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TEXT OF APPEAL AGAINST STALIN'S REHABILITATION

What appears to be the full text of the signed appeal to the C.C., C.P.S.U., against any rehabilitation of Stalin at the 23rd Congress has now been published by Posey, (16 September 1966). This appeal was one of three highly unusual documents which were circulated in Moscow by a number of extremely prominent communists just before the Congress was held. The other two petitions were both strong protests against the sentences on Sinyavsky and Daniel, signed by a total of at least forty influential citizens.

Below is a translation of the text of the appeal as published in the British weekly, Statist (23 September 1966):

Respected Leonid Ilich!

Tendencies have appeared lately in some public speeches and articles in our press which are in fact directed at a partial or indirect rehabilitation of Stalin. We do not know how firmly these tendencies are grounded, but they manifest themselves ever more frequently as the XXIII Party Congress draws nearer. However, even if it is only a matter of a partial revision of the decisions of the XX and XXII Party Congresses, this causes deep apprehension. We think it our duty to inform you about our opinion in this matter.

Until now we have not been aware of a single fact, of a single argument which would permit us to think that a condemnation of the personality cult was wrong in any of its respects. On the contrary, it is difficult to doubt that a large part of striking, of truly horrifying facts about Stalin's crimes has not yet been made public. These facts would confirm the absolute correctness of the decisions of both Party Congresses.

There is something else as well. We believe that any attempt to whitewash Stalin conceals a danger of serious dissensions within Soviet society. Stalin is responsible not only for the destruction of countless innocent people, for our unpreparedness for the war, for a departure from the Leninist norms of party and state life. His crimes and unjust deeds also distorted the idea of Communism to such an extent that our people will never forgive him for this. Our people will not understand and will not accept even a partial departure from the decisions on the personality cult. No one will be able to obliterate these decisions from its consciousness and memory. Any attempt to do so will lead only to confusion and disarray in the broadest circles. We are convinced, for instance, that this would cause great unrest among the intelligentsia and would seriously complicate the moods of our youth. Like the whole of the Soviet public we are worried about the young people. No explanations or articles will make people believe in Stalin again; on the contrary, they will simply create disorder and anger. To undertake anything like this is dangerous, taking into account the complex economic and political situation of our country.

We also see another danger as equally serious. The question of Stalin's rehabilitation concerns not only home, but also international politics. Any step towards his rehabilitation would undoubtedly pose a threat of a new split in the ranks of the world Communist movement, this time between ourselves and the Communists of the West. They would assess this step as a surrender to the Chinese, to which they would never agree. This is a factor of exceptional importance which we cannot write off. In the time when we are threatened, on the one hand, by ever more active American imperialists and West German revanchists and, on the other, by the leaders of the Communist Party of China, it would be extremely unwise to risk a rift or even complications with the fraternal parties in the West.

So as not to claim your attention for too long we limit ourselves to mentioning only the most substantial arguments against any rehabilitation of Stalin, first and foremost concerning the danger of the two-way split. We do not even speak about the great complications which any departure from the decisions of the XX Party Congress would bring upon the international contacts of our cultural community--among other things upon its struggle for peace and international cooperation. All that has been achieved so far would be endangered.

We could not but write you about our thoughts. It is quite clear that a decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on this question cannot be regarded as a routine one, taken in the general course of work. In either case it will have historic importance for the destinies of our country. We hope that this will be taken into account.

The Statist did not publish the list of signatories to the appeal, but their names as given by Posev are as follows:

Academician A.A. Artsimovich, Lenin and state prize-winner.
O.N. Yefremov, Chief Producer, Sovremennik Theatre.
Academician P.L. Kapitsa, Hero of Socialist Labor, state prize-winner.
V.P. Katayev, member of the Union of Writers, state prize-winner.
P.D. Korin, People's Artist USSR, Lenin prize-winner.
Academician M.A. Leontovich, Lenin prize-winner.
Academician I.M. Maisky.
V.P. Nekrasov, member of the Union of Writers, state prize-winner.
V.M. Nemensky, member of the Union of Artists, state prize-winner.
K.G. Paustovsky, member of the Union of Writers.
Yu. I. Pimenov, People's Artist RSFSR, state prize-winner.
M.M. Plisetskaya, People's Artist USSR, Lenin prize-winner.
A.A. Popov, People's Artist USSR, state prize-winner.
M.M. Romm, People's Artist USSR, state prize-winner.
S.N. Rostovsky (Ernst Genry), member of the Union of Writers, Vorovsky prize-winner.
Academician S.D. Skazkin.
Academician A.D. Sakharov, threefold Hero of Socialist Labor, winner of both Lenin and state prizes.
B.A. Slutsky, member of the Union of Writers.
I.M. Smoktunovsky, member of the Union of Film Workers, Lenin prize-winner.
Academician I. Ye. Tamm, Hero of Socialist Labor, winner of Lenin and state prizes, Nobel prize-winner.
V.F. Tendryakov, member of the Union of Writers.
G.A. Tovstogonov, People's Artist USSR, winner of Lenin and state prizes.
M.M. Khutsiev, Honored Artist.
S.A. Chuykov, People's Artist USSR, state prize-winner.
K.I. Chukovsky, member of Union of Writers, Lenin prize-winner.

These names have been listed here in full, because they give an excellent impression of the quality and scope of the opposition to Stalin's rehabilitation. Moreover since the signatories were

successful in achieving their main purpose (not a word was said concerning Stalin at the 23rd Congress), they clearly form the core of a liberal faction in Soviet intellectual life which is of continuing long-term importance as a potential domestic pressure group. Although the 25 names above are the only ones listed in Posev, it is widely believed in the West that a considerable number of other prominent personalities, such as Ilya Ehrenburg and A. Surkov, later supported the appeal.

Five of the 25 signatories are internationally known for their work in nuclear physics -- Artsimovich, Kapitsa, Leontovich, Sakharov and Tamm -- as well as in other branches of science.

Among the writers (Katayev, Nekrasov, Paustovsky, Slutsky, Tendryakov and Chukovsky), the first two are both holders of the Stalin Prize, while Chukovsky is a Lenin prize-winner. Paustovsky is one of the most respected Soviet playwrights, and is a member of the Board of the USSR Union of Writers. Slutsky is the liberal poet whose strongly anti-Stalinist poems, published in November 1962, were a major part of the revisionist movement begun by Solzhenitsyn's book "One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich." Tendryakov is an author who writes in a grimly realistic style, to such an extent that the publication of one of his plays ("White Flag") in Molodaya Gvardiya caused the dismissal of the editor-in-chief three years ago.

Korin is a widely-known portrait-painter, who won the Stalin prize in 1952 and the Lenin prize eleven years later. Fimenov, another painter, twice won the Stalin prize, and his works are on display in the Tretyakov Gallery. Chuykov also has been awarded two Stalin prizes for his paintings, and he is a member of the Board of the Union of Artists.

Plisetskaya has been a Prima Ballerina at the Bolshoi Theatre for almost twenty years and is, second only to Ulanova, the USSR's most famous living dancer. Romm is a film director whose successes have won him no fewer than five Stalin prizes and who is now a Presidium member of the Union of Film Workers.

Finally mention must be made of Maysky, who took part in the 1905 Revolution, and who from 1943 to 1946 was a Deputy People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs. The 25 signatories therefore cover a surprisingly broad cross-section of the Soviet establishment. The nucleus of the liberal faction in the CPSU is now definitely identifiable, due to the publication by Posev of what is surely a historic document.