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FAILURE OF KHRUSHCHEV'S REORGANIZATION  
OF STATE CONTROL MINISTRY

The state control apparatus, which has now been reorganized for the second time in four years (Pravda, August 29, 1957 and July 23, 1961), seems to present Khrushchev with a virtually insoluble problem. As long ago as the 20th Party Congress he was complaining that "it carries out Lenin's injunctions poorly. And it raises no important questions for improving the state apparatus."<sup>1</sup> He went on to describe it as a "primitive" system, and to say it must be radically reorganized.

First Khrushchev put V. M. Molotov, who was already under a cloud, in charge of it (November 1956) and then in August 1957, after Molotov's downfall in the purge of the anti-party group, he changed its name to "Commission of Soviet Control." At the end of 1957 G. V. Yenyutin, who still heads the organization, was appointed to lead it.<sup>2</sup>

Its major function is to operate as an economic police force, supervising the work of all the other bodies under the Council of Ministers.<sup>3</sup> Since Bulganin's removal, the latter body has of course been under the chairmanship of Khrushchev himself, and therefore Yenyutin's task is to report directly to Khrushchev.

Four years ago the theory seems to have been that the Ministry of State Control, which was said to be "isolated from life" and "amateurish,"<sup>4</sup> not only would function better if called a "Soviet Control Commission" but also would advertise the gradual movement towards "withering away of the state" and greater reliance on public organizations, mostly of unpaid helpers, which Khrushchev occasionally recalls as his long-term goal. But secondly there was also a change of method, in that whereas prior to 1957 control had been based on the departmental principle, subsequently it was reorganized at the factories themselves. The result was that by 1959 V. I. Zakurdayev, Deputy Chairman of the Soviet Control Commission of the RSFSR, was

<sup>1</sup> Pravda, 15 February 1956, see Background Information, 31 July 1958.

<sup>2</sup> Izvestia, 18 December 1957.

<sup>3</sup> See J. S. Berliner, "Factory and Manager in the USSR," Harvard University Press, 1957, pp. 289-291.

<sup>4</sup> Sovetskaya Rossiya, 18 August 1959.

able to claim that in the RSFSR alone there were 37,000 volunteer "controllers," suggesting that for the USSR as a whole there must be approximately 70,000 of these unpaid economic policemen at work.

Now Khrushchev, through the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet published three days ago, has turned the clock almost the whole way back by rechristening the organization the Commission of State Control of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, a union-republican body. Hence although the former Ministry has not (yet) been reestablished, the pretense of "public" or "Soviet" control has been repudiated, and once again, as in the field of justice,<sup>5</sup> the tendency to revert to stricter discipline, even if this means an extension of the powers of the state, is clearly detectable.

For Khrushchev to have to reverse one of his own reorganizations, the necessity must be urgent indeed.

A clue to the nature of the urgency may perhaps be found in the terms of reference for the new body laid down in the latest decree, which instructs it to combat "statistical padding (pripiski), deception and humbug." These ominous terms were missing from the 1957 decree, and have only come into repeated general use, with a three-year imprisonment tag attached to them, (under the decree of May 24th) during 1961.

The maximum penalty which the Ministry of State Control in Molotov's day and the Commission of Soviet Control in the post-Molotov era were empowered to impose was a fine of three months salary (see Pravda, May 19, 1958). The difference in the possible penalties now and then is a good measure both of the deterioration in the economic morality of the new class and of Khrushchev's increasing perplexity as to how best to repress it.

r. r. g.

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<sup>5</sup> E.g., the extension of the death penalty and powers of the KGB to cover economic crimes such as currency speculation -- see Background Information, 22 July 1961.