

## DOCUMENT No. 1

V. G. Belinsky

### LETTER TO NIKOLAI GOGOL' (1847)

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*Vissarion Belinsky (1811-48) was the chief personality among the philosophical Left in the Russia of the 1830s and 1840s. His work chiefly took the form of literary criticism, which became a major vehicle for the discussion of social and even political problems in Russia – although those who were critical of the regime were nonetheless compelled to tread carefully. Belinsky emerged as one of the most important figures in these discussions. As one historian has written, "It is no exaggeration to say that Belinsky's dramatic intellectual evolution influenced the outlook of an entire generation."<sup>1</sup> Belinsky was the son of a country doctor and was compelled to support himself entirely by his own work.*

*The following letter was written in response to the writer Nikolai Gogol'. With the publication of The Inspector General (1836) and Dead Souls (1842), Gogol' was acclaimed by the regime's critics as a truthful painter of Russian life and a forceful critic of the evils of serfdom and bureaucratic corruption. But Gogol's actual convictions turned out to be rather different, as was revealed in Gogol's Selected Passages from a Correspondence with Friends (1847). Here Gogol' declared that Russia's ills were a consequence not of the political or social system but rather the moral failings of individuals. Gogol' advocated a kind of national regeneration through complete submission to the Church and the paternal guidance of the autocrat. Intellectuals of the 1840s saw this as an apology for what they saw as the tyranny of Nicholas I (1825-55). Belinsky's was the most outraged and famous reaction to Gogol's Selected Passages. His letter stands, to quote another historian, as "a landmark in Russian intellectual history," that "explicitly stated the Westernizing intelligentsia's belief in the interconnection of material, political, and spiritual progress in the tradition of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment."<sup>2</sup>*

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[Y]our profound knowledge of Russia is only that of an artist, but not of a thinker, whose role you have so ineffectually tried to play in your fantastic book. Not that you are not a thinker, but that you have been accustomed for so many years to look at Russia from your *beautiful far-away*; and who does not know that there is nothing easier than seeing things from a distance the way we want to see them; for in that *beautiful far-away* you live a life that is entirely alien to it; you live in and within yourself or within a circle of the same mentality as your own that is powerless to resist your influence on it. Therefore you failed to realize that Russia sees her salvation not in mysticism or asceticism or pietism, but in the successes of civilization, enlightenment, and humanity. What she needs is not sermons (she has heard enough of them!) or prayers (she has repeated them too often!), but the awakening in the people of a sense of their

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<sup>1</sup> Andrzej Walicki, A History of Russian Thought From the Enlightenment to Marxism (Sanford, 1979), p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> Marc Raeff, Russian Intellectual History: An Anthology (New York, 1966), p. 252.

human dignity lost for so many centuries amid dirt and refuse; she needs rights and laws conforming not to the preaching of the church but to common sense and justice, and their strictest possible observance. Instead of which she presents the dire spectacle of a country where men traffic in men, without even having the excuse so insidiously exploited by the American plantation owners who claim that the Negro is not a man; a country where people call themselves not by names but by nicknames such as Vanka, Vaska, Steshka, Palashka; a country where there are not only no guarantees for individuality, honor and property, but even no police order, and where there is nothing but vast corporations of official thieves and robbers of various descriptions. The most vital national problems in Russia today are the abolition of serfdom and corporal punishment and the strictest possible observance of at least those laws that already exist. This is even realized by the government itself (which is well aware of how the landowners treat their peasants and how many of the former are annually done away with by the latter), as is proved by its timid and abortive half-measures for the relief of the white Negroes and the comical substitution of the single-lash knout by a cat-o-three tails.

Such are the problems that prey on the mind of Russia in her apathetic slumber! And at such a time a great writer, whose astonishingly artistic and deeply truthful works have so powerfully contributed toward Russia's awareness of herself, enabling her as they did to take a look at herself as though in a mirror – publishes a book in which he teaches the barbarian landowner to make still greater profits out of the peasants and to abuse them still more in the name of Christ and Church.... And would you expect me not to become indignant?... Why, if you had made an attempt on my life I could not have hated you more than I do for these disgraceful lines.... And after this, you expect people to believe the sincerity of your book's intent! No! Had you really been inspired by the truth of Christ and not by the teaching of the devil you would certainly have written something entirely different in your new book. You would have told the landowner that since his peasants are his brethren in Christ, and since a brother cannot be a slave to his brother, he should either give them their freedom or, at least, allow them to enjoy the fruits of their own labor to their greatest possible benefit, realizing, as he does, in the depths of his own conscience, the false relationship in which he stands toward them.

And the expression "*Oh, you unwashed snout, you!*" From what Nozdrev and Sobakevich did you overhear it, in order to present it to the world as a great discovery for the edification and benefit of the peasants, whose only reason for not washing is that they have let themselves be persuaded by their masters that they are not human beings? And your conception of the national Russian system of trial and punishment, whose ideal you have found in the foolish saying that both the guilty and innocent should be flogged alike? That, indeed, is often the case with us, though more often than not it is the man who is in the right who takes the punishment, unless he can ransom himself, and for such occasions another proverb says: *guiltlessly guilty!* And such a book is supposed to have been the result of an arduous inner process, a lofty spiritual enlightenment! Impossible! Either you are ill – and you must hasten to take a cure, or... I am afraid to put my thought into words! ...

Proponent of the knout, apostle of ignorance, champion of obscurantism and Stygian darkness, panegyrist of Tartar morals – what are you about! Look beneath your feet – you are standing on the brink of an abyss!... That you base such teaching on the Orthodox Church I can understand: it has always served as the prop of the knout and the servant of despotism; but why have you

mixed Christ up in it? What have you found in common between Him and any church, least of all the Orthodox Church? He was the first to bring to people the teaching of freedom, equality, and brotherhood and to set the seal of truth to that teaching by martyrdom. And *this* teaching was men's *salvation* only until it became organized in the Church and took the principle of Orthodoxy for its foundation. The Church, on the other hand, was a hierarchy, consequently a champion of inequality, a flatterer of authority, an enemy and persecutor of brotherhood among men – and so it has remained to this day. But the meaning of Christ's message has been revealed by the philosophical movement of the preceding century. And that is why a man like Voltaire who stamped out the fires of fanaticism and ignorance in Europe by ridicule, is, of course, more the son of Christ, flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, than all your priests, bishops, metropolitans, and patriarchs – Eastern or Western. Do you really mean to say you do not know that! Now it is not even a novelty to a schoolboy... Hence, can it be that you, the author of *The Inspector General* and *Dead Souls*, have in all sincerity, from the bottom of your heart, sung a hymn to the nefarious Russian clergy whom you rank immeasurably higher than the Catholic clergy? Let us assume that you do not know that the latter had once been something, while the former had never been anything but a servant and slave of the secular powers; but do you really mean to say you do not know that our clergy is held in universal contempt by Russian society and the Russian people? About whom do the Russian people tell dirty stories? Of the priest, the priest's wife, the priest's daughter, and the priest's farm hand. Does not the priest in Russia represent the embodiment of gluttony, avarice, servility, and shamelessness for all Russians? Do you mean to say that you do not know all this? Strange! According to you the Russian people is the most religious in the world. That is a lie! The basis of religiousness is pietism, reverence, fear of God. Whereas the Russian man utters the name of the Lord while scratching himself somewhere. He says of the icon: *If it works, pray to it; if it doesn't, it's good for covering pots.*

Take a closer look and you will see that it is by nature a profoundly atheistic people. It still retains a good deal of superstition, but not a trace of religiousness. Superstition passes with the advances of civilization, but religiousness often keeps company with them too; we have a living example of this in France, where even today there are many sincere Catholics among enlightened and educated men, and where many people who have rejected Christianity still cling stubbornly to some sort of god. The Russian people is different; mystic exaltation is not in its nature; it has too much common sense, a too lucid and positive mind, and therein, perhaps, lies the vastness of its historic destinies in the future. Religiousness has not even taken root among the clergy in it, since a few isolated and exceptional personalities distinguished for such cold ascetic contemplation prove nothing. But the majority of our clergy has always been distinguished for their fat bellies, scholastic pedantry, and savage ignorance. It is a shame to accuse it of religious intolerance and fanaticism; instead it could be praised for exemplary indifference in matters of faith. Religiosity among us appeared only in the schismatic sects who formed such a contrast in spirit to the mass of the people and who were numerically so insignificant in comparison with it.

I shall not dwell on your panegyric to the love affair existing between the Russian people and its lords and masters. I shall say point-blank that panegyric has met sympathy nowhere and has lowered you even in the eyes of people who in other respects are very close to you in their views. As far as I am concerned, I leave it to your conscience to admire the divine beauty of the autocracy (it is both safe and profitable), but continue to admire it judiciously from your

*beautiful far-away*: at close quarters it is not so attractive, and not so safe.... I would remark but this: when a European, especially a Catholic, is seized with religious ardor he becomes a denouncer of iniquitous authority, similar to the Hebrew prophets who denounced the iniquities of the great ones of the earth. We do quite the contrary: no sooner is a person (even a reputable person) afflicted with the malady that is known to psychiatrists as *religiosa mania* than he begins to burn more incense to the earthly god than to the heavenly one, and so overshoots the mark in doing so that the former would fain reward him for his slavish zeal did he not perceive that he would thereby be compromising himself in society's eyes.... What a rogue our fellow the Russian is!

Another thing I remember you saying in your book, claiming it to be a great and incontrovertible truth, is that literacy is not merely useless but positively harmful to the common people. What can I say to this? May your Byzantine God forgive you that Byzantine thought, unless, in committing it to paper, you knew not what you did....

As far as I can see, you do not properly understand the Russian public. Its character is determined by the condition of Russian society in which fresh forces are seething and struggling for expression; but weighed down by heavy oppression, and finding no outlet, they induce merely dejection, weariness, and apathy. Only literature, despite the Tartar censorship, shows signs of life and progressive movement. That is why the title of writer is held in such esteem among us; that is why literary success is easy among us even for a writer of little talent. The title of poet and writer has long since eclipsed the tinsel of epaulets and gaudy uniforms. And that especially explains why every so-called liberal tendency, however poor in talent, is rewarded by universal notice, and why the popularity of great talents that sincerely or insincerely give themselves to the service of orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationality declines so quickly. A striking example is Pushkin who had merely to write two of three verses in a loyal strain and don the livery of a Gentleman of the Bedchamber to forfeit the people's love immediately....

Salzbrunn, July 15, 1847.

**DOCUMENT No. 2**

Ivan Vasil'evich Kireevskii

**ON THE NATURE OF EUROPEAN CULTURE AND ITS RELATION TO THE CULTURE OF RUSSIA (1852)**

*If some Russian intellectuals were inclined to embrace European civilization, others were more skeptical about what the West had to offer. Such views were most readily evident among the so-called Slavophiles, who accepted a basic opposition between Russia and the West and – perhaps paradoxically – used ideas from German philosophy to posit that a people or culture develops organically, manifesting spiritual distinctive traits in its social life. Slavophiles stressed the totality of a social or cultural entity and regarded with worry everything that would erode its integrity – most notably, logical analysis, individual particularism, and atomization of society.*

*I. V. Kireevskii was among the leading figures in the early generation of the Slavophiles. Having received a Western education and having traveled in Western Europe, he experienced a religious crisis of sorts in the late 1830s and emerged from the experience a devout son of the Russian Orthodox Church. His writings represent a critique of contemporary Russia and his goal was to bring about a thorough transformation of his country's social and spiritual condition. Interestingly, the regime regarded Kireevskii with some suspicion, since "Kireevskii glorified those elements of Russia's past which were least compatible with the modernization of the Russia and the institutional framework inherited from Peter the Great."<sup>3</sup> The essay below originally appeared in Moskovskii Sbornik (Moscow Collection) in 1852.*

Certainly few questions nowadays are more important than the question of the relation of Russian to Western culture. How we pose and resolve it in our minds may determine not only the dominant trend in our literature, but the entire orientation of our intellectual activity, the meaning of our private lives and the nature of our social relationships. And yet only a short time ago this question could not have been posed or, what amounts to the same thing, could have been resolved so readily that there was no point in posing it. The consensus of opinion was that the difference between the European and Russian culture was merely a difference in degree and not in kind, their spirit and basic principles being the same. We (it was said then) used to be barbarians; our civilization began only when we started to imitate Europe, which had immeasurably outdistanced us in intellectual development. In Europe, learning was in full flower before we had any, and it has come to fruition, whereas ours is still in the budding stage. Hence the Europeans are our teachers and we their students; still, it was usually added with complacency, we are clever students and learn so quickly that we shall probably outstrip our masters...

<sup>3</sup> Marc Raeff, Russian Intellectual History: An Anthology (New York, 1966), p. 174-75.

[S]ome thirty years ago you would hardly have found a thinking man who conceived of the possibility of any culture other than that borrowed from Western Europe. Since then, however, a change has taken place both in Western Europe and in European-Russian culture. Since then, however, a change has taken place both in Western European culture and in European-Russian culture.

In this second half of the nineteenth century, European culture has attained such a fullness of development that its special significance has become consummately clear to any thoughtful observer. Yet this comprehensive development, this manifest achievement, has brought about an almost universal feeling of dissatisfaction and disappointment. Western culture has proved unsatisfying not because learning has lost its vitality in the West; on the contrary, it appears to flourish more richly than ever before. Again, the reason is not that there are some forms of public life which impede human relationships or prevent them from proceeding in the prevailing direction; on the contrary, a struggle against an external obstacle would only strengthen the dominant trend, and it would seem that never before have men found it easier to arrange their public lives to meet their intellectual requirements. No, men whose mental lives are not circumscribed by passing interests experience a feeling of dissatisfaction and disconsolate emptiness simply because the very triumph of the European mind has revealed the narrowness of its basic aspirations; because, despite the great abundance and magnitude of individual discoveries and advances in learning, what all that knowledge adds up to has only been of negative value for man's inner spirit; because, despite all the brilliance, the comforts and amenities of modern existence, life itself has been drained of its essential meaning; not being bolstered by a strong generally held conviction, it can neither be made fair by lofty ideals nor warmed by deep compassion. Cold analysis, practiced over many centuries, has destroyed the very foundations of European culture, so that the principles in which that culture was rooted from which it has grown, have become irrelevant, even alien to it, and in contradiction to its end result. All that is left to it is this very analysis which has severed it from its roots, this self-propelling scalpel of reason, this abstract syllogism which recognizes only itself and individual experience, this autonomous intelligence, or – to put it more precisely – this logical faculty of the mind divorced from all man's other faculties or cognition, save the coarsest and most primitive perceptions of the sense on which it erects its ethereal dialectical edifices.

It should be remembered, however, that the feeling of dissatisfaction and despondency now experienced by Western man did not set in at once when the triumph of his destructive rationality became manifest. Having abandoned his age-old convictions, he placed boundless trust in the omnipotence of his abstract reasoning precisely because the convictions it had destroyed had been so great, so strong, so comprehensive. In the first moments of victory his joy was not only unmingled with regret; on the contrary, intoxicated with self-confidence, he reached a state of poetic exaltation. He believed that by using his own abstract reason he could forthwith build new and rational life for himself and transform the earth into a veritable paradise. He was not deterred by his dreadful, bloody experiences; his gross failures did not dash his hopes; individual suffering only set a martyr's crown on his head, leaving him still bedazzled; an eternity of unsuccessful attempts might, it would seem, have tired him but not shattered his self-confidence had not that same abstract reason he had relied on reached a point in its development at which it became aware of its own inadequacies and limitations....

Hence it may be said that it is not that Western thinkers have become convinced of the one-sidedness of logical reason, but that Europe's logical reason itself, having reached the highest possible level of its development, has become aware of its limitations and, having grasped the laws of its own operation, has discovered that the full scope of its self-propelling force does not extend beyond the negative aspect of human knowledge; that its theoretical linkage of derived concepts requires premises taken from other sources of knowledge; that the higher truths, the living insights, the basic convictions of the mind all lie outside the abstract circle of its dialectics and, although they do not contradict its laws, are nevertheless not derived from them and are in fact beyond its reach if its activity has been forcibly separated from that of the other faculties of the human spirit....

This state of the European mentality had the opposite effect in Russia from that which it has more recently had in the West. Only a few, and then but passingly, were beguiled by the superficial glitter of these extravagant systems, deluded by that artificial comeliness which was rotten at the core; most of the men who had followed the developments of Western thought became aware of the inadequacies of Western civilization and turned their attention to those cultural principles, underestimated by the West, which were once peculiar to Russia and traces of which were still to be found in it despite the influence of Europe.

The result was active historical research, comparison, publications. In this we owe a great deal to our government, which discovered so many valuable historical documents gathering dust in forgotten archives and remote monasteries and published them for all to read. Perhaps for the first time in 150 years [i.e., since before Peter the Great], Russian scholars took an objective, searching look at themselves and their own country and, in studying elements of intellectual life that were new to them, were struck by a strange phenomenon: they saw with amazement that they had been mistaken about nearly everything to do with Russia, its history, its people, its faith, the roots of its culture, and the imprints ° still visible, still warm – of that culture on the Russian past and on the mind and character of the Russian people; they had been mistaken not because anyone had sought to deceive them, but because their strong bias toward Western civilization and their boundless prejudice against Russian barbarism had made it impossible for them to understand Russia. In the past, being swayed by the same prejudices, they may themselves have helped to spread the delusion. The spell was so potent that it concealed from them the most obvious objects that were under their very noses; but to make up for this, the awakening is astonishingly rapid. Daily we see men who followed the Western orientation, many of them men with highly cultivated minds and firm characters, change all their convictions simply through having made an objective and profound study of themselves and their country. In the latter, they study the basic principles which went into the making of their particular Russian style of life, while in themselves they discover those vital faculties of the spirit for which Western intellectual development found no place and to which it offered no nourishment...

The principles underlying Russian culture are totally different from the component elements of the culture of the European peoples. True, the civilization of each of these peoples has features peculiar to it; but their individual ethnic, political, or historical peculiarities do not prevent them from forming a spiritual whole, into which they all fit as limbs do into a living body. Hence, despite all the accidents of history, they have always developed in close and sympathetic

contact. Russia, having spiritually broken away from Europe, lived a life separate from Europe's. The Englishman, the Frenchman, the Italian, the German never stopped being European, while always preserving their national characteristics. The Russian, on the other hand, had nearly to destroy his national personality in order to assimilate Western civilization; for both his appearance and his inner cast of mind, which explained and supported each other, were the result of an entirely different type of life, flowing from an entirely different fountainhead.

Apart from ethnic differences, three historical circumstances gave the entire development of culture in the West its specific character: the special form in which Christianity reached it; the special aspect of the civilization of the ancient world which it inherited; and lastly, the special elements which entered into the formation of its political organization....

[T]hree elements peculiar to the West – the Roman Catholic Church, the civilization of ancient Rome, and polity arising out of the violence of conquest – were entirely alien to Old Russia. Having accepted the Christian religion from Greece, Russia was in constant contact with the Ecumenical Church. the civilization of the pagan world reached it through the Christian religion, without driving it to single-minded infatuation, as the living legacy of one particular nation might have done. It was only later, after it had become firmly grounded in a Christian civilization, that Russia began to assimilate the last fruits of the learning and culture of the ancient world... When Christianity penetrated into Russia, it did not meet with the immense difficulties that it had to overcome in Rome, Greece, and the European countries steeped in Roman civilization. The Slavic world did not present those insurmountable obstacles to its pure influence on spiritual and social life that Christianity encountered in the self-contained civilization of the classical world and the one-sided civilization of the Western peoples. In many respects, even the ethnic characteristics of the Slavic customs favored the assimilation of Christian principles. Furthermore, the basic concepts of the rights and duties of man and of his personal, family, and social status did not evolve in violence through formal agreements between warring races and classes as, after a war, artificial boundaries are traced between neighboring states in obedience to the dead letter of a treaty obtained by compromise. Not having been conquered, the Russian people organized its polity in its own way. The enemies who afflicted it always remained alien to it, and did not interfere with its internal development. The Tatars, the Poles, the Hungarians, the Germans, and the other scourges sent to it by Providence could only stop its intellectual development – and did, in fact, stop it – but could not change the essential meaning of its spiritual and public life.

[T]he relationships of the Russian among themselves were also different from those in the West.... Western man fragments his life into separate aspirations, and although he then unites them logically into a coherent plan, yet at every moment of his life he is like a different person. One corner of his heart shelters the religious feeling on which he calls on occasion for ritual observance; another, quite separate, harbors the faculties of reason and practical good sense; a third, his sensual desires; a fourth, his ethical concepts and love of family; a fifth, self-interest; a sixth, his esthetic sense; and each of these separate strivings and desires is subdivided further into drives, each of which is accompanied by a separate state of mind, each of which manifests itself separately, and all of which are bound together only by abstract reason. Western man is easily able to pray in the morning with fervent, intense, amazing zeal; then rest from that effort, rest

from his work not only physically, but morally, forgetting its dull occupations in laughter and the sound of drinking songs; and then forget the rest of his day and indeed his whole life in the enjoyment of a make-believe world which captures his imagination. Next day he will be ready, with similar ease, to recommence turning the wheel of his outwardly rational life.

Not so the Russian. When he prays in church, he does not scream in exaltation, beat his breast, or swoon with emotion; on the contrary, during the act of prayer he makes a supreme effort to preserve sobriety of mind and integrity of spirit. Then, when the fullness of self-realization in prayer – rather than mere intensity of feeling – floods his soul and his heart is touched by emotion, his tears flow quietly and no passion troubles the deep serenity of his spiritual state. On the other hand, neither does he sing drinking songs; he partakes of his dinner with a prayer. It is with a prayer that he begins and finishes every task. It is with a prayer that he enters and leaves a house. The lowliest peasant appearing in the palace before the Grand Duke (to defend whose honor he may but yesterday have risked his life in some skirmish with the Poles) would not greet his host before bowing to the holy icon, such as also to be found in a place of honor in every hut, large or small. Thus the Russian has always linked all his doings, important or not, directly with the highest concepts of the mind and the deepest concentration of the heart....

But let us stop here and summarize all that we have said on the difference between Western European and ancient Russian culture; for surely we have noted enough particulars to be able to add them up and arrive at a general definition of the two types of civilization....

[T]he essence of Russian civilization still lives on among the people and, what is most important, in the Holy Orthodox Church. Hence it is on this foundation and on no other that we must erect the solid edifice of Russian enlightenment, built heretofore out of mixed and for the most part foreign materials and therefore needing to be rebuilt with pure native stone. The construction of that building can be carried out only when that class of our nation that is not wholly occupied with working to provide for its material needs and whose appointed role in society is therefore to shape the public consciousness – when that class, I say, which is still saturated with Western ideas, becomes at last convinced of the one-sidedness of European culture; when it grows more keenly aware of the need for new intellectual principles; when, in a rational desire for the whole truth, it turns to the pure fountainhead of its people's ancient Orthodox faith and, with its responsive heart, will hearken after the distant echoes of this holy faith still clearly to be heard in Russia's former native life. Then, having thrown off the yoke of the logical systems of European philosophy, the educated Russian will find in the depths of the special, living, integral philosophy of the Holy Fathers of the Church – a philosophy incomprehensible to the Western mind – complete answers to those very questions of the mind and heart that most perturb a soul disillusioned by the latest results of Western thinking....

Abridged from: Marc Raeff, ed., Russian Intellectual History: An Anthology (New York, 1966).

**DOCUMENT No. 3**

## People's Will

**PARTY PROGRAM (1879)**

*Russia's autocratic government had shown in the 1860s that it was capable of change, as the emancipation of serfs in 1861 and other important reforms of the same decade suggest. However, Russia's political system remained firmly autocratic, and even very modest plans for allowing the participation of Russian subjects in politics were dismissed by conservative statesmen as being inconsistent with autocracy. Individuals frustrated with the slow rate of political and social change in Russia had appeared as early as 1825, and more radical groups arose in the reign of Alexander II (reigned 1855-1881). These groups adopted a variety of different programs, but by the late 1870s some were openly advocating terrorism. The most prominent of those groups was People's Will (Narodnaya Volya), formed in 1879.*

*The document here, the first program of the party, clarifies the position of People's Will. It lays out the basic vision and aspirations of the group. What place did terrorism occupy in the program, and what did the members of People's Will think it would achieve? In what ways did the revolutionaries see their own movement as a product of specific historical circumstances? What relationship did the revolutionaries posit between "the Supreme Power" and the people?*

By fundamental conviction we are socialists and democrats. We are satisfied that only through socialistic principles can the human race acquire liberty, equality, and fraternity; secure the full and harmonious development of the individual as well as the material prosperity of all; and thus make progress. We are convinced that all social forms must rest upon the sanction of the people themselves, and that popular development is permanent only when it proceeds freely and independently, and when every idea that is to be embodied in the people's life has first passed through the people's consciousness and has been acted upon by the people's will. The welfare of the people and the will of the people are our two most sacred and most inseparable principles.

## A

1. If we look at the environment in which the Russian people are forced to live and act, we see that they are, economically and politically, in a state of absolute slavery. As laborers, they are deprived of all rights. Not only does the actual state of things fail to answer their will; they cannot even think what is good and what is bad for them; the very thought that they can have a will is regarded as a crime against the State. Enmeshed on all sides, they are being reduced to a state of physical degeneration, intellectual stolidity, and general inferiority.
2. Around the enchained people we see a class of exploiters whom the state creates and protects. The state itself is the greatest capitalistic power in the land; it constitutes the sole political

oppressor of the people, and only through its aid and support can the lesser robbers exist. This bourgeois excrescence in the form of a government sustains itself by mere brute force—by means of its military, police, and bureaucratic organization—in precisely the same way that the Mongols of Genghis Khan sustained themselves in Russia. It is not sanctioned by the people; it rules by arbitrary violence, and it adopts and enforces governmental and economic forms and principles that have nothing whatever in common with the people's wishes and ideals.

3. In the nation we can see, crushed but still living, its old traditional principles, such as the right of the people to the land, communal and local self-government, freedom of speech and of conscience, and the rudiments of federal organization. These principles would develop broadly, and would give an entirely different and more popular direction to our whole history, if the nation could live and organize in accordance with its own wishes and its own tendencies.

## B

1. We are of opinion, therefore, that it is our first duty, as socialists and democrats, to free the people from the oppression of the present government, and bring about a political revolution, in order to transfer the supreme power to the nation. By means of this revolution we shall afford the people an opportunity to develop, henceforth, independently, and shall cause to be recognized and supported, in Russian life, many purely socialistic principles that are common to us and to the Russian people.

2. We think that the will of the people would be sufficiently well expressed and executed by a national Organizing Assembly, elected freely by a general vote, and acting under the instructions of the voters. This, of course, would fall far short of an ideal manifestation of the people's will; but it is the only one that is practicable at present, and we therefore think best to adopt it....

## D

In view of the stated aim of the party its operations may be classified as follows:

1. *Propaganda and agitation.* Our propaganda has for its object the popularization, in all social classes, of the idea of a political and democratic revolution as a means of social reform, as well as popularization of the party's own program. Its essential features are criticism of the existing order of things, and a statement and explanation of revolutionary methods. The aim of agitation should be to incite the people to protest, as generally as possible, against the present state of affairs, to demand such reforms as are in harmony with the party's purposes; and, especially, to demand the summoning of an Organizing Assembly. The popular protest may take the form of meetings, demonstrations, petitions, leading addresses, refusals to pay taxes, and so forth.

2. *Destructive and terroristic activity.* Terroristic activity consists in the destruction of the most harmful persons in the Government, the protection of the party from spies, and the punishment of official lawlessness and violence in all the more prominent and important cases in which such lawlessness and violence are manifested. The aim of such activity is to break down the prestige of Governmental power, to furnish continuous proof of the possibility of carrying on a contest with the Government, to raise in that way the revolutionary spirit of the people and inspire belief in the practicability of revolution, and finally, to form a body suited and accustomed to warfare.

3. *The organization of secret societies and arrangement of them in connected groups around a single center.* The organization of small secret societies with all sorts of revolutionary aim is indispensable, both as a means of executing the numerous functions of the party and of finishing the political training of its members. In order, however, that the work may be carried on

harmoniously, it is necessary that these small bodies should be grouped about one common center, upon the principle either of complete identification or of federal union.

4. *The acquirement of ties, and an influential position in the administration, in the army, in society, and among the people....* The party should enlist acknowledged partisans among the more prominent classes of the peasantry, and should prearrange for the active cooperation of the masses at the more important points and among the more sympathetic portions of the population....

5. *The organization and consummation of the revolution.* In view of the oppressed and cowed condition of the people, and of the fact that the Government, by means of partial concessions and pacifications, may retard for a long time a general revolutionary movement, the party should take the initiative, and not wait until the people are able to do the work without its aid.

6. *The electioneering canvass before the summoning of the Organization Assembly.* However the revolution may be brought about—as the result of an open revolution, or with the aid of a conspiracy—the duty of the party will be to aid in the immediate summoning of an Organizing Assembly, to which shall be transferred the powers of the Provisional Government created by the revolution or the conspiracy.

**DOCUMENT No. 4**

## People's Will

**A LETTER FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF  
PEOPLE'S WILL TO ALEXANDER II (22 March 1881)**

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*By the summer of that 1879 People's Will had decided to target the Emperor himself, with the hope that success would lead to destruction of the tsarist order. In fact, the first attempt on the life of Alexander II had occurred already in 1866, but with the campaign of People's Will the Emperor now became almost a hunted animal. The group managed to smuggle a bomb into the Winter Palace in 1880, but while eleven people were killed in the resulting blast, the Emperor escaped harm. After some frustration, the group eventually succeeded in assassinating the Emperor in March of 1881. No revolution followed, however, and Alexander II's son, also named Alexander, proved even more committed to autocracy than his father had been. Extensive arrests led to the disintegration of People's Will by the mid-1880s, but terrorism remained an important element in Russia even into the early Soviet years. Perhaps most importantly, terrorism made compromise between the regime and its critics virtually impossible. The document below helps to clarify the position of People's Will. It is a letter to the new Emperor, Alexander III, shortly after the assassination of his father.*

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Your Majesty:

Although the Executive Committee understands fully the grievous oppression you must experience at this moment, it believes that it has no right to yield to the feeling of natural delicacy which would perhaps dictate the postponement of the following explanation to another time. There is something higher than the most legitimate human feeling, and that is duty to one's country—the duty for which a citizen must sacrifice himself and his own feelings, and even the feelings of others. In obedience to this all-powerful duty we have decided to address you at once, waiting for nothing, as will wait for nothing the historical process that threatens us with rivers of blood and the most terrible convulsions.

The tragedy enacted on the Ekaterinski canal<sup>4</sup> was not a mere casualty, not was it unexpected. After all that had happened in the course of the previous decade it was absolutely inevitable; and

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<sup>4</sup> That canal was the location where Alexander II was mortally wounded in the terrorist attack. A Cathedral was erected in its place and still stands in St. Petersburg today.

in that fact consists its deep significance for a man who has been placed by fate at the head of governmental authority. Such occurrences can be explained as the results of individual malignity, or even of the evil disposition of “gangs,” only by one who is wholly incapable of analyzing the life of a nation. For ten whole years—notwithstanding the strictest prosecution; notwithstanding the sacrifice by the late Emperor’s Government of liberty, the interests of all classes, the interests of industry and commerce, and even its own dignity; notwithstanding the absolute sacrifice of everything in the attempt to suppress the revolutionary movement—that the movement has obstinately extended, attracting to itself the best elements of the country—the most energetic and self-sacrificing people of Russia—and the revolutionists have carried on, for three years, a desperate partisan warfare with the administration.

You are aware, your Majesty, that the Government of the late Emperor could not be accused of a lack of energy. It hanged the innocent and the guilty, and filled prisons and remote provinces with exiles. Tens of so-called “leaders” were captured and hanged, and died with the courage and tranquility of martyrs; but the movement did not cease—on the contrary it grew and strengthened. The revolutionary movement, your Majesty, is not dependent upon any particular individuals; it is a process of the social organism; and the scaffolds raised for its more energetic exponents are as powerless to save the out-grown order of things as the cross that was erected for the Redeemer was powerless to save the ancient world from the triumph of Christianity. The Government, of course, may yet capture and hang an immense number of separate individuals, it may break up a great number of separate revolutionary groups, it may even destroy the most important of existing revolutionary organizations; but all this will not change, in the slightest degree, the condition of affairs. Revolutionists are the creation of circumstances; of the general discontent of the people; of the striving of Russia after a new social framework. It is impossible to exterminate the whole people; it is impossible, by means of repression, to stifle its discontent. Discontent only grows the more when it is repressed. For these reasons the places of the slain revolutionists are constantly taken by new individuals, who come forth from among the people in ever-increasing numbers, and who are still more embittered, still more energetic....

A dispassionate glance at the grievous decade through which we have just passed will enable us to forecast accurately the future progress of the revolutionary movement, provided the policy of the Government does not change. The movement will continue to grow and extend; deeds of a terroristic nature will increase in frequency and intensity, and the revolutionary organization will constantly set forth, in the places of destroyed groups, stronger and more perfect forms. Meanwhile the number of the discontented in the country will grow larger and larger; confidence in the Government, on the part of the people, will decline; and the idea of revolution—of its possibility and inevitability—will establish itself in Russia more and more firmly. A terrible explosion, a bloody hurly-burly, a revolutionary earthquake throughout Russia, will complete the destruction of the old order of things. Upon what depends this terrible prospect? Yes, your Majesty, “terrible” and lamentable! Do not take this for a mere phrase. We understand better than anyone else can, how lamentable is the waste of so much talent and energy, the loss, in bloody skirmishes and in the work of destruction, of so much strength that, under other conditions, might have been expended in creative labor and in the development of the intelligence, the welfare, and the civil life of the Russian people. Whence proceeds this lamentable necessity for bloody conflict? It arises, your Majesty, from the lack in Russia of a real government in the true sense of that word. A government, in the very nature of things,

should only give outward form to the aspirations of the people and effect to the people's will. But with us—excuse the expression—the Government has degenerated into a mere camarilla, and deserves the name of a usurping “gang” much more than does the Executive Committee.

Whatever may be the intentions of the Tsar, the actions of the Government have nothing in common with the popular welfare, or popular aspirations. The Imperial Government subjected the people to serfdom, put the masses into the power of the nobility, and is now openly creating the most injurious class of speculators and jobbers. All of its reforms result merely in a more perfect enslavement and a more complete exploitation of the people. It has brought Russia to such a pass that, at the present time, the masses of the people are in a state of pauperism and ruin; are subjected to the most humiliating surveillance, even at their own domestic hearths; and are powerless even to regulate their own communal and social affairs. The protection of the law and of the Government is enjoyed only by the extortionists and the exploiter, and the most exasperating robbery goes unpunished. But, on the other hand, what a terrible fate awaits the man who sincerely considers the general good! You know very well your Majesty, that it is not only socialists who are exiled and prosecuted. Can it be possible that the *Government* is the guardian of such “order”? Is it not rather probable that this is the work of a “gang”—the evidence of a complete usurpation?

These are the reasons why the Russian Government exerts no moral influence, and has no support among the people. These are the reasons why Russia brings forth so many revolutionists. These are the reasons why even such a deed as Tsaricide excites in the minds of a majority of the people only gladness and sympathy. Yes, your Majesty! Do not be deceived by the reports of flatterers and sycophants—Tsaricide, in Russia, is popular.

From such a state of affairs there can be only two exits: either a revolution, absolutely inevitable and not to be averted by any punishments, or a voluntary turning of the Supreme Power to the people. In the interest of our native land, in the hope of preventing the useless waste of energy, in the hope of averting the terrible miseries that always accompany revolution, the Executive Committee approaches your Majesty with the advice to take the second course. Be assured, so soon as the Supreme Power ceases to rue arbitrarily, so soon as it firmly resolves to accede to the demands of the people's conscience and consciousness, you may, without fear, discharge the spies that disgrace the administration, send your guards back to their barracks, and burn the scaffolds that are demoralizing the people. The Executive Committee will voluntarily terminate its own existence, and the organizations formed about it will disperse, in order that their members may devote themselves to the work of culture among the people of their native land.

We address your Majesty as those who have discarded all prejudices, and who have suppressed the distrust created by the actions of the Government throughout a century. We forget that you are the representative of the authority that has so often deceived and that has so injured the people. We address you as a citizen and as an honest man. We hope that the feeling of personal exasperation will not extinguish in your mind your consciousness of your duties and your desire to know the truth. We might also feel exasperation. You have lost your father. We have not only lost our fathers, but our brothers, our wives, our children, and our dearest friends. But we are ready to suppress personal feeling if it be demanded by the welfare of Russia. We expect the same from you.

We set no conditions for you—do not let our proposition irritate you. The conditions that are prerequisite to a change from revolutionary activity to peaceful labor are created, not by us, but by history. These conditions, in our opinion, are two.

1. A general amnesty to cover all past political crimes; for the reason that they were not crimes but fulfillments of civil duty.
2. The summoning of representatives of the whole Russian people to examine the existing framework of social and governmental life, and to remodel it in accordance with the people's wishes....<sup>5</sup>

And now, your Majesty, decide! Before you are two courses, and you are to make your choice between them. We can only trust that your intelligence and conscience may suggest to you the only decision that is compatible with the welfare of Russia, with your own dignity, and with your duty to your native land.

Source: George Kennan, Siberia and the Exile System (New York, 1891), 495-503.

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<sup>5</sup> A third demand on the actual conduct of the elections follows.

**DOCUMENT No. 5**

Vladimir I. Lenin

***WHAT IS TO BE DONE? (1902)***


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*At the time when he wrote "What is to be Done," Lenin was a young Russian émigré recently returned from Siberian exile and living in Geneva, Switzerland. His work on the Russian Social Democratic newspaper "Iskra" (The Spark), brought him into the center of a debate raging in European Marxist circles over the "revisionist" ideas of Eduard Bernstein. The problem was all the more urgent for Lenin since some Russian Marxists, known as "economists," were advocating Bernstein's approach, arguing that the Social Democratic party in Russia should focus on legal activities aimed at improving the economic well being of the working class. Lenin's response was the long pamphlet "What is to be Done," a vigorous polemic in which he sketched out a new vision of a Marxist revolutionary party. The following are selected excerpts from the larger work.*

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It is no secret that two trends have taken form in the present-day international Social-Democracy. The conflict between these trends now flares up in a bright flame, and now dies down and smolders under the ashes of imposing "truce resolutions." The essence of the "new" trend, which adopts a "critical" attitude towards "obsolete dogmatic" Marxism, has been presented clearly enough by Bernstein, and demonstrated by Millerand.

Social-Democracy must change from a party of the social revolution into a democratic party of social reforms. Bernstein has surrounded this political demand with a whole battery of symmetrically arranged "new" arguments and reasonings. Denied was the possibility of putting Socialism on a scientific basis and of demonstrating its necessity and inevitability from the point of view of the materialist conception of history. Denied was the fact of the growing impoverishment, the process of proletarianisation and the intensification of capitalist contradictions; the very concept, "*ultimate aim*," was declared to be unsound, and the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat was completely rejected. Denied was the antithesis in principle between liberalism and socialism. Denied was *the theory of the class struggle* on the grounds that it could not be applied to a strictly democratic society, governed according to the will of the majority, etc.

Thus, the demand for a decisive turn from revolutionary Social-Democracy to bourgeois social-reformism was accompanied by a no less resolute turn towards bourgeois criticism of all the fundamental ideas of Marxism....

He who does not deliberately close his eyes cannot fail to see that the new "critical" trend in socialism is nothing more nor less than a new variety of *opportunism*. And if we judge people not by the glittering uniforms they don, not by the high-sounding appellations they give themselves, but by their actions, and by what they actually advocate, it will be clear that "freedom of criticism" means freedom for an opportunistic trend in Social-Democracy, the freedom to convert Social-Democracy into a democratic party of reform, the freedom to introduce bourgeois ideas and bourgeois elements into Socialism....

Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement. This thought cannot be insisted upon too strongly at a time when the fashionable preaching of opportunism goes hand in hand with an infatuation for the narrowest forms of practical activity... Our Party is only in process of formation, its features are only just becoming outlined, and it is yet far from having settled accounts with other trends of revolutionary thought, which threaten to divert the movement from the correct path.... The national tasks of Russian Social-Democracy are such as have never confronted any other socialist party in the world.... *The role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory....*

The systematic strikes [of the 1890s in St. Petersburg] represented the class struggle in embryo, but only in embryo. Taken by themselves, these strikes were simply trade union struggles, but not yet Social-Democratic struggles. They marked the awakening antagonisms between workers and employers, but the workers were not, and could not be, conscious of the irreconcilable antagonism of their interests to the whole of the modern political and social system, i.e., theirs was not yet Social-Democratic consciousness. In this sense, the strikes of the nineties despite of the enormous progress they represented as compared with [earlier] "revolts," remained a purely spontaneous movement.

We have said that there could not have been Social-Democratic consciousness among the workers. It could only be brought to them from without. The history of all countries shows that the working class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade union consciousness, i.e., the conviction that it is necessary to combine in unions, fight the employers and strive to compel the government to pass necessary labour legislation, etc.

The theory of socialism, however, grew out of the philosophic, historical and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the propertied classes, the intellectuals. By their social status, the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia. In the very same way, in Russia, the theoretical doctrine of Social-Democracy arose quite independently of the spontaneous growth of the working-class movement, it arose as a natural and inevitable outcome of the development of thought among the revolutionary socialist intelligentsia... Hence, we had both the spontaneous awakening of the masses of the workers, the awakening to conscious life and conscious struggle, and a revolutionary youth, armed with the Social-Democratic theory, eager to come into contact with the workers...

Since there can be no talk of an independent ideology formulated by the working masses themselves in the process of their movement, the only choice is--either bourgeois or socialist ideology. There is no middle course (for humanity has not created a "third" ideology, and, moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be a non-class or above-class ideology). Hence, to belittle the socialist ideology *in any way, to turn away from it in the*

*slightest degree* means to strengthen bourgeois ideology.

The political struggle of Social-Democracy is far more extensive and complex than the economic struggle of the workers against the employers and the government. Similarly (indeed for that reason), the organization of a revolutionary Social-Democratic party must inevitably be of a kind *different* from the organisation of the workers designed for this struggle. A workers' organization must in the first place be a trade organization; secondly, it must be as broad as possible; and thirdly, it must be as little clandestine as possible (here, and further on, of course, I have only autocratic Russia in mind). On the other hand, the organizations of revolutionaries must consist first, foremost and mainly of people who make revolutionary activity their profession (that is why I speak of organizations of revolutionaries, meaning revolutionary Social-Democrats). In view of this common feature of the members of such an organization, *all distinctions as between workers and intellectuals*, not to speak of distinctions of trade and profession, in both categories *must be obliterated*. Such an organization must of necessity be not too extensive and as secret as possible....

I assert: 1) that no revolutionary movement can endure without a stable organization of leaders maintaining continuity; 2) that the broader the popular mass drawn spontaneously drawn into the struggle, forming the basis of the movement and participating in it, the more urgent the need for such an organization, and the more solid this organization must be (for it is much easier for demagogues to side track the more backward sections of the masses); 3) that such an organization must consist chiefly of people professionally engaged in revolutionary activity; 4) that in an autocratic state, the more we *confine* the membership of such an organization to people who are professionally engaged in revolutionary activity and to have been professionally trained in the art of combatting the political police, the more difficult will it be to wipe out such an organization, and 5) the greater will be the number of people of the working class and of the other classes of society who will be able to join the movement and perform active work in it...

Our worst sin with regard to organization is that by our *amateurishness we have lowered the prestige of revolutionaries in Russia*. A person who is flabby and shaky on questions of theory, who has a narrow outlook, who pleads the spontaneity of the masses as an excuse for his own *sluggishness*, who resembles a trade union secretary more than a spokesman of the people, who is unable to conceive of a broad and bold plan that would command the respect even of opponents, and who is inexperienced and clumsy in his own professional art - the art of combating the political police - why, such a man is not a revolutionary but a wretched amateur!

Source: V. I. Lenin, Collected Works, (Moscow, 1964), v. 5, pp. 352-353, 354-355, 369-370, 374-375, 389, 452-453, 464.

Translation revised and edited by Nathaniel Knight

Source: [http://academic.shu.edu/russianhistory/index.php/Lenin,\\_What\\_is\\_to\\_be\\_Done](http://academic.shu.edu/russianhistory/index.php/Lenin,_What_is_to_be_Done)

## DOCUMENT No. 6

**Konstantin Pobedonostsev**

### ***THE FALSEHOOD OF DEMOCRACY (1896)***

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*Alexander III and his entourage proved exceedingly resistant to calls for change, especially after the assassination of Alexander II. They believed that autocracy was the only viable form of government for Russia, for a host of historical, geographical and psychological reasons. Most of them were not opposed to a certain evolution of Russia under the guidance of the autocracy. But they regarded with hostility any encroachment on the autocratic privileges of the ruler. Needless to say, they were also hostile towards the ideals of democracy and popular sovereignty.*

*Among the most articulate of these conservatives was Konstantin Pobedonostsev (1827-1907). An accomplished lawyer and tutor to the future Alexander III, in 1880 Pobedonostsev became the chief procurator of the Holy Synod, the highest administrative position in the Orthodox Church. He remained firmly committed to the principle of autocracy and condemned democracy as a "falsehood," for the reasons indicated in the selection below. When the interior minister M. T. Loris-Melikov produced a plan allowing for the limited and consultative participation of certain segments of Russian in the formation of policy in 1881, Pobedonostsev condemned this as a dangerous and reckless innovation, as the first step in the introduction of a constitution. Constitutions, he remarked, "are in essence instruments for every kind of untruth, the source of all kinds of intrigue." The plan for reform, which had gained Alexander II's support on the eve of his assassination, stood little chance of approval by his son. It was abandoned, and no serious political reform was contemplated by the government until the crisis of the twentieth century.*

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### **The New Democracy**

What is this freedom by which so many minds are agitated, which inspires so many insensate actions, so many wild speeches, which leads the people so often to misfortune? In the democratic sense of the word, freedom is the right of political power, or, to express it otherwise, the right to participate in the government of the State. This universal aspiration for a share in government has no constant limitations, and seeks no definite issue, but incessantly extends.... Forever extending its base, the new Democracy now aspires to universal suffrage – a fatal error, and one of the most remarkable in the history of mankind. By this means, the political power so passionately demanded by Democracy would be shattered into a number of infinitesimal bits, of which each citizen acquires a single one. What will he do with it, then? How will he employ it? In the result it has undoubtedly been shown that in the attainment of this aim Democracy violates its sacred formula of "Freedom indissolubly joined with Equality." It is shown that this

apparently equal distribution of "freedom" among all involves the total destruction of equality. Each vote, representing an inconsiderable fragment of power, by itself signifies nothing; an aggregation of votes alone has a relative value. The result may be likened to the general meetings of shareholders in public companies. By themselves individuals are ineffective, but he who controls a number of these fragmentary forces is master of all power and directs all decisions and dispositions. We may well ask in what consists the superiority of Democracy. Everywhere the strongest man becomes master of the state; sometimes a fortunate and resolute general, sometimes a monarch or administrator with knowledge, dexterity, a clear plan of action, and a determined will. In a Democracy, the real rulers are the dexterous manipulators of votes, with their placemen, the mechanics who so skillfully operate the hidden springs which move the puppets in the area of democratic elections. Men of this kind are ever ready with loud speeches lauding equality; in reality, they rule the people as any despot or military dictator might rule it. The extension of the right to participate in elections is regarded as progress and as the conquest of freedom by democratic theorists, who hold that the more numerous the participants in political rights, the greater is the probability that all will employ this right in the interests of the public welfare, and for the increase of the freedom of the people. Experience proves a very different thing. The history of mankind bears witness that the most necessary and fruitful reforms – the most durable measures – emanated from the supreme will of statesmen, or from a minority enlightened by lofty ideas and deep knowledge, and that, on the contrary, the extension of the representative principle is accompanied by an abasement of political ideas and the vulgarization of opinions in the mass of the electors. It shows also that this extension – in great States – was inspired by secret aims to the centralization of power, or led directly to dictatorship. In France, universal suffrage was suppressed with the end of the Terror, and was re-established twice merely to affirm the autocracy of the two Napoleons. In Germany, the establishment of universal suffrage served merely to strengthen the high authority of a famous statesman who had acquired popularity by the success of his policy. What its ultimate consequences will be, Heaven only knows!

The manipulation of votes in the game of Democracy is of the commonest occurrence in most European states, and its falsehood, it would seem, has been exposed to all; yet few dare openly to rebel against it. The unhappy people must bear the burden, while the Press, herald of a suppositious public opinion, stifles the cry of the people with its shibboleth, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." But to an impartial mind, all this is nothing better than a struggle of parties, and a shuffling with numbers and names. The voters, by themselves inconsiderable unities, acquire a value in the hands of dexterous agents. This value is realized by many means – mainly, by bribery in innumerable forms, from gifts of money and trifling articles, to the distribution of places in the services, the financial departments, and the administration. Little by little a class of electors has been formed which lives by the sale of votes to one or another of the political organizations. So far has this gone in France, for instance, that serious, intelligent, and industrious citizens in immense numbers abstain from voting, through the difficulty of contending with the cliques of political agents. With bribery go violence and threats, and reigns of terror are organized at elections, by the help of which the respective cliques advance their candidates; hence the stormy scenes at electoral demonstrations, in which arms have been used, and the field of battle strewn with the bodies of the killed and wounded....

## The Great Falsehood of Our Time

Among the falsest of political principles is the principle of the sovereignty of the people, the principle that all power issues from the people, and is based upon the national will – a principle which has unhappily become more firmly established since the time of the French Revolution. Thence proceeds the theory of Parliamentarism, which, up to the present day, has deluded much of the so-called "intelligence," and unhappily infatuated certain foolish Russians. It continues to maintain its hold on many minds with the obstinacy of a narrow fanaticism, although every day its falsehood is exposed more clearly to the world.

In what does the theory of Parliamentarism consist? It is supposed that the people in its assemblies makes its own law, and elects responsible officers to execute its will. Such is the ideal conception. Its immediate realization is impossible. The historical development of society necessitates that local communities increase in numbers and complexity; that separate races be assimilated, or, retaining their polities and languages, unite under a single flag, that territory extend indefinitely; under such conditions direct government by the people is impracticable. The people must, therefore, delegate its right of power to its representatives, and invest them with administrative autonomy. These representatives in turn cannot govern immediately, but are compelled to elect a still smaller number of trustworthy persons – ministers – to whom they entrust the preparation and execution of the laws, the apportionment and collection of taxes, the appointment of subordinate officials, and the disposition of the militant forces.

In the abstract this mechanism is quite symmetrical: for its proper operation many conditions are essential. The working of the political machine is based on impersonal forces constantly acting and completely balanced. It may act successfully only when the delegates of the people abdicate their personalities; when on the benches of Parliament sit mechanical fulfillers of the people's behests; when the ministers of State remain impersonal, absolute executors of the will of the majority; when the elected representatives of the people are capable of understanding precisely, and executing conscientiously, the program of activity, mathematically expressed, which has been delivered to them. Given such conditions the machine would work exactly, and would accomplish its purpose. The law would actually embody the will of the people; administrative measures would actually emanate from Parliament; the pillars of the State would rest actually on the elective assemblies, and each citizen would directly and consciously participate in the management of public affairs.

Such is the theory. Let us look at the practice. Even in the classic countries of Parliamentarism it would satisfy not one of the conditions enumerated. The elections in no way express the will of the electors. The popular representatives are in no way restricted by the opinions of their constituents, but are guided by their own views and considerations, modified by the tactics of their opponents. In reality, ministers are autocratic, and they rule, rather than are ruled by, Parliament. They attain power, and lose power, not by virtue of the will of the people, but through immense personal influence, or the influence of a strong party which places them in power, or drives them from it. They dispose of the force and resources of the nation at will, they grant immunities and favors, they maintain a multitude of idlers at the expense of the people, and they fear no censure while they enjoy the support in Parliament of a majority which they maintain by the distribution of bounties from the rich tables which the State has put at their

disposal. In reality, the ministers are as irresponsible as the representatives of the people. Mistakes, abuse of power, and arbitrary acts are of daily occurrence, yet how often do we hear of the grave responsibility of a minister? It may be once in fifty years a minister is tried for his crimes, with a result contemptible when compared with the celebrity gained by the solemn procedure.

Were we to attempt a true definition of Parliament, we should say that Parliament is an institution serving for the satisfaction of the personal ambition, vanity, and self-interest of its members. The institution of Parliament is indeed one of the greatest illustrations of human delusion. Enduring in the course of centuries the tyranny of autocratic and oligarchical governments, and ignoring that the evils of autocracy are the evils of society itself, men of intellect and knowledge have laid the responsibility for their misfortunes on their rulers and on their systems of government, and imagined that by substituting for these systems government by the will of the people, or representative government, society would be delivered from all the evils and violence which it endured. What is the result? The result is that, *mutato nomine*, all has remained essentially as before, and men, retaining the weaknesses and failings of their nature, have transfused in the new institutions their former impulses and tendencies. As before, they are ruled by personal will, and in the interests of privileged persons, but this personal will is no longer embodied in the person of the sovereign, but in the person of the leader of a party; and privilege no longer belongs to an aristocracy of birth, but to a majority ruling in Parliament and controlling the State...

In our time, nothing is so rare as men imbued with a feeling of solidarity with the people, ready for labor and self-sacrifice for the public good; this is the ideal nature, but such natures are little inclined to come into contact with the baseness of the world. He who, in the consciousness of duty, is capable of disinterested service of the community does not descend to the soliciting of votes, or the crying of his own praise at election meetings in loud and vulgar phrases. Such men manifest their strength in their own work, in a small circle of congenial friends, and scorn to seek popularity in the noisy marketplace. If they approach the crowd, it is not to flatter it, or to pander to its basest instincts and tendencies, but to condemn its follies and expose its depravity. To men of duty and honor the procedure of elections is repellent; the only men who regard it without abhorrence are selfish, egoistic natures, which wish thereby to attain their personal ends. To acquire popularity such men have little scruple in assuming the mask of ardor for the public good. They cannot and must not be modest, for with modesty they would not be noticed or spoken of. By their positions, and by the parts they have chosen, they are forced to be hypocrites and liars; they must cultivate, fraternize with, and be amiable to their opponents to gain their suffrages; they must lavish promises, knowing that they cannot fulfill them; and they must pander to the basest tendencies and prejudices of the masses to acquire majorities for themselves. What honorable nature would accept such a role? Describe it in a novel, the reader would be repelled, but in elections the same reader gives his vote to the living artiste in the same role...

On the day of polling few give their votes intelligently: these are the individual, influential electors whom it has been worthwhile to convince in private. The mass of the electors, after the practice of the herd, votes for one of the candidates nominated by the committees. Not one exactly knows the man, or considers his character, his capacity, his convictions; all vote merely

because they have heard his name so often. It would be vain to struggle against this herd. If a level-headed elector wishes to act intelligently in such a grave affair, and not to give way to the violence of the committee, he would have to abstain altogether, or to give his vote for his candidate according to his conviction. However he might act, he could not prevent the election of the candidate favored by the mass of frivolous, indifferent, and prejudiced electors.

In theory, the elected candidate must be the favorite of the majority; in fact, he is the favorite of a minority, sometimes very small, but representing an organized force, while the majority, like sand, has no coherence, and is therefore incapable of resisting the clique and the faction. In theory, the election favors the intelligent and capable; in reality, it favors the pushing and impudent. It might be thought that education, experience, conscientiousness in work, and wisdom in affairs, would be essential requirements in the candidate; in reality, whether these qualities exist or not, they are in no way needed in the struggle of the election, where the essential qualities are audacity, a combination of impudence and oratory, and even some vulgarity, which invariably acts on the masses; modesty, in union with delicacy of feeling and thought, is worth nothing....

Such is the Parliamentary institution, exalted as the summit and crown of the edifice of State. It is sad to think that even in Russia there are men who aspire to the establishment of this falsehood among us; that our professors glorify to their young pupils representative government as the ideal of political science; that our newspapers pursue it in their articles and feuilletons, under the name of justice and order, without troubling to examine without prejudice the working of the parliamentary machine. Yet even where centuries have sanctified its existence, faith already decays; the Liberal intelligence exalts it, but the people groans under its despotism and recognizes its falsehood. We may not see, but our children and grandchildren assuredly will see, the overthrow of this idol, which contemporary thought in its vanity continues still to worship.

**DOCUMENT No. 7****THE OCTOBER MANIFESTO (1905)**

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*By 1905, Russia had entered a serious crisis. In the 1890s industrialization began to advance much more rapidly – and with it the process of urbanization and the development of a working class. This created an unstable situation, especially in Russia's cities. Beginning in 1902, the countryside was also beset by a wave of peasant disturbances. In 1904 Russia embarked on a disastrous war with Japan, on the assumption that a non-European country would be unlikely to defeat a major European power. By 1905, however, this is exactly what was occurring. While the regime embarked on a modest though significant program of reform by late 1904, popular dissatisfaction with the autocracy, now ruled by Nicholas II (reigned 1894-1917), became extreme. Even the conservative newspaper New Times declared, "It is no longer possible to live this way." Thus in 1905, the autocracy faced a growing wave of industrial strikes, peasant rebellion, and condemnation by the educated elite. By October the country faced a paralyzing general strike, and Nicholas II finally issued the October Manifesto, reproduced below. The manifesto promised new civil freedoms of Russia's subjects and the creation of a new parliament, known as the State Duma, which would have much more than just symbolic or consultative powers. The manifesto became the basis for Russia's political order after 1905, although many of its promises remained unrealized.*

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17 October 1905

We, Nicholas II, Emperor and Autocrat of All the Russias, Tsar of Poland, Grand Duke of Finland, etc. etc., declare to all our loyal subjects:

The disturbances and unrest in St Petersburg, Moscow and in many other parts of our Empire have filled Our heart with great and profound sorrow. The welfare of the Russian Sovereign is inseparable from the welfare of His people, and national sorrow is His sorrow. The present disturbances could give rise to profound disaffection among the masses, presenting a threat to the unity and integrity of Our State. The oath which We took as Tsar compels Us to use all Our strength, intelligence and authority to put a speedy end to this unrest which is so dangerous for the State. The relevant authorities have been ordered to take measures to deal with direct outbreaks of disorder and violence and to protect people who only want to go about their daily business in peace. However, in view of the need for successful implementation of earlier measures aimed at pacifying the country, we have decided that the work of the higher agencies of government must be coordinated. We have therefore ordered the government to take the

following steps in fulfilment of our unbending will:

1. Fundamental civil freedoms will be granted to the population, including real personal inviolability, freedom of conscience, speech, assembly and association.

2. Without halting the elections that have already been scheduled, participation in the Duma will be granted to those classes of the population which are at present deprived of voting powers (insofar as is possible in the short period before its convocation). Further development of a universal franchise will be left to the newly established legislature (i.e., according to the law of August 6, 1905, to the Duma and the Council of State).

3. It is established as an unshakeable rule that no law can come into force without its approval by the State Duma and representatives of the people will be given the opportunity to take real part in the supervision of the legality of authorities appointed by Us.

We call on all true sons of Russia to remember their duty to the homeland, to help put a stop to this unprecedented unrest and, together with this, to devote all their strength to the restoration of peace and quiet in our native land.

Issued at Peterhof on the 17th day of October in the year of Our Lord 1905, in the eleventh year of Our reign.

Original signed by Nicholas II.

Source: Unattributed translation from Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii, 3rd series, vol. XXV/I, no. 26803. Revised (syntax emendations) Jon Bone.

**DOCUMENT No. 8****THE FUNDAMENTAL LAW OF 23 APRIL 1906**


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*Was Russia a constitutional monarchy after 1905? Opinions on this question vary, but certainly one of the most important documents for addressing this question is the Fundamental Law of April, 1906. The document certainly has the "feel" of a constitution, but it needs to be emphasized that this was not Russia's first Fundamental Law. Ever since the codification of Russian law, completed by Mikhail Speransky in the 1830s, the first volume of the Law Digest had carried the title "the Fundamental Law" (*Osnovnoi Zakon*). Few would contest that Russia was a non-constitutional autocracy before 1905, so the mere existence of the Fundamental Law of April 1906 cannot be taken as proof that Russia had now become a constitutional state. This means that the question of constitutionality needs to be addressed in terms of the actual content of the Fundamental Law, portions of which are reproduced below. Just as the revolution of 1905 has been labeled "ambiguous" in terms of its outcome, the Fundamental Law allows for different interpretations. As you read the selection, you might seek to determine the extent to which the principle of autocracy had been preserved and, alternatively, the extent to which the Emperor's authority was now limited and/or restricted.*

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1. The Russian State is one and indivisible....

3. The Russian language is the general language of the state, and its use is compulsory in the army, the navy and state and public institutions....

**Chapter I. The Essence of the Supreme Autocratic Power**

4. The All-Russian Emperor possesses the supreme autocratic power. Not only fear and conscience, but God himself, commands obedience to his authority.

5. The person of the Sovereign Emperor is sacred and inviolable.

6. The same supreme autocratic power belongs to the Sovereign Empress, should the order of succession to the throne pass to a female line...

7. The sovereign emperor exercises power in conjunction with the State Council and the State Duma.

8. The sovereign emperor possesses the initiative in all legislative matters. The Fundamental Laws may be subject to revision in the State Council and State Duma only on His initiative. The sovereign emperor ratifies the laws. No law can come into force without his approval. . . .

9. The Sovereign Emperor approves laws; and without his approval no legislative measure can become law.

10. The Sovereign Emperor possesses the administrative power in its totality throughout the entire Russian state. On the highest level of administration his authority is direct; on subordinate levels of administration, in conformity with the law, he determines the degree of authority of subordinate branches and officials who act in his name and in accordance with his orders.

11. As supreme administrator, the Sovereign Emperor, in conformity with the existing laws, issues decrees for the organization and functioning of diverse branches of state administration as well as directives essential for the execution of the laws.

12. The sovereign emperor takes charge of all the external relations of the Russian State. He determines the direction of Russia's foreign policy. . . .

13. The Sovereign Emperor alone declares war, concludes peace, and negotiates treaties with foreign states.

14. The sovereign emperor is the Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army and navy.

15. The sovereign emperor appoints and dismisses the Chairman the Council of Ministers and individual Ministers....

16. The Sovereign Emperor has the right to coin money and to determine its physical appearance.

17. The Sovereign Emperor appoints and dismisses the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Ministers, and Chief Administrators of various departments, as well as other officials whose appointment or dismissal has not been determined by law.

18. As supreme administrator the Sovereign Emperor determines the scope of activity of all state officials in accordance with the needs of the state.

19. The Sovereign Emperor grants titles, medals and other state distinctions as well as property rights. He also determines conditions and procedures for gaining titles, medals, and distinctions.

22. Justice is administered in the name of the Sovereign Emperor in courts legally constituted, and its execution is also carried out in the name of His Imperial Majesty.

23. The Sovereign Emperor has the right to pardon the accused, to mitigate the sentence, and even to completely forgive transgressions, including the right to terminate court actions against the guilty and to free them from trial and punishment. Stemming from royal mercy, he also has

the right to commute the official penalty and generally to pardon all exceptional cases that are not subject to general laws, provided such actions do not infringe upon civil rights or the legally protected interests of others.

## **Chapter II. Rights and Obligations of Russian Subjects**

28. The defence of the Throne and of the Fatherland is a sacred obligation of every Russian subject. The male population, irrespective of social status, is subject to military service determined by law.

29. Russian subjects are obliged to pay legally instituted taxes and dues and also to perform other obligations determined by law.

30. No one shall be subjected to persecution for a violation of the law except as prescribed by the law.

31. No one can be detained for investigation otherwise than prescribed by law.

32. No one can be tried and punished other than for criminal acts considered under the existing criminal laws, in force during the perpetration of these acts, provided newly enacted laws do not exclude the perpetrated criminal acts from the list of crimes.

33. The dwelling of every individual is inviolable. Breaking into a dwelling without the consent of the owner and search and seizure are allowed only in accordance with legally instituted procedures.

34. Every Russian subject has the right to freely select his place of dwelling and profession, to accumulate and dispose of property, and to travel abroad without any hindrance. Limits on these rights are determined by special laws.

35. Private property is inviolable. Forcible seizure of immovable property, should state or public need demand such action, is permissible only upon just and decent compensation.

36. Russian subjects have the right to organize meetings that are peaceful, unarmed, and not contrary to the law. The law determines the conditions of meetings, rules governing their termination, as well as limitations on places of meetings.

37. Within the limits determined by law everyone can express his thoughts orally or in writing, as well as distribute these thoughts through publication or other means.

38. Russian subjects have the right to organize societies and unions for purposes not contrary to the law. Conditions for organization of societies and unions, their activity, terms and rules for acquiring legal rights as well as dosing of societies and unions, is determined by law.

39. Russian subjects enjoy freedom of religion. Terms of enjoyment of this freedom are

determined by law.

41. Exceptions to the rules outlined in this chapter include localities where martial law is declared or where there exist exceptional conditions that are determined by special laws.

### **Chapter III. Laws**

42. The Russian Empire is governed by firmly established laws that have been properly enacted.

43. Laws are obligatory, without exception, for all Russian subjects and foreigners living within the Russian state.

44. No new law can be enacted without the approval of the State Council and the State Duma, and it shall not be legally binding without the approval of the Sovereign Emperor.

45. Should extraordinary circumstances demand, when the State Duma is not in session, and the introduction of a measure requires a properly constituted legal procedure, the Council of Ministers will submit such a measure directly to the Sovereign Emperor. Such a measure cannot, however, introduce any changes into the Fundamental Laws, or to the organization of the State Council or the State Duma, or to the rules governing elections to the Council or to the Duma. The validity of such a measure is terminated if the responsible minister or the head of a special department fails to introduce appropriate legislation in the State Duma during the first two months of its session upon reconvening, or if the State Duma or the State Council should refuse to enact it into law.

### **Chapter IV. The State Council, State Duma, and the Scope of Their Activity**

56. The Sovereign Emperor, by a decree, annually convenes the session of the State Council and of the State Duma.

57. The Sovereign Emperor determines by a decree the length of the annual session of the State Council and of the State Duma, as well as the interval between the sessions.

58. The State Council is composed of members appointed by His Majesty and of elected members. The total number of appointed members of the Council called by the Emperor to deliberate in the Council's proceedings cannot exceed the total number of the elected members of the Council.

59. The State Duma consists of members elected by the population of the Russian Empire for a period of five years, on the basis of rules governing elections to the Duma.

61. The same person cannot serve simultaneously as a member of the State Council and as a member of the State Duma.

62. The Sovereign Emperor, by a decree, can replace the elected membership of the State Council with new members before its tenure expires. The same decree sets new elections of members of the State Council.

63 The emperor who holds the throne of all Russia cannot profess any religion save the Orthodox. . . .

64. The State Council and the State Duma have equal rights in legislative matters.

68. Those legislative measures that are considered and approved by the State Duma are then submitted to the State Council for its approval. Those legislative measures that have been initiated by the State Council are reviewed by the Council and, upon approval, are submitted to the Duma.

69. Legislative measures that have been rejected either by the State Council or by the State Duma are considered defeated.

70. Those legislative measures that have been initiated either by the State Council or by the State Duma [and approved by both], but which have failed to gain Imperial approval, cannot be resubmitted for legislative consideration during the same session. Those legislative measures that have been initiated by either the State Council or by the State Duma and are rejected by either one of the Chambers, can be resubmitted for legislative consideration during the same session, provided the Emperor agrees to it.

71. Legislative measures that have been initiated in and approved by the State Duma and then by the State Council, and likewise legislative measures initiated and approved by the State Council and then by the State Duma, are submitted by the Chairman of the State Council to the Sovereign Emperor.

81. The Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Ministers, and Heads of various departments, are responsible to the Sovereign Emperor for State administration. Each individual member is responsible for his actions and decisions.

87 If extraordinary circumstances require legislative action whilst the State Duma is in recess, the Council of Ministers may make recommendations direct to the sovereign emperor. Such a measure may not, however, introduce changes in the Fundamental Laws, in the statutes of the State Council and State Duma or in the regulations governing elections to the Council and the Duma. Should such a measure not be introduced into the Duma as a bill within two months from the date of its next meeting . . . it loses force. . . .

**DOCUMENT No. 9**

Joseph Stalin

**SPEECH ON THE NEED TO INDUSTRIALIZE (1928)**

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*By the late 1920s, the Communist Party faced difficult choices concerning the future course of the country. On the one hand were those, like Leon Trotsky, who argued that the rapid industrialization was necessary for the USSR's survival in the face of a hostile capitalist West. On the other hand were proponents of a more gradual approach, most notably Nikolai Bukharin, who believed in a gradual transformation of NEP into socialism. He and his supporters thus envisioned a mixed economy of sorts. Embedded within this debate was a struggle for power, which ended with Stalin's emergence by the late 1920s as unrestricted dictator of the Soviet Union. While initially adopting an ambivalent position, Stalin eventually emerged as a proponent of rapid industrialization and used the issue against Bukharin and his supporters. The following is taken from a speech to the Central Committee of the Communist Party in November of 1928. Here Stalin makes the case for "a fast rate of development of industry."*

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Our theses proceed from the premise that a fast rate of development of industry in general, and of the production of the means of production [i.e., the creation of industrial machinery such as machine-tools] in particular, is the underlying principle of, and the key to, the industrialization of the country . . . and the key to the transformation of our entire national economy along the lines of socialist development. But what does a fast rate of development of industry involve? It involves the maximum capital investment in industry. And that leads to a state of tension in all our plans, budgetary and non-budgetary. . .

We have assumed power in a country whose technical equipment is terribly backward. Along with a few big industrial units more or less based upon modern technology, we have hundreds and thousands of mills and factories the technical equipment of which is beneath all criticism from the point of modern achievements. At the same time we have around us a number of capitalist countries whose industrial technique is far more developed and up-to-date than that of our country. Look at the capitalist countries and you will see that their technology is not only advancing, but advancing by leaps and bounds, outstripping the old forms of industrial technique. And so we find that, on the one hand, we in our country have the most advanced system, the Soviet system, and the most advanced type of state power in the world, Soviet power, while, on the other hand, our industry, which should be the basis of socialism and of Soviet power, is extremely backward technically. Do you think that we can achieve the final victory of socialism in our country so long as this contradiction exists?

What has to be done to end this contradiction? To end it, we must overtake and outstrip the advanced technology of the developed capitalist countries. We have overtaken and outstripped the advanced capitalist countries in the sense of establishing a new political system, the Soviet system. That is good. But it is not enough. In order to secure the final victory of socialism in our country, we must also overtake and outstrip these countries technically and economically. Either we do this, or we shall be forced to the wall. . . .

. . . The independence of our country cannot be upheld unless we have an adequate industrial basis for defence. And such an industrial basis cannot be created if our industry is not more highly developed technically. . . . The technical and economic backwardness of our country was not invented by us. This backwardness is age-old and was bequeathed to us by the whole history of our country. . . . The age-old backwardness of our country can be ended only on the lines of successful socialism which has established its proletarian dictatorship and has charge of the direction of the country. . . . And just because we are responsible for everything, we must put an end to our technical and economic backwardness. We must do so without fail if we really want to overtake and outstrip the advanced capitalist countries. And only we Bolsheviks can do it. But precisely in order to accomplish this task, we must systematically achieve a fast rate of development of our industry. . . [As Lenin said] " . . . either perish, or overtake and outstrip the advanced countries economically as well .... Perish or drive full-steam ahead." . . .

The question of a fast rate of development of industry would not face us so acutely if we were not the only country but one of the countries of the dictatorship of the proletariat. If there were a proletarian dictatorship not only in our country but in other, more advanced countries as well, Germany and France, say. If that were the case, the capitalist encirclement could not be so serious a danger as it is now, the question of the economic independence of our country would naturally recede into the background, we could integrate ourselves into the system of more developed proletarian states, we could receive from them machines for making our industry and agriculture more productive, supplying them in turn with raw materials and foodstuffs, and we could, consequently, expand our industry at a slower rate. But . . . we are still the only country of the proletarian dictatorship and are surrounded by capitalist countries, many of which are far in advance of us technically and economically. That is why Lenin raised the question of overtaking and outstripping the economically advanced countries as one of life and death for our development.

But besides the external conditions, there are also internal conditions which dictate a fast rate of development of our industry as the main foundation of our entire national economy. I am referring to the extreme backwardness of our agriculture, of its technical and cultural level. I am referring to the existence in our country of an overwhelming preponderance of small commodity producers, with their scattered and utterly backward production, compared with which our large-scale socialist industry is like an island in the midst of the sea, an island whose base is expanding daily, but which is nevertheless an island in the midst of the sea.

. . . it must also be remembered that, while industry is the main foundation, agriculture constitutes the basis for industrial development, both as a market which absorbs the products of industry and as a supplier of raw materials and foodstuffs, as well as a source of export reserves essential in order to import machinery for the needs of our national economy. . . .

Hence the task of supplying agriculture with the maximum amount of instruments and means of production [i.e., machinery such as tractors, etc.] essential in order to accelerate and promote its reconstruction on a new technical basis. But for the accomplishment of this task a fast rate of development of our industry is necessary. . . .

We cannot go on . . . for too long a period, basing the Soviet regime and socialist construction on two different foundations; the foundation of the most large- scale and united socialist industry and the foundation of the most scattered and backward, small-commodity economy of the peasants. . . . Either we accomplish this task, in which case the final victory of socialism in our country will be assured, or we turn away from it and do not accomplish it--[As Lenin said] . . . "Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country."

From: <http://web.jjay.cuny.edu/~jobrien/reference/ob98.html>

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**DOCUMENT No. 10**

Nikita Khrushchev

**SPEECH TO THE 20<sup>TH</sup> PARTY CONGRESS  
(February 24-25 1956)**


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*At the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU February 24-25 1956, Khrushchev delivered a report in which he denounced Stalin's crimes and the 'cult of personality' surrounding him. Known as the "Secret Speech" and lasting four hours, Khrushchev's speech was unlike any previously delivered at a party congress and represented a crucial act in the process of destalinization. A portion of the speech is reproduced here.*

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After Stalin's death, the Central Committee began to implement a policy of explaining concisely and consistently that it is impermissible and foreign to the spirit of Marxism-Leninism to elevate one person, to transform him into a superman possessing supernatural characteristics, akin to those of a god. Such a man supposedly knows everything, sees everything, thinks for everyone, can do anything, is infallible in his behavior.

Such a belief about a man, and specifically about Stalin, was cultivated among us for many years....

At present, we are concerned with a question which has immense importance for the Party now and for the future – with how the cult of the person of Stalin has been gradually growing, the cult which became at a certain specific stage the source of a whole series of exceedingly serious and grave perversions of Party principles, of Party democracy, of revolutionary legality....

Allow me first of all to remind you how severely the classics of Marxism-Leninism denounced every manifestation of the cult of the individual....<sup>6</sup>

During Lenin's life the Central Committee was a real expression of collective leadership: of the Party and of the nation. Being a militant Marxist-revolutionist, always unyielding in matters of principle, Lenin never imposed his views upon his co-workers by force. He tried to convince. He patiently explained his opinions to others....

Fearing the future fate of the Party and of the Soviet nation, V. I. Lenin made a completely correct characterization of Stalin. He pointed out that it was necessary to consider transferring

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<sup>6</sup> There follow examples from Marx, Engels, and especially Lenin.

Stalin from the position of [Party] General Secretary because Stalin was excessively rude, did not have a proper attitude toward his comrades, and was capricious and abused his power.

As later events have proven, Lenin's anxiety was justified. In the first period after Lenin's death, Stalin still paid attention to his advice, but later he began to disregard the serious admonitions of Vladimir Ilyich. When we analyze the practice of Stalin in regard to the direction of the Party and of the country, when we pause to consider everything that Stalin perpetrated, we must be convinced that Lenin's fears were justified....

We have to consider seriously and analyze correctly this matter in order that we may preclude any possibility of a repetition in any form whatever of what took place during the life of Stalin, who absolutely did not tolerate collegiality in leadership and in work, and who practiced brutal violence, not only toward everything which opposed him, but also toward that which seemed, to his capricious and despotic character, contrary to his concepts.

Stalin acted not through persuasion, explanation and patient cooperation with people, but by imposing his concepts and demanding absolute submission to his opinion. Whoever opposed these concepts or tried to prove his [own] viewpoint and the correctness of his [own] position was doomed to removal from the leadership collective and to subsequent moral and physical annihilation....

Stalin originated the concept "enemy of the people." This term automatically made it unnecessary that the ideological errors of a man or men engaged in a controversy be proven. It made possible the use of the cruelest repression, violating all norms of revolutionary legality, against anyone who in any way disagreed with Stalin, against those who were only suspected of hostile intent, against those who had bad reputations. The concept "enemy of the people" actually eliminated the possibility of any kind of ideological fight or the making of one's views known on this or that issue, even [issues] of a practical nature. On the whole, the only proof of guilt actually used, against all norms of current legal science, was the "confession" of the accused himself. As subsequent probing has proven, "confessions" were acquired through physical pressures against the accused. This led to glaring violations of revolutionary legality and to the fact that many entirely innocent individuals – [persons] who in the past had defended the Party line – became victims.

We must assert that, in regard to those persons who in their time had opposed the Party line, there were often no sufficiently serious reasons for their physical annihilation. The formula "enemy of the people" was specifically introduced for the purpose of physically annihilating such individuals.

It is a fact that many persons who were later annihilated as enemies of the Party and people had worked with Lenin during his life. Some of these persons had made errors during Lenin's life, but, despite this, Lenin benefited by their work; he corrected them and he did everything possible to retain them in the ranks of the Party; he induced them to follow him....

[L]et us take the example of the Trotskyites. At present, after a sufficiently long historical period, we can speak about the fight with the Trotskyites with complete calm and can analyze

this matter with sufficient objectivity. After all, around Trotsky were people whose origin cannot by any means be traced to bourgeois society. Part of them belonged to the Party intelligentsia and a certain part were recruited from among the workers. We can name many individuals who, in their time, joined the Trotskyites; however, these same individuals took an active part in the workers' movement before the Revolution, during the Socialist October Revolution itself, and also in the consolidation of the victory of this greatest of revolutions. Many of them broke with Trotskyism and returned to Leninist positions. Was it necessary to annihilate such people? We are deeply convinced that, had Lenin lived, such an extreme method would not have been used against any of them.

Such are only a few historical facts. But can it be said that Lenin did not decide to use even the most severe means against enemies of the Revolution when this was actually necessary? No; no one can say this. Vladimir Ilyich demanded uncompromising dealings with the enemies of the Revolution and of the working class and when necessary resorted ruthlessly to such methods. You will recall only V. I. Lenin's fight with the Socialist Revolutionary organizers of the anti-Soviet uprising, with the counterrevolutionary kulaks in 1918 and with others, when Lenin without hesitation used the most extreme methods against the enemies. Lenin used such methods, however, only against actual class enemies and not against those who blunder, who err, and whom it was possible to lead through ideological influence and even retain in the leadership. Lenin used severe methods only in the most necessary cases, when the exploiting classes were still in existence and were vigorously opposing the Revolution, when the struggle for survival was decidedly assuming the sharpest forms, even including a Civil War.

Stalin, on the other hand, used extreme methods and mass repressions at a time when the Revolution was already victorious, when the Soviet state was strengthened, when the exploiting classes were already liquidated and socialist relations were rooted solidly in all phases of national economy, when our Party was politically consolidated and had strengthened itself both numerically and ideologically....

Having at its disposal numerous data showing brutal willfulness toward Party cadres, the Central Committee has created a Party commission under the control of the Central Committee's Presidium. It has been charged with investigating what made possible mass repressions against the majority of the Central Committee members and candidates elected at the 17th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks).

The commission has become acquainted with a large quantity of materials in the NKVD archives and with other documents. It has established many facts pertaining to the fabrication of cases against Communists, to false accusations, [and] to glaring abuses of socialist legality, which resulted in the death of innocent people. It became apparent that many Party, Soviet and economic activists who in 1937-1938 were branded "enemies" were actually never enemies, spies, wreckers, etc., but were always honest Communists. They were merely stigmatized [as enemies]. Often, no longer able to bear barbaric tortures, they charged themselves (at the order of the investigative judges/falsifiers) with all kinds of grave and unlikely crimes.

The commission has presented to the Central Committee's Presidium lengthy and documented materials pertaining to mass repressions against the delegates to the 17th Party Congress and

against members of the Central Committee elected at that Congress. These materials have been studied by the Presidium.

It was determined that of the 139 members and candidates of the Central Committee who were elected at the 17th Congress, 98 persons, i.e., 70 per cent, were arrested and shot (mostly in 1937-1938). [*Indignation in the hall*] What was the composition of the delegates to the 17th Congress? It is known that 80 per cent of the voting participants of the 17th Congress joined the Party during the years of conspiracy before the Revolution and during the Civil War, i.e. meaning before 1921. By social origin the basic mass of the delegates to the Congress were workers (60 per cent of the voting members).

For this reason, it is inconceivable that a Congress so composed could have elected a Central Committee in which a majority [of the members] would prove to be enemies of the Party. The only reasons why 70 per cent of the Central Committee members and candidates elected at the 17th Congress were branded as enemies of the Party and of the people were because honest Communists were slandered, accusations against them were fabricated, and revolutionary legality was gravely undermined.

The same fate met not only Central Committee members but also the majority of the delegates to the 17th Party Congress. Of 1,966 delegates with either voting or advisory rights, 1,108 persons were arrested on charges of anti-revolutionary crimes, i.e., decidedly more than a majority. This very fact shows how absurd, wild and contrary to common sense were the charges of counterrevolutionary crimes made out, as we now see, against a majority of participants at the 17th Party Congress.

[*Indignation in the hall*]

We should recall that the 17th Party Congress is known historically as the Congress of Victors. Delegates to the Congress were active participants in the building of our socialist state; many of them suffered and fought for Party interests during the pre-Revolutionary years in the conspiracy and at the civil-war fronts; they fought their enemies valiantly and often nervelessly looked into the face of death.

How, then, can we believe that such people could prove to be “two-faced” and had joined the camps of the enemies of socialism during the era after the political liquidation of Zinovievites, Trotskyites and rightists and after the great accomplishments of socialist construction? This was the result of the abuse of power by Stalin, who began to use mass terror against Party cadres....

Lenin taught that the application of revolutionary violence is necessitated by the resistance of the exploiting classes, and this referred to the era when the exploiting classes existed and were powerful. As soon as the nation’s political situation had improved, when in January 1920 the Red Army took Rostov and thus won a most important victory over [General A. I. ] Denikin, Lenin instructed [Felix] Dzerzhinsky to stop mass terror and to abolish the death penalty....

Stalin deviated from these clear and plain precepts of Lenin. Stalin put the Party and the NKVD up to the use of mass terror when the exploiting classes had been liquidated in our country and when there were no serious reasons for the use of extraordinary mass terror.

This terror was actually directed not at the remnants of the defeated exploiting classes but against the honest workers of the Party and of the Soviet state; against them were made lying, slanderous and absurd accusations concerning “two-facedness,” “espionage,” “sabotage,” preparation of fictitious “plots,” etc....

An example of vile provocation, of odious falsification and of criminal violation of revolutionary legality is the case of the former candidate for the Central Committee Politbiuro, one of the most eminent workers of the Party and of the Soviet Government, comrade [Robert] Eikhe, who had been a Party member since 1905.

*[Commotion in the hall]*

Comrade Eikhe was arrested on April 29, 1938 on the basis of slanderous materials, without the sanction of the [State] Prosecutor of the USSR. This was finally received 15 months after the arrest.

The investigation of Eikhe’s case was made in a manner that most brutally violated Soviet legality and was accompanied by willfulness and falsification.

Under torture, Eikhe was forced to sign a protocol of his confession prepared in advance by the investigative judges. In it, he and several other eminent Party workers were accused of anti-Soviet activity.

On October 1, 1939 Eikhe sent his declaration to Stalin in which he categorically denied his guilt and asked for an examination of his case. In the declaration he wrote: “There is no more bitter misery than to sit in the jail of a government for which I have always fought.”

A second declaration of Eikhe has been preserved, which he sent to Stalin on October 27, 1939. In it [Eikhe] cited facts very convincingly and countered the slanderous accusations made against him, arguing that this provocatory accusation was on one hand the work of real Trotskyites whose arrests he had sanctioned as First Secretary of the West Siberian Regional Party Committee and who conspired in order to take revenge on him, and, on the other hand, the result of the base falsification of materials by the investigative judges....

On February 2, 1940, Eikhe was brought before the court. Here he did not confess any guilt and said as follows:

“In all the so-called confessions of mine there is not one letter written by me with the exception of my signatures under the protocols, which were forced from me. I have made my confession under pressure from the investigative judge, who from the time of my arrest tormented me. After that I began to write all this nonsense.... The most important thing for me is to tell the

court, the Party and Stalin that I am not guilty. I have never been guilty of any conspiracy. I will die believing in the truth of Party policy as I have believed in it during my whole life.”

On February 4, Eikhe was shot.

*[Indignation in the hall]*

It has been definitely established now that Eikhe’s case was fabricated. He has been rehabilitated posthumously....

Facts prove that many abuses were made on Stalin’s orders without reckoning with any norms of Party and Soviet legality. Stalin was a very distrustful man, sickly suspicious. We know this from our work with him. He could look at a man and say: “Why are your eyes so shifty today?” or “Why are you turning so much today and avoiding to look me directly in the eyes?” The sickly suspicion created in him a general distrust even toward eminent Party workers whom he had known for years. Everywhere and in everything he saw “enemies,” “two-facers” and “spies.” Possessing unlimited power, he indulged in great willfulness and stifled people morally as well as physically. A situation was created where one could not express one’s own volition....

The power accumulated in the hands of one person, Stalin, led to serious consequences during the Great Patriotic War.

When we look at many of our novels, films and historical-scientific studies, the role of Stalin in the Patriotic War appears to be entirely improbable. Stalin had foreseen everything. The Soviet Army, on the basis of a strategic plan prepared by Stalin long before, used the tactics of so-called “active defense,” i.e., tactics which, as we know, allowed the Germans to come up to Moscow and Stalingrad. Using such tactics, the Soviet Army, supposedly thanks only to Stalin’s genius, turned to the offensive and subdued the enemy. The epic victory gained through the armed might of the land of the Soviets, through our heroic people, is ascribed in this type of novel, film and “scientific study” as being completely due to the strategic genius of Stalin.

We have to analyze this matter carefully because it has a tremendous significance not only from the historical, but especially from the political, educational and practical points of view. What are the facts of this matter?

Before the war, our press and all our political-educational work was characterized by its bragging tone: When an enemy violates the holy Soviet soil, then for every blow of the enemy we will answer with three, and we will battle the enemy on his soil and we will win without much harm to ourselves. But these positive statements were not based in all areas on concrete facts, which would actually guarantee the immunity of our borders.

During the war and after the war, Stalin advanced the thesis that the tragedy our nation experienced in the first part of the war was the result of an “unexpected” attack by the Germans against the Soviet Union. But, comrades, this is completely untrue. As soon as Hitler came to

power in Germany he assigned to himself the task of liquidating Communism. The fascists were saying this openly. They did not hide their plans.

In order to attain this aggressive end, all sorts of pacts and blocs were created, such as the famous Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis. Many facts from the prewar period clearly showed that Hitler was going all out to begin a war against the Soviet state, and that he had concentrated large armies, together with armored units, near the Soviet borders.

Documents which have now been published show that [as early as] April 3, 1941 Churchill, through his ambassador to the USSR, [Sir Stafford] Cripps, personally warned Stalin that the Germans had begun regrouping their armed units with the intent of attacking the Soviet Union.

It is self-evident that Churchill did not do this at all because of his friendly feeling toward the Soviet nation. He had in this his own imperialistic goals – to bring Germany and the USSR into a bloody war and thereby to strengthen the position of the British Empire.

All the same, Churchill affirmed in his writings that he sought to “warn Stalin and call his attention to the danger which threatened him.” Churchill stressed this repeatedly in his dispatches of April 18 and on the following days. However, Stalin took no heed of these warnings. What is more, Stalin ordered that no credence be given to information of this sort, so as not to provoke the initiation of military operations....

Despite these particularly grave warnings, the necessary steps were not taken to prepare the country properly for defense and to prevent it from being caught unawares.

Did we have time and the capabilities for such preparations? Yes, we had the time and the capability. Our industry was already so developed that it was capable of supplying fully the Soviet Army with everything that it needed. This is proven by the fact that, although during the war we lost almost half of our industry and important industrial and food-production areas as the result of enemy occupation of the Ukraine, Northern Caucasus and other western parts of the country, the Soviet nation was still able to organize the production of military equipment in the eastern parts of the country, to install there equipment taken from the western industrial areas, and to supply our armed forces with everything necessary to destroy the enemy.

Had our industry been mobilized properly and in time to supply the Army with the necessary materiel, our wartime losses would have been decidedly smaller. However such mobilization had not been started in time. And already in the first days of the war it became evident that our Army was badly armed. We did not have enough artillery, tanks and planes to throw the enemy back....

This pertained, alas, not only to tanks, artillery and planes. At the outbreak of the war we did not even have sufficient numbers of rifles to arm the mobilized manpower. I recall that in those days I telephoned from Kiev to comrade [Georgy] Malenkov and told him, “People have volunteered for the new Army [units] and are demanding weapons. You must send us arms.”

Malenkov answered me, “We cannot send you arms. We are sending all our rifles to Leningrad and you have to arm yourselves.”

*[Movement in the hall]*

Such was the armament situation....

Very grievous consequences, especially with regard to the beginning of the war, followed Stalin’s annihilation of many military commanders and political workers during 1937-1941 because of his suspiciousness and through slanderous accusations. During these years repressions were instituted against certain parts of our military cadres beginning literally at the company- and battalion-commander levels and extending to higher military centers. During this time, the cadre of leaders who had gained military experience in Spain and in the Far East was almost completely liquidated.

The policy of large-scale repression against military cadres led also to undermined military discipline, because for several years officers of all ranks and even soldiers in Party and Komsomol cells were taught to “unmask” their superiors as hidden enemies.

*[Movement in the hall]*

It is natural that this caused a negative influence on the state of military discipline in the initial stage of the war....

When an exceptionally serious situation for our Army developed in the Kharkov region in 1942, we correctly decided to drop an operation whose objective was to encircle [the city]. The real situation at that time would have threatened our Army with fatal consequences if this operation were continued.

We communicated this to Stalin, stating that the situation demanded changes in [our] operational plans so that the enemy would be prevented from liquidating a sizable concentration of our Army.

Contrary to common sense, Stalin rejected our suggestion. He issued the order to continue the encirclement of Kharkov, despite the fact that at this time many [of our own] Army concentrations actually were threatened with encirclement and liquidation.

I telephoned to [Marshal Alexander] Vasilevsky and begged him: “Alexander Mikhailovich, take a map” – Vasilevsky is present here – “and show comrade Stalin the situation that has developed.” We should note that Stalin planned operations on a globe.

*[Animation in the hall]*

Yes, comrades, he used to take a globe and trace the front line on it....

On one occasion after the war, during a meeting [between] Stalin [and] members of the Politbiuro, Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan mentioned that Khrushchev must have been right when he telephoned concerning the Kharkov operation and that it was unfortunate that his suggestion had not been accepted.

You should have seen Stalin's fury! How could it be admitted that he, Stalin, had not been right! He is after all a "genius," and a genius cannot help but be right! Everyone can err, but Stalin considered that he never erred, that he was always right. He never acknowledged to anyone that he made any mistake, large or small, despite the fact that he made more than a few in matters of theory and in his practical activity....

All the more shameful was the fact that after our great victory over the enemy, which cost us so dearly, Stalin began to downgrade many of the commanders who had contributed so much to it. [This was] because Stalin ruled out any chance that services rendered at the front might be credited to anyone but himself.

Stalin was very much interested in assessments of comrade [Grigory] Zhukov as a military leader. He asked me often for my opinion of Zhukov. I told him then, "I have known Zhukov for a long time. He is a good general and a good military leader."

After the war Stalin began to tell all kinds of nonsense about Zhukov. Among it [was] the following: "You praised Zhukov, but he does not deserve it. They say that before each operation at the front Zhukov used to behave as follows: He used to take a handful of earth, smell it and say, 'We can begin the attack,' or its opposite, 'The planned operation cannot be carried out.'" I stated at the time, "Comrade Stalin, I do not know who invented this, but it is not true."

It is possible that Stalin himself invented these things for the purpose of minimizing the role and military talents of Marshal Zhukov.

In this connection, Stalin very energetically popularized himself as a great leader. In various ways he tried to inculcate the notion that the victories gained by the Soviet nation during the Great Patriotic War were all due to the courage, daring, and genius of Stalin and of no one else....

Not Stalin, but the Party as a whole, the Soviet Government, our heroic Army, its talented leaders and brave soldiers, the whole Soviet nation – these are the ones who assured victory in the Great Patriotic War.

*[Tempestuous and prolonged applause]*

Central Committee members, Ministers, our economic leaders, the leaders of Soviet culture, directors of territorial-party and Soviet organizations, engineers, and technicians – every one of them in his own place of work generously gave of his strength and knowledge toward ensuring victory over the enemy.

Exceptional heroism was shown by our hard core – surrounded by glory are our whole working class, our kolkhoz peasantry, the Soviet intelligentsia, who under the leadership of Party organizations overcame untold hardships and bearing the hardships of war, and devoted all their strength to the cause of the Fatherland's defense.

Our Soviet women accomplished great and brave deeds during the war. They bore on their backs the heavy load of production work in the factories, on the kolkhozes, and in various economic and cultural sectors. Many women participated directly in the Great Patriotic War at the front. Our brave youth contributed immeasurably, both at the front and at home, to the defense of the Soviet Fatherland and to the annihilation of the enemy.

The services of Soviet soldiers, of our commanders and political workers of all ranks are immortal. After the loss of a considerable part of the Army in the initial war months, they did not lose their heads and were able to reorganize during the course of combat. Over the course of the war they created and toughened a strong, heroic Army. They not only withstood [our] strong and cunning enemy's pressure but smashed him.

The magnificent, heroic deeds of hundreds of millions of people of the East and of the West during the fight against the threat of fascist subjugation which loomed before us will live for centuries, [indeed] for millennia in the memory of thankful humanity.

*[Thunderous applause]*

The main roles and the main credit for the victorious ending of the war belong to our Communist Party, to the armed forces of the Soviet Union, and to the tens of millions of Soviet people uplifted by the Party.

*[Thunderous and prolonged applause]*

Comrades, let us reach for some other facts. The Soviet Union justly is considered a model multinational state because we have assured in practice the equality and friendship of all [of the] peoples living in our great Fatherland.

All the more monstrous are those acts whose initiator was Stalin and which were rude violations of the basic Leninist principles [behind our] Soviet state's nationalities policies. We refer to the mass deportations of entire nations from their places of origin, together with all Communists and Komsomols without any exception. This deportation was not dictated by any military considerations.

Thus, at the end of 1943, when there already had been a permanent change of fortune at the front in favor of the Soviet Union, a decision concerning the deportation of all the Karachai from the lands on which they lived was taken and executed.

In the same period, at the end of December, 1943, the same lot befell the [Kalmyks] of the Kalmyk Autonomous Republic. In March, 1944, all the Chechens and Ingush were deported and the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Republic was liquidated. In April, 1944, all Balkars were

deported from the territory of the Kabardino-Balkar Autonomous Republic to faraway places and their Republic itself was renamed the Autonomous Kabardian Republic.

Ukrainians avoided meeting this fate only because there were too many of them and there was no place to which to deport them. Otherwise, [Stalin] would have deported them also.

*[Laughter and animation in the hall]*

No Marxist-Leninist, no man of common sense can grasp how it is possible to make whole nations responsible for inimical activity, including women, children, old people, Communists and Komsomols, to use mass repression against them, and to expose them to misery and suffering for the hostile acts of individual persons or groups of persons....

The willfulness of Stalin showed itself not only in decisions concerning the internal life of the country but also in the international relations of the Soviet Union.

The July Plenum of the Central Committee studied in detail the reasons for the development of conflict with Yugoslavia. It was a shameful role that Stalin played here. The “Yugoslav affair” contained no problems that could not have been solved through Party discussions among comrades. There was no significant basis for the development of this “affair.” It was completely possible to have prevented the rupture of relations with that country. This does not mean, however, that Yugoslav leaders made no mistakes or had no shortcomings. But these mistakes and shortcomings were magnified in a monstrous manner by Stalin, resulting in the break off of relations with a friendly country....

Or let us take the matter of the Stalin Prizes.

*[Movement in the hall]*

Not even the Tsars created prizes that they named after themselves.

Stalin recognized as the best a text of the national anthem of the Soviet Union which contains not a word about the Communist Party; it contains, however, the following unprecedented praise of Stalin: “Stalin brought us up in loyalty to the people. He inspired us to great toil and deeds.”

In these lines of the anthem, the whole educational, directional and inspirational activity of the great Leninist Party is ascribed to Stalin. This is, of course, a clear deviation from Marxism-Leninism, a clear debasing and belittling of the role of the Party. We should add for your information that the Presidium of the Central Committee has already passed a resolution concerning the composition of a new text of the anthem, which will reflect the role of the people and the role of the Party.

*[Loud, prolonged applause]...*

Comrades! We must abolish the cult of the individual decisively, once and for all; we must draw the proper conclusions concerning both ideological-theoretical and practical work. It is necessary for this purpose:

First, in a Bolshevik manner to condemn and to eradicate the cult of the individual as alien to Marxism-Leninism and not consonant with the principles of Party leadership and the norms of Party life, and to fight inexorably all attempts at bringing back this practice in one form or another....

Second, to continue systematically and consistently the work done by the Party's Central Committee during the last years, a work characterized by minute observation in all Party organizations, from the bottom to the top, of the Leninist principles of Party leadership, characterized, above all, by the main principle of collective leadership, characterized by the observance of the norms of Party life described in the statutes of our Party, and, finally, characterized by the wide practice of criticism and self-criticism.

Third, to restore completely the Leninist principles of Soviet socialist democracy, expressed in the Constitution of the Soviet Union, to fight willfulness of individuals abusing their power. The evil caused by acts violating revolutionary socialist legality which have accumulated during a long time as a result of the negative influence of the cult of the individual has to be completely corrected.

Comrades! The 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has manifested with a new strength the unshakable unity of our Party, its cohesiveness around the Central Committee, its resolute will to accomplish the great task of building communism.

*[Tumultuous applause]*

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