

National War College
Washington D.C.

January 23, 1962

The Honorable Charles E. Bohlen
Special Assistant to the Secretary of State
Department of State

Dear MR. Ambassador:

I consider that it is important that my research project, "The Problem of the Next Succession in the USSR", cite certain thoughts that you have expressed in your several speeches before the National War College and during the brief conversation we had here on January 2, 1962.

I am eager to avoid the problem of classification and non-attribution. I therefore have requested this interview in the hope that you may see fit to restate, in a for-the-record meeting, the following paraphrases of your thoughts:

"In his final days Stalin, using his police agent Ryumin, Deputy Minister of State Security, and Poskrebyshev, head of his personal Special Sector, was clearly in the process of another massive reorganization."

"The fundamental contradiction to be resolved in the future of Soviet Russia is the retention of a dictatorship of the Party in a nation whose economic base, social development, and State bureaucracy have outmoded the justification for the Party."

"Stalin, through his skillful manipulation of the position of General Secretary of the Party to place his henchmen in the key Party posts while demoting or denouncing the associates of his rivals, obtained control of all the resources of the Party organization, including its files."

"The Communist Party was in the process of being destroyed as an institution toward the end of Stalin's regime, by his Special Sector, under the horrible Poskrebyshev, superimposed above Party, State, and the military, relying for its control on the secret police."

"One of the most far-reaching effects of Beria's strategy, which was further accentuated by the breakup of his own monolithic control of police at the center after his arrest, was the decentralization of police control in the satellites and the abandonment of the use of police as a conscious instrument of terror. The consequent loss of ability to obtain direct, abject response in the satellites cost the world-wide Communist movement an important qualitative control in the satellites; Stalin had been the unquestioned dictator of these countries and their policies, just as much as he was in the Soviet Union."

"In the Polish difficulties the Soviet leaders decided on the spot not to use force because they discovered that Gomulka had powerful support among the people---the Polish Army and, curiously enough, the Polish Secret Police."