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FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE DRAFT PROGRAM OF THE CPSU

- I. Introduction
- II. Twenty-First Party Congress -
Before and After (Part One)
(American Slavic and East
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by Herbert Ritvo)

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Introduction

Khrushchev's draft program, the most important party document for charting the way ahead for the next twenty years, is perhaps more remarkable for what it does not say than for what it contains. Although it aims to show how communism is to be built, it makes no mention whatever of communes. China is mentioned only three times in some nine Pravda pages (about 47,000 words) and is given little of the special recognition appropriate to her status as the 2nd most powerful Communist nation. None of her "creative contributions to Marxism-Leninism" are specifically endorsed, and by omission and implication many of them, such as the communes, the "great leaps forward" and the "hundred flowers" are rejected.

The sections of the program dealing with foreign affairs, the other "socialist" countries and the major issues of war and peace contain astonishingly little which was not already known as Khrushchev's position after the 81-Party meeting in Moscow last year. On the other hand the domestic section contains many new and far reaching promises, most of which, however, are carefully stated to be not expected to mature until the seventies. By that time Khrushchev's natural talent for forgetting his more inconvenient theories may well have had time to exert itself. Readers will recall the fate of his 1957 boast that he would overtake the US in meat, butter and milk output by 1960.

The analysis of capitalism in the draft is remarkable for its obsolescent, musty approach and for how little the CPSU appears to have learnt about the changes in the West since 1919, when the 2nd Party program was adopted by the 8th Congress.

The new draft claims that:

"capitalism has entered its last stage - the stage of monopoly capitalism, of imperialism."

but fails to give any more convincing reasons for this assertion than were provided in the 81-Party statement. The draft is so devoid of reality that it even repeats the 1919 thesis of

The draft states..."it is impossible to jump over necessary stages of development..."

"a relative, and sometimes an absolute deterioration in the position of the working class"

in the West, although the facts of wage statistics throughout Europe and America have long since exploded this hoary myth.

The draft proclaims the right of nations to self-determination, including secession, as having been ensured by the October Revolution. It does not expand on this point and even the qualifying clause in the 1919 program, which carefully ensured that no secession took place is now absent from the 1961 draft. In the 1919 program the qualification reads:

"The All-Russian Communist Party regards the question as to which class expresses the desire of a nation for separation, from a historical point of view, taking into consideration the level of historical development of the nation, i.e., whether the nation is passing from medievalism toward bourgeois democracy or from bourgeois democracy toward Soviet or proletarian democracy, etc."

In the economic section, the most conspicuous absentee is the theory of the priority development of heavy industry. Indeed, the trend of the draft is strongly towards a consumer-oriented society, since the Presidium evidently recognizes that in the area of living standards the USSR at present is still an underdeveloped society.

There is a strong emphasis on material incentives

"which permit the best combination of personal and public interests, and stimulate an increase in labor productivity, the growth of the economy and the prosperity of the people."

Hence the continuation of Khrushchev's basic criticism of the ideology of the Chinese communes, which has always been that they failed to provide adequate incentives for their members, is clearly reaffirmed.

The section on Soviet colonial policy is as hypocritical as ever; it states that in a socialist society nations are ensured political equality and that they unite on a "voluntary" basis in the single multinational state of the USSR. Evidently the experiment of "self-determination" is not likely to be given a genuine trial in the Baltic or the Caucasian republics for example.

Concerning the doctrine of specific roads to socialism, the draft program gives it only the scantiest recognition - markedly less than the 81-Party statement:

"The trunk road " (stolbovaya doroga) "to socialism has been blazed. Many peoples are already following it. and sooner or later all peoples will follow it."

The trunk road in question is the Soviet one, and no detailed mention is made of Mao Tse-tung's very different highway. This peculiar form of Soviet arrogance, while no doubt predictable in the CPSU's program, is most unlikely to win for it any degree of real acceptance in Peking.

The expected attack on Yugoslavia seems somewhat muted by comparison with the 81-Party statement. The draft says curtly:

"The Yugoslav leaders, by their revisionist policy, have set Yugoslavia in opposition to the socialist camp and to the international communist movement, have created a threat of the loss of the revolutionary gains of the Yugoslav people."

In the 81-Party statement, on the other hand, the Yugoslavs were also said to be "engaged in subversive work against the socialist camp" and "harming the unity of all peace-loving forces." The present softer attitude, understandable in the opportunist light of the Popovic visit to Moscow and the Belgrade meeting on September 1st, will be yet another irritant for Sino-Soviet and Soviet-Albanian relations.

Another passage which appears to attack Yugoslavia without naming her reads:

"The experience of the world socialist system has confirmed the need for the closest alliance between countries falling away from capitalism, for uniting their efforts to build socialism and communism. The policy of building socialism in isolation, apart from the world commonwealth of socialist countries, is theoretically unfounded because it is contrary to the objective laws of socialist development. It is harmful economically because it leads to the squandering of social labor, a reduction in the tempo of production and to the dependence of a country on the capitalist world. It is reactionary and dangerous politically because it does not rally but divides the peoples in the face of the united front of imperialism, nourishes bourgeois -nationalist tendencies and in the last analysis may lead to the loss of socialist gains."

But although this is aimed primarily at Tito, it may also have been meant as a warning to Mao, whose trade with the USSR is declining, whose agricultural production has failed to such an extent that he must import millions of tons of wheat from Canada and Australia and whose regime is strongly nationalist.

The section of the draft dealing with the "world crisis of capitalism" is obsolete not only in its refusal to recognize the high real wage-levels in the West, but also in its reiterated empty use of the "chronic unemployment" theme. While this may seem convincing if the US alone is in question, the W. European countries whose populations equal that of the USSR are in fact confronted with a serious labor shortage enabling them to employ many thousands of Algerians in France, W. Indians and Pakistanis in Britain, Greeks and Italians in Germany.

The draft is full of internal contradictions, which are particularly noticeable in the economic passages. Despite its retention of the 2nd Program's worn out thesis of the "relative deterioration" of the conditions of the working class, it goes on to admit that in a "small group of capitalist countries", there is a relatively high standard of living, supposedly maintained at the expense of the underdeveloped peoples. It seems that no adequate explanation of the prosperity in Switzerland and the Scandinavian countries, which have never had any colonies, has yet occurred to its authors.

There is also the usual defensive note in the draft's handling of free elections and the multi-party system in the West. It claims that by controlling the press, capital, the radio, TV and cinema the monopolists "impose their candidates" on the people. The various parties are explained as being merely different factions of the dominant bourgeoisie. However, it is clear that not even the Presidium believes this absurd misrepresentation, because the draft continues to advocate parliamentary methods of seizing power as soon as it turns to the heart of its key quarrel with Mao Tse-tung.

As in many of Khrushchev's statements, Peking is reminded that:

"revolutions are not made to order. They cannot be imposed from outside...The victorious proletariat cannot impose happiness on another people, without thereby undermining their own victory...Communists never have thought and do not consider that the road to revolution is not necessarily linked with another world war...Revolution is perfectly possible without war. The great aims of the working class can be achieved without a world war" etc.

At the same time, as in the 81-Party statement, the export of counter-revolution by the West is also ruled out.

The irrelevance of the draft to modern conditions is exemplified in its definition of "dictatorship of the proletariat". This, it says, means the "dictatorship of the overwhelming majority over the minority," but in point of fact, as any adequate social survey of a contemporary industrialized Western nation shows, the "proletariat" has long since become a declining minority.

One "Chinese" method is "not excluded" by the draft, but is attributed to Marx and Lenin, not to Mao Tse-tung. This is the buying out of the bourgeois (see Party Life, No. 12, 1961) by the "proletariat" in order to gain possession of the basic means of production. This, for the Kremlin, is an unusually "peaceful" road to power. It also hoists Mao with his own petard.

Although Yugoslavia specifically is denounced less often than in the 81-Party statement, the draft devotes a little more space to revisionism as a whole than this was the case in December. The treatment of dogmatism and sectarianism is virtually the same in essence, though perhaps not quite so verbose.

The section of the draft dealing with the national bourgeoisie makes no concession to Mao Tse-tung's views. Certainly Nasser, Kassem and Castro are told that their "national-liberation" revolutions are not ended by winning political independence" but Mao is also informed that at the present stage "the progressive role of the national bourgeoisie, its ability to take part in the solution of vital national tasks is not yet exhausted." It is interesting to speculate how long it will be before Khrushchev decides that Mao was right after all. His continuing inability to obtain domestic political concessions from Nasser and Kassem is scarcely a good advertisement for his policies, and must present Peking with many opportunities for effective criticism.

The passage on nuclear war, in accordance with Khrushchev's views, makes no pretence that only "capitalism" would suffer. It declares that hundreds of millions of people would perish, whole countries would suffer unprecedented damage, and that therefore war should be avoided. The "weapon of socialism" is its "superiority in organization, state system, the economy, in raising the living and cultural standards", not its military force.

The passage on foreign policy similarly contains nothing to assuage the Chinese. Despite their public objections in 1960, "general and complete disarmament" under strict international control" appears in the draft, and the CPSU declares that it aims to follow:

"an active and consistent policy of improving and developing relations with all capitalist countries including the USA, Great Britain, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, Italy and others interested in ensuring peace."

Whatever Mao may think of improving relations with Italy and Japan, he has often enough let it be known that he is strongly averse to Khrushchev's spasmodic efforts to cooperate with the USA.

Domestic Policies

In this section the most important statement is that for the next twenty years wage payments for labor are to remain the basic source of worker income, i.e., throughout the period the USSR is to remain a socialist society, with material incentives predominant, just as they are in the West.

But emphasis is to shift towards a consumer oriented society, although an "abundance of goods" will only be achieved in the seventies. Automobile output is to be expanded "significantly" despite the fact that Khrushchev himself is known to prefer taxis for his subjects rather than private cars. Perhaps this is one area in which the consumer pressures have overruled Khrushchev's austere view of what is good for his subjects.

Rents are gradually to be paid for by the state during the seventies, but as with the other promises of free services¹

¹Water, gas, heating at the end of the seventies, free meals at work, etc.

the draft fails to point out the inevitable corollary - that indirect taxes, such as the turnover tax, will consequently have to be unnecessarily high. This can scarcely be an attractive economic proposition, since the Soviet citizen's indirect taxes are already probably the highest in the world.

The transition to the six-hour day has been postponed, since it is now promised "within this decade". Not long ago Khrushchev was confidently predicting that it would be achieved in 1964 (see his speech to the 21st Party Congress) and its postponement by up to six years in the draft program may well hint at what may be expected to happen to many of the other unrealistic "carrots" which the draft contains.

However one advance which is likely to materialize is the abolition of night shifts. Women are already being taken off night shifts as more and more male labor becomes available, and it is therefore reasonable to assume that this development will continue until, with the increasing abundance of labor, day-work is the general rule.

Despite the advance billing in Moscow, no promise of "free bread" is made in the draft, but during the seventies the transition to free canteen meals at work and on the collective farms is to begin. Whether this will be acceptable to the workers will no doubt depend on the quality of the meals. At present, the evidence in the Soviet press suggests that even the meals now paid for by the workers are far from satisfactory in this respect.

The target set for the increases in real incomes of workers by the draft program is "almost to double them in ten years". But since during the 1960-61 period average real incomes rose by only 4% (see C.S.A. report, July 21, Pravda) and in the previous years by about 5% the target is not attainable unless, as the draft coyly puts it, "public funds are taken into account". In countries where free trade unions can operate, real wages tend to rise appreciably faster than this (e.g., in Great Britain the increase has been about 3% in the last six months, in West Germany it was 56% during the years 1950-59). Moreover in the USSR the real incomes of the peasants have fallen in the past two years. The members of a democratic trade union, unlike the proletariat in the USSR, can spend their earnings as they please, without half of them being diverted into the state's "public funds". And since the Soviet real incomes are at present less than half those averaged by the British or W. German worker, the likelihood of "catching up" in this field seems remote to the point of unreality.

For 1980 the draft sets the goal of a flat for every family, including newly-weds. Thus both Mao's original commune idea of dormitories for the drones and S.G. Strumilin's pale attempt to approach it from a Soviet angle (see Novy Mir, No. 7, 1960) have both been rejected for what is essentially a bourgeois ideal. But in this case too the current rate of State building in the USSR, 15,000,000 sq. meters in the first half of 1961 compared with 16,000,000 in West Germany's free economy, with only a quarter of the Soviet population, will have to be rapidly accelerated if the target is to be achieved.

After all the rosy promises made in the draft, including "free" boarding schools by 1980 for those children whose parents agree to be deprived of them for most of the year, an important qualification is made:

"The complication of the international situation and the increased expenditures on defense which it necessitates may hold up the plans for increasing prosperity."

Thus the draft provides an escape clause such that whenever the Presidium wishes to divert 3,000,000,000 rubles to the armed forces to support its plans for Berlin, for example, as it did three weeks ago, the resultant setback in living standards can be blamed on the West.

Nevertheless the "revision of the general line"² of the Party concerning the priority development of heavy industry, for which Khrushchev and V. Novikov, the Chairman of Gosplan, have assiduously prepared the way during the past eight months (see Background Information, 22 December 1960, 20 January 1961) has now become a fait accompli. Nowhere in the draft is priority for heavy industry reaffirmed, and it is probably the first major economic document from the CPSU for several decades to omit this age-worn shibboleth of Stalinist dogma. Naturally Khrushchev, aware of the sensitivity of his extreme left-wing on this point, has not flatly rejected it, but the draft shows that the Novikov-Khrushchev theory is now operative:

"...The task of transforming Soviet industry into technically the most perfect and powerful in the world requires the further development of heavy industry...The CPSU will in the future also be ceaselessly solicitous of the growth of heavy industry...Heavy industry must grow to ensure on the base of technical progress the growth of the branches of the economy producing consumer goods. Therefore the main task of heavy industry is full provision of the needs of the country's defence and better and fuller satisfaction of the vital demands of man and Soviet society."

These are not the words of a defeated Khrushchevian faction as the New York Times (July 31, 1961) suggests. They are the draft's deliberately cautious way of restating Khrushchev's views of May 20th 1961, when he said at a Moscow reception:

"Now we consider our heavy industry as built. So we are not going to give it priority."

The draft does not give it priority either, and once again the 1st Secretary has "revised the general line."

²See Khrushchev's denial of "revisionism" January 6th. (Kommunist, No. 1, 1961)

The New York Times bolsters its theory of a setback for Khrushchev by saying that the draft calls for a goal of 250,000,000 tons of steel in 1980. But in fact it says:

"In 20 years ferrous metallurgy will reach a level which will make it possible to produce about 250,000,000 tons of steel a year. The production of steel must fully cover the growing needs of the national economy corresponding to the level of technical progress which will have been achieved by then."

Between the theoretical possibility described by the draft and a "goal", there is a wide gulf. As Khrushchev has said "we evidently shall not follow the policy of developing the ferrous metals industry to the limit of our potential..." (January 6th, 1961).

There is an excellent reason for Khrushchev's attitude, and it can be simply described. With the armed forces now reduced to approximately 2.7 millions (only slightly larger than those of the US), with automobile output still at a rudimentary stage despite the draft's proposed expansion, and with consumer durables production only beginning to achieve mass dimensions, the USSR could not use steel delivered at the maximum theoretical rate. Perhaps China could absorb the surplus, but she could not pay for it. Moreover it is vitally important to notice that the draft's target for industrial output reads:

"During the next ten years, to increase the volume of output by approximately 2.5 times and thus to outstrip the present level of US industrial output."

At present the U.S. uses approximately 100,000,000 tons of steel a year, and if the draft's output target is to be achieved the USSR in 1970 would not require much more.

The New York Times also finds the electric power targets extremely ambitious. They are, but they are not so new as the draft would lead one to think. Here the original wording is absolute and definitive:

"The annual production of electric power must be brought to 900,000-1,000 million kilowatt hours by 1970..."

This is a real target, not the statement of a theoretical potential, but 900,000 million kilowatt hours was already aimed at for 1972 as long ago as November 1958 (see Background Information, February 2nd, 1958, p. 28). The target date has been advanced by two years during the last three years, but high electricity usage is as much a hall-mark of a consumer society (e.g., the U.S.) as a sign of heavy industrial development.

First Steps Towards Democracy?

Obviously the Presidium is well aware of the pressures for greater democracy within the USSR, because the draft incorporates some important new proposals to make Soviet elections less stultifying than at present. Despite the ever-increasing cult of Khrushchev, the draft denounces the cult of personality in routine terms and then proposes that at every election,³ not less than one quarter of the CC and Presidium should be removed.

"Members of the Presidium will be elected as a rule for not longer than 3 successive convocations."

Theoretically therefore if this were implemented, Khrushchev, Mikoyan, Suslov and Shvernik should all be on their way out in October 1961. An intriguing thought, but the draft quickly suppresses any such heretical idea with the escape clause:

"Some party leaders, in recognition of their acknowledged authority, high political, organizational and other qualities can be elected to the leading organs for a longer period."

So after October most of the familiar faces, and certainly the most familiar face, will still be with us. But the draft continues sternly:

"In this case the respective candidate is considered elected only on condition that not less than three quarters of the votes cast in a secret ballot are cast in his favor."

Is there a theoretical possibility that Khrushchev might muster less than three-quarters of the vote? The most that can be said is that if the possibility exists, at present it seems most unlikely to mature.

On paper the new rules will mean that to change more than 50% of the Presidium or C.C., some twelve years would be required. But Khrushchev has demonstrated in the recent past that he can change the personnel of these bodies appreciably faster (e.g., only five⁴ members of the 1952 Presidium of 17 members now remain) so that the practical application of the regulations must remain open to serious question.

Military Policy

As the draft rightly says:

"from the point of view of internal conditions, the USSR has no need of an army now."

³Normally held every four years.

⁴Khrushchev, Suslov, Mikoyan, Shvernik, Kosygin.

With the security forces of the MVD, the militia and two and a half million members of the "volunteer" people's guards, it would be astonishing if internal security required the aid of Malinovsky's men as well. But it is significant that all talk of the army withering away to such an extent that it can be replaced by a territorial militia, which Khrushchev himself proposed in January 1960 to the Supreme Soviet, has now been dropped. The excuse given is the "danger stemming from the imperialist camp" and the lack of progress towards full and complete disarmament. A more likely reason in fact, however, is not that Khrushchev's long-term policy has been reversed but that the short-term tactical requirements of the Berlin situation require the draft's newly immobiliste attitude to the armed forces. After the suspension of the fourth demobilization, any other policy at present would scarcely have been practicable.

Another influence of the Berlin (and Laotian) situations is to be seen in the theory on local wars. Khrushchev has often truly said that local wars are dangerous because they may lead to major ones, but this realistic idea does not appear in the draft. Instead a more precise formulation, which should be acceptable to Peking, reads:

"The CPSU and the whole Soviet people will continue to oppose each and every aggressive war, including wars between capitalist states and local wars aimed at stifling national liberation movements, and consider it their duty to support the sacred struggle of the oppressed peoples, their just liberation wars against imperialism."

However the wording does not commit the USSR to the military support of "just liberation wars". In Laos Khrushchev's support is close and effective, yet in the Congo it was long-range and ineffective. While the outcome depends both on geography and the quality of the opposition to his intervention, the dogma remains flexible enough to allow him to threaten or to act as the situation requires.

Withering-Away Again Postponed

Just as the army is now not to wither away, so the long expected decease of the state has been postponed yet again by the draft. This is achieved by interposing the "self-exhaustion" of the dictatorship of the working class as a prerequisite. The state and therefore its punitive organs (though the draft does not specifically say so) is now to remain until the "complete victory of communism" and since communism is only being built (for the next twenty years), the demise of the state is effectively postponed till the Ides of March - and the long awaited decease of capitalism.

The Party to Flourish

If the state has been reprieved, the party is given a new lease on life. Its role is to grow, it is to remain the "leading and directing force" of society.

Although the principle of collective leadership is still

Although the principle of collective leadership is still said to be "the law of its life", in practice it is probable that in October 1961, to a still greater degree than in 1959 when the 21st Congress met, it will be embodied both in the public mind and in the realities of power by one man whom none in the USSR can yet successfully oppose.

r.r.g.

TWENTY-FIRST PARTY CONGRESS --
BEFORE AND AFTER (Part One)

By Herbert Ritvo
The American Slavic and
East European Review
April 1961

In the period between the 20th and 21st Party Congresses, thirteen plenary sessions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union were held,¹ although only twelve can be documented from official sources.² These meetings of the CC elected at the February, 1956, meeting, more numerous than for any comparable time interval in party history, not only provided the background for the first extraordinary³ (vyneocherednoj) Congress in more than four decades; they also furnished the forums and tribunals at which all the important issues subsequently referred to the Congress for formal post facto approval had been initially presented and, for the most part, resolved. Nevertheless, as M. Suslov pointed out, the January 27-February 5 meeting was "not a regular Party Congress, which explains why no Central Committee report was heard."⁴ Yet despite A. Mikoyan's reminder that the delegates had "assembled...to discuss the single question on the agenda -- the control figures"⁵ of the seven year plan, Khrushchev's 67,000-word, seven-hour long address and the eighty-five shorter contributions dealt with developments of the intervening three years and prospects for the future.

In many respects the extraordinary Congress, coming hard on the heels of the December, 1958, plenum, seemed merely a continuation of the series of meetings (two in 1956, four in 1957, six in 1958), held since the 20th Congress. This impression was strengthened by the publication of the texts of the sixty-six speeches at the December plenum, first in Pravda (December 16-20) and then in book form,⁶ the first time the secrecy of the intra-party debates had been lifted in this manner since

¹ V. Churayev, "Development of Inner Party Democracy in the USSR," World Marxist Review, London, 1959, No. 6, p. 25.

² See National Policy Machinery in the Soviet Union, Report of the Committee on Governmental Operations, U.S. Senate (Washington, 1960), p. 13.

³ In the commentary to the VI Congress of the RKP (b), there is a reference to the March, 1918, meeting as "Ekstrenny." KPSS v Resoljucijakh i reshennijakh (Moscow, 1953, 7th ed.), p. 402. The procedures for calling an extraordinary Congress are described in Articles 29 and 30 of the Party Statutes adopted at the XIX Party Congress (Pravda, October 14, 1952).

⁴ Pravda, January 31, 1959. ⁵ Ibid., February 1, 1959.

⁶ Plenum Centralnogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskoy Partii Sovetskogo Sojuza 15-19 Dekabrja 1958 goda. Stenograficheskiy Otchet (Moscow, 1958).

the thirties.⁷ Should this practice continue, as it already has for two of the three plenary sessions in 1959 (June and December), the Party Congress may well lose much of its present aura of importance, although it will always maintain its statutory supremacy as the traditional policy-pronouncing instrumentality. Indeed, compared to the changes approved by the Central Committee meetings between the last two Congresses, the 21st, from the perspective of internal affairs at least, was scarcely more than a public balancing of the party ledgers by the new party-state leader for the second three-year period since the death of Stalin, the opening phase of the "Khrushchev era."⁸ With its last act, fixing the date for the next regular Congress in 1961,⁹ the extraordinary Congress, in a most appropriate manner, underlined its transitional character.

Conspicuously missing from the Congress were any meaningful references to Stalin, either positive or negative. Although there were several remarks on the elimination of the "cult of the personality," the most dramatic theme of the 20th Congress, only Khrushchev and one of his trusted ideologists mentioned the posthumously debased dictator. The iconoclast of three years ago, however, banally recalled only that by "carrying out the policy of industrializing the country and collectivizing agriculture, our people under the leadership of the party and its Central Committee, headed for many years by J. V. Stalin, had effected the most profound changes";¹⁰ the veteran Agit-Prop specialist, Pospelov, perhaps to stress that many of the details of Khrushchev's secret speech had been relegated to archival obscurity, employed a more deferential appellation when he spoke of the beneficial results which followed the closing of the "dangerous gap between theory and practice which has become manifest in the last year of the life of Josef Vissarionovich Stalin."¹¹ The studied evasion of so sensitive a subject, which had had such far-reaching unanticipated repercussions in 1956 -- at home and abroad -- was, of course, an accurate reflection of the correctives applied to Khrushchev's portrayal of his predecessor by the CC resolution on the "cult of the personality."¹² Although even more favorable evaluations of Stalin's

7 For an analysis of the materials of the December, 1958, plenum and its relevance to the XXI Party Congress, see Adam B. Ulam, "The New Face of Soviet Totalitarianism," World Politics, XXI, No. 3 (April, 1960), 391 ff.

8 It is not without interest to note that the American edition of the excellent study of the post-Stalin period by G. Boffa, Moscow correspondent of the official organ of the Communist Party of Italy, was changed to Inside the Khrushchev Era from La Grande Svolta.

9 Pravda, February 6, 1959.

10 Ibid., January 28, 1959.

11 Ibid., February 1, 1959.

12 Ibid., July 2, 1956; it is likely that this resolution was adopted at the plenary session for which there is no record.

TABLE I
CPSU Central Committee Plenums, 1956-58

<u>Date Reported (Pravda)</u>	<u>Time of Session</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>Main Speakers</u>
1. Feb. 28	(1956) Feb. 27	Election of Presidium and Secretariat of CC Formation of CC Bureau for RSFSR	Not listed
2. Dec. 25	Dec. 20-24	Revision of sixth FYP Management of Industry	N. K. Bajbakov M. Saburov N. A. Bulganin (Speeches not published)
Dec. 26	(1957)	Resolution on Gosekon and Gosplan	
3. Feb. 16	Feb. 13-14	Reorganization of Management Role of Gosplan	N. S. Khrushchev (Text not published; theses published, Pravda, March 30)
4. July 4	June 22-29	Return of Shepilov to Secretariat Expulsion of anti-party group from Presidium and CC Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovich, and Shepilov Demotion of Pervukhin to candidate Saburov dropped from Presidium Election of Aristov, Belyaev, Ignatov, Kuusinen to full membership in Presidium Promotion of Brezhnev, Zhukov, Kozlov, Shvernik, Furtseva to Candidate members Party-political work in Army and Navy Expulsion of Zhukov from Presidium and CC Meeting of representatives of Communist and Workers Parties Trade Unions Mukhitdinov promoted to full member of Presidium Ignatov, Kirichenko, and Mukhitdinov appointed secretaries of CC	Not listed
5. Nov. 3	Oct. 28-31		M. Suslov (Text not published)
6. Dec. 19	Dec. 16-17		V. V. Grishin (Text not published)
7. Feb. 28	(1958) Feb. 25-26	MTS Reorganization	N. S. Khrushchev (Speech not published; theses, Pravda, March 1)
8. May 9	May 6-7	Chemical Industry (Yugoslavia)	N. S. Khrushchev Pravda, May 10
9. June 20	June 17-18	Agriculture Reform (MTS, Procurements, Prices) Podgorny and Polyansky promoted to full membership in Presidium	N. S. Khrushchev Pravda, June 21

TABLE I (Cont'd)

CPSU Central Committee Plenums, 1956-58

<u>Date Reported (Pravda)</u>	<u>Time of Session</u>	<u>Subjects</u>	<u>Main Speakers</u>
10. Sept. 7	(1958) Sept. 5	Convocation of Extraordinary Party Congress Control figures for 7-year plan Bulgaria removed from Presidium Discussions of Khrushchev's thesis on seven-year plan Agricultural progress since 1953	Not listed
11. Nov. 14	Nov. 12		Thesis, Pravda, Nov. 14
12. Dec. 16	Dec. 15-19		<u>N. S. Khrushchev</u>

work were advanced in a series of Khrushchev statements¹³ during the turbulent months of readjustment after the risings in Poland and Hungary, the official materials of the 21st Congress demonstrate by this glaring omission that the dilemma of a definitive depiction of Stalin's complex personality and historical role has not yet been resolved. Within a month after he had completely ignored this problem at the Congress, the old Stalinist who had sparked the public criticism of the idol in 1956, revealed in the following confession how the specter responsible for a great and terrible past still haunted those who had donned his mantle:

Stalin enjoyed great authority among the people, among us and among those with whom he worked. It must be said that despite all his shortcomings, he was a man of great intelligence. Not long before his death he said: "If I should die, what will become of you?" He thought that those surrounding him would be incapable without him. We thought of this and wondered how we would manage and how we would accomplish it. But six years have already passed and our party as you see has become still stronger and more powerful.¹⁴

This post-Congress reflection is of interest not only because of the now stereotyped admission that the leaders who had been terrorized by Stalin respected his talents; it is more relevant as a revelation of the gnawing fears of a temporary collective leadership concerning its ability effectively to direct the party-state machine inherited from the unique totalitarian dictatorship of Stalin. Three years earlier, Mikoyan's cautiously, but overtly, expressed, criticism had been the prelude to Khrushchev's violent, but covert, repudiation of one-man rule. The allusions to the collective doubts, uttered by the only member of the post-Stalin oligarchy still active in the Presidium, now makes strange reading indeed, when all party and state achievements from victory over the "anti-party group" to the conquest of cosmic space are attributed to the "initiative" or, at least, to the "support" of Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev personally.

Thus, at the 21st Congress, the emergence of a new "cult of the personality" of the man who had only a few years earlier bitterly exposed the appalling consequences of the un-Marxist-Leninist hagiolatry of his predecessor again posed the problem

13 Speech at banquet for Chou En-lai -- Ibid., January 18, 1957.

14 A. Mikoyan, Rostov Oblast Regional Service, February 28, 1959, in a speech (February 26) before the elections to the RSFSR Supreme Soviet; this paragraph was not included in the Izvestia text of the same date. Note how Mikoyan's quotation of a query by Stalin is almost identical with a rhetorical question attributed to Stalin by Khrushchev: "You members of the Politburo are blind as young kittens; what would happen without me?" Khrushchev's secret speech, Current Soviet Policies II, L. Gruliov, editor (New York: Praeger, 1957), p. 183. See also A. Harriman, Peace with Russia? (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1959), p. 103.

of interpreting the role and nature of the leadership of the ruling party in a totalitarian state. There are, of course, valid objections to reducing analyses of developments in the Soviet Union to merely a question of the personalities of the leaders; and certainly the transformation of the Soviet dictatorship from the prostrate, dismembered giant of 1917 to the second greatest industrial power in the world in 1953 is inexplicable in terms of either the words or deeds of Lenin and Stalin alone. Nevertheless, for the third time in the four decades of the existence of the Soviet party-state, a single party leader has obtained both the authority and/or power which have enabled him alone, no doubt with the advice of those within the apparatus who support or are dependent upon him and his policies, to choose among alternative courses of action left open by the continuous evolution of an increasingly modernized industrial society.

In form, at least, the 21st Congress was scarcely distinguishable from all the Stalin-dominated Congresses from 1930 (16th) to 1952 (19th); in content most of the principles of the "report of Comrade Khrushchev" -- not that of the Central Committee as in the case of regular Congresses -- were essentially extensions and refinements of the program enunciated at the 20th Congress.¹⁵ From the opening day of the "Congress of the Builders of Communism," when Khrushchev's name was listed twenty-four times on the front page of the governmental organ¹⁶ to the final session, the person, the plan, the policies, and finally even the future party program of the First Secretary, CC, CPSU -- Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers -- completely dominated the entire proceedings. The sycophantic hero worship, so caustically condemned in the "secret speech," resounded once again in the Kremlin in a chorus of praise which had no parallels in Soviet history except for the adulation of J. V. Stalin. There may still be some doubts concerning the nature of these policies and how successfully Khrushchev and his machine can implement them; on the basis of the documentary materials of the Congress, however, there is no evidence which suggests that any immediately identifiable opposition, least of all the silenced (Malenkov, Molotov, Kaganovich) and the humiliated (Bulganin, Pervukhin, and Saburov) can hope to challenge the power of their former "comrade-in-arms" who has proven himself the best student of their master's practice and theory. The metamorphosis of Stalin the man into Stalin the demigod took nearly a decade and a series of bloody purges; the transformation of Khrushchev the apparatchik into Khrushchev the leader -- rukovoditel', not yet vozhd'¹⁷ -- has progressed more rapidly and more humanely.

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- 15 The seven-year plan represented, it is true, a considerable revision of the original targets of the sixth Five-Year Plan adopted at the 20th Congress.
- 16 Izvestia, January 27, 1959, in nomination for the Republican Supreme Soviet elections.
- 17 In the official translation of the speech delivered in English by an Indian on the occasion of the award of the Lenin Peace prize to Khrushchev, the Russian word for leader was vozhd' (Pravda, May 17, 1959). There has been no repetition of this designation for Khrushchev.

Without comparable bloodletting, the First Secretary has become a symbol of near universality of knowledge; only the element of infallibility is still lacking.

It is impossible, without reading the documents, to feel the cumulative impact of the constant reiteration of the name, words, and deeds of Nikita Sergeevich. The praise and eulogies range from agriculture¹⁸ and atomic research¹⁹ to cosmic rockets²⁰ and construction of power stations,²¹ from recognition for aiding the solution of nationality problems²² to contributions in working out the seven-year plan.²³ These tributes were, at the last Congress, not expressed in the Stalinist superlatives, but the effusiveness of laurels piled upon Khrushchev suggested that it was only a matter of degree and time before letters and pledges²³ to "Comrade N. S. Khrushchev personally" would close this gap. The long-range effects and the lasting influence of Khrushchev's report cannot yet be measured, but the immediate impact of Khrushchev's appearance in action as the "true student and continuer (prodolzhatel') of the great work of Lenin"²⁴ was readily apparent from the response at the Congress and in the press. From a protégé of the First Secretary came this evaluation on the first day of discussion:

Comrade Khrushchev's report is imbued with the Leninist ideas of building communism in our country, is proof of the all-conquering force of Marxism-Leninism. The theoretical propositions set out in the report are a new milestone, a new stage in the study of laws governing Communist construction. The conclusions about the nature of the advance of society towards communism, the ways and means of developing and bringing closer together collective forms and state forms of property, the merger of these forms into a single Communist property, constitute a long-range program, not only for us, but for all our friends abroad.²⁵

These words from a subordinate were more than matched by the applause from the agit-prop editorial writers who endowed Khrushchev's report with the attributes of a "classic" of Marxism-Leninism. The leap into the ideological vacancy left by

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- 18 See speeches of E. Andreevna, Pravda, February 5; A. M. Shkolnikov, ibid., February 6; K. I. Satraev, ibid. February 6.
 - 19 I. V. Kurchatov, ibid., February 5.
 - 20 D. F. Ustinov, ibid., February 5.
 - 21 J. J. Kuzmin, I. V. Zhegalin, ibid., February 5; A. F. Zasljadko, I. T. Novikov, ibid., February 3.
 - 22 N. A. Mukhitdinov, ibid., January 31; D. D. Karaev, ibid., February 5.
 - 23 N. Beljaev, ibid., January 29.
 - 24 N. A. Mukhitdinov, ibid., September 30, 1958.
 - 25 D. Poljanskij, ibid., January 29, 1959.

forcible removal of Stalin from the trinity of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism at the 20th Congress was successfully completed by Khrushchev at the 21st in the opinion of these authoritative judges:

The road to communism -- thus can the meaning of the content of Comrade Khrushchev's report...be briefly described. The report is a programmatic document for our party, for the whole international working class and the Communist movement. In its profound analysis, in the clarity and precision of its ideas, this is one of the greatest works of Marxism-Leninism.²⁶

The embodiment of Khrushchev's ideological improvisations in the party doctrinal scriptures as the "incarnation of creative Marxist-Leninist teaching,"²⁷ was the inevitable corollary to his assumption of undisputed leadership as demonstrated by his replacement of Marshal Bulganin as Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers²⁸ at the midpoint of the twenty months between the defeat of the anti-party group in July, 1957, and the 21st Congress in January-February, 1959. Openly occupying the dual posts at the head of the party-state machine²⁹ within five years after the death of Stalin, Khrushchev had reduced to months the years which had elapsed between Stalin's similar rout of his opposition (left in 1927, right in 1930) and the decision to become the head of the government as well as leader of the party because of the emergency provoked by the impending Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. Yet despite this striking acceleration of the historical parallels between Stalin and Khrushchev in comparable periods of their struggle for supreme power, it may still be premature to draw definitive conclusions on the basis of a "personality cult" which is still in the process of development. Nevertheless, neither the 21st Congress, in particular, nor the Soviet scene, in general, can be properly understood unless the phenomenon of the new charismatic leader is considered from the perspectives of the past as well as fitted into the pattern of the present and the prospect for the future. The destruction of the Stalin image by Khrushchev three years ago was an essential prerequisite for the construction of a new image, independent of the deceased despot, to meet one of the indispensable demands of a modern totalitarian party; the rate at which this "pseudo-charismatic leader"³⁰ has been propagandistically created, moreover, is proof that the cult of the leader was not simply a perversion of Soviet totalitarianism, but is an immanent component of the mechanism of the mono-party

²⁶ Izvestia, January 24, 1959.

²⁷ I. V. Zhegalin, Pravda, February 5, 1959.

²⁸ Pravda, March 28, 1958.

²⁹ Since March, 1956, also Chairman of the CC Bureau for the RSFSR, Pravda, March, 1956.

³⁰ R. Bauer, "The Pseudo-Charismatic Leader in Soviet Society," Problems of Communism, Vol. III, Nos. 3 and 4, 1953.

dictatorship inherited from Stalin by Khrushchev. Only a few months after the 21st Congress an eighteen-page article on the occasion of Khrushchev's sixty-fifth birthday provided a Stalinist expert³¹ on the "cult of the personality," a minor authority in his own right, with an opportunity for formulating the following ideological rationalization of the recurrence of the phenomenon of the new "positive hero" and his relationship to society:

...a person becomes truly great through the possession of the best qualifications "to serve the great social needs of his era which have evolved as the result of general and specific causes." He takes the initiative to fulfill these needs in a way which causes his activity to become the "conscious and free expression" of historically necessary social development.

Thus, giving due attribution to Plekhanov, the present leader of the Socialist Unity Party and head of the DDR state³² has brought current practice into alignment with a theory which will nevertheless be strained to justify such birthday salutations as the following one from a collective which has clearly recognized its subordinate place:

Our dear Nikita Sergeevich, on your 65th birthday we warmly and heartily greet you -- our elder comrade and friend, true disciple of Lenin and outstanding leader to the Communist Party, the Soviet State and the entire working class movement.³³

With this pledge of allegiance on a birthday anniversary never previously celebrated,³⁴ the "cult of the personality" had run full course, from the calm re-examination and reappraisal by silence and omission between 1953 and 1955, through the violent destruction of the prototype at the 20th Congress in February, 1956, and the subsequent attempts at a patchwork reconstruction which must remain incomplete because of the emergence of a new symbol since the 21st Congress. In no other

31 W. Ulbricht, Einheit, April, 1959.

32 After the death of W. Pieck, Ulbricht joined Khrushchev, Novotny (Czechoslovakia), Tsedenbal (Mongolia), as party leaders (First Secretaries) who also hold top state or governmental posts.

33 Open letter from the Presidium, CC, CPSU, to Comrade N. S. Khrushchev, Pravda, April 19, 1959.

34 As a measure of the contrast to the greetings to Khrushchev from all satellite party leaders in April, 1959, only W. Ulbricht and O. Grotewohl sent messages to Mikoyan on his sixty-fifth birthday recently. It was transmitted by ADN, November 24, 1960, but not published in the Soviet press.

respect is the contrast between the last two Congresses greater; no other facet of contemporary Soviet affairs warrants more serious study and has received less.³⁵

The revival of the personality cult, even within these limits, was an accurate reflection of the total breakdown of the fiction of collective leadership which had been extolled so vigorously only three years earlier as the counterpoint in the chorus of euphemistic denunciation of Stalin. Referred to by a mere handful of the leaders³⁶ and mentioned by less than a dozen of the lesser luminaries, the principle of collectivity was thus the second major theme of 1956 to be played in a minor key in 1959. The reasons were, of course, obvious: at the December, 1958, plenum Bulganin had abjectly admitted his complicity in the activities of the anti-party group in 1957,³⁷ thereby increasing the publicly identified members of this faction to four former full Presidium members;³⁸ at the 21st Congress, Pervukhin and Saburov, demoted but not designated as part of the opposition in July, 1957,³⁹ were officially added to the list of those accused not only of obstructing Khrushchev's policies but also of having sought to "change the composition of the leading bodies of the party."⁴⁰ The resignation of Voroshilov as Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet and his "retirement" from the Presidium of the Central Committee in July, 1960,⁴¹ then completed the carefully controlled chain reaction set off by the explosive ouster of Malenkov, Kaganovich, and Molotov.⁴²

Although the simple arithmetic of the complicated intra-party struggle had long been apparent even to the most indifferent Soviet citizen, not until last June did Khrushchev frankly admit -- to foreign Communist leaders in the presence

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- 35 Except for Myron Rush, The Rise of Khrushchev (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1958), there is no detailed study in English of the origins of the Khrushchev cult.
- 36 The only Presidium members to use the words were Beljaev, Kirichenko, Brezhnev, and Sheverniki; the first two were removed from the Presidium in May, 1960 (Pravda, May 5, 1960).
- 37 Although removed from the Presidium in September at the plenary session which convoked the 21st Congress (Pravda, September 7, 1958), Bulganin was first included in the anti-party group by Khrushchev (Pravda, November 15, 1958) one day after the publication of the control figures for the seven-year plan.
- 38 Shepilov, the fourth of the original group, was a candidate member.
- 39 Pravda, July 4, 1957. 40 Ibid.
- 41 Pravda, July 17, 1960; although Voroshilov's waverings in the crisis of June, 1957, had been reported in the Western press (V. Zorza, Manchester Guardian, July 10, 1957), the first hint from Soviet sources came with the omission of Voroshilov's name from the list of Khrushchev's supporters in the new party history (Istoriya KPSS, Moscow, 1959, p. 655).
- 42 Pravda, July 4, 1960.

of Western journalists -- that he had defeated an overwhelming majority in the party Presidium. The version of his words,⁴³ unfortunately available only in indirect discourse as reported from a reception at the Rumanian Party Congress in Bucharest, provides the missing documentation for the crucial event which made possible the subsequent accelerated transition of Khrushchev's controversial policies into the party line approved at the Congress:

Though "two plus two equals four" was mathematically correct, he said, the same certainly could not be applied to politics. In the summer of 1957, when he faced the opposition in the Presidium, Bulganin -- "my friend⁴⁴ of twenty years" warned that there were "seven against your four."

From the details of the case presented against the anti-party group at the Congress some insight into the workings of the Presidium can be conjectured, although it must be remembered that "less is known about its formal organization...than about any comparable group of men in history."⁴⁵ Before examining these charges, however, one should compare the consequences of the failure of an unprincipled coalition to remove Khrushchev as First Secretary in June, 1957, with the results of the successful collaboration of an equally diversified grouping of forces in the Presidium which had prevented a concentration of dual party-state powers in the hands of Malenkov in March 1953.

The chronology of the events immediately after the death of Stalin is well known, but a fully documented explanation of the changes which moved Malenkov out of the secretariat is still not possible. From a well-informed Western Communist source, however, has now come the following testimony which strongly suggests that an informal balance of power rather than a formalized procedure can be the decisive factor in a body which Khrushchev claims "meets regularly, not less than once a week"⁴⁶ to determine policy on the basis of a majority vote:

It was a fact, and this too was revealed and discussed at the January 1955 Central Committee plenary session although not known until his (Malenkov's) resignation, that at Stalin's death Malenkov and Beria had jointly shuffled the main organs of control, even before the Presidium was called together. The Central Committee was

⁴³ The Times, London, June 27, 1960; also New York Times, June 27, 1960.

⁴⁴ See also A. Harriman, op. cit., p. 105, for personal evaluations of Molotov by both Khrushchev and Mikoyan; also S. Bialer, "I Chose Truth," News from Behind the Iron Curtain, October, 1956.

⁴⁵ National Policy Machinery in the Soviet Union, p. 18.

⁴⁶ Interview with Turner Cattledge, New York Times, May 11, 1957.

faced with a "fait accompli," and because of the gravity of the moment no one raised objections...⁴⁷

Thus, as indicated by the official listings of the first post-Stalin Presidium,⁴⁸ the combined action of two Presidium members, one, the senior functionary in the Secretariat and the other responsible for the police apparatus respectively, had temporarily been sufficiently strong to effect such far-reaching organizational changes as the removal of fifteen⁴⁹ of the twenty-five Presidium members plus all ten of the candidates elected by the Central Committee plenary session following the 19th Party Congress only five months previously. This surprise attack, however, could not be further exploited by the minority of two, and only a week later the resignation of Malenkov from the Secretariat⁵⁰ left little doubt that a still unidentifiable Presidium majority had compelled the self-appointed Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers to relinquish the key party post in the Secretariat to Khrushchev. For Malenkov and Beria the almost immediate reassertion of majority rule in the Presidium marked the first steps on the road to their political deaths, sudden and literal in the case of the latter, protracted and figurative for the former. Khrushchev's refusal to bow to arithmetically greater forces in the same body, on the other hand, corresponded to the fundamental change in power relationships between the members of a factionally divided Presidium and their erstwhile colleague who was, as the result of the 20th Congress, firmly in control of the Secretariat and the party apparatus, including the Central Committee. The failure of the effort to oust the First Secretary in June, 1957, thus demonstrated in a dramatic manner that the dynamics of the Soviet party-state dictatorship had again confirmed Trotsky's 1904 prediction of the inevitable trend towards a personal dictatorship in a Leninist party.

It is a curious but undeniable fact that at each successive stage of Khrushchev's rise to one-man rule, the question of overt or covert opposition has always been raised. Various combinations have been suggested as hidden obstacles to the successful ascension by the First Secretary to the peaks of Stalin's power -- absolute control of the mono-party state machine through personal domination of all the levers of power. There

47 G. Boffa, Inside the Khrushchev Era (New York, 1959), p. 27. Boffa was the journalist selected to present Khrushchev's version of the June events to the outside world; see L'Unita (Rome and Milan), July 7 and 8, 1960.

48 From the announcement of the reorganization of the party-state apparatus (Pravda, March 7, 1953), until the announcement of the arrest of Beria (Pravda, July 10, 1953), Malenkov and Beria always headed the official listings, followed by Molotov, Voroshilov, and Khrushchev. The alphabetical listing began at the 11th Trade Union Congress (Pravda, June 7, 1954) and, with some exceptions involving Khrushchev, is still practiced.

49 Three of the full members, L. Melnikov, P. Ponomarenko, and N. Shvernik, were dropped to candidate status (Pravda, October 17, 1952).

50 Pravda, March 21, 1953, reporting on the plenary session of March 14.

has, as a result, arisen an image of Khrushchev constantly under threat and pressure, acting not on his own initiative but only in response to the challenges posed by the ever latent possibility of defeat.

This version has been amply supplemented with details from the speeches at the 21st Congress. In the address of A. I. Kirichenko,⁵¹ for example, the starting point of the struggle with the anti-Khrushchev forces is moved back to the spring of 1953 and traced through the 20th Congress as follows:

Remember how many fierce attacks had to be endured by the Central Committee from the factional anti-party group who opposed the important measures of the Central Committee ...directed towards a further upsurge of the economy... the welfare of the people....I must say, comrades, that the members of the anti-party group, immediately after the death of Stalin, had at almost every meeting of the Presidium attacked every innovation which followed from the teaching of Lenin...and which concerned questions of ... leadership of the country, the organization of the armed forces, and the exercise of foreign policy. But it was particularly after the 20th Congress that they took up arms and began their fierce attack against the general line of the party. The anti-party group cast off its mask, and on June 18, 1957, it took organized action against the course planned by the 20th Congress. At this time, when the members of the group had counted their forces in the Central Committee Presidium, they had concluded that they had, as they imagined, forces strong enough to change the policy of the party and the government.

It is important to note that Kirichenko,⁵² with this general condemnation of the obstructionism of the "splitters," clearly distinguishes between the words of the anti-party group, i.e., the substantive debates on policy which had continued for more than three years, and their deeds, i.e., "attempt to change the policy of the party and government," the euphemism for the ouster of Khrushchev. In a somewhat lighter vein, the aged

51 Ibid., February 1, 1959.

52 An interesting sidelight to Kirichenko's moving the start of the anti-party group's opposition back to the spring of 1953 is provided in his biography in Volume 51 of the B.S.E. (P. 1952, date of publication -- May, 1958), and in the M.S.E., Volume 4, publication date -- April, 1959). These give May, 1953, as the date of his election as candidate member of the Presidium of the CPSU, although he did not become First Secretary of the Ukrainian CC until June, 1953, when he replaced L. Melnikov. Politicheskij Slovar', Moscow (January, 1958) does not mention Kirichenko's election to candidate membership. Since there is no record of any May, 1953, plenum, this intentional chronological blunder seems designed to qualify Kirichenko as an "eye-witness" to all the Presidium debates from the time "immediately after the death of Stalin."

Comintern functionary,⁵³ who reached the pinnacle of the party leadership at an age when most of his contemporaries were retired, also differentiated between the stubbornly negative approach of the defeated and defamed opposition and their desperate and abortive attempt to seize power:

When Comrade Khrushchev put forward new, urgent party matters, these fractionalists...failed to understand them and looked at them like sheep at a new gate. (Laughter in hall.) Reclaim virgin land? What for? Reorganize the management of industry and construction? What if something happens? Grow maize? That is something new! Use personal contacts in foreign policy? That's the limit! And so on. (Animation in hall.) All that was new was alien to these ossified bureaucrats...they were afraid... that they would not be able to maintain their leading positions. Therefore the posing of new tasks provoked their hatred and they entered upon real intrigues in their struggle....I am convinced that there is not a single politically conscious Soviet citizen who feels that the Central Committee has treated these people too severely.

The note on which the quotation from Kuusinen ends was then expressed somewhat more affirmatively by one⁵⁴ of the relatively few members of the ministerial and economic bureaucracy to speak at the Congress, ostensibly called to discuss the "control figures of the seven-year plan":

I think that the CC of our party acted very humanely with such "leaders," removed them from their posts and gave them a chance in new assignments to atone for their guilt to the party and the people.

Only one other delegate⁵⁵ mentioned the surprisingly benign qualities displayed by the party leadership, prefaced, however, with a deep bow of appreciation to the intrepid leader:

Again and again we thank the CC and Nikita Sergeevich personally for having cast aside from the path of the party and the people the despicable and odious group of fractionalists Malenkov, Kaganovich, Molotov, Bulganin, and Shepilov.

53 O. V. Kuusinen, Pravda, February 4, 1959.

54 A. F. Zasjadko, ibid., February 3, 1959.

55 E. P. Kolushchinskij, ibid., February 6, 1959.

The CC was very gracious in leaving the anti-party group as members of the party. Particular humanity was shown by the CC towards Bulganin, Pervukhin, and Saburov, but they did not draw any conclusion from this. It was only when he was forced to do so by the speech of Comrade Spiridonov⁵⁶ that Pervukhin asked to speak at the Congress.⁵⁷ None of us is satisfied with his speech. We do not believe him. He is cunning, evasive; he wants to escape responsibility. Instead of telling the Congress about his heinous role, about his participation in the foul conspiratorial group and instead of wholeheartedly repenting before the Congress and relating how he repeatedly repented before the June Plenum, instead of admitting all the damage which they have done...here from the platform of the Congress, he states that he helped the Plenum of the CC to investigate the base conspirators. That is a lie. The CC investigated the contemptible group...without you; and the Plenum of the CC has also investigated you well enough.

Not since the thirties had a Politburo (Presidium) member been denounced in such terms and permitted to maintain his post, even though deprived of most of the vestiges of prestige and power.⁵⁸ It is, therefore, instructive to note how these harangues by apparatchiki of the Khrushchev machine combine many of the essentials of the operational "style" of the First Secretary: professions of gratitude to the heroic new leader are contrasted to the moral degradation of his opponents; the shining righteousness of his cause adds to the blackness of their conspiratorial machinations; the pressure for future confessions is maintained by the force of example of the present leniency. Still at a midpoint between Lenin who was "careful to salvage the person and dignity"⁵⁹ of his defeated opponents and Stalin who eventually liquidated nearly all of them, Khrushchev -- thus far -- has been able to compel only the "newer" members of the anti-party group -- Bulganin, Pervukhin, and Saburov -- to demean themselves by self-depravation, an intermediary step in the "ritual of liquidation." These humiliating performances, in the context of Khrushchev's denunciation of the physical liquidation of the "smashed" party opposition in his secret speech at the 20th Party Congress are, no doubt, the practical implementation of the major premise of that document, still buried in Khrushchev's "memory hole" -- the implicit promise not to repeat the process of extermination of once loyal party leaders for intra-party opposition.

⁵⁶ Ibid., January 29, 1959.

⁵⁷ This would imply that, even as a candidate member of the Presidium, Pervukhin had not been scheduled to address the Congress. The only candidate not to speak or submit a text (Voroshilov) was D. S. Korotchenko.

⁵⁸ Pervukhin's confession was also labelled "unsatisfactory" by Lt. Gen. S. P. Vasjagin, Chief of the Political Administration of the Soviet Forces in the DDR (Radio Volga, February 15, 1959).

⁵⁹ B. Wolfe, Six Keys to Soviet Power (Boston, 1956), p. 11.

At the 21st Congress Khrushchev was riding on the crest of a victory wave which had carried him from the defeat of the anti-party group in June-July, 1957, to the greatest harvest in Soviet history in 1958,⁶⁰ from the launching of the first sputnik in October, 1957, to the successful breakthrough into cosmic space in January, 1959, from Mao's public proclamation of Soviet leadership in bloc and party affairs at the Moscow conference in November, 1957, to Chou En-lai's reaffirmation⁶¹ of the Chinese decision to postpone indefinitely the ideological challenge to Soviet doctrine posed by the creation of the people's communes. There was therefore neither any immediate motive nor any compelling necessity for Khrushchev to apply indiscriminately the instruments of terror at his command to the original, and apparently still recalcitrant,⁶² members of the anti-party group. The mass of general denunciations⁶³ at the Congress, consistently similar in form although differentiated in content,⁶⁴ served primarily to maintain the pressure of party sanctions as a prelude to future punitive measures. The few new revelations⁶⁵ in the "unsatisfactory" self-criticism of Pervukhin and Saburov were amplified in the harshly phrased rejections of their pleas by J. J. Kuzmin⁶⁶ and others, thereby helping to identify the specific instances and issues on which Pervukhin and Saburov had, at various times since 1954, held different opinions than Khrushchev concerning the development of the power and chemical industries.

⁶⁰ Narodnoe Khozjajstvo SSSR v 1958 godu (Moscow, 1959), p. 352.

⁶¹ Pravda, January 1959.

⁶² In a speech broadcast by Radio Volga, February 15, 1959, Lt. General S. P. Vasjagin referred to an "obnoxious letter" from Shepilov to the Congress "which proved that he has not recognized his errors." There is no evidence that any of the others, Malenkov, Molotov, or Kaganovich, submitted similar documents.

⁶³ Sixty-eight of the eighty-seven texts attacked the anti-party group.

⁶⁴ For detailed analyses of the differences in these attacks, see B. Meissner, Russland unter Chruschtschow (München, 1960), pp. 150-52; W. Leonhard, Kreml ohne Stalin (Köln, 1959), pp. 472-76; D. Burg, "Discussion at the Party Congress," Bulletin (Institute for the Study of the USSR) (Munich, May, 1960), pp. 13-17; also the reply to Burg by G. Denike, Socialisticheskij Vestnik, April, 1959.

⁶⁵ Not previously recorded were accusations that Pervukhin was responsible for the slow growth of electric power (Kuzmin, Pravda, February 5, 1959) and the allegation that Saburov had hindered the development of the oil industry in the Tatar Republic, Ignatyev, ibid., February 4, 1959. Saburov's "statement" (Zajavlenie) the only speech thus described, contains 11 examples of anti-party opposition, including objections to economic aid for the "people's democracies" (Vneocherednoj XXI S'ezd Kommunisticheskoy Partii Sovetskogo Sojuza: Stenograficheskij Otchet, 1959, Vol. 2, pp. 289-92).

⁶⁶ Pravda, February 5, 1959.

But these relatively unimportant substantive increments to the already long bill of particulars against the anti-party group could scarcely have been the reason for the revival of attacks, which had practically ceased until the December, 1958, plenum. Nor did A. I. Mikoyan, using questions raised during his trip to the United States on the eve of the Congress as a pretext to discuss the related problems of continued opposition and the anti-party group,⁶⁷ supply a wholly convincing explanation for the resumption of the flogging of politically dead party wheelhorses:

Our party enjoys complete unity and there is no conflict....We felt it necessary (at the December plenum), however, and we still feel it necessary to speak of the anti-party group at this Congress, with only one purpose -- to prove once again the complete erroneousness and harmfulness of its political position and to stress even more the absolute validity of the struggle of the Leninist Central Committee against this group.

Yet despite the uncertainty concerning the ultimate fate of the opposition, there can be no doubt that the 21st Congress marked a major step towards the re-establishment of the characteristically totalitarian patterns of leadership, modified by the character and personality of Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev. To the Soviet public and, more importantly, to the party, Khrushchev is presented as the personification of reason and persuasion in his relentless pursuit of unchanged goals. At the Congress the more outspoken critics of the anti-party group furnished the First Secretary with the staging and scripts for the desired depiction of a leader who is a model of moderation. Having demonstrated in an amazingly short time that the cult of the personality is not a perversion of the Soviet system, Khrushchev has also proven that the permanent purge is institutionally anchored in the mono-party dictatorship. In the "increasingly totalitarianized" machine that Khrushchev controls "the inner tensions and struggles and their consequences tend to be resolved more and more in the upper layers of the totalitarian power structure and no longer to penetrate the lower strata of society as they did during the thirties."⁶⁸ Khrushchev's humanitarian purge of the post-Stalin Presidium had, by the convocation of the 21st Congress, left only Mikoyan and Voroshilov as political survivors of the collective body which sought to rule the Soviet Union after Stalin's death. The latter, as previously noted, has been permitted to resign in honor, but already the descent into obscurity has begun for some of those, A. Kirichenko and N. Beljaev,⁶⁹ who had moved to the top in Khrushchev's train.

⁶⁷ Ibid., February 1, 1959.

⁶⁸ Z. Brzezinski, Permanent Purge (Cambridge, 1956), p. 172.

⁶⁹ Pravda, May 5, 1960.

Thus the "purge" of the loyal protégés whose performances apparently did not meet Khrushchev's standards⁷⁰ falls readily into the pattern of punishment meted out to the disloyal Shepilov. To the younger and middle generation of Khrushchev's subordinates remaining in the Presidium, the fates of the recently fallen will serve as a warning of the penalties of dissent no less than the lot of the "old Stalinists" will still any oppositional tendencies in the minds of the lesser contemporaries (Shvernik and Kuusinen) who replaced them. The call for a new generation to move up into leading posts, proclaimed first by Khrushchev and seconded by his cadre chiefs, A. Aristov⁷¹ and the deposed Kirichenko, indicates clearly that the traditional course of the quiet phase of the "permanent purge" is being extended from the summit down to the lower levels. It is therefore appropriate that those who have previously sought Khrushchev's opposition at the top, in the persons of Molotov and the old Stalinists, in the specter of Suslov and the remaining Stalinists, in the guise of Zhukov and the Army, in the name of Mao and the defeated Stalinists, have now directed their search to the "hard core" Stalinists among the apparatchiki. As Khrushchev continues to bring new men into the machine he has rebuilt, he could ask for no better rationalization for the action which will inevitably demand its toll of victims from the top to the bottom.

70 See Khrushchev's attack on Beljaev at the December plenum, Pravda, December 23, 1959.

71 Now also removed to the less onerous position of Ambassador in Warsaw -- r.r.g.