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ANALYSIS OF ZHUKOV'S CONFESSION

The most significant development in today's material on the Zhukov case is the inclusion of his self-criticism in the lead editorial of Pravda. As "Comrade" Zhukov, not as the powerful Marshal or former Minister of Defense, he has been forced to submit to the decisive disciplinary measures of the Party in a manner that is basically no different from that recently applied to the helpless intellectuals such as M. Aliger. Unlike the "freedom writers" who have been able to hold out for months against party pressures exercised by Khrushchev personally - because they pose no potential power threat to the party organizations - the Marshal had to be removed from his possible sources of strength -- or be broken. The text contains only a single qualification that the criticism has "in the main" been correct." This is the sole indication of Zhukov's resistance in the Central Committee debate and it is followed by a reference of its value "to other military workers". There is a possibility that more top-level military personalities may be involved. Many of the most prominent have, however, already condemned Zhukov's actions, and speculation on the extent of the purge should be avoided.

Zhukov's mention of his previous expulsion from the Central Committee reveals a fact completely unknown to Western sources. There is no record of his election to the Central Committee, either as a member or candidate, at the 18th Party Congress in 1939 nor at any plenary session between 1939 and 1945. It is of course possible that he was opted into the Central Committee during the war. If so, Zhukov's refusal to submit to Stalin's censure and his humiliating acquiescence to Khrushchev's accusations provide a new measure of the efficacy of the First Secretary's wielding of the same instruments of persuasion. The attacks on Zhukov's war record, initiated by Marshal Koniev and certain to be continued at lower levels, fall into a familiar pattern. The association of Zhukov with Stalin's errors in World War II is intended to deprive the former symbol of opposition to Stalin of any claim to share Khrushchev's monopoly as the spokesman of anti-Stalinism - as defined and determined by the First Secretary according to his needs of the moment.

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