

16 November 1957

Background Information (USSR)

REAPPEARANCE OF SHATALIN

The personnel changes in the Secretariat of the Central Committee between the death of Stalin (3 March 1953) and the plenary session of 14 March 1953 (Pravda, 21 March 1953) remain the most important unclarified problems in Khrushchev's drive to personal domination of the Party apparatus. Although full details are available concerning the reduction of the Presidium of the CC, the exact reorganization of the Secretariat announced simultaneously cannot yet be determined. As the following table shows, the immediate assignments of several of the members of the Secretariat elected at the XIX Party Congress were not given in the first statement of Party and governmental reorganization (Pravda, 7 March 1953):

J. V. Stalin	-- Died 5 March 1953.
A. B. Aristov	-- <u>Not mentioned.</u>
L. I. Brezhnev	-- Transfer to head of Political Department, Navy Ministry.
N. G. Ignatov	-- Transfer to executive work in Council of Ministers.
G. M. Malenkov	-- <u>Not mentioned.</u>
N. A. Mikhailov	-- Replaced N. S. Khrushchev as First Secretary, Moscow Oblast.
N. M. Pegov	-- Secretary Presidium Supreme Soviet.
P. K. Ponomarenko	-- Transferred to executive work in Council of Ministers.
M. A. Suslov	-- <u>Not mentioned.</u>
N. S. Khrushchey	-- "To concentrate on work in the Central Committee."

Since it was also announced at this time that S. D. Ignatyev, P. N. Pospelov, and N. N. Shatalin were elected to the Secretariat, there was a degree of uncertainty regarding the positions of the three not mentioned, Malenkov, Suslov and Aristov. A week later another plenary session of the CC

"...grant^{ed} the request of Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, G. M. Malenkov, to be released from the duties of Secretary of the Party Central Committee."

The new Secretariat then elected consisted of the following (Pravda, 21 March 1953):

N. S. Khrushchev
M. A. Suslov
P. N. Pospelov
N. N. Shatalin
S. D. Ignatyev

Aristov, the only member of the XIX Party Congress Secretariat still unaccounted for, was assigned to the Far East as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Khabarovsk Territory Soviet before the end of the month.

On the basis of their previous records in the Party and propaganda apparatus, Suslov and Shatalin were generally considered to represent the continuation of Malenkov's influence in the Secretariat; in retrospect, Ignatyev and Pospelov, can be regarded as Khrushchev's personal candidates. Exactly a month later, still another plenary session "released Comrade S. D. Ignatev from the duties of a Secretary of the CPSU" (Pravda, 7 April 1953), three days after the MVD, under Beria, had issued a communique charging the former MGB with having fabricated the "Doctors' Plot" and one day after Pravda (6 April 1953) had accused former

Minister of State Security Ignatyev of "political blindness." The inclusion in the post-Stalin Secretariat of the Party functionary, who was assigned by Stalin to extract the confessions from the doctors (see Khrushchev's secret speech), is the most striking example of the interrelationship between the Secretariat and the Police apparatus since Yeshov. The fact that Ignatyev has maintained his standing in the Party apparatus up to the present (elected First Secretary Bashkir CC, February 1954; full member CC CPSU, February 1956; First Secretary Tatar Republic CC, July 1957) is certainly evidence that he still enjoys the support of Khrushchev and leaves little doubt as to Khrushchev's own involvement in the Doctors' Plot.

The next important change in the Secretariat occurred soon after the resignation of Malenkov in February 1955. Without any official announcement N. N. Shatalin was dropped. This was first revealed when he was identified as First Secretary of the Maritime Province in March 1955. Thus, the association with Malenkov would seem to have been confirmed, and his replacement in February 1956 by D. T. Shtykov, a former NKVD official, was in line with Khrushchev's "rehabilitation" of Zhdanov's followers in his pre-XX Congress reshuffle of the Party apparatus. Although the ouster of Shatalin reduced the Secretariat to only three members--Khrushchev, Suslov and Pospelov--it was not until five months later, at the July 1955 plenum, that Khrushchev was able to bring this important body to full strength by the return of A. B. Aristov and the election of N. I. Belayev and D. T. Shepilov. At the same time Suslov (and Kirichenko) was elected a full member of the Presidium, sharing with Khrushchev the rare privilege of holding posts in both the Secretariat and Presidium. By this time, at least, Suslov's former allegiance to Malenkov had obviously ended; his promotion at the plenum which condemned Molotov's views on Tito is circumstantial evidence that he could scarcely be identified as a spokesman of the "Stalinist" group. The XX Party Congress demonstrated Khrushchev's personal domination of the Secretariat had been completed by the inclusion of L. Brezhnev and Ye. Furtseva, both of whom joined Shepilov as candidate members of the Presidium. Shatalin was not reelected to the Central Committee.

Not until 8 October 1957 was Shatalin again mentioned in the Soviet press. Without any reference to his present assignment he was listed in Sovetsky Flot as a signatory to the obituary notice for Rear Admiral S. P. Yeraizer, who had once worked in the People's Commissariat for State Control. Since the second name on the listing was V. G. Zhavarankov, formerly Minister, and then under Molotov Deputy Minister of State Control, and since three others (A. T. Chulit, A. Ya. Tsytko, A. S. Pavlev) were known to be occupying posts in the Ministry until its conversion into a Commission, as well as the possible identification of the Secretary of the Party Organization of the Ministry of State Control (Semenikhin), it is reasonable to assume that N. N. Shatalin has been reassigned to the central apparatus of the former Ministry of State Control. Thus, shortly after Khrushchev had described G. M. Malenkov as a "tool of Beria" thereby accusing him of coresponsibility for the crimes of the final period of Stalin's life,* one of Malenkov's two closest associates in the cadre section of the CC since 1938 (see "Mediator," Boris Meissner, Ost-Probleme, 1950, p. 920) may have returned to Moscow; the fate of the other, V. M. Andrianov, has remained a total mystery since November 1953 when Khrushchev personally participated in the plenary session which removed him as First Secretary of the Leningrad Oblast Committee. Should the First Secretary find it necessary to culminate his campaign against Malenkov (and his group) with a "trial," Shatalin could be a most important witness. For the First Secretary of the Secretariat which now composes exactly 50 percent of the Presidium (seven out of fourteen) the necessary majority for such a decision poses no problem; only the unexpected results of his personal attack on Stalin last year may still be detaining him from attempting once again to resolve the problem of responsibility of the 1936-38 purges.

*Pravda, 18 August 1957.