

maneuver to isolate again his Presidium opposition. In the June 1955 plenum he removed Molotov from the control of foreign affairs and scheduled a 20th Congress for February 1956. He strengthened his position in the Secretariat with the addition of Shepilov, Aristov, and Belyaev. In preparation for the forthcoming Congress he stepped up the replacement of provincial first secretaries with his own nominees. He appeared to be trying to split his Presidium opposition into several groups on various issues.

The issue of de-Stalinization, which had troubled each of the lieutenants in their personal strategies, was to come to a head in the 20th Congress. After vacillating for nearly 3 years a collective decision to downgrade Stalin appears to have been made in January of 1956. The precise form of the program probably had not been determined by the time the 20th Congress met.

Khrushchev, still not in full control of the apparatus, had not been able to secure a majority in the Presidium decisive enough to destroy his rivals, despite the promotion of his associates, Kirichenko and Suslov.⁴⁹ Khrushchev's intention in the 20th Congress was probably to secure a Presidium more favorable to the development of his plans. "We can assume that anyone in Khrushchev's position is compelled by the logic of his position to strive for such a result."⁵⁰ The opposite is also true. Those, such as Mikoyan, not competing for full power,

must work tirelessly to provide counterweights. A balance between conflicting forces requires constant maneuver by all concerned in a collective leadership. The system is not self-regulating and crises come often as the collegium becomes successively less collective with the majority made up increasingly of the satraps of the ultimate winner. Going into the 20th Congress Khrushchev seemed, while winning majorities for his policy issues, always to be opposed by a majority (made up of his enemies and those disposed to give his policies a trial) on the matter of a decisive purge of his opposition.

The 20th Congress gave evidence of a dramatic struggle, probably fought within the Presidium, on the nature and extent of the de-Stalinization campaign. With Mikoyan leading the attack, Khrushchev put together, apparently hastily, a compromise platform, delivered in his famous Secret Speech, which won a majority of the Presidium and gave him a base for further attack against Malenkov, Molotov, and Kaganovich who were closely associated with Stalin's crimes. The achievement of this majority was probably facilitated by even those opposed to the platform who were unwilling to face the alternative of jeopardizing the entire ruling group through a factional appeal to the Central Committee of the Congress. They may also have been influenced because Khrushchev's violent attack on Stalin served to slow his own climb to the status of one-man rule. ⁵¹

Khrushchev made gains in the new Central Committee submitted to the Congress for approval.

Following this Congress a new Party organ, the Bureau for the RSFSR, was created, headed by Khrushchev and composed entirely of his associates. In effect it interposed over the Russian "Republic" one more Khrushchev organ between the Party Secretariat and a large part of the Central Committee.

After the 20th Congress, a renewed attack on the personality cult resulted in a new liberal line in the cultural field, led by Shepilov, and liberalization in the satellites. Initially Khrushchev and his allies seemed to be strengthened; Molotov and Kaganovich lost key posts in June 1956.

We have seen that Khrushchev's opposition was returned to power in September and October 1956 by a policy issue more important than institutional considerations-i. e., the imminent collapse of Khrushchev's eastern European policies. Molotov, returning to the Ministry of State Control, achieved a strong position from which to harass Khrushchev's operations and he moved to produce a harder line by his supervision of cultural affairs. There was a moderate swing to restore Stalin's status. The December 1956 plenum, citing the failure of Khrushchev's Sixth Five-Year Plan, countered Khrushchev's previous efforts at

economic decentralization by making Gosekonomkomissiya (The Economic Operations Bureau) so powerful that only the Presidium could overrule it. Malenkov again moved up in status in the government.⁵²

In the February 1957 plenum, Khrushchev countered. There was less criticism of the economic program of the 20th Congress; there was praise of the "Virgin Lands" project and of the emphasis on heavy industry. Gosekonomkomissiya's role was to be deemphasized. Kozlov became a candidate member of the Presidium. Shepilov replaced Molotov in the supervision of cultural affairs. These were the first steps in Khrushchev's effort to break the December-January deadlock. The second was a great campaign to decentralize the economic bureaucracy to break its power. A raging controversy ensued. In May 1957 Khrushchev forced his economic plan through the Supreme Soviet with no member of the Presidium speaking for it other than his picked associates. Simultaneously during this period a moderate cult of personality campaign went on for Khrushchev. Perhaps the economic reorganization itself, or perhaps the strong-arm methods of forcing it through, brought Khrushchev once more up against a Presidial majority. The leadership locked in a decisive struggle. The "Anti-Party Group" majority apparently feared a Khrushchev coup at this time. The Presidium went into session on June 18 for

a convulsive battle lasting until a plenum of the Central Committee, hastily convened, began on June 22, 1957. Subsequent events have confirmed that Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich, Bulganin, Pervukhin, Shepilov, Saburov, and Voroshilov, eight of the eleven members of the Presidium, initially opposed Khrushchev. But Khrushchev held out. Whether by threat to invoke the police under his associate, Serov, or the Army whose spokesman, Zhukov, was clearly with him; or whether, more subtly, by preventing the press or radio from printing the Presidium decision; or whether by invoking the right of the Central Committee to overrule the Presidium; Khrushchev forced the more vacillating members of the "Anti-Party Group" to shift back to him. True majority rule in the Presidium ended. Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich, and Shepilov were removed from the Presidium and denounced.⁵³

Despite the many charges laid against the group, they were not brought to trial. Possibly even after the June 1957 plenum there remained a majority of the Presidium unwilling to permit Khrushchev to carry revenge to an extreme.

Thus, the final, nearly victorious thrust of the economic bureaucracy was defeated.

Chapter III

The Final Consolidation: Intra-Party Maneuvers, 1957-1961

As reported in detail in Chapter II, four months after his Anti-Party victory in June 1957, Khrushchev removed Zhukov and restored political control over the Army. This eliminated the last of the institutional threats to the Party. Twenty years after Stalin had seized absolute power Khrushchev restored the Party machine to hegemony over Soviet society.⁵⁴ Yet the events of the subsequent four years now require analysis in order to provide a better understanding of the earlier portion of the struggle and to evaluate the present status of the regime. These last four years have witnessed a step-by-step strategy on the part of Khrushchev, interpreted by one school of thought as eliminating the restraints placed upon him by the compromise victory over the "Anti-Party Group" and by another as improving the personal flavor and efficiency of his regime. The disagreement of analysts relates to the degree to which these moves portended Khrushchev's personal power within the reestablished dictatorship of the Party. The "weak Khrushchev" school believes, for example, that the increases in the size and power of the Secretariat in 1957 (in which all but one of the full Presidial members served on the Secretariat) were to support Khrushchev as against the "Anti-Party

Group"⁵⁵, because at that time his interests and those of the apparatchiks not truly dependent on him were identical vis a vis their rivals in State and Army. The "strong Khrushchev" school of expert opinion holds that Khrushchev was clearly a dictatorial leader with control over the flow of personnel, at that time. Both schools agree that Khrushchev's efforts to get a blood purge have met resistance (in 1958, 1959, and 1961) but to the "strong" group this merely means that there are limits to the power of a dictator who rules without terror whereas to the "weak" school this is confirmation that Khrushchev is forced by the logic of his position to conduct a struggle to eliminate all who are not fully beholden to him. And thus, in what is perhaps the major power issue, he does not have a majority. The "weak" school visualizes Khrushchev as having to take his recalcitrant Presidium to six different Central Committee plenums in 1958 to win support on major policies - i.e., agriculture, industrial decentralization, the new Economic Plan, and the "Anti-Party Group" issues. In similar vein, this school sees the 21st Congress of January 1959 as having been carefully delimited to a "Special" status (and therefore legally estopped from electing a new Central Committee) to prevent Khrushchev from presenting a new slate of more malleable Presidium members to a Khrushchev-dominated Central Committee. An extension of this reasoning postulates that a balance of members in the Central

Committee, last elected in the 1956 - 20th Congress, was thus maintained until the October 1961 - 22nd Congress as a potential majority against Khrushchev should his policies have become too dictatorial.⁵⁶

The "weak" school visualized Khrushchev as having to extricate himself in 1959 from potential domestic trouble by ousting lieutenants responsible, under him, for certain policies. There were purges in several republics for insufficient resistance to nationalist tendencies in politics and culture. The "Virgin Lands" project in Kazakhstan was a failure again that year; Belyaev, First Secretary of the Party in Kazakhstan, and a Presidium member, was purged.⁵⁷ Kirichenko, who, as Khrushchev's senior lieutenant, had been in charge of selection of cadres through his Party Organs Department, was purged. The "weak" school considered this to be Khrushchev's tactic to avoid pressures against himself for a too liberal attitude toward national elements within the republics.⁵⁸ The "strong" school visualizes all of these purges as non-terroristic versions of the purges Stalin used to conduct to maintain his reputation for infallibility when his lieutenants failed and believed that Khrushchev was clearly dominant at the 21st Congress.⁵⁹

In the May and July plenums of 1960, Khrushchev formalized the demotion of his sacrificed lieutenants, retired Voroshilov,⁶⁰ and began the replacement of new blood in all four power institutions

starting with the lower echelons. Kosygin, Podgorny, and Polyansky were promoted to full Presidium membership.⁶¹ The latter two are treated by both schools as true Khrushchev disciples. F. Kozlov joined the Secretariat where he rapidly became the acknowledged senior lieutenant.⁶²

As a result of the 1960 changes the majority of the seats in the Presidium were no longer held by the Secretariat, but by Khrushchev and three completely separate groupings of his subordinates: four from the Secretariat, two members and two candidates from the RSFSR Bureau and four from the government. This represented a total of at least eleven of the fifteen full Presidium members.⁶³ Although the "weak" school believed that this organization did not increase Khrushchev's power at that time⁶⁴, the "strong" school held that the Presidium has not had great significance since the 1957 consolidation of the dictatorship. To this writer the reorganization appears to be a possible major effort by Khrushchev to build a base of personal support within the State bureaucracy equivalent to that he had by then achieved in the central Party and RSFSR Bureau organizations.

The summit meeting with its interrelated U2 episode and the polemical battle with the Chinese Communists, both in 1960, apparently caused a critical review within top Soviet organs. There is once again widespread disagreement among experts concerning the extent, if any,

to which Khrushchev's power was reduced before and after these events.⁶⁵ The "strong" school holds that the Soviet political machinations of this period were again merely the response of an unchallenged leader, "not in danger of being overthrown or put in tutelage by a majority of the Presidium"⁶⁶, but merely taking "account of the weight of social forces and movement of opinion in the leading strata of society upon which his power is based."⁶⁷ The "weak" school sees Khrushchev seriously checkmated by a Presidial majority, maneuvering sweepingly to save himself at the price of temporarily downgrading his long-time ally, Mikoyan.⁶⁸

The final set piece in the intra-Party phase of the consolidation, at the time of completion of this research, is the 22nd Congress, held in Moscow in October 1961. With regard to the power aspects this Congress must be analyzed in two areas: personnel and organizational changes in the top bodies; and the major factional and planning issues taken up by the Congress. Again in both categories the evidence is controversial.

Appendix I illustrates the personnel and organizational changes: The Presidium was reduced from 14 to 11 full members by the elimination of Aristov, Furtseva, Ignatov, and Mukhitdinov, and by the addition of Voronev. Its Candidature was reduced from 9 to 5 by the elimination of Kalnberzin, Kirilenko, Korotchenko, Pervukhin, and

Pospelov, by Voronev's promotion out of the body, and by the addition of Rashidov and Shcherbitsky. The Secretariat was increased, this time from 5 to 9 by the elimination of Mukhitdinov and the addition of Demichev, Ilichev, Ponomarev, Shelepin, and Spiridonov.

On 1 December 1961, the writer, after study of the speeches given before the Congress and the voluminous press reports, wrote a letter expressing his tentative conclusions to one expert member of each of the two schools on Khrushchev's status. These letters, together with the replies from the two experts, have been reproduced in Appendix II. Mr. Myron Rush postulates that the personnel changes of the Congress are fully sponsored by Khrushchev. Mr. Robert Conquest, on the other hand, considers that only 3 full members of the Presidium (Brezhnev, Podgorny, and Polyansky) and 3 candidates (Grishin, Mzhavanadze, and Shcherbitski) owe their careers entirely to his sponsorship. He further categorizes as independents the only 3 individuals besides Khrushchev who are members of both Presidium and Secretariat (Kozlov, Suslov, and Kuusinen). Moreover, among the new junior members of the Secretariat he assigns only Demichev fully to Khrushchev's camp although he finds that Ponomarev, Spiridonov, and Shelepin "have been speaking and acting to a Khrushchev brief over recent years"⁶⁹. My own research of all sources confirms to my satisfaction that these 3 new lieutenants are all products of

Khrushchev's empire. Moreover, on the same basis it seems necessary to add Voronev, the sole addition to full Presidial membership, and Ilichev, of the Secretariat, to Khrushchev's known satraps. Therefore, with these additions to those that Mr. Conquest identifies as Khrushchev's, I find at least 6 of the 9 in the Secretariat (Khrushchev, Demichev, Ilichev, Ponomarev, Shelepin, Spiridonov) and 5 of the 11 in the Presidium (Brezhnev, Khrushchev, Podgorny, Polyansky, and Voronev) who should be treated as fully committed to Khrushchev. Moreover the 73 year old Shvernik appears to have supported Khrushchev faithfully since his moderate deviation to Malenkov's "soft" line in the consumer-goods issue in 1953-55.⁷⁰ This researcher therefore finds significant support for the "strong" school in the complexion of the Secretariat and is not persuaded that an anti-Khrushchev majority is attainable in the Presidium, even if that organ remains decisive. In contra-position to Mr. Conquest's categorization of Kozlov as independent, an extremely well informed observer has pointed out to this writer that the likelihood of Kozlov's being anything but a completely loyal and able lieutenant of Khrushchev, is remote.⁷¹

In the field of factional and planning issues at the 22nd Congress, the views of the two experts are a reflection of their divergent interpretations of the political orientation of the lieutenants in the top organs. The representative of the "strong" school sees "Khrushchev's willingness

to take on the Chinese Communists, rake up Stalin's crimes once again -- and more publicly, hold fast to his humiliating terms for an agreement with the West in Berlin, and reopen the attack on the "Anti-Party Group" for having dared to oppose him in 1957"⁷² as an expression of confidence in his power base. The "weak" school makes the telling point that the large-scale and sensational moves, as often as not, have been Khrushchev's means of "breaking up a stalemate which is tending rather against him"⁷³ and sees his attack on the past as directed "against a praesidial majority centered perhaps on Kozlov and Kosygin".⁷⁴

Significantly, both experts agree that evidence from the 22nd Congress tends to show Khrushchev getting less than he asked for on Voroshilov; they come to differing conclusions as to the reasons.

It seems most likely, to this writer, that Khrushchev, in seeking for his own ends to rule without terror, must be responsive to the policy views of his senior advisors. Further, his ability gradually to win his long term objectives during the last four years is revealed by the steady progress he has made in forcing down the ladder and out of the Party the members of the "Anti-Party Group".⁷⁵ A powerful Khrushchev, able to resort to terror if he chooses but shrewd enough to recognize the additional problems this course might bring, would need to resort to the "Anti-Party Group" issue as a strong verbal weapon. The vituperation and threats would serve to frighten back into line those

leaders and institutions which find themselves in disagreement with his policies. It may not be too unrealistic to suggest that Khrushchev may even have preferred the drawn out nature of the downgrading of the remaining members of the Group in order to have available, longer, this tool for use against rising social forces. Similarly, Khrushchev's intensification of the de-Stalinization program may be seen as a cleansing action designed to sweep away the residue of conservative Stalinist dogma, attitudes, and downright inefficient habits which informed observers report have undoubtedly presented obstacles to Khrushchev's policies.

In summary, the full meaning of the signs and portents of the recent past in the enigmatic Soviet political scene are not available. Good scholars have come to significantly divergent conclusions using the same data. This writer finds that the preponderance of these inadequate signs point toward the conclusion that Khrushchev is, in fact, the dictatorial ruler of Russia, with a status similar to that occupied by Stalin in the period 1930-34. His grandiose policies, his de-Stalinization campaign, and his attacks on his former enemies, together with programs which seem to have been oriented to reestablish initiative, drive, and vitality in the Soviet domestic scene, give to the 1957-61 period the flavor of a legitimation drive. Khrushchev having won power in the first four years seems to have used the last four to seek

the aura of the charismatic ruler. Either by personal inclination or by cunning appreciation of the social and institutional pressures released by the post-Stalin power struggle, he seems unlikely to try to acquire the despotic power that Stalin achieved in his later years. If, as this writer believes to be the case, Khrushchev is truly master in his Party, then the policy and institutional conflicts of 1953-57, summarized in Chapter II, become of even greater import for it would then have been completely in this time and in this arena that the final battle was fully won.

Perhaps of greatest significance from the standpoint of the next succession struggle is that, as both schools agree, Khrushchev solicits advice, delegates, responds to those legitimate institutional pressures which do not threaten the regime, and operates as an astute oligarchic political leader rather than a complete despot. Throughout the analysis of the probability and nature of the succession crisis in the next two chapters, this central theme must be kept in mind: The spectre of Stalin's terror served as a restraining factor on social forces, institutions, and individual contenders in the last struggle; what will be the short and long term variant effects of Khrushchev's political form of restrained Party despotism.

Chapter IV

Probability of the Succession Struggle

"Never before has the unity of Soviet society been so monolithic--as at the present time."
Georgi Malenkov, Chairman, Council of Ministers, 8 August 1953; on Beria

A determination of the probability of the succession struggle requires analysis of the prospects for long-term survival of the regime, the existence or lack of traditional or legal mechanisms for replacement of a leader who dies, the feasibility and likelihood of designation of a successor while the leader lives, and the alternatives if the foregoing mechanisms are unavailable or unworkable.

Capability of the regime for survival. This is not a facet requiring long development. Certain autocracies in the past have shown an extraordinary capacity for survival. The Roman and several Oriental empires lasted hundreds of years as systems although there were dynastic changes. Such autocracies have generally perished through foreign invasion.⁷⁶ Modern totalitarian regimes possess the theoretical means to establish similar records of longevity with their militant ideology, single mass party, terroristic police control, control of effective means of communication, control of weapons systems, and central direction of social associations and group activities.⁷⁷ Historically Russia has shown a peculiar predisposition

for tyrannical rule - the composite result of devastating wars, the vastness of her area to be dominated from a central point, and the Tartar heritage.⁷⁸ Russia has now established in the stream of history a dynastic dictatorial rule consisting of a series of three personal dictatorships. Neither of the reasonable schools of disagreement over the degree of Khrushchev's personal rule have forecast a breakup of the Party regime in his era. Once the dictatorial regime has survived a given succession crisis, the inherent cycle facing the new dictatorship in Soviet Russia may be summarized as: a stable dictatorship, the inevitable succession crisis, resolution or dissolution.⁷⁹ This certainty of a forthcoming succession struggle is, in any tyranny, an influence during the dictator's rule becoming paramount as his health becomes poor or as he grows old.

Selection and legitimation. In a constitutional republic the succession problem is eliminated, in a sense, because rulers are periodically changed under a constitution which is self-perpetuating through an amending procedure. The act of election not only determines the selection of the next leader but automatically confers legitimacy. Many historical despotisms were spared the problem of selection and legitimation through the device of blood inheritance which conferred the rule of the father on the son or nearest heir.

In the Soviet system, on the other hand, the problem of succession has presented itself anew each time.⁸⁰ By retaining the outward, formal constitutional structure it has been able to fall back on a facade of legality for certain features, to control the form and arena of the struggle. But in neither succession did the settlement eventuate by a democratic process from below, since the dynamics required, such as freedom of the press and competing parties, were non-existent.⁸¹ Yet the only workable alternative to democratic or traditional determination of the successor is an autocratic one - and the autocrat is dead, having ruled successfully by fragmenting the power of all subordinates. The result has been the maneuver of these fragments in a kind of groping, empirical, dog eat dog, selection process, from which the winner, even as Khrushchev seems to be doing in this era, must later legitimize his rule. This empirical struggle is compounded by the lack of an established center of decision-making in the Soviet union. Decisive authority or internal sovereignty has resided at different times in the Presidium, the Party Central Committee, the Party Congress, and the Secretariat of the CPSU. This very question of where the authority resides has been fought over by key figures in the succession crisis and has been resolved by vote only when no faction had the power to enforce a decision.

However, the major contribution of Khrushchev to Soviet Communism may well be that he has developed a structure in which the convulsive nature of the succession struggle has a higher probability of being confined to the Party itself - a "halfway house" to legitimation. The succession necessarily rests on the legitimation of the government's power. It exposes a regime's authority to its greatest strain, since the passing away of the ruler calls not only his but the system's authority into question.⁸² Stalin had carried his attenuation of the Party to such an extreme that, with the break-up of his personal office, the instruments of power were relatively coequal. To date Khrushchev, either deliberately or under duress, has maintained the hegemony he restored to the Party. Since the dynamic focal point of the totalitarian dictatorship is the leader-Party inter-dependence, under either of the Khrushchev power positions analyzed in Chapter III, the Party would seem to provide the optimum key to the succession problem, "not as a democratic and cooperative group of free individuals, but as a bureaucratic apparatus with a hierarchial structure of legitimacy".⁸³

In this regard Khrushchev's substantive program of the 22nd Congress for transition to Communism may well have as one of its political objectives, the improvement of the potentiality of the

structure for the next succession. He has declared that the State will begin to wither and the Party's role will increase during this transition. Such trends would undoubtedly make it more difficult for the State bureaucracy to contest the Party machine's supremacy during the next succession.⁸⁴

Designation of a successor. With the dictatorship inhering to no office and with no statute accepted in tradition as establishing the rule of succession, there remains the possibility that a dictator might be able to specify who his successor is to be. The first problem the ruler faces is ideological. The public promulgation of the concept of a single, all-powerful "Vozhd" fits badly into the Marxist framework of thought, which assigns the history making role to the classes, or in the Leninist version, to the Party as a whole. Soviet political and constitutional theory therefore has shied away from the question of what happens when this "non-existent" ruler dies. The subterfuge has been to insist that the leadership is collective. Thus when Khrushchev denounced Stalin for having become a despot his sin was stated in terms of his departure from the principle of collectivity.⁸⁵ Therefore arrangements to designate a successor cannot be directly and publicly proclaimed when there is public denial that the current ruler is supreme.

Nevertheless each dictator has given some thought to the matter

of designating his successor. Lenin's famous testament consisted of a request to rule by collegium with the concomitant effort to prevent Stalin's rise by suggesting his removal from the position of General Secretary.⁸⁶ Stalin, in power, seemed always to have a senior lieutenant, whose identity changed sufficiently often to prevent his becoming a threat to the leader.⁸⁷ Khrushchev is reported to have referred verbally to a definite successor.⁸⁸ Yet to date no successor-apparent has made the climb to total power. There is danger to the incumbent dictator in the advance delegation of power. Thus Stalin, after making Malenkov "primus inter pares" in 1948 by elevating him to the three top Soviet power organs, added Khrushchev to the Secretariat in 1949, probably as a counterweight, while at the same time reinforcing his personal control of the police. Stalin's system did not work, primarily because he did not remove the checks and balances at the end. His gestating purges may well have been designed to do just that, leaving Malenkov probably, or possibly Khrushchev, or even Poskrebyshev, clearly unrivalled. But his faulty timing in mortality proves the weakness of the system even so.

Designation has not then been a principal of legitimacy in the succession struggle. Moreover, designation without full power might well leave the lieutenant without support after the leader's death. With the other lieutenants making the traditional alliances to head off

the front runner, such designation might well be the kiss of death.⁸⁹

Successful exercise of power, not incumbency of an office, is the key. It is most unlikely that an office could be devised to circumvent this problem because the power that must go with it represents a mortal threat to the dictator. How much more so would be the case in a regime in which terror is consciously pushed into the background.

The advance commissioning by Khrushchev of a political body, e.g. - Praesidium, Secretariat, or specially created group - to designate, after his death, a successor must be considered as a possibility. This maneuver would have the advantage of avoiding the necessity for Khrushchev to delegate power, in advance, to a chosen successor. However, again it would be incapable of insuring the actual transfer of power from the individual lieutenants (whose institutional positions permitted them to seize it) to the chosen successor.

Alternatives. With the survival of the Soviet dictatorial regime relatively certain, with no formal method for selection and legitimation of a successor, and with the advance designation to the extent necessary being infeasible, there remains only the empirical system of the last two successions. The nature of this return to collectivity and subsequent gradual grappling of institutions of power is the subject of Chapter V.

Chapter V

The Nature of the Succession Crisis

"Never once before Stalin died in 1953 was the name of Khrushchev mentioned as his possible heir."

H. E. Salisbury

The three Soviet personal dictatorships have been connected by two succession crises, the nature and character of which have been functionally related to the dictatorships preceding them. History has therefore established the general character of the cycle in the Soviet Union. However, the number of examples are so few and the margin of success of the winning personality and institution has been, in some tactical episodes, so small that conclusions from the data must be guarded. Other alternatives might have developed.

Changes resulting from succession crises. For example, the Malenkov strategy of seeking power based on the State bureaucracy might well, if successful, have led to a government placing emphasis on technical-rational procedures and formal legalism in which totalitarian ideology became subordinate to internal considerations in economic planning. Or the Beria strategy, based on relaxing state controls and encouraging local nationalism could, conceivably, in a prolonged struggle, have led to a form of oriental traditionalism - a central, despotic ruler and bureaucracy with much less control of

the details of daily life.⁹⁰ Even more remotely, an Army coup under Zhukov, motivated primarily by a yearning to free the military of Party and police restraints, might have led to a military dictatorship, or a democratic form of government in which those fundamental yearnings were secured.⁹¹

Changes which have occurred are dramatic. Under the philosophy of Soviet Communism first priority is given to the retention of power by the regime.⁹² If, as it was after Stalin's death, the regime is concerned about actual survival, remarkable internal and external changes result while this phase of the succession problem develops.

First, in their uncertainty as to forces and pressures, Stalin's lieutenants adopted a collectivity of leadership in which corporate decisions were made. Terror as a technique was renounced. The majority of the prisoners in "slave labor" camps were released. A measure of legal safeguards were instituted.⁹³ The secret police were downgraded in the hierarchy and controls placed upon them. Despite policy arguments about degree, living standards were raised appreciably over the Stalin era and ideological supervision of thought and conduct was liberalized.⁹⁴ The external changes, made under Soviet Russia's traditional retrenchment in the face of internal difficulties, were even more significant.⁹⁵ The de-Stalinization campaign

and decentralization of police control triggered the May and June 1953 disorders in the satellites. These tensions further motivated the regime to seek reductions in confrontations abroad. Territorial claims on Turkey were renounced a few weeks after Stalin died. By July the armistice in Korea was negotiated. In 1954 the USSR agreed to a modus vivendi in Indo-China. A peace treaty with Austria, and the concomitant evacuation, was signed a year later.⁹⁶ Meanwhile the satellite areas had won limited control over their own affairs. Even greater settlements were in prospect with some probability of fruition had the struggle been more protracted.⁹⁷

The great significance of these changes emphasized the fluid nature of the succession and the importance of understanding and being prepared to exploit it.

Cyclic fortunes. Part of the fluidity during the succession crisis is the result of the continual cyclical changes in the delicate power balance among lieutenants while the dictator lives. For example, had Stalin died either just prior to World War II or in 1946-47, the man most likely to have been his initially acknowledged successor would have been Zhdanov. Had Stalin died in the latter part of World War II, Malenkov would probably have filled that role just as he did in the years after Zhdanov's death.⁹⁸ In his final days, Stalin, using his

police agent, Ryumin, Deputy Minister of State Security, and Poskrebyshev, was clearly in the process of another massive reorganization.⁹⁹ He had new blood on the way up in the form of men like Suslov, Kozlov, and Aristov. Older lieutenants such as Beria, Mikoyan, and Molotov were in various stages of decline while Khrushchev had just broken out of a temporary eclipse over agriculture.¹⁰⁰ Thus we are handicapped in determining the nature of the succession struggle by uncertainty over the degree to which Khrushchev's victory was the result of astute initial maneuvering and what part was played by the fortuitous last-minute manipulation, from above, of the power positions occupied by him and his rivals.¹⁰¹

People and personalities. The foregoing serves to emphasize that in the Soviet political system only the very fortunate and best fitted lieutenants survive. The leader and his lieutenants must shoulder a very heavy load. The insecurity and cross-checking at lower echelons force responsibility upward. This puts a premium on the kind of energy, political ruthlessness, span of administrative control, and memory which the ultimate dictator must also have. A continual sifting process goes on to eliminate the politically incompetent even during the dictator's life.¹⁰²

After the leader's death, each lieutenant in the execution of his

personal strategy, using his institutional power bases, receives additional conditioning in the kind of internecine political machination and treachery which, if good enough to make him the winner of total power, is more than adequate to keep him there and insure that he will be a formidable opponent of the U.S.. But the variation in capabilities of the various lieutenants cannot be accurately gauged. This throws an element of additional doubt into the analysis of any power struggle. Would Khrushchev have been successful over Malenkov had their institutional roles been reversed?

Factionalism. It was noted that a significant early change caused by the succession struggle is the acceptance of the principle of collective leadership. This has been, however, in each struggle, a facade, with each lieutenant maneuvering to improve his power position.

Under the ban introduced by Lenin at the 10th Party Congress in 1921 the minority of a leading Party organ is not entitled to carry any dispute to the next broader organ without becoming guilty of "anti-party" factionalism. Soviet practice has conformed to this doctrine during each of the three dictatorships. Factions are formed under a dictator to influence his policies and to apportion his instruments of power. He remains the supreme arbiter and there is no appeal attempted. But during the two succession crises the leading rivals

have disregarded the Lenin doctrine. The outset has been characterized by the personal rivalry of the most ambitious lieutenants, carried over from the dictatorial regime. These lieutenants, through maneuver and compromise, form factions. After each faction has been defeated it has been condemned for its factionalism. Thus, even in the succession crisis, factionalism remains secretive and conspiratorial because the "anti-party" determination spells the end of life or career. Thus all lieutenants have a certain vested interest in fighting for power with caution.¹⁰³ This provides security against disintegration of the totalitarian regime. It probably explains the mutual compromise and adjustment after the leader's death and the drastic treatment of Beria for threatening the traditional arena of political combat. The result is a struggle within the apparatus with no leader able to break out and make a mass appeal until he is well organized within. Beginning as a compromise collective leadership, gradual elimination of fringe elements leads to this emergence of central contestants. "The process of decision-making, and consequent accountability, in time unavoidably leads to internal inequalities in the collective leadership and true leadership again begins to assume a personal veneer -- it is within the apparatus, and not on the barricades of ideological conflict, that the new totalitarian leaders are begotten, destroyed, or eventually

made triumphant."¹⁰⁴ Thus, violations of factional doctrine in the succession phase tend, nevertheless, to be confined to the Party structure.

Factionalism and Institutions. It was the high degree of institutionalization of the bureaucratic network operated by the collective lieutenants that was largely responsible for the survival of the Soviet regime after Stalin's death.¹⁰⁵ Factional strength stems from the collective control, by the lieutenant and his associates, of one or more of these institutions: State bureaucracy, Army, political police, or subsidiary bodies such as Trade Union associations, Young Communist League, etc. In addition to the personal rivalries of the lieutenants there is a basic conflict between institutions, particularly between Party and State. The economic and administrative managers of the State tend to associate themselves with the national aspirations of the USSR. The economic managers have a certain security and economic well-being which they are reluctant to lose. The Party has its bureaucrats too but they tend to be militant in their ideology and thus committed to the development of the USSR as a base for world revolution. Their existence is based on struggle, sacrifice, prodigious work, and power.¹⁰⁶

As we have noted, the Army as an institution has demonstrated a yearning for freedom from secret police control and for independence