidium and said that he had acquainted com. Molotov [with it] and that he had agreed. In the letter it talked about the necessity of doing a survey on our relations with fascist Yugoslavia. In the letter it was called fascist Yugoslavia, and its leaders, fascists...

On the issue of disarmament, com. Molotov took an incorrect position on the decrease of military forces by a third.

Khrushchev. And even committed a distortion of a CC decision.

Bulganin. Afterwards, the CC Presidium adopted a decision to the effect that our position had to be changed on the issue of cutting armaments. I will speak in greater detail of this. The Soviet proposal on the issue of disarmament, which was being looked into and discussed in different committees of the United Nations, stipulated a reduction in arms and armed forces of the five great powers by one third. The Westerners insisted on a reduction of armed forces to a definite level, because one third, let us say, of five million is one thing, and one third of one million is another. If we cut one third and France cuts one third, that would be different things. From this point of view our position was out of date [*ustarela*].

Khrushchev. That position is unwise.

Bulganin. But for several years we have been chewing [*zhuem*] the same thing over: one third, one third. Com. Gromyko sat on the subcommittee in London for a month and kept reporting that the most ideal thing was cutting by a third. Stupidity!

Khrushchev. Besides himself, he didn't convince anyone there.

Bulganin. In March 1955, the CC Presidium recognized the position of the MID on that issue to be incorrect [*nepravil'noi*] and adopted a resolution to reject that thesis. We said that we should agree with the Westerners as to levels. A directive went to London in fulfillment of our decision. And all of a sudden we read Malik's telegram from London, that he is continuing his line on one third. What was going on? It turns out that in the telegram

which went to London as an instruction from com. Molotov, the following clarification was made: if necessary, if you are asked, what the term “agreed levels” means, you must say that we have in mind a reduction of arms and armed forces by one third. Com. Molotov then excused himself, saying that he had made an oversight, that it was a mistake, but I consider it necessary to speak about this.

[Source: *TsKhSD f.2, op. 1, d. 173, ll. 76 ff.* Translated by Benjamin Aldrich-Moodie.]

¹ Ed. Note: In February 1945, Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin met in the Palace of Livadia at Yalta in the Crimea to discuss and agree on the postwar order.

² Ed. Note: In October 1944, Churchill and Stalin met in the Kremlin and divided up spheres of influence in Europe, allegedly on the back of an envelope. For details, see Albert Resis, “The Churchill-Stalin Secret ‘Percentages’ Agreement on the Balkans, Moscow, October 1944,” *American Historical Review* 83 (1977-78) pp. 368-87.

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Evening, 9 July 1955

Bulganin. (Chairman) Com. Molotov has the floor.

Molotov. [Ed. note: Molotov presents the development of Soviet-Yugoslav relations since World War Two for about twenty minutes.] Comrades, the issue of Yugoslavia has great political significance. Obviously, the complex nature of the Yugoslav issue is clear to us all...

If one were to judge by this statement, it would appear that the main reason for the rupture in relations between the CPSU and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (CPY) in 1948 was some “materials” which were fabricated by the enemies of the people Beria and Abakumov, and the rest is not worthy of attention.

From what I have said and from a real acquaintance with the materials, one can, however, establish that this statement, which tries to explain the reason for the rupture in relations with the CPY in large part by the hostile intrigues of Beria and Abakumov, does not fit with the factual situation. Beria and Abakumov’s intrigues, without a doubt, played a certain role here, but this was not of chief importance.

The groundlessness of that explanation, it seems to me, is visible from the following:

First, it was incorrect to place the blame for the rupture in relations between the CPSU and the CPY only on our party, while keeping silent about the responsibility of the CPY. This falsely exonerates [*obeliae*] the leadership of the CPY, for which there are no grounds.

Secondly—and this is the important point—it should not be ignored that as the basis of the disagreement

between our party and the leadership of the CPY, there was the fact that the Yugoslav leaders distanced themselves from the principled international positions for which they had stood in the previous period.

In a discussion of this issue in the CC Presidium, some doubt was expressed in relation to the awkwardness and incorrectness of the given explanation. However, the following arguments followed in defense of the given explanation of the reasons for the rupture: that if we did not say that the main reason was Beria’s and Abakumov’s intrigues, then the responsibility for the rupture would fall on Stalin, and that was impermissible.

These arguments should not be accepted.

Khrushchev. On Stalin and Molotov.

Molotov. That’s new.

Khrushchev. Why is it new?

Molotov. We signed the letter on behalf of the party CC.

Khrushchev. Without asking the CC.

Molotov. That is not true.

Khrushchev. That is exactly true [*tochno*].

Molotov. Now you can say whatever comes into your head.

Khrushchev. Without even asking the members of the Politburo. I am a member of the Politburo, but no one asked my opinion.

Molotov. Com. Khrushchev is speaking imprecisely [*netochno*].

Khrushchev. I want once again to repeat: I was not asked, although I [was] a member of the Politburo.

Molotov. You must not forget that the basic and real reason for the rupture was the move of the leadership of the CPY from a position of communism to a position of nationalism, and not just someone’s intrigues which, of course, also played their role.

Did such a departure by the Yugoslav leaders from communism occur or not? We must give an answer to that question...

Does this mean that there are no grounds for rapprochement between the USSR and Yugoslavia? No, it does not.

If a rapprochement and an improvement of relations between the Soviet Union and this or that country which does not belong to the socialist camp (for instance, India or Finland) is possible, then, consequently, an improvement in relations and a rapprochement between the USSR and Yugoslavia is also possible, if Yugoslavia shows, along with the USSR, an aspiration to this. In the present conditions such a rapprochement is possible chiefly along intergovernmental [Ed. note: i.e., non-party] lines.

In our relations with Yugoslavia, we cannot forget the fact that Yugoslavia left the people’s democratic countries with which it was together from 1945-1947. But, on the other hand, we must reckon with and appreciate the fact that Yugoslavia, although it drew closer to the imperialist camp, is trying in some capacity to preserve its sovereignty and national independence, although in recent years

its ties with countries like the USA, England and others, and together with this, its dependence on these countries, have become stronger and stronger. It [Yugoslavia] is between two camps, tilting towards the capitalist countries. In view of this, it is completely clear that it is our task to weaken Yugoslavia's ties with the capitalist countries which are pulling it into the imperialist camp, be they commercial, economic, or military-political ties, which are putting Yugoslavia in a position of dependence on imperialism. For this, it is necessary to increase and strengthen Yugoslavia's ties with the USSR and the people's democratic countries, showing all possible vigilance in relation to the remaining ties that Yugoslavia has with the capitalist countries. Such a policy will strengthen our socialist camp and at the same time will weaken the camp of the imperialist countries. Such a policy is correct, let's say, in relation to India (or Finland), and is all the more correct in relation to Yugoslavia, where the revolutionary traditions of partisan struggle against fascist occupiers are alive and sympathies for the USSR are great in the people, and where such post-war revolutionary victories as the nationalization of large industry and others, which were accomplished when Yugoslavia marched in the same ranks as the people's democratic states which had arisen at that time, have been preserved. However, it should not be forgotten that in recent years (1949-1955), Yugoslavia has made a series of steps backward both in the city (the weakening of state planning authority in relation to nationalized industry), as well as especially in the countryside, where in recent years a line of renouncing the collectivization of agriculture has been followed.

We must make sure that Yugoslavia does not enter the North Atlantic bloc, or any of its international affiliates, and that Yugoslavia leaves the Balkan union, [since] two of the three participants (Turkey and Greece) are members of the North-Atlantic bloc. It is also in our interest to help Yugoslavia reduce its economic dependence on the USA and other capitalist countries. We must expand and strengthen cooperation with Yugoslavia, above all in the international arena, in the struggle to strengthen peace in Europe and in the whole world. The same can be said in relation to possible international cooperation in the economic sphere, insofar as joint steps with Yugoslavia and other countries in the interest of normalizing international trade and against discrimination and other aggressive actions by capitalist countries headed by the USA, are possible and desirable.

However, appropriate caution and a critical approach should be shown toward Yugoslavia's political steps, bearing in mind that in recent years Yugoslavia's position on a series of issues (for instance, on the German issue) has been closer to the position of the Western powers than to the position of the USSR and the people's democratic countries. It should not be forgotten that in accusing the Soviet Union of imperialist tendencies and of the so-called policy of "hegemony," the Yugoslav government has

untied its hands to speak out against the USSR at any time on all and sundry issues of international relations. The government of Yugoslavia has not yet once said that it has revised these views, or even that its foreign policy is closer to the position of the USSR and the people's democratic countries than to the position of the powers in the imperialist camp...

[*TsKhSD*, f.2, op.1, d.173, ll.1-11. Translated by Benjamin Aldrich-Moodie.]

Continued from page 29

bered, "The commission report was given by Pospelov (he was and remains pro-Stalinist). The facts were so terrifying that when he spoke, especially in very serious places (*tiazhelyi*), tears appeared in his eyes and his voice trembled. We were all stunned, although we knew much, but all that the commission reported we, of course, did not know. And now it all was verified and confirmed by documents."⁵

After the report Khrushchev stated his position: "Stalin was incompetent (*nesostoiatel'nost'*) as a leader (*vozhd'*). What kind of leader [is this], if he destroys everyone? We must show the courage to speak the truth. Opinion: tell the Congress; to consider: how to tell the Congress. Whom to tell[?] If we do not tell, then we are dishonest (*nechestnost'*) towards the Congress. Maybe have Pospelov prepare a report and tell—the causes of the cult of personality, the concentration of power in one [set of] hands, in dishonorable (*nechestnykh*) hands."⁶

[Ed. Note : Behind the scenes of the ongoing Congress, the Presidium edited Khrushchev's speech. The passage below was excised.]

"Every member of the Politburo can tell of disrespectful (*bestseremonnyi*) treatment by Stalin of Politburo members. I present, for example, this case. Once, not long before his death, Stalin summoned several members of the CC Presidium. We went to his dacha and began to discuss several questions. It happened that on the table across from me there was a big stack of papers, which hid me from Stalin.

Stalin testily shouted: 'Why are you sitting there?! Are you afraid that I will shoot you? Do not be afraid, I will not shoot, sit a bit closer.' There are your relations with members of the Politburo."⁷

[Source : V.P. Naumov, "K istorii sekretnogo doklada N.S. Khrushcheva na 20th s'ezde KPSS," *Novaia i noveishaia istoriia* 4 (1996) pp. 147-168, reprinted in *Forum für osteuropäische Ideen- und Zeitgeschichte* 1(1997), pp. 137-177. Special thanks to Donal O'Sullivan for permission to reprint. Translated by Andrew Grauer.]

¹ Mikoian's diary can be found in the Presidential Archive (APRF, f.39, op.3, d.120).

² Malin Notes are located in the Center for the Storage of Contemporary Documentation (TsKhSD, f.3, op.8, d.389).

³ The draft of Khrushchev's speech can be found in TsKhSD, f.1, op.2, d.16.

⁴ TsKhSD f. 3, op. 8, d. 389, ll. 52-54.

⁵ APRF f. 39, op. 3, d. 120, ll. 115-116.

⁶ TsKhSD f. 3, op. 8, d. 389, l. 62.

⁷ TsKhSD f. 1, op. 2, d. 16, ll. 76-77.

**Concluding Word by com. N.S. KHRUSHCHEV
[12 July 1955]**

Comrades. I want to read you a telegram which com. Gromyko cited in part, since this document is of interest in understanding the position of the Yugoslav leaders. It is a communication from our ambassador in Yugoslavia about a conversation with com. Tito.

On 29 June com. Tito invited the Soviet ambassador to visit him and had a lengthy conversation with him. Here is what com. Val'kov wrote about that:

"In a conversation with me on 29 June Tito told me the following:

At present, Tito said, there are many conversations among the Yugoslavs and foreign representatives, surrounding the communication published in the Yugoslav press on 28 June about his, Tito's, acceptance of an invitation to visit the Soviet Union.

I noted that at a lunch in the Egyptian mission on 28 June the Canadian ambassador, the Egyptian envoy, the Japanese envoy, and the English consul all asked me about this issue. After this Tito noted that he would be happy to visit the Soviet Union and, in keeping with the understanding with comrades Khrushchev and Bulganin, the trip would take place next year. Concerning [U.S. Secretary of State John Foster] Dulles' announcement at a 28 June press conference on the fact that the possibility of the Yugoslav president's visiting the United States of America would be reviewed favorably if the Marshal expressed a desire to visit the United States of America, Tito said that the Americans would have to wait a long time for the expression of such a desire, if indeed they ever wait long enough [to hear it]." (Laughter in the hall). Not badly put!

Voice from the audience. Not bad...

Now on Austria. This is a very important issue. I remember how Stalin, about a year before his death, said several times:

- Why don't we conclude a treaty with Austria?

But this matter kept being postponed; it was said that we would resolve it after Trieste. When the Trieste matter got cleared up, comrade Stalin again ask[ed]:

- Why aren't we concluding a treaty with Austria?

After Stalin's death, somehow com. Malenkov and I began talking with com. Molotov about Austria. He told us that the Austrian issue was a very complex one which we needed very much [i.e. to keep on the agenda without resolving it], [and] that its resolution had to be delayed.

Here, at the plenum, I will frankly say that I believed Molotov's word on everything, [and] like many of us, thought that he was a great and experienced diplomat. Sometimes you'd look and then reason and think:

- Damn it [*chert voz'mi*], maybe I am missing something! After all, that is what it means to be a diplomat—he sees, and I don't see anything (laughter in the hall). I'm telling you this in all sincerity.

Some time passed, and I still wanted to find out what

Molotov saw in the Austrian issue and [why] he was fighting to drag out its resolution, but I can't see [it].

I came to the conclusion that there was no reason for us to drag out this matter, since time was beginning to work against us. In Austria we are losing our good position by dragging out a resolution to the issue of a peace treaty with the country. I then say to com. Bulganin:

- You know what I think, Nikolai Aleksandrovich? In my opinion, the Austrian issue as Molotov understands it is reminiscent of an egg which has gone bad. Soon you will have to throw it in the garbage because everything will change and there will be no value in resolving it positively. And that is really so.

But if we had gone halfway [*vyshli navstrechu*] with a resolution of the Austrian issue when the events connected with the conclusion of the Paris agreement had just ripened, after all, then the issue of these agreements could have arisen in a different way.

Voice from the Presidium. Correct.

Voice from the hall. The Paris agreement wouldn't have come about.

Khrushchev. We put forward the Austrian issue in a discussion of the CC Presidium. I said to com. Molotov:

- Listen, Viacheslav Mikhailovich, you understand this issue. But some comrades and I do not understand why we should delay the conclusion of a treaty with Austria. Explain to us how you understand it. Perhaps I will begin to understand it differently; after all, we aren't fools. And when I understand, I will support you; after all, right now I don't see anything complicated in it. I see only stupidity on our side, which consists of the fact that we are dragging out the conclusion of a peace treaty with Austria for no apparent reason.

We discussed the issue and came to the conclusion that we should conclude a peace treaty with Austria, [and] make sure that Austria became a neutral state. When we came to such a decision, Molotov said:

- It is good that it was decided this way. After all, I did not object to such a decision.

Comrades! We, all of the members of the Presidium, each spoke to Molotov twice, reporting to him that it was necessary to stop dragging out the Austrian issue and to resolve it. And you know how we usually resolve issues in the Presidium,—we don't speak because everything is already clear and that issue that has been brought for examination does not need additional clarification. And here, I repeat, we all spoke several times without convincing com. Molotov that it was impossible to delay any further on this matter.

Kaganovich. And [we spoke] quite sharply [*i dovol'no ostro*].

Khrushchev. During the discussion I ask[ed] com. Molotov:

- Tell me, please, are you for or against war?

- No, he says, I am against war.

- Then what are you achieving by having our troops sit in Vienna? If you stand for war, then it would be

correct to stay in Austria. It is a beach-head [*platsdarm*], and only a fool would give up such a beach-head if he planned to make war now. If [you are] not for war, then we have to leave. In our country, communists do not understand you; the Austrian communists do not understand, and Austrian workers begin to see our troops as occupiers. Communists abroad also do not understand us. Why are we sitting in Austria; what are we waiting for there?

Com. Molotov was commissioned to prepare a draft. He presented the draft, but it said that if an *anschluss* were to be prepared of Austria with Germany, we would reserve the right to lead our troops into Austria. There was a lot of all sorts of nonsense in the draft presented by the MID.

I said to com. Molotov:

- Listen, we have to look at things realistically and concretely. Let's assume that we manage to conclude a treaty in which this is said. Imagine that they prepare an *anschluss*. After all, after we find out about it, everything will be ready for an *anschluss*—artillery will be deployed where they should be, and troops will be assembled. After all, they are not fools, and know that if there is an *anschluss*, we can oppose an *anschluss* and, probably, repulse it. So, in such a situation, would you start a war?

You have to keep in mind, after all, that the Austrians and Germans are nations [*natsii*] close to one another. If someone set us such conditions: to separate the Russians from the Ukrainians or Belorussians, what would we say? We would say, without pausing for thought:

- You take your proposals to God's mother [*k bozh'ei materi*]!

Why should we stick our noses into that matter? Remember what has already happened. After the First World War, France reserved rights for itself as to the Saar, the Ruhr, and the Rhineland zones. But Hitler came to power in Germany. He squeezed France, seizing the Saar district [and] the Ruhr [and] Rhineland zones, and what became of it? An embarrassment. The French disgraced themselves, since it became clear that France was not in a condition to defend itself. And Hitler, having gotten cocky [*obnaglev*], began to mobilize forces for other expansionist adventures.

I said to Molotov:

- Why should we do what you are proposing in Austria? Let us save our strength at home, and everyone will understand us correctly.

And so when we all bore down on him [*navalilis' nego*], he couldn't do anything other than to say, I agree; we have to submit whatever draft you propose. After the resolution of the Austrian issue, abroad they began to write about how wise [and] what a good diplomat Molotov was, and how he so skillfully took care of the Austrian issue. I even once said to com. Bulganin: "Probably Molotov doesn't like to read such articles." After all we know what position com. Molotov took on that issue. And then at a meeting of the CC Presidium he said:

- Did I really object to the resolution of the Austrian

issue?

Perhaps in another month he will say that he approved the resolution on the Yugoslav issue as well?

Or take the issue of arms control. For a long time we took an incorrect position, proposing to cut the armed forces of all countries by one third. With such a stance on the issue [*postanovka voprosa*], they will send us to the devil and put forward convincing arguments as well. Who will make such an agreement? We have so many million [men] at arms (and the Americans have data on this). We say: let's disarm, cut armaments by a third. And what sort of disarmament can there be here; can they really discuss our draft? Judge for yourself: we have, for example, six million soldiers, reduced by one third—four [million] are left. They have, for instance, three million, which must also be reduced by one third. After this, what sort of correlation of forces is left after that? By making that sort of proposal, we give the imperialists trump cards to decline our proposal; we will look like opponents of disarmament. The rulers of bourgeois states under the pressure of their people also raise the issue of disarmament. In order to knock all of the trumps out of the hands of the imperialists, we decided to introduce a proposal that, on the issues of arms control, we start from the conditions of each state, taking into account the size of the territory of the country, the quantity of its population, and other conditions. Based on these conditions, we must attain arms cuts to an appropriate level. Is this decision correct? Undoubtedly, it is correct. Such a proposal permits us the possibility of taking the initiative.

We adopted a resolution of the CC Presidium on this issue and instructed com. Molotov to inform com. Malik about it, but he sent a different directive, did not fulfill the resolution of the CC Presidium, as com. Bulganin has correctly stated here. At the meeting of the CC Presidium we asked com. Molotov: why did he do so? He explained it like this: I gave correct instructions, but when they looked at the ciphered communication, it turned out that it was incorrectly written. Com. Molotov admitted that he had made an error in this matter, for which we then gave him a warning...

[Source: *TsKhSD f.2, op.1, d.176, ll.282-95. Translated by Benjamin Aldrich-Moodie.*]

“Stalin, comrades, is such a figure that many historians will break their teeth trying to learn this history; and there will still be something left to learn.”

Khrushchev’s Second Secret Speech *Introduced and Translated by L.W. Gluchowski*

Much has already been written about Khrushchev’s secret speech to the closed session of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) on the evening of 24-25 February 1956. The secret speech, “On the cult of personality and its consequences,” ignited a flame which set the communist world afire. In one fell swoop Stalin was branded a criminal by Khrushchev.¹ The international communist movement went through a period of chaos following Khrushchev’s revelations and nowhere was this more apparent than in Poland.

On 12 March 1956, the Polish United Worker’s Party (PUWP) lost its own leader. Boleslaw Bierut, ill with pneumonia, had traveled to the 20th CPSU Congress but he never returned. He died of heart failure in Moscow shortly after reading the secret speech, which the Soviets provided to all the leaders of the fraternal parties on the evening of 24 February. The secret speech found its way to Poland with the delegates who returned to Warsaw.² Bierut’s death forced Khrushchev to move quickly. He travelled to Warsaw with Bierut’s body for the state funeral and remained there for a week. Khrushchev met with the Polish leadership to settle the succession question. On 20 March, the PUWP held its 6th plenum to chose a new First Secretary. Khrushchev was invited to make a speech and to participate in the proceedings. Below is an excerpt of his 73 page, largely extemporaneous, often incoherent and ungrammatical explanation to the Polish comrades of why he gave the secret speech at the 20th congress, as well as other matters.³ This speech was not included in the official protocol of the 6th plenum and remained hidden in the Polish archives until recently. It was never translated and has never been published before.

Khrushchev was an emotional speaker who tended to speak his mind. A number of episodes are noteworthy in this speech: Khrushchev said that the legacy in foreign policy left by Stalin was terrible; that Stalin was smart, but suffered from a persecution complex; that we after all coped with foreign policy despite Stalin’s warnings; that we could not arrest Stalin on 22 June 1941; that we should “demoralize NATO;” that Stalin had called him a Pole.⁴ Moreover, Khrushchev agreed to answer questions by the Polish comrades from the floor about the secret speech and Stalin’s legacy.⁵

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The Speech by Comrade Khrushchev at the 6th PUWP CC Plenum (Excerpt) 20 March 1956, Warsaw

[Head of State Council]

Comrade Aleksander Zawadzki [in Polish]

Comrades, the [PUWP] Politburo has taken advantage of the occasion afforded by Comrade Khrushchev’s visit with us, and has invited Comrade Khrushchev to meet with the Central Committee plenum. As a result we should treat this as the beginning of the plenum—the actual meeting will begin in the late afternoon.

I suggest, in the name of all present, that we give Comrade Khrushchev a heartfelt greeting, at this, our plenum. (Applause.) We ask that Comrade Khrushchev take advantage of this meeting, and speak to all who are gathered, from a perspective of personal experience.

Comrade Khrushchev [in Russian]

My task is very difficult because I don’t know which problems interest you, the Polish United Workers’ Party. The questions [discussed at] the 20th [CPSU] congress. All the questions of the 20th congress.

I was told that you’re familiar with the report presented at the closed session of the congress. You also read it. Now, comrades, I would like to talk about a very crucial question—the question of the cult of personality.

The report of the closed session [of the 20th CPSU congress] you have read. But.....[Ed. Note: Dots not enclosed in parentheses are found in the original.] with such openness we presented these questions. We didn’t hide anything; we said everything. Why did we introduce this question to the party congress? We had a discussion. We exchanged opinions, if such a topic should be touched. People, for decades, thought like this. And suddenly, we’ll show them that it’s not that clean, how we always looked at and understood this subject, that it’s dirty, this subject. We discussed it a lot, argued about it, and finally decided to present this question. This is our capital, and we have to use it. Our biggest capital is that which aids in reinforcing the ranks of our party. And capital which aides in reinforcing our authority among the masses is our main capital. After the death of Stalin, we freed tens of thousands of people from jails. We reinstated thousands of people to party membership. We reinstated our friends. I talked to one of them, who spent sixteen years with.....This is my

acquaintance, we worked together in the Donbass. I was in charge of the *orgotdel* [Organization Department] of Stalin's regional committee, he was in charge of the.....regional committee. A member of the party since 1917, joined as a young man, and spent sixteen years in jail, a completely honest man. Comrades, this was a member.....up until the 7th congress and [he was] a delegate to the 7th congress. They came, they wanted, you see, not only the pants from the Red Cross, but.....and he would have been satisfied. But, he wants to receive moral satisfaction. How can we say it to him? And we would have been simply.....if we simply.....our head, and said that nothing had happened. So, thousands of people came, and people who were in the party for decades.....

II

The most important thing is to educate correctly. ...Who will decide, how can one explain the absence of the.....congress for thirteen years. How can one explain? But, we have so many people who asked us this question during Stalin's tenure. They were arrested. This is already an anti-Soviet person. The party should be informed at a certain time, right before the party congress, but this is arbitrariness. The party cannot live like this. Well, we have decided to report these questions to the congress, and said.....and saying.....To state the question, and where were you, you were with Stalin. We said we've seen, and we're saying, you judge. Let the congress judge, if it deserves trust or not. But, the party must know everything. As the master, the congress must know about it and decide. Therefore, we came and stated it. I would say.....that after we had made this report, and now we're reading this report to members of the party, then we decided to read it to Komsomol members. There are eighteen million warm-hearted young people that were brought up by us in a certain direction. If they don't know everything—won't understand us.....We decided.....then we went ahead. We decided to have it read during workers' meetings. Not only to party members, but to non-party members as well, so that non-party members feel that we trust them.....will know. When we were told.....the entire world talks, the entire diplomatic corps is making noise that Khrushchev did.....exactly. The connections [i.e., intelligence communications] aren't bad. Here he gave such a report, he talked for three hours, really talked for three hours, that such questions were presented, that such questions were really presented, and that after that, they won.....so to speak. To each other.....there's such a situation among the diplomats, that Khrushchev flew to Warsaw, Malenkov to London, Mikoian to Karachi, during a bad state in the [Soviet] Politburo they're not going to fly all over the world.....checking themselves. Because, really, let them make some noise; make some noise and then they'll be left with nothing (*na bobakh*). But, we will only win from this, because now we have a colossal growth of party solidarity around the Central Committee, and firmness

among party ranks, and it's only natural that the party receive satisfaction, that we, so to speak, the Central Committee.....under the party.....He made the report to the party, because.....the reasons.....and we're saying how to cure why this could have happen.....

(...)

After reading this, you'd probably be indignant, and probably say, this is really an enemy of the people. (*Voice from the audience [in Russian]* No.) No? Comrades, comrades, you're saying no. I'm not upset with you. Yes, Comrades. But, you're saying this in 1956, after my presentation. Now, even a fool can be smart, as they say. But, you have to make the decision when the question is being discussed. Here, before you, sits your wonderful fellow-countryman, and our friend, Rokossowski. He spent two years in jail. (*Question from the audience:.....Berezhkov*) There is. Yes, there is. Here, in my report, I was talking about Meretskov. Meretskov, I don't know if he sat for two years or not, but not for a long time. But, now he's a complete invalid. He was interrogated by Rodos.⁶ This big man was interrogated by Rodos. They had very smart techniques. The doctors' case. I was sick, before my trip to Warsaw. The professor, Vinogradov came, who was one of the saboteurs and had been in jail. And then he was freed. I ask: "So, what do you think, Vladimir Nikitovich, can I fly to Warsaw?" He says: "You can. Breath carefully, through the nose. Don't make speeches outdoors. Do not take off your hat." A doctor says that to a person who's not yet completely well. He was in jail. After jail he examined us. But, I read his testimony myself, that he was a German spy. It so happened that this doctor, Vinogradov, attended to me, and was at my place practically a day before his arrest. After my presentation to the 19th congress, I fell ill. And I was laying in bed, for three day. And he was taking care of me, and I was already reading the protocols on his statements. The other doctors were saying this.....What could I do? What could I do, when a doctor who works with him says: I say such-and-such, I did such-and-such things, I poisoned this one, I strangled that one. I had the help of such-and-such. What could I say to myself. I'll go and say to Stalin that this isn't true. But, he'll say: "What are you doing, these people are admitting it." In any case, I wouldn't be allowed. The investigator should have been called, then the doctors, and questioned. But these conditions weren't available. These conditions—this is the cult of personality.

(...)

Well, you have read everything in the report. This is, so to say, fresh news. The situation in the agricultural field is difficult. Once I said to Stalin: "Comrade Stalin, we have a crisis in agriculture." He says: "What do you mean, crisis?" I reply: "A crisis: no milk.....no meat, no milk. What's happening?" "This is not correct," he says, and immediately became defensive because of this word. "Stalin's age," "Stalin's leadership," and here is a crisis.....Only enemies say this word. Malenkov was

asked: "Do we procure more meat now or less?" "More." I said: "I'm saying more too." "More milk?" "More." "Well, the population has increased too." Wages have risen. The purchasing ability has increased too. Then, if that's so, talk like this. We couldn't tell him these things. Well, what kind of socialism is it when a person can't drink an extra cup of milk. I, at the time of capitalism, drank as much milk as I wanted, being a miner during capitalism. And now, I have to, I should be thankful, that now, I can buy a cup of milk for my child. But, such is the situation. This means that this is our fault; we're discrediting socialism. The workers and employees, and all the people—a socialist system, capitalist system, he doesn't choose by himself. But, he chooses a system which will provide a better lifestyle for him. This system for him, the socialist system, this is a social system where the tools of production are located in the hands of society. Therefore, the society itself, in its own interests, will use these tools of production. So, you have to provide uninterrupted growth in the standard of living of the population. Stalin said that a committee should be formed to study this matter. I was nominated as the chairman of that committee. I knew what it meant. I'm not going to do anything to cause problems. I'll get nothing. I can't do anything. I know this. I say: "Comrade Stalin, why me, maybe Malenkov is better?" Why did I nominate Malenkov, for that I had grounds. Malenkov was entrusted with leadership for agriculture. I said, why. I'm the secretary of the Moscow committee. I have so many things (*vot tak vot*) of my own to be done. Let Malenkov do it. "Let it be." So, what can I do, you can't argue with Stalin. He says, Mikoian should be in the committee, and others, let them work. Well, I know that if I had the opportunity to solve this question, I'd give a suggestion. But, I wouldn't be allowed to solve this matter. And they would make me an enemy. Because, whatever I'd have suggested, Stalin would say that it's all harmful. Only enemies can suggest this. We spent a lot of time sitting and arguing. But, do you know, comrades, how many ass-lickers are there? There was this Kozlov, an agriculture manager, we kicked him out from the Central Committee, but this big bastard (*svoloch*) remained in the party. I beg your pardon for such harsh words, but he should have been expelled from the party. All the time he presented documents to the Central Committee on how everything is moving, agriculture is developing, that we have nothing, but agriculture is growing. We sat, corrected the material a little bit. I'll tell you exactly how it was. Corrected the materials, and went to Comrade Stalin: The materials are ready. Spent a lot of time, not because we couldn't figure it out, but because we didn't know how to suggest it, how to put it. Therefore, we had to disguise it so that no one would be the wiser, and there was some benefit from it. Stalin read it. So, he says, many billions should be given. Something like six or seven billion. This is child's play, only enemies look at this question from this angle. They don't understand how the peasant lives.....Stalin says. With one hen, he says, the

peasants sells and pays duties with all of one hen. How can he say that, when Stalin didn't see a live peasant for probably thirty years. Stalin's more aloof than his dacha—he can't see anything from his dacha, because it's surrounded by woods, and with guards. And with field-glasses you wouldn't see a living person, except the guard. How can he think like that? But, a man who knows the village, who sees the peasants, he can't agree with him. Instead of accepting our suggestion, Stalin says—no. I suggested my own ideas. Together, with this proposition, we looked at this question and raised the duties on peasants some 40 billion rubles. My God, here I left. I told Mikoian, the only salvation is if the peasants rebel. Because there's no other way out. Because they sell all the produce to pay duties, their duties. Already, they don't have this money. From where can they get it? And, well, we researched. And we researched. But, what's there to research. And then I saw that the situation was like this. I knew, and I said: "Comrade Stalin, this is a very big problem you gave us. It's difficult to decide by such a committee. We need more people." He said: "What do you want?" I said: "Malenkov, Beria, Bulganin, Kaganovich"—named all the members of the Politburo, so that everybody will be involved. "What are you doing. What for?" I said: "It's a big question." "Big question? Well, include Malenkov and Beria." "Very well." At least now it's easier. I had to involve Beria, that bastard, because if he proposed what Mikoian proposed, then he would have to sign the document. You see what kind of complicated conditions existed. And then we all got together. "Well, I said, comrades, how are we going to solve this?" Well, Beria probably understood. He said this is all nonsense. Where can we get the money from? From where? Let's look for money. The matter ended with the death of Stalin. So the document was burned. But, just before the death, a document existed. But, if he had not died, I myself don't know how all this would have ended. I think that it would have ended with additional arrests. Because, Stalin told us—these are populists and SRs [Socialist Revolutionaries], meaning enemies. These were difficult conditions. If you look at it this way, Stalin died, we made way for an increase in agriculture. It means we understand. It means we can find the necessary solution. Why didn't we find it at the time, because of one person who was stopping it. And we couldn't do anything. Absolutely couldn't do anything. That's why, now, we have fuel. And that's why we're roaring like bulls: "Down with the cult of personality!" Just like the Komsomol. Why, because if we get rid of the cult, then we will always collectively find the correct solution. Stalin was telling us that the capitalist world will fool us, that we're like blind kittens. But, if Stalin came back now, we would show him what we've done after him, and how we've cleaned up the atmosphere. I think that Stalin couldn't have done it, and in ten years. And if he had lived a little bit longer, then he possibly would have started another war.

Listen! When Stalin died, 109 people were killed. 109 people died because everyone moved like a mob and smothered them. This is just such a psychosis (*psikhos*). Some people, when they were in the hall near the casket, started crying—What are we going to do now? Comrades, common people is one thing, but how many party members and Komsomol members thought when Stalin died, what will happen after him? Is it proper? Is it appropriate to imagine a hero, and make everything dependent on him? Comrades, do we then need the party? What is it? It means not believing in human judgment, not believing in the force of democracy, not believing in collective leadership. Comrades, then let's choose a king. The monarchists say their system is better, because all your elections depend on your voters, and they adapt [to each other], but our monarch, he was given the power to rule and manage by God. Then we must agree with even such an absurdity. And now, we're trying to break this myth of power and infallibility. Some say, what would you have done during the war, if you didn't have Stalin? Defeated the Germans. Defeated them—and defeated them sooner, with less blood [lost]. I'm sure of it. And maybe we could have avoided the war. Maybe, if our policy was a little smarter, maybe, we could have avoided the war. Nobody knows. That is how I and my friends in our collective see these things.

Listen, such absurdity. When Lenin died, no busts. Stalin died, there wasn't a single town or city where a monument to him was not placed. We, when he died, we couldn't imagine what to name after him, to immortalize him the day he died, because whatever we did would have been significantly worse than what he had done during his lifetime. Can this be correct? Can this be correct upbringing? There was no modesty, although he talked a lot about modesty. There were many, many shortcomings, which, unfortunately, we could not.....We ourselves suffered from it. I vacationed with him one year. I lived next [door]. I told my friends and they understood it. They said that if you're still alive after this vacation, say "Thank God." Why? Because I had to dine with him every day. It means I had to be drunk every day. I beg your pardon. Am I saying it too frankly, yes? (*Voices from the audience [in Russian]:* You're saying the truth. Say it. Say it.) You just can't do this. We had foreigners arriving and coming over sometimes. We were ashamed when we came for dinner, because there was a battery of mortars (*batareia minometov*) [Ed. note: hard liquor] on the table. There's a limit to everything.....It was like this, comrades. It was. But, if one doesn't drink and eat with him, you're his enemy. You're his enemy. This kind of absurdity, why did it happen? If he was not protected by the cult of personality, he would have been kicked out, and told: Listen, dear, drinking so heavily isn't allowed. You have to work. We're responsible for the work done. He [Stalin] himself once told us in the heat of conversation: "Go on talking. Once, Lenin called me [to him] and tells me: Why, my dear (*baten'ka*), are you drinking so heavily? You're buying champagne by the case, getting people drunk. And

he wanted to put me on trial." He [Stalin] told us this.....We couldn't tell him that it would have been for the best if Lenin had done it, because if you said it, you wouldn't be going home anymore. You're not children, comrades. You should understand. I have a lot of Polish friends. And [Stalin] made me a Pole. Stalin asked me: "What's your last name?" I said: "Khrushchev." "Your last name ends like a Polish one with [one line black out in text] ski." I said: "Who knows. I lived for a long time as Khrushchev, and now it's—ski." Comrades, I was standing near Yezhov, and Stalin said: "Yezhov said it." Yezhov replied: "I didn't." "How is it you didn't say it? When you were drunk, you said it to Malenkov." Malenkov passes by. Stalin says: "Did Yezhov tell you that Khrushchev's Polish?" He says: "No." You see, they'll say, why is Khrushchev denying. First of all, I'm a Russian, I'm not denying. Second, what kind of crime is it if I had been Polish? What kind of crime? Look, comrades, when Stalin died, Beria took his post. And he was then the most influential man among us. Beria and Malenkov. He took the post of internal affairs minister, comrades. Beria. But, what kind of counter-revolution did we have in 1953? None. We have a good, friendly, lively society in the Soviet Union. What did he need it for? So that he could stand above the party. What does it mean to stand above the party? It means to raise his own cult of personality. What Stalin was, Beria would have become (*Byl Stalin, stal by Beriia*). He'd have destroyed the party. The party would be like a formality, because he'd be in command. So, then, we rebelled and arrested Beria for raising his hand against the party. We told him this. We didn't arrest him like Stalin arrested Kosior. Instead, we arrested him during the meeting. All members of the Presidium were present. We told him: "We accuse you of such and such actions. You encroach on the rights of the party as shown by. We said it to him." This, he says, I did because of this and that. We then said, arrest him. When the prosecutor interrogated him, Beria said: "On what grounds do you arrest me?" He replied: "You're asking me on what grounds? The entire Presidium and Council of Ministers were there when you were arrested. Not only them, but the entire government apparatus!" [Ed. note: For Beria letters from prison to Malenkov, see the Berlin 1953 section of this *Bulletin* and the CWIHP website: cwihip.si.edu.]

With these words, allow me to finish my presentation. (Applause.)

Chairman [Comrade Zawadzki in Polish]

In accordance with our mutual agreement, those among the comrades with a question, please ask them, and those among the comrades who want to express themselves—also feel free to express yourself.

Comrade Kazimierz Witaszewski [in Polish]

I want to deal with the following problem. Comrade Khrushchev spoke of Comrade Stalin as the strongest, the best type of Marxist-Leninist. On the other hand, we read

Comrade Khrushchev's speech. And what Comrade Khrushchev said here, it's all about what Stalin did on his own, in spite of the collective, without coming to an understanding with anyone. I can't understand, how to explain this, that a Marxist, the party leader, who, on the one hand talks about what kind of person a party member ought to be—a communist, modest, ought to listen to the voice of the masses—and, on the other hand, this same party leader does not recognize the collective, the Central Committee, the Politburo, works on his own, shoots people, old Bolsheviks, without cause. Here, for me, a question emerges, how is it possible to reconcile one with the other, that Stalin was a good Marxist?

[Several questions follow. Then Khrushchev answers, not always to the questions, but at some length.]

Comrade Khrushchev [in Russian]

Where would you place Stalin? Would you say he's not a Marxist? Stalin, who occupied such a prominent position in the party, and possessed indisputable, colossal influence, and revolutionary abilities, led the party by what path? In the direction of building a socialist society. This is a fact. Could Stalin have led in a different direction? He could have. Could he have brought it to some other result? I think that he couldn't, because the party would have resisted. But, Stalin himself was a convinced Marxist, and he was convinced that society in particular must become a communist society, and he served this society with all his body and soul. Of this, I have no doubt. The question of the means and of the course taken, this is a completely different question. It's difficult to combine, but it's a fact. And these facts have already taken place. How you want to combine it, and think it through, this depends, so to speak, on your individual abilities. But, it's a fact. We can't say that by using such and several methods to kill people, he killed so-and-so many in order to destroy the socialist regime, so that he could put the Soviet Union onto the capitalist rails. This would be stupid (*glupost'*). This would be a lie. This would be stupid. Who would believe it? No, that's wrong. Here's the whole tragedy for Stalin was a revolutionary. And therefore, to affirm the new, we should fight with the old. And in this struggle, comrades, we never denied harsh methods and extreme actions. We didn't deny it in the past, and we don't deny it now. Therefore, on this, Stalin was a Marxist, and he served, and used all the methods available. He used them so that in this struggle to affirm [the new], he destroyed his own people. His own people were destroyed (*svoikh unichtozhal*). Of course it's possible. This was in every party. There were always cases where someone was under the suspicion of being an agent provocateur. Sometimes investigations and courts were used, but it later turned out that they had been honest people. Were there cases like these? Of course there were. And it was the same in the Polish party. It was everywhere. If there's an underground, if there's a struggle,

then it's always possible. And the fact that the enemy sends its agents is known to everybody, comrades. It's all a question of intelligence, methods, and abilities. Stalin had such views, he understood it well, and tried to protect himself. And in protecting the revolution, he got to the point where, as they say, the artillery fired on its own army.

Well, my dear friend, I can't say anything else. I would be dishonorable, if after his death, everything was blamed on him. That wouldn't be very smart. We would then not have been Marxists, or we would not have understood it and explained it correctly. Stalin in particular was a Marxist. A Marxist. We think so. The question of his mistakes on the questions of theory, and in other instances, is not being discussed right now, comrades. This was a man who devoted his body and soul to the working class. There isn't a single doubt about it.

But.....always, so to speak, humans are fallible. Something unpleasant is omitted, something pleasant is exaggerated. So this kind of lesson is not accepted as a valid source of history. I don't want to insult our elders, I myself am not young, but I know that sometimes.....[about events] forty to fifty years ago, everyone tells his own [version]

...Stalin valued every revolutionary. It had to be seen. We saw it. We're now talking about the negative [side of] history. But, Stalin, comrades, if I could talk about the good times, [Stalin's] attention and caring. This was a revolutionary. He lived life, but he had a persecution mania (*maniia presledovaniia*) about somebody pursuing him.....And, because of it, he would never stop.....He, even his own relatives.....He shot them. Because, he thought that the brother of his first wife—a Georgian woman, she died a long time ago. (*From the audience: Alilueva. No, Alilueva's the last wife.*) Svanidze. Svanidze. Her brother. This was a friend of Stalin's. This was already an old man. He was a Menshevik, then he joined the party, and we often saw him with Stalin. And, evidently, Beria suggested that this Svanidze was an agent, that he was an enemy, and that he had a directive to kill Stalin. Stalin, of course, said listen, he sleeps over at my place, he dines with me, he's often been with me. So, why is he not doing what he's supposed to? He could have poisoned me a long time ago. But, Beria tells him: "No. You know there are different agents. Some get the assignment immediately. Some agents are kept near you, behave normally, then the time comes, he gets the signal, and then he'll do it!" Stalin believed him. Svanidze was arrested. He was interrogated by all methods [i.e., torture]. He was sentenced to execution by shooting. Stalin lived with Svanidze for so many years; something human [remained]; so he still had doubts. Then, he orders Beria: When Svanidze is about to be shot, tell him that if he admits his guilt—Stalin was already sure that Svanidze was an enemy—and asks for forgiveness, we will forgive him. We will forgive him. Before Svanidze was shot, we are told, he was told Stalin's words, and he said: "Exactly

what am I guilty of? Why should I ask for forgiveness. I'm not a criminal. I'm a member of the party. I'm an honest person. I didn't commit any crimes before Stalin, and before the party and country. I won't ask." And he was shot. That's what was happening. So, why did Stalin destroy [Svanidze]? He destroyed him simply so (*prostotak*).....He believed he was an enemy. We have to rack our brains to explain things that are not so easy. You have to complicate this question a little bit. Only then will you understand correctly, and correctly give an explanation. This is a complicated question.

The beginning of the war and Stalin. Comrades, here, it was said that maybe we could have used it to our advantage, when he turned out to be.....This was impossible, comrades. The war began.....the enemy attacks, and if we, at that time, had announced that we dismissed Stalin from the leadership. Comrades, a better present to Hitler could not be imagined.....(*Voice from the audience: Correct, [he] had to direct the collective.*) Exactly, had to direct. Comrades, all this is being explained simply, right here at this meeting, and after Stalin's death, and you have to have [in mind] the concrete conditions. The war was going on, and the name of Stalin played a big part, and suddenly we're announcing we dismissed Stalin. Comrades, that is defeat. This would mean the death of the country.

...Stalin must be criticized, and we already see how we are criticizing him. But, comrades.....even if you smear a person more and more, he won't get darker than he deserves. We can smear his reputation. But, after us, there are going to be people, you know, like restorers, who in cathedrals or somewhere start restoring things that were already painted and repainted, each artist in his own way. But, a good restorer takes it, cleans everything, washes everything off, and says: "This is, in reality, the work of such and such. And everything else was merely appended." So it is in this matter, too, comrades. Stalin, comrades, is such a figure that many historians will break their teeth trying to learn this history, and there will still be something left to learn. Stalin is Stalin. He's a very complex figure. He had a lot of good and a lot, a great lot, of bad. Now, we're trying to deal with the bad so that we can strengthen the party's correct path of action. But, Stalin will, in any case, from us, and after us, and from our grandchildren and children, receive what he deserved. He played his part and played in such a way that God left it to others, who worked with him, to know. I'm saying it directly, because it's a question of the struggle.....Stalin had his own methods. He said that in order for the working class to succeed, in order to take power, many thousands and millions of workers had to die. Maybe it was a mistake. At such a moment of revolutionary struggle, it's possible that there are mistaken victims. But, he says, history will forgive me. Is it possible? Perhaps. The whole question concerns the scale of these mistakes. A question of methods. Because his doses were incorrect, because an incorrect method of leadership was used. And

we want to avoid this. Comrades, we ourselves aren't guaranteeing that mistakes won't be made. We also can't allow; we also arrested people, and will probably make arrests in the future. I think that you'll also have to do this. But, if you now become liberals, and look at everybody and pat everybody on the back, then these enemies will bite your hands off (*ruki pootkusaiut*). We have such enemies and you have them. You probably have more enemies, because you're younger than we are, and we destroyed more, and you're closer to them. So, I think that even in the future mistakes are possible. I can't say, right now, that we promise that not even a single hair will fall from the head of any person. No. Comrades, this is very complicated. Comrades, the enemy is really insidious, the enemy really is, has been all the while, and we'll fight with these enemies wherever we recognize them and, maybe, where we don't recognize them. I, for example, know that when I worked in Ukraine, we destroyed not one, but many of our enemies using the hands of our enemies. We knew.....these ones.....we forged some documents. We would place them surreptitiously everywhere.....they arrested them, tortured them, and hung them. But, you'll say that this is cruel. But, comrades, we're fighting with the enemy. Is this method with enemies allowed? I think it's allowable. Will we give it up, now? I, for example, won't refuse to use it, if it's used to destroy the enemy.....If we're going to be cowardly, it means we are cowards. So there, dear comrades. (...)

(Applause. Stormy applause.)

[Source: AAN, (*Archive of Modern Records*) PZPR 2631 *Materialy do stosunkow partyjnych polsko-radzieckich z lat 1956-1958, "Przemowienie tow. Chruszczowa na VI Plenum K.C.," k. 14-87. Translated from the Russian and Polish by L.W. Gluchowski.]*

¹ Ed note: The full text of the speech as released by the US Department of State on 4 June 1956 (citing "a confidential source") can be found in *The Anti-Stalin Campaign and International Communism: A Selection of Documents* edited by the Russian Institute, Columbia University. (NY, 1956).

² For further details see Tony Kemp-Welch, "Khrushchev's 'Secret Speech' and Polish Politics: The Spring of 1956," *Europe-Asia Studies* (March 1996), pp. 181-206.

³ The text makes clear that Khrushchev had a copy of the 20th Congress speech in his hand as he spoke in Warsaw.

⁴ I would like to express my thanks to Vladislav Zubok of the National Security Archive for his helpful comments on an earlier draft translation of this speech.

⁵ Ed. note: No discussion had been permitted after the Moscow secret speech. On this, see Vladimir Naumov, "Zur Geschichte der Geheimrede N.S. Chruschchevs auf dem XX Parteitag der KPdSU" in *Forum* 1,1 (1997), p. 173.

⁶ Ed. note: In the Moscow secret speech of 25 February 1956, Rodos is referred to as follows: "He is a vile person, with the brain of a bird and morally completely degenerate."

.....

Evening, 24 June 1957

Suslov chairing. Com. Molotov has the floor.

Molotov. Comrades, I have already spoken about the fact that I wish further to touch on international issues. It seems to me that in this regard com. Khrushchev's efforts are not entirely successful. We all understand and consider it necessary to conduct, support, and stimulate those measures which assist the lessening of international tensions. This is the basis for our work on strengthening peace, on delaying and averting a new war. And we must by all means possible be careful that this policy gives the results that we want to derive from it.

In connection with this, I consider that when com. Khrushchev, in a conversation with the editor of the American newspaper, *The New York Times*, Turner Catledge, published on 14 May spoke about the mutual relations between the Soviet Union and the United States of America, he committed an error, an incorrect [step]; he spoke as follows: "Speaking more concretely about international tension, the matter, obviously, reduces in the final analysis to the relations between two countries—between the Soviet Union and the United States of America."

Voices. Correct.

Molotov. And further, he says: "We consider that if the Soviet Union is able to come to an agreement [*dogovorit'sia*] with the United States, then it will not be hard to come to an agreement with England, France, and other countries."

Voices. Correct.

Molotov. I consider this incorrect both in essence and in tactics. It does not accord with the Leninist policy in international affairs which has been approved by the 20th party congress. (Agitation in the hall)...

Molotov. ...we can fight against imperialism and win out over imperialism only by making use of contradictions in the imperialist camp. If we imagine that we can come to an agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States of America and therein see the expressed essence of our policy, then we forget the basic Leninist position on making use of "cracks", contradictions in the imperialist camp. We must not unite the imperialist and capitalist states around America, [must] not push for that and [must] not depict the situation in such a way that the Soviet Union must only agree with the United States of America, and all the remaining countries will supposedly play an insignificant role. No, comrades, now that we have become a great power, a powerful force, and have huge support in our socialist camp in the East and the West—in these conditions we must be particularly careful to deepen any split, any disagreements and contradictions in the imperialist camp, in order to weaken the international position of the United States of America—the most powerful of the imperialist powers. But imperially strong America cannot dictate everything to the other imperialist states. For that reason we support all sorts of contacts with non-socialist

countries and consider it to be very important. We support contact with little Denmark, Norway, Burma, Egypt, and so on. Moreover, we bear in mind that the use of contradictions in the camp of the capitalist states has a very great significance. And only in that way, squeezing not only America, but also other states which diverge from or waiver within the capitalist camp, only in that way can we weaken America itself, which is struggling against us. For that reason the issue of the use of the stated contradictions, that we not forget about these contradictions—that is our most important issue in the whole of our foreign policy

[Ed. Note: After numerous interruptions]

Molotov. Let me finish. From a different angle, there is another shortcoming here. How can one reduce the matter to the relations between the USSR and the United States of America, forgetting about the socialist camp? Com. Khrushchev's formulation ignores all of the remaining socialist countries besides the USSR. One must not, however, ignore the People's Republic of China, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, or the other socialist countries...

Kirilenko. Answer this question: who are such dogmatists, how are we to understand them?

Molotov. Maybe you are not up [*plokho razbiraetes'*] on this matter, com. Kirilenko, but how are the others relevant here [*pri chem tut drugie*]? I am talking about something that requires the attention of the comrades present at this plenum. For this reason I am saying important things, although maybe you do not agree with this. There is a measure of truth here, in any case. We have never formulated the issue of the mutual relations between the Soviet Union and America as did com. Khrushchev. Once in 1924, Trotskii tried to throw out the slogan that now America had made a beggar of Europe. That was an anti-Marxist thing. Perhaps com. Khrushchev forgot this and has forgotten the lessons which the party had on that count in the past? But it doesn't hurt us to give a reminder about that. (Noise in the hall.)

I, comrades, want to say something further about the second mistake of com. Khrushchev in the statement to the editor of the newspaper *The New York Times*. Com.

Khrushchev speaks in this way—I am citing from *Pravda*:

"If, for instance—N.S. Khrushchev adds as a joke—our minister Gromyko and your secretary Dulles met, in a hundred years they wouldn't agree on anything, and, perhaps, only our grandsons would wait long enough to get any results from these negotiations."

Voice. Read on.

Molotov. Read on yourself.

Voice. It is being said as a joke there.

Molotov. One does not play with the authority of the MID of the USSR in front of the bourgeois governments. It is incorrect in its essence, and it is tactically harmful to the Soviet state. And however much you say, these things must not be condoned, because they bring harm to our state, and let us tell com. Khrushchev that right to his face [*priamo v glaza*]...

Khrushchev. Imagine: the President in the presence of the other Finnish leaders invites guests to a steam bath, but the visitors spit and leave. That offends, insults them. When we returned to Moscow and they started to upbraid me for visiting the Finnish steam bath and Bulganin began to join in as well, I said: Molotov wants to depict me as an unprincipled person because I went to the bath. How can you not be ashamed of yourself? You here won't go with anyone. If you got your way, you would lead the country to the end of its tether [*do ruchki*], would argue with everyone, would lead [the country] to conflict. Look at your telegram from San Francisco; what did you write in it? You wrote that war could start right now. How could the foreign minister behave so?

Molotov. Don't make things up [*Ne vydumyvaete*], com. Khrushchev.

Voice. Com. Molotov, there is nothing left for you to do but drag out the dirty laundry [*ubornuiu vytaashchit'*]; you've stooped so low.

Mikhailov. Com. Khrushchev, both in former trips, and when he was in Finland, worked for the people, for the party, and you, com. Molotov, should be ashamed to spit on this work; it is not worthy of you.

Molotov. I disagree with com. Mikhailov. (Noise in the hall). The First Secretary could have behaved in a more dignified manner in Finland.

Voice. Tell us, how was it undignified?

Rudenko. And you consider it dignified to visit Hitler?

Voice. Better to go to a steam bath than to engage in conspiratorial activities.

Suslov. Com. Molotov, you reduced questions in international relations to a steam bath. It's possible to say that the CC reached correct foreign policy despite you.

Molotov. A lie [*nepravda*].

Pospelov. The July 1955 plenum recorded this.

Voice. On Yugoslavia

Molotov. That was discussed; there was a CC resolution; I voted for it. Comrades, on the Yugoslav issue I want to dwell on one point. At one point in the heat of polemics on the Yugoslav issue, com. Khrushchev imputed that I did not understand that on some issues the Chinese comrades could correct us. I understand this and recognize it. But I maintain that in the given case and in a series of other cases, things were ascribed to me that I did not say. I said something else. Once, when, on the basis of a ciphered communication from Beijing, I referred to the fact that com. Mao Zedong, criticizing the Yugoslav comrades, pointed out that they were behaving like Laborites and not like communists—on the basis of that case, I asked the question: why do we not understand what the Chinese comrades understand? On the given issue we should have figured it out earlier than them. That is what I said on the subject

Pospelov. You said: you are going to the fascists cap in hand [*na poklon*].

Molotov. There were exaggerations in relation to

Yugoslavia, but not that sort. In a CC resolution in the summer of 1953, we wrote that the Yugoslavs should be treated like other bourgeois governments. You can find that resolution of the CC Presidium. Comrades, you must not say something that hasn't happened. But it was said by me, although the resolution was mistaken...

Molotov. Does our press, the selfsame *Pravda*, ever mention the name of Stalin? No, it modestly remains silent about Stalin, as if for 30 years Stalin did not play a prominent role in the history of our party and of the Soviet state.

We recognized his mistakes, but one must also talk about his achievements. Otherwise, the party itself is injured.

Voice. Why did you not make a statement about that at the 20th party congress?

Molotov. It was after the 20th congress, what I am saying to you. Of course, when com. Zhou Enlai came, we began to attest that Stalin was such a communist that, God grant, every one should be; but after Zhou Enlai left, we stopped doing so. This does not increase the authority of our party, since we are not giving a firm, clear answer; but that is what is demanded of us, and we should not permit anything else.

Khrushchev. You want to turn everything back, in order then to take up the axe yourself.

Molotov. No, that is not so, com. Khrushchev. I hope that that is not what you want, and moreover, that is not what I want.

Note the following fact. There is a decree of the CC Presidium of 28 April 1955 on the archive of I.V. Stalin: "To confirm a commission to examine the documents from the archive of Stalin, staffed by coms. Khrushchev (chairman), Bulganin, Kaganovich, Malenkov, Molotov, Pospelov, and Suslov." And, all the same, after 28 April 1955, the commission has not once met. They do not want to meet, and, after all, more than two years have gone by...

[Dmitrii] Shepilov. Bulganin already said that he did not meet with me at any meetings.

Voice. The members of the CC Presidium told what assessment you made, your approach to this issue.

Voice. Why is your surname in particular in this group, and not another, if you are not privy [to this matter]?

Khrushchev. You are against the cult of personality, and I, no less, have fought and fight against the cult of personality. But if you are such a fighter, then why did you, after Stalin's death, as editor of *Pravda*, falsify the photograph and place a shot of Malenkov next to Mao Zedong in the newspaper, when this did not actually happen [*v prirode etogo ne bylo*]?

Shepilov. It is true, that happened, and I was punished for doing so. I considered that the basic problem was our friendship with China, the closeness of the two heads of government—the symbol of this eternal friendship, and I did it in those interests; that was my mistake.

Khrushchev. For that the CC Presidium reprimanded you...

[Break]

Mikoian. Comrades, first of all I want to talk about some facts which have brought the party leadership chosen after the 20th party congress to its present state, when the plenum meets amidst the crisis of the party leadership. Now we have a crisis in the party leadership; that must be frankly stated.

Voice. No, there is no crisis.

Mikoian. I am talking about the crisis in the CC Presidium.

[Averki] Aristov. But the CC Presidium is not the leadership of our party. The leadership is the CC.

Mikoian. Com. Aristov has spoken correctly.

After the 20th party congress showed ideological unity, we considered that collective leadership was the guarantee of the success of our party, and tried in every way to uphold that unity. It seemed that everyone tried. There were disagreements on separate issues, disputes, but insofar as they did not turn into a system, they did not harm the cause...

The events in Poland and Hungary were a great test for our party and our leadership, [and] for the CC Presidium. I was very glad, [and] everyone else was very happy that in those days our CC Presidium was wholly unified and firm. On such serious issues, unity was gratifying.¹ It was pleasant for me that the comrades with whom we disagreed, like Molotov, Kaganovich, [and] Malenkov, in this matter behaved as was appropriate, although it should be noted that on the issue of the new Hungarian leadership, com. Molotov did not agree. Malenkov behaved well in Hungary, and it was believed that he had come into line [*voshel v obshchuiu koleiu*]. That is how it was until recently.

After the February 1957 CC Plenum, from the point where the issue of the organization of the *sovnarkhoz* [large collective farms] was decided, the atmosphere began to worsen; an unstated dissatisfaction on the part of some members of the Presidium was evident; disagreement was noted, [and] it was felt that some people were not saying everything [they thought]. Then it was still bearable, but the atmosphere continued to poison the situation...

Until recently there was no sign of the formation of a group in the CC Presidium, but there was some impression that com. Molotov [and] com. Kaganovich were sometimes silent, as if they had come to an understanding. They avoided arguing with one another. For instance, I did not avoid argument with Molotov or Kaganovich, but they avoided argument between themselves. Perhaps there were no grounds for disagreement? There were. Recently, Malenkov also began avoiding arguments with them. There was one case in which he agreed that he had not acted entirely properly; that was in relation to Yugoslavia. In connection with the incorrect speech by com Tito in Pula, Soviet communists and the communist parties of other countries delivered a dignified rebuff. As a result, by

its own fault, the Yugoslav party ended up practically in isolation from the other communist parties. After this, the Yugoslav leadership began to speak out in conversations with our comrades and made known its desire to improve relations with us in its open statements.

On com. Khrushchev's suggestion, we discussed this issue in the CC Presidium and decided to instruct [Soviet Ambassador to Yugoslavia] com. [Nikolai] Firiubin to engage in an appropriate conversation with com. Tito at the instructions of the CC Presidium.

Several days before this, information about the fact that one Yugoslav diplomat tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to win over one important leader of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party [HSWP] to the Yugoslav side, was sent around to the members of the CC Presidium. Thus, in connection with a discussion of measures to improve relations with Yugoslavia, com. Molotov introduced a proposal that the CC CPSU inform all fraternal parties that Yugoslav diplomats were engaging in the recruitment of communists in fraternal parties. The adoption of com. Molotov's proposal would have led, of course, to the disruption of the improvement of relations with Yugoslavia, because such an appeal by us to all parties could not be hidden from the Yugoslav leadership, and, in this, it would see duplicity in our policies and the absence of a true wish to reconcile. This was, in essence, Molotov's wish to put a fly in the ointment [*vlit' lozhku degtia v bochku meda*].

Then they talked very calmly about this; there were no insults. Khrushchev said: Viacheslav, you again want to continue your line on disputes with Yugoslavia. I also calmly spoke twice, criticizing com. Molotov; com. Bulganin criticized him. Malenkov sat opposite and stayed silent. I know that Malenkov was against this; on many political issues he was not close to the views of Molotov and Kaganovich, but he sat and kept silent...

Mikoian. Generally there was unity in the Presidium on the Hungarian issue, but I must say that com. Molotov held an incorrect line in relation to the new Hungarian leaders.

Imagine that tomorrow, on 4 November, our troops had to move out [*vystuplenie*] all over Hungary, but by this evening it was still unclear who would be at the head of the new government of Hungary, by whose summons and in support of whom our troops were mobilizing. Why? Khrushchev and Malenkov were in Yugoslavia meeting with the Romanians, Bulgarians, Hungarians, and Yugoslavs over the course of two days in order to obtain their agreement for the use of our troops. I was busy with getting [Janos] Kadar, [Ferenc] Muennich, and others out of Budapest; there was still no government, [and] they were discussing whom to move into the government. We proposed Kadar. Molotov insisted that [Andras] Hegedus be at the head—the former prime minister. He asked: who is this Kadar? We, he implied [*mol*], did not know him and were slighting him. We could not agree on the

composition of the government. Zhukov said: I cannot put off the operation; there is already an order to our troops to move out. Molotov insisted on reinstating the old leadership.

Molotov. That's not correct; we spoke about Muennich.

Mikoian. You proposed Hegedus; before his departure to Yugoslavia, Khrushchev proposed Muennich; others proposed Kadar—we argued all day. If there had been no argument, why not agree right away on the composition of the government? We had it out [*rugalis*] with you, argued fiercely. Bulganin and other comrades should remember.

Khrushchev. Anastas Ivanovich [Mikoian], when, during the Hungarian events, Malenkov and I returned from our trip to a series of people's democratic countries and Yugoslavia, we had formed the opinion that we must support Kadar's candidacy. Some called for Muennich's candidacy. He is an honorable comrade who likes us; I did military training together with him in the Proletarian Division. He is an excellent comrade, but in the given situation, com. Kadar is the best candidate.

Mikoian. Only after com. Khrushchev's arrival was it possible to specify the composition of the government headed by Kadar. Com. Kadar is from the working class and is a serious person, and that has now been justified. It is good that com. Khrushchev reminded [us]. There was the following case: Molotov calls and proposes a meeting. On what topic? [Matyas] Rakosi wrote a letter to the HSWP, [saying] that they were not allowing him back into Hungary and requested that he remain here. Molotov asked: who decided, how, why? He considered that the convocation of a special session of the CC Presidium was called for. And when we met at the next regular meeting [i.e., no special session had been called], he insisted that Rakosi and [Erno] Gero be given the chance to work.

Molotov. Who insisted? That is not exact.

Mikoian. After all, you demanded the convocation of a special session of the CC Presidium in order to discuss Rakosi's letter, which came to the CC CPSU Presidium with an accusation against the new leadership of the HSWP. Two days later [*chez den*], at the next meeting of the CC Presidium, you spoke with a criticism of the resolution of the CC Plenum of the HSWP that at present and in the near future, the interests of the HSWP demanded that Rakosi, Gero, Hegedus [be prevented from working] in Hungary, but remain in the Soviet Union for a specified period. You demanded that Rakosi, Gero, and Hegedus return to Hungary. If we had heeded Molotov's advice, we would have lost the trust of the Hungarian party; the Hungarians would have thought that we were playing a double game. We argued with Molotov: Rakosi did not see what was happening, became detached from reality and led the party into a catastrophe. While located in Moscow, he called certain of his supporters in Budapest on the telephone and, essentially, led a group struggle against the new Hungarian leadership. In connection with

this we told him: do not live in Moscow; live in another city, and don't mess things up [*ne port' dela*].

Khrushchev. When the Hungarian government delegation visited us, Molotov said to Kadar: why are you not taking Rakosi with you? This question once again upset the Hungarian leaders. They thought that we were supporting them [only] on a temporary basis, and that then Rakosi would once again come to power in Hungary.

Mikoian. It's true; during the reception, com. Molotov scolded Kadar [as to] why they weren't taking Rakosi back to work in Hungary. Such behavior by com. Molotov was incorrect.

Molotov. We were talking not about Rakosi, but about Hegedus.

Mikoian. You were talking about Rakosi.

Mikoian. In relation to the [Presidium] Saturday meeting, at which Bulganin said that Khrushchev acted incorrectly. What does that consist of?

The people's democratic countries request that, when we order equipment for the next year, the orders be given out at least six months' in advance, so that blueprints can be drawn up and inventories can be ordered. Otherwise, it is impossible—to order in January and receive the products in January. This is an elementary thing. Not only our friends, but also the capitalists demand this.

This is an indisputable issue, but arguments have begun around it: will we be able to pay for the equipment? Here we order, but what will we pay with? I provide information: in all, we buy 16 billion rubles in goods, and now we are talking about a preliminary order for 3 billion rubles in equipment, and these are needed goods. Why should we not be able to pay? We will be able to. There is no issue here. The total volume of trade will be approximately the same as last year's.

Finally, what does this mean politically? On the whole, equipment is being supplied by the GDR and Czechoslovakia. If we do not strengthen East Germany, where workers are supporting their communist government, our army will end up in the fire. And, after all, there is an army of a half million [men] there. We cannot lose the sympathy of the German populace. If we lose their sympathy and trust—that will mean the loss of East Germany. And what would the loss of East Germany mean? We know what that would be, and for that reason operate on the basis that we must use the capacity of East German industry in full. Then the workers of the GDR will have work and will give us what we need; otherwise we will have to give the GDR both goods and food, without receiving equipment in return. I consider that our position is absolutely correct.

Voice. Correct.

Mikoian. But we are told: you will order, but will we be able to pay? This is an issue unto itself—a great political issue. I kept calm, although I am also a quick-tempered person, but Nikita Sergeevich caught the scent of the whole political edge of the issue. Seeing that a

majority against the draft was forming, he said the following phrase: "I would like on this issue in particular to hold a vote and to remain in the minority." The socialist camp has been created because it is important to strengthen it and not to permit wavering. If East Germany and Czechoslovakia today are left without orders, the whole socialist camp will crack. Who needs such a camp if we cannot ensure orders? After all, the issue stands as such: either feed the workers of the GDR for free, or provide orders, or otherwise lose the GDR entirely. That is why Nikita Sergeevich blew up [*vzorvalsia*]. I also almost blew up.

Voices. Blew up.

Khrushchev. Now it is clear that they had an understanding to fight us on this issue.

Mikoian. I also think so...

Comrades, after the Hungarian and Polish events, our prestige abroad temporarily weakened somewhat. First, we bared our teeth to the enemies, the Americans, for Hungary, and bared our teeth for Egypt and achieved a halt to the war which had started there.

Then they again conducted a policy of disarmament in order to turn the sympathy of the petty-bourgeois elements toward them. Molotov says that the Leninist policy of using the contradictions of the imperialist camp is not being put into practice. But he makes [only] one citation. First of all, he incorrectly interprets it. But even so, let us assume that he is correctly interpreting it. Look at our party's policy on splitting the bourgeois world. Our comrades went to India and to Burma, and managed to undermine the influence of the imperialist powers on the countries of Asia.

Voices. Correct.

Mikoian. Earlier we had no access to the Arab countries; English influence had such a hold on the Muslim religion, that we had no access there. Three imperialist powers gathered together and decided all of the issues of the Near East without us. But when we sold arms to Egypt, we bared our teeth to our enemies, and Nasser turned out to be a strong leader, so that now they cannot any longer resolve the issues of the Near East without us. Is that not a realization of the Leninist policy on using the contradictions of the imperialist camp? In the given case we are supporting bourgeois nationalists against the imperialists.

Voices. Correct.

Mikoian. Com. Voroshilov went to Indonesia. Indonesia is a bourgeois state, in many ways feudal, even, which only recently won its political independence. They met Voroshilov triumphantly not only because he is a good person, but because he represents the Soviet Union. Remember the age we are living in, and the strength we have. The Indonesians are a 70-million-strong people; they have a smart President, Sukarno, but in order to strengthen his power with the people, he needs a visit from Voroshilov, in order to strengthen his influence through him. What strength we have and communism has...

They accuse com. Khrushchev of being hot-tempered and harsh [*goriach i rezok*]. But there they went and met without him. You can't imagine the precipitousness and fervor of coms. Molotov and Kaganovich at the meeting of the Presidium! In the course of less than 10 days at three sessions of the CC Presidium on the three foreign-trade issues this now open grouping held trial battles, specifically on trade with Austria, on orders for equipment in people's democratic countries, on trade with Finland. After this, an attack started along the whole front. It is true, Finland is a bourgeois country and borders us, but is that really important to us? We know this through war with the Finns and the Germans. The Finnish people knows how to make war, and our task, not to make war, is the greatest task for our state. For that very reason coms. Khrushchev and Bulganin travelled to Finland and succeeded there...

Further, what did we do in foreign policy? Com. Khrushchev proposed that a letter be written from com. Bulganin to the Norwegians. At that time we had been arguing with the Norwegians after the Hungarian events, so let's now write a letter to the Norwegians, but say politely that if you meddle in military affairs, we will wipe you off the face of the earth [*sotrem s litsa zemli*]. We approved this, and it turned out to be a good idea.

Khrushchev. To speak about serious issues in a friendly tone.

Mikoian. The people from MID [*Midovtsy*] have now begun to write drafts of notes and letters. Well before, they put together documents very badly, in a criminal, crude way of speaking, stereotypically; it was impossible to read them.

That has made a huge impression. They sent letters to the English as well. They were influential. They addressed the French people. They didn't write to Eisenhower, not to everyone, but only to those of whom I have talked. Does this mean that we know how to see and use contradictions? We have been using the contradictions of capitalism everywhere in our foreign policy.

Molotov has picked on one sentence of com. Khrushchev's: the USSR and the USA are the only possessors of atomic weapons, and now decide the questions of war and peace.

Khrushchev. Or the following fact: when we proposed to the President of the USA, Eisenhower, to call England and France to order during the English and French attack on Egypt. Was that not a use of contradictions?

Mikoian. I am concerned about time, and for that reason do not talk about that. Remember the circumstances: there was an uprising in Hungary; our troops occupied Budapest, and the Anglo-French decided: the Russians are stuck in Hungary, [so] let's hit Egypt; they can't help; they can't fight on two fronts. We'll pour dirt on the Russians, they say, and we will thump Egypt; we will deprive the Soviet Union of influence in the Near East. That is what they decided, and we found both the

strength to keep troops in Hungary and to threaten the imperialists that if they do not end the war in Egypt, it could lead to the use of missile weapons by us. Everyone recognizes that with that we decided the fate of Egypt. Even before that, we made a move that com. Khrushchev talked about. Since the Americans were conducting a different policy from the English, and did not want to dirty themselves with a colonial war, [or] that their “friends” be so dirtied, but to do in Egypt themselves [*a samim ukhlopat’ Egipet*]. We said the following to the Americans: let’s introduce American-Soviet troops together in order to restore peace in Egypt, which would accord with the goals of the United Nations. This produced a huge effect.

From the point of view of using the contradictions of imperialism in the interests of communist policy, there has never been such a broad practice, such rich results, as in recent years in our Central Committee with the participation of com. Khrushchev...

Voice. Correct (Applause).

[Source: Istoricheskii arkhiv 3-6(1993) and 1-2 (1994)
Translated by Benjamin Aldrich-Moodie]

¹ Ed. Note.: It is especially ironic to hear Mikoian praise the opposition’s unity in 1956, since he himself was the main dissenter from the decision to invade Hungary. Unanimity of decision was only formally maintained because Mikoian was in Budapest, protesting long-distance, when the actual decision to intervene was made on 30-31 October 1956. For more on this, see “The Malin Notes on the Crises in Hungary and Poland, 1956” Translated, annotated and introduced by Mark Kramer, *CWIHP Bulletin* 8-9 (Winter 1996/1997) pp. 385-410.

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Evening, 25 June 1957

Gromyko. Comrades! Our foreign enemies are at present betting on and placing their main hopes on disorder and collapse in our leadership. Let us ask one question: what would happen if this anti-party group seized the leadership; how would that be seen abroad, above all by the American bourgeoisie—our main enemy? They would see it as their victory.

Voices. Without a doubt.

Voice. They would thank Malenkov, Kaganovich and Molotov.

Gromyko. They would see it in the following way, that Dulles’ policy, the policy of the “cold war,” the policy of squeezing, of pressure on the Soviet Union, had won out. Let coms. Molotov, Kaganovich, Malenkov, and those who made a bloc with them, look at the situation they have put themselves in. I think that it would not be a mistake to say that they have put themselves in a certain sense in the position of Dulles’ allies.

Voices. Correct.

Gromyko. And in the absence of unity, it is easier for enemies to slip us another Hungary and a second edition of

17 June 1953—the events in the GDR. They can say to us: fine, the Russian people have shown that more than once in complicated circumstances they close ranks; the leadership also closes ranks, and victory is assured thereby.

It is true, history has shown that both the people and the leadership close ranks when the dark hour tolls. The people closed ranks even when the tsars were in our country. But at what price would the defense of our great cause of socialism come, if the hopes of the enemy were realized, if our leadership were shattered!

Comrades, I cannot agree with some of the statements that there is only an embryonic political platform here so far, but not a platform. I think that if one analyzes everything that has been said by the troika, above all by Molotov as well as those who formed a bloc with him, then one must come to the conclusion that politically—if a political assessment is to be given—a real revisionist platform was present. It affected both the political and the economic life of our country, as well as the issue of cadres.

As for cadres, I think that no one would disagree that if the troika and their accomplices had taken control of the leadership, the shadow of Shatalin or some equivalent of him would have reappeared. And these people don’t have to be taught how to make short work of cadres.

The comrades who spoke correctly said that we were talking about people who had lost touch with life, with the people, with practical work, having buried themselves in paperwork [*zashlis’ v bumagakh*]. But I would like as far as possible to emphasize one side of the affair, which has not been sufficiently emphasized. These people for a long time put themselves in a position where they lecture members of the CC Presidium who are taking the correct position, CC members, and so on, left and right. They regard everyone sitting here, as a rule, as adolescents who, as they say, walk under the table like a pawn [*pod stol peshkom khodiat*].

Voices. Correct.

Gromyko. It is true that many of us are ten or perhaps fifteen years younger than some of the participants of the anti-party group. But that is not our fault. If that is anyone’s fault, it is our mothers’ and fathers’.

Voice. That is only by age.

Gromyko. They do not notice that people have grown up both literally and politically. They are not the same people who they were ten or fifteen years ago. The present plenum has confirmed this well. Our CC is the full master of the situation.

The participants in the anti-party group have put themselves in the position of some sort of priests [*zhretsy*]. Even in ancient Greece where there were priests, they existed when their existence corresponded to the needs of the ruling class. I think that something similar must be said now. Approximately the same conclusion should be made: there is no need at all for these priests. (Laughter, applause.)

Comrades, even the bourgeoisie, including the

American and English [bourgeoisie], cannot permit themselves the luxury of keeping a person who has lost all value for the state leadership in his job. An example: Churchill. He did not serve badly in the interests of the colonial British empire, but when he lost his value, they sent him to paint landscapes. (Laughter in the hall.)

Voices. Correct.

Gromyko. When Eden lost his value, although he was a bit younger, they sent him on an indefinite vacation. I think that the troika, and perhaps some of those who formed a bloc with the troika, should also be sent to paint landscapes. (Laughter in the hall.)

Voices. Correct.

Gromyko. Comrades, I wanted to emphasize with all decisiveness one more point, since it relates to many of the actions of our foreign policy. In my opinion, the Central Committee should know some facts which the previous speakers could not talk about simply because they are not involved in this business, while our brother [Molotov] sits on [*nash brat sidit na*] foreign policy affairs.

From all of the practical work of the CC Presidium over the course of at least the last two years, it has become clear that these priests are trying to present com.

Khrushchev's role in the CC as that of an agronomist. That is a definite line. You see, they say, he knows agriculture and runs it. In this way they want to cancel out the huge contributions which the First Secretary of the CC, com. Khrushchev, has made to the country and the party.

I want to touch on another area in the political and economic leadership of the country, and also in the area of foreign policy.

Here com. Mikoian has touched on one issue of foreign policy—our serious warning which was made to England and France when these countries launched into military adventurism against Egypt. It is well known that that action was appreciated abroad, and it is correct, that the way the ultimatum put an end to the military actions against Egypt in 28 hours after com. Bulganin's message was sent to Eisenhower, the English and French premiers and the Israeli premier, Ben Gurion, was in our interests.

Malik. Eden broke out crying when he received the message.

Gromyko. There were reasons to cry.

Comrades, I consider myself a person who is economical with words, but I should report to the Central Committee that the dispatch of that message was the initiative of com. Khrushchev, the First Secretary of the Central Committee. (Applause). Shepilov was minister of foreign affairs then. He spoke here, but his tongue could not move to note that fact. He loses the gift of speech in such cases.

Shepilov. At dozens of meetings, including at MID meetings, I said that this aided our rapprochement with the Arabs, that this was com. Khrushchev's initiative.

Gromyko. Why did you not say so to the Central Committee?

Shepilov. I agree.

Gromyko. Why am I talking about this? I want to emphasize that the CC Presidium, and above all the First Secretary, has led on issues of the USSR's foreign policy. Unfortunately, not so many foreign policy issues were discussed at plenums. It would be good if we correct this in the future; we must correct this situation.

And so, speaking about the leadership of our foreign policy, I do not want to create the impression that merits in this matter fall proportionately to all in the CC Presidium, including from the troika. Nothing of the sort.

The main, if one can express oneself this way, impulses on issues of foreign policy came from the First Secretary of the party Central Committee (Applause).

Voices. Correct.

Gromyko. I do not hesitate to say this, although at present I head our diplomatic department. If I did not want and did not desire to speak about this, I would be misunderstanding [*lozhno ponimal by*] the prestige of the MID.

Second issue. I will only mention it—the Austrian treaty. That is not only a decision by the CC Presidium. Com. Khrushchev insisted on the necessity of making a decision. You all know the positive significance of that whole affair.

The Trieste issue—that is also his proposal.

The issue of normalizing relations with West Germany—that is also his initiative. As a result, we received a huge lever of influence on the internal conditions in West Germany. Without this, it is possible that the Bundeswehr would be armed with atomic weapons. The plans to expand the West German army were disrupted and in any case delayed in large part because we, by establishing our embassy in Bonn, provided the Social Democratic opposition in West Germany with a rich line of argument. I repeat, the normalization of relations with West Germany has in large part aided this.

This was adopted on the insistence, not only by the proposal, but on the insistence of com. Khrushchev in the face of opposition from com. Molotov.

Voices. Yes.

Gromyko. The normalization of relations with Japan...

Molotov. I did not oppose, but on the contrary, supported...

Gromyko. When, Viacheslav Mikhailovich?

Molotov. I supported the establishment of relations with West Germany as well.

Gromyko. I will remind you of the facts: You came back from the conference in San Francisco. The day before, the issue was discussed in the CC Presidium. There was a decision at com. Khrushchev's suggestion to normalize relations with West Germany and to send an open note to the Adenauer government. We at MID prepared such a note in keeping with com. Khrushchev's proposal. Against this, as far as I remember, there were no objections in the Presidium.

Com. Molotov returned. I did not physically have the

time to introduce [show to the Presidium] this issue before his return. The minister arrived; he examined the proposal. Deputy minister V.S. Semenov who is present here and I tried to convince com. Molotov that the draft should be brought to the CC as had been pre-approved in the Presidium. Am I speaking correctly, com. Semenov?

Semenov. Correctly.

Gromyko. We said: it is a correct decision and should be introduced in this form in particular. Com. Molotov says: no, by introducing such a draft, we will extend a hand to [West German Chancellor Konrad] Adenauer and entreat him. He cancelled this decision and introduced his own proposal. Of course, the Presidium altered the whole thing and affirmed its decision.

Molotov. An open letter is one thing, and a non-open letter is another. The difference here is not an essential one, but one of form.

Gromyko. Not only on this issue, although it in particular was a very important issue.

Voice. We were talking about the content.

Gromyko. We were talking about making a direct proposal on normalization to put Adenauer in a difficult position and not to drag out the matter as before.

On disarmament. I am not going to repeat what has been said before—it is a complex problem. But here as well the main decisions were, as a rule, taken by the First Secretary of the CC.

The virgin lands were spoken about here. I want to emphasize this matter from another angle. If it hadn't been for the virgin lands—and it is well known on whose insistence the relevant decision was made—this year we not only would have been on hunger rations [*na golodnom païke*], but we could not have sold grain to our friends. We would have been obliged to market our gold abroad, in the context of our very tight foreign-trade balance. We could not have sold bread to the Poles, the Hungarians, or the Albanians. I am not even talking about the fact that we could not have sold [bread] to Egypt.

I do not want to repeat myself on the theme of how significant that would have been, but I do want to emphasize one fact: if we had not given [*dali*] the people's democratic countries bread, then...

Mikoian. If we had not sold [*prodali*] it [to them].

Gromyko. If we had not sold them bread, those countries would have been obliged to turn to someone else; there is only one someone else—the Americans. And they will not only sell bread, but will sell with the simultaneous attachment of one-sided conditions.

The negotiations which have recently taken place between the Poles and the Americans on some issues, including on the issue of selling so-called agricultural surpluses to Poland, have shown that the Americans seize anything they can with their teeth in order to attach the conditions they need.

After all, in Egypt, if it had not been for our arms and our grain...

Mikoian. And oil plus [our] purchases of cotton,

then, although it cannot be said definitely; in such matters you cannot make categorical assertions; but there is a good likelihood that Egypt would have been brought to its knees.

I want to touch on another issue as well. It would be good if com. Molotov mentally went out into the middle of the hall and looked at himself speaking from this tribune. He would see what a pathetic picture it is. It was also a pathetic picture when he tried to denigrate the visits of our leading officials, above all, of course, com. Khrushchev, to other countries with serious missions, as a result of which the foreign-policy influence of our state, the Soviet Union, has been increased in several countries and several world regions.

I must say that I simply bow before the huge work of great state importance which was done during these trips by com. Khrushchev. As is well known, com. Bulganin travelled with him, but com. Khrushchev was always the soul of the matter.

Voices. Correct. (Applause).

Gromyko. This applies to the visit to India. I was among the accompanying persons. It applies to the trip to Yugoslavia, to Afghanistan, to Burma, to England, to Finland, and to the meeting of the leaders of the four powers' summit in Geneva in 1955. And I think that com. Molotov resorted to fairly dirty methods on purpose in his effort to denigrate [Khrushchev], since com. Molotov did not and could not have any other arguments worthy of attention.

Voices. Correct.

Gromyko. In Finland during the last visit there was a pack of foreign correspondents from Finnish, French, American, and English newspapers that were very hostile to us. But not one of the correspondents nor any one of the newspapers which were most hostile to the Soviet Union dared to bring any facts that would cast a shadow on the behavior of com. Khrushchev and com. Bulganin during their last trip.

What sort of conclusion follows from this? The conclusion is as follows: the ethics of the bourgeois newspapers which were most hostile to us turned out to be more elevated than the ethics by which Molotov now lets himself be guided at the CC Plenum.

Voices. Correct. (Applause.)

Gromyko. Com. Molotov also dredged up com. Khrushchev's interview. I want to inform the Central Committee [about something]. I consider that it has the right and should know this fact. Com. Khrushchev did not propose himself, did not ask for this interview. The proposal that com. Khrushchev agree to give an interview was made by the MID, by me. It was discussed in the CC Presidium. At the beginning I had the following impression: com. Khrushchev did not have a very fixed opinion as to whether he should or should not give an interview. I spoke "for," and the members of the Presidium approved our proposal, and the decision was taken.

By its content the interview given was good and

correct. I must say that not many of the Soviet Union's foreign policy actions have stirred up a hornet's nest in the USA as did that interview. In vain, Molotov tried to depict the matter as if there were some new doubtful positions which do not follow from our party line and were not approved by the CC Presidium. There is nothing of the sort. There are no such positions. The only positions there are those which follow and are wholly founded on the resolutions of the 20th congress of the CPSU, on the resolutions of the CC Presidium and of the party CC itself. There is one new thing in the interview. What is new? It is the fresh, original form of the presentation of our views with an exposition of Soviet foreign policy. But that itself is valuable. What was needed was exactly a lively, intelligible form of presentation, of exposition of the views and issues of our foreign policy. That was needed; it contributed to the interview's huge effect.

In the course of our work we read official and unofficial communications, which in particular relate to an assessment of this interview, and with all confidence I can state that it was assessed in precisely that way...

[Source: Istoricheskii arkhiv 3-6(1993) and 1-2 (1994) Translated by Benjamin Aldrich-Moodie]

26 June 1957

Ustinov. I am convinced that this anti-party grouping had a platform on the issues of agriculture and foreign policy. Remember the plenum [in July 1955], when the issue of Yugoslavia was discussed. At that time I thought: why object to the establishment of friendly relations with any country, and in particular with Yugoslavia, which has a highly important strategic significance? It would seem, on the contrary, that we must win it at any cost. The Americans are throwing around colossal amounts of money in order to make the territory available for their bases. Com. Khrushchev made a reasonable proposal. Remember what he said: we must attract Yugoslavia to our side and try to isolate it [Yugoslavia] from the capitalists...

Shelepin. Since the steam bath was talked about, I want to bring up the following fact. There was a discussion in the plenum about com. Molotov's wife and he was warned: "Take charge of her; bring her into line (*Vos'mi ee v ruki, navedi poriadok*)," - but he evidently did not draw conclusions from that.¹ At one point I was sent together with com. N.M. Pegov to accompany [North Vietnamese leader] com. Ho Chi Minh to a pioneer camp. We arrive there and suddenly see a woman who tells us that she is from a children's home under Molotov's wife, and that she had come in order to take com. Ho Chi Minh and drive him to the children's home. We told her that com. Ho Chi Minh was not going there. In reply to this, she stated: no, he will go, since Polina Semenovna [Zhemchuzhina] said that he would go.

If com. Molotov had drawn conclusions from the criticism at the plenum, would she really have dared to act in that way?

Molotov. You must say the facts, and not what someone said.

Shelepin. And I'm telling facts. I myself was there and am not adding a word.

¹ Ed. Note: P.S. Zhemchuzhina's Jewishness, her friendship with Golda Meir, and her sister in Palestine/Israel brought a charge of treason, when the campaign against "rootless cosmopolitans" was loosed. She had been exiled in 1949 by a direct vote of the Politburo, Molotov abstaining. According to Roy Medvedev: "The day of Stalin's funeral, 9 March, was also Molotov's birthday. As they were leaving the mausoleum, Khrushchev and Malenkov wished him a happy birthday, despite the occasion, and asked what he would like as a present. 'Give me back Polina,' he replied coldly, and moved on." Two years later, Mikunis bumped into Molotov in the privileged Kremlin Hospital at Kuntsevo [where Stalin had one of his dachas]. "I went up to him and asked, 'How could you, a member of the Politburo, let them arrest your wife?' He gave me a cold look and asked me who I thought I was. I replied, 'I am the General Secretary of the Israeli Communist Party, and that's why I'm asking you.'" (Quotes from Roy Medvedev, *All Stalin's Men*. (New York, 1985), pp. 98-99, 102-3.)

[Source: Istoricheskii arkhiv 3-6(1993) and 1-2 (1994) Translated by Benjamin Aldrich-Moodie]

Evening, 28 June 1957

Suslov (chairing). Com. Kuznetsov has the floor.

Kuznetsov. ...How is it possible not to note—even our enemies recognize this—that since 1953, the Soviet Union has enjoyed huge successes in the area of foreign policy, while in 1953, the country was essentially on the brink of war? Friendly ties have been established and are being strengthened with many states on the basis of a struggle to consolidate peace. The international authority of the Soviet Union as the leading state in the struggle for peace and security, as the friend of all peoples who are fighting against the imperialists for their national independence and freedom, has grown immeasurably...

The steps taken by the Soviet Union in the Egyptian issue and on the whole throughout the Near and Middle East are exemplars of the realization of Leninist policy in international affairs.

What was the situation in the United Nations prior to 5 November of last year, as the English, French, and Israeli imperialists unleashed war on Egypt at the end of October.

Day and night the General Assembly meets; the [UN] Security Council meets and adopts many resolutions, but no concrete steps are taken against the aggressors. With

the assent of the USA, the English and French imperialists had conducted things so as to deflect public opinion and make quick work of Egypt.

The delegations of Egypt and other Arab countries in the UN were in a very anxious state; help could only come from the Soviet Union. And the Soviet Union did not let them down. When on 5 November they found out in the UN about the letters sent by the Soviet government on 5 November to England, France, the USA and Israel, there was an effect that could not have been produced by the explosion of several hydrogen bombs. On 7 [November], military actions were halted, and after that the withdrawal of the aggressors from Egypt began.

Even the bourgeois diplomats, who of course are embittered against the USSR, said in conversations with us that from the point of view of diplomacy it was a step that was hard to overestimate. At the same time they noted with obvious envy that the Soviet Union, without a single shot, without any actual involvement, forced two imperialist plunderers—England and France—to cease military activities and withdraw their troops from Egypt.

Besides this, these actions by the Soviet government helped us to acquire many new friends and to strengthen ties with old ones.

I want to draw your attention to the fact that com. Molotov talks a lot about using contradictions in the capitalist camp. It is well known that before 1953, the Soviet Union in its position on many international issues pushed the USA, England, and France together. [People] simply stopped believing that [over] there, the USA, England, and France have serious differences on many problems...

Khrushchev. ...we stopped buying butter abroad. When Malenkov was Chairman of the Council of Ministers in 1953-1954, we threw away a lot of gold in order to buy butter [*maslo*], herring, fabric, and other products and goods. How much gold did we spend then, com. Malenkov—200-250 tons?

Voice: If not more.

Khrushchev. Can one really resolve state issues in such a way? We will give away all of the gold, and there will be no more butter. They must be resolved in another way.

I want to say the following. Everyone knows that we must help (by treaty) the German Democratic Republic [GDR], since it is our socialist stronghold, our front line [*perednii krai*] in the struggle with the capitalist world. Politics has its logic. If the Germans in the GDR live worse than in the Federal Republic of Germany, then communists there will not be supported. For that reason, we must sell the GDR the necessary agricultural products. And we are doing this. Now we received a telegram in which the Germans are asking us to withhold shipments of butter and meat to them, since more has been prepared there than foreseen by the plan. That is a gratifying development.

This year for the first time, we celebrated the First of May without introducing a resolution on strengthening shipments of goods to the cities. Because everything that was stipulated in the plan is being supplied. This is the first time that has happened. And they try to depict that as a deviation! Oh, you... What makes you happy, if our successes distress you so?

Remember what sad results this policy led to, to the disruption of friendly relations with Turkey and Iran, our neighbors. It was literally a stupidity [*glupost'*]. In our incorrect policy in relation to Turkey we helped American imperialism. The Turks used to receive Voroshilov like a brother; they named a square after Voroshilov. But when the Second World War ended, we wrote a note to Turkey [saying] that we were tearing up the friendship treaty. Why? Because you are not giving up the Dardanelles. Listen, only a drunkard could write such a thing. After all, no country would give up the Dardanelles voluntarily.

The issue of Iran. What did we do in Iran? We put our troops there and started to boss them around [*stali tam khoziainichat'*]. And when the smell of gunpowder was in the air and we had either to fight or to leave, Stalin said—we must leave before it's too late, and we left. We poisoned the Persians' mood. When the Iranian shah visited us, he said that they could not forget what we wanted to do. I do not remember who was the minister of foreign affairs then, but in any case, Molotov was one of Stalin's main advisers on issues of international politics.

Gromyko. Molotov was minister then.

Molotov. But the proposal was not mine.

Khrushchev. But you fully agreed with it. With our short-sighted policies we drove Turkey and Iran into the embraces of the USA and England, into the Baghdad pact.

Take the war with Finland. It was costly to us, and as a result of it we were disentangling ourselves for a long time. And the war in Korea, which exacerbated the international situation to the utmost.

There was a period in which, as a result of a series of incorrect foreign-policy steps, our relations with the people's democratic countries started to worsen.

After Stalin's death, Molotov once again became head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He kept trying to conduct his same policy, which could not but lead to the isolation of the Soviet Union and to the loss of many foreign-policy positions. How did Molotov enter the MID? Beria and Malenkov decided that. What guided them? I think that it is not accidental; everything was thought out. Essentially, the international policies of Stalin were Molotov's policies. Although it must be said that Stalin was much wiser and more flexible in his conduct of basic foreign policy than Molotov. The CC was forced to remove Molotov from leadership over foreign issues...

Molotov's policy could not but lead to a worsening of relations between states; it would have helped the imperialists unite their forces against the USSR. It is an

adventurist policy. And he still has the gall to cite Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, teaching us Leninist foreign policy. He is an empty dogmatist (*nachetchik*) detached from [real] life...

Khrushchev. A little while ago when we were in Finland, I criticized Bulganin for his incorrect statements. We came to a peasant's farm, went out onto a hillock; the farmer is showing us his lands, and everything is going well. Suddenly Bulganin says: here is an excellent observation point (laughter in the hall). I almost gasped [*chut' ne akhnul*]. Listen to what you're saying, I say. And he answers me: you are a civilian, and I am a military man. Well, what sort of military man are you! You should think before speaking. There is a saying: in the house of a hanged man you don't talk about rope.

Just imagine what it must have been for the Finns to hear such words. We fought against Finland, and then restored good relations; we came to visit as guests, they met us in a cordial manner, and it turns out that we have come to pick out command points. Is that friendship? It is obvious that that offends, insults them. The minister of foreign affairs and other Finnish officials were with us, and I don't know how they took that statement...

Khrushchev. Molotov said that allegedly we are not using the contradictions between the imperialist states in the interests of strengthening the countries of the socialist camp. But that is a slander. Remember our government's appeal to the United States with a proposal to speak out jointly against the aggression of England, France, and Israel in Egypt. Was that really not an example of our active policy of unmasking the imperialists? Having proposed joint action against England, France, and Israel to Eisenhower in order to avoid war in Egypt, comrades, we tore the veil [*pokryvalo*] off the aggressors. We also got a big trump for exposing the USA's policy. Before this, the Egyptians said that the Soviet Union was leaving them to the whims of fate, that only the USA was defending them in the Security Council. And suddenly we propose joint action. The Egyptian people rejoiced and thanked the Soviet Union.

Or remember our letters to Guy Mollet, Eden, and Ben Gurion. In those countries, one could determine the meaning of those letters even by the smell of the air (laughter in the hall), because within 24 hours the war was halted. And they tell us about an inability to use contradictions. Is that really not using contradictions?

Voice: At that moment Eden came down with a fever.

Khrushchev. Some wits at one of the receptions said: Eden came down with an inflammation of the [urethral] canal... The Suez canal, because at that moment he resigned and lay down in bed. (Laughter in the hall).

The foreign-policy steps of our party's CC during the Anglo-Franco-Israeli aggression and the counter-revolutionary putsch in Hungary averted the danger of the outbreak of a new world war.

What is the position of the Soviet Union now in the international arena? On all the core issues of international politics, including issues such as the problem of disarmament and the banning of atomic and hydrogen weapons, the initiative is in the Soviet Union's hands. With our peace-loving policy we have put the imperialist states on the defensive.

In my rejoinder I already spoke about the worrying case when Shepilov, as editor of *Pravda*, committed an outright forgery, having published a falsified photograph depicting Stalin, Mao Zedong, and Malenkov in the interests of servility toward Malenkov. In reality, there was no such photograph. There was a group photograph in which many persons were photographed. But Shepilov removed all of these people from the photograph and left only three people, wishing by this to aggrandize Malenkov and serve him. For that the Central Committee gave Shepilov a stern reprimand....[Ed. Note: The Stalin-Mao-Malenkov faked photo and copy of original from which it was made can be found facing p. 128 in Martin Ebon, *Malenkov: Stalin's Successor* (McGraw Hill: NY, 1953).]

[Source: Istoricheskii arkhiv 3-6(1993) and 1-2(1994)
Translated by Benjamin Aldrich-Moodie]

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