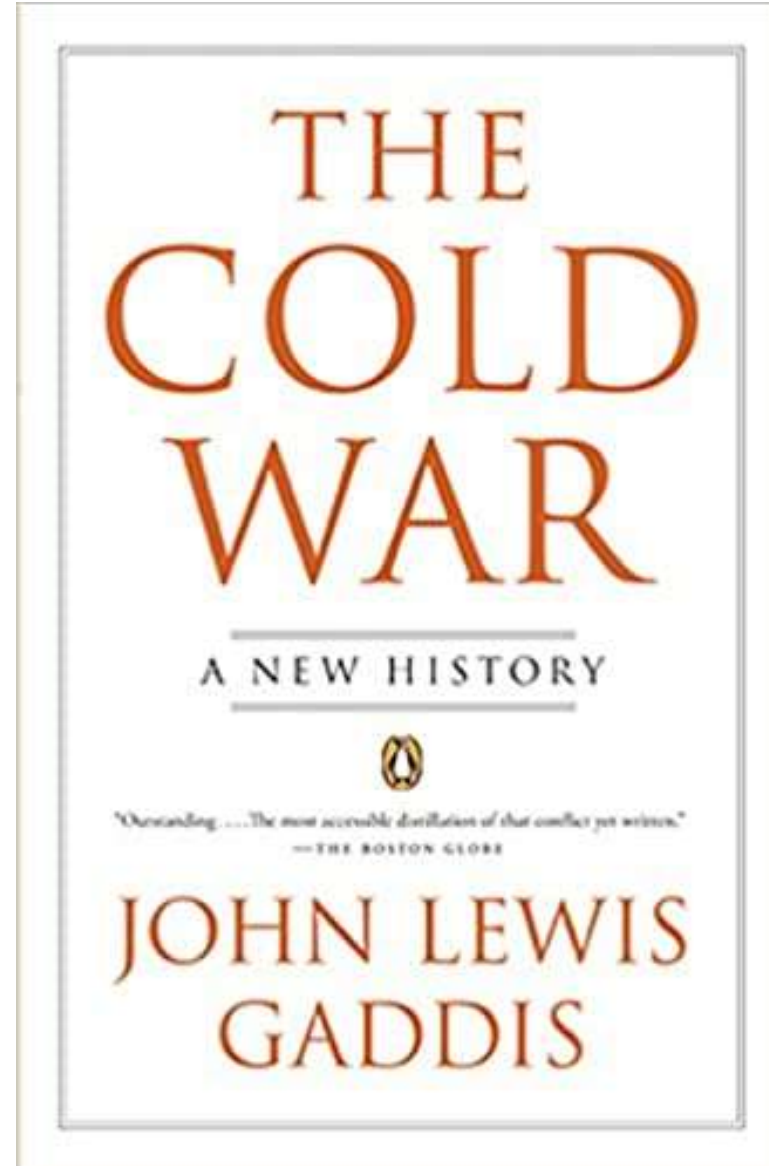
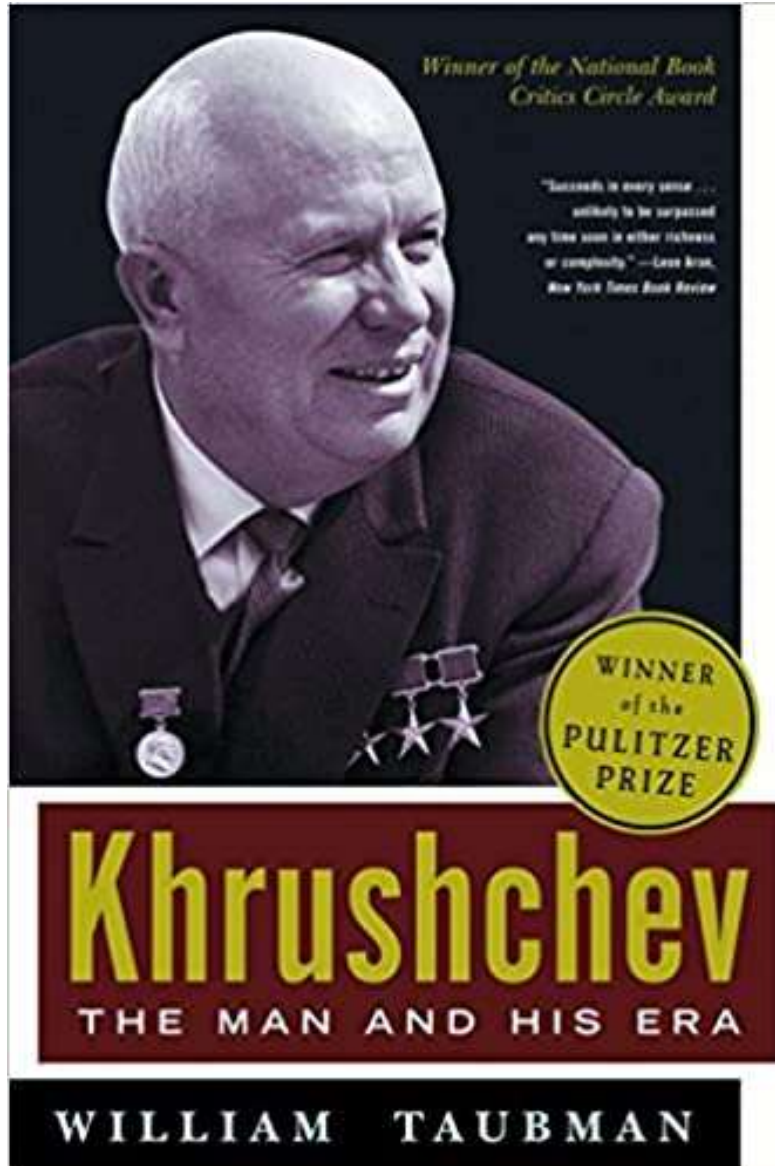
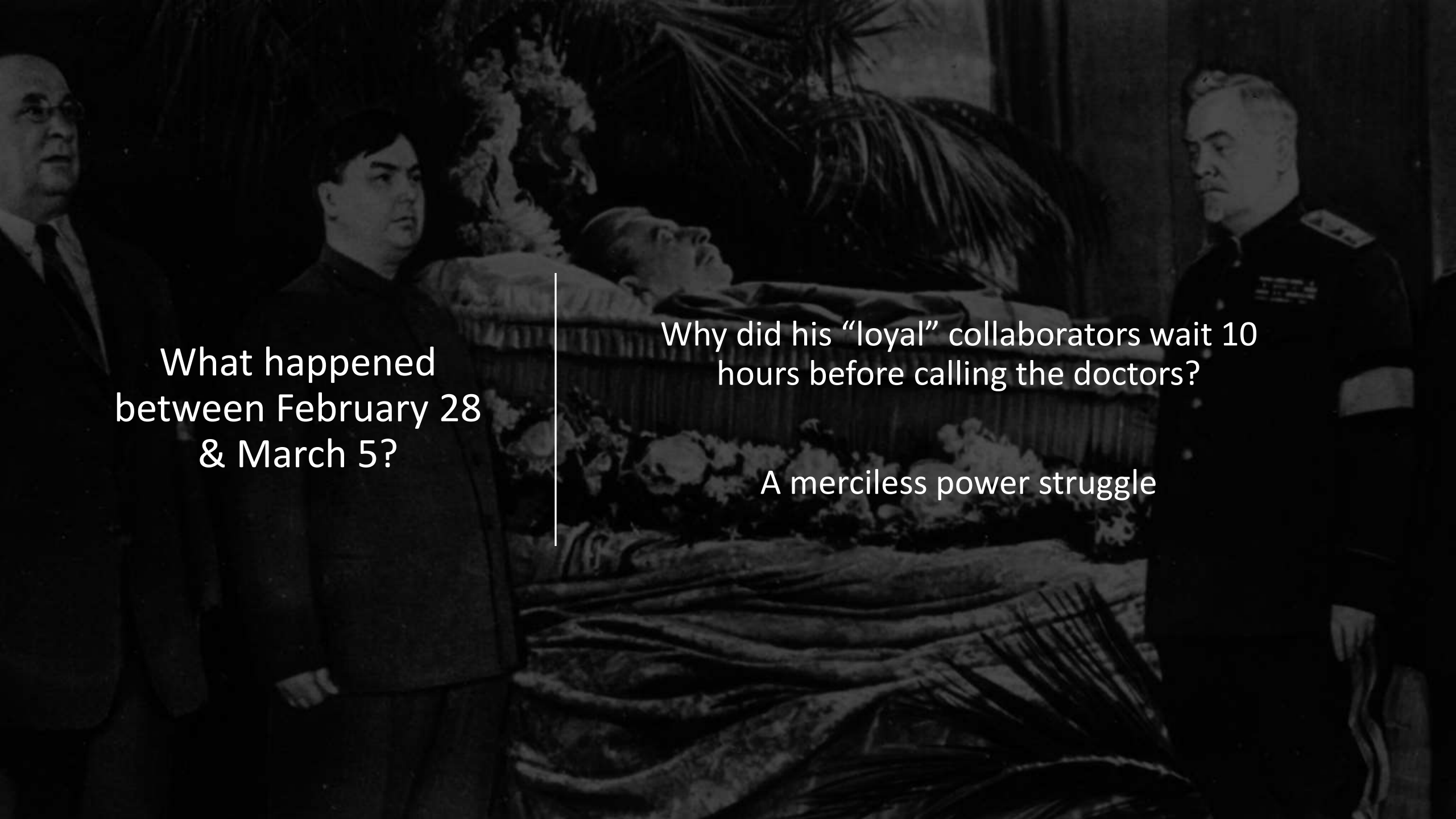




The two deaths of Stalin

1953-1956





What happened
between February 28
& March 5?

Why did his “loyal” collaborators wait 10
hours before calling the doctors?

A merciless power struggle



The sources

Partial opening of Stalin's archives

2 important accounts until the end of the 1960s: **Nikita Khrushchev** & **Svetlana Alliluyeva** (Stalin's daughter)



1988: a new account

Alexey Rybin (Stalin's bodyguard): Stalin's closest collaborators (Lavrenti Beria) precipitated the dictator's death



3 March 1943

Radio Moscow: Stalin paralyzed as
a result of a stroke while in his
Moscow apartment

Loss of speech and difficulties
breathing

Stalin NOT in Moscow (the first of
many lies)

Kuntsevo Dacha

A paranoid Stalin increasingly
out of the public eye



Panic at the French embassy

Malfunctioning radio
A decipher clerk off sick

French ambassador (Louis Joxe) stunned
by the news



Meeting with Stalin (August 1952)

Stalin physically diminished but
otherwise alert & well

An impressive leader

The man who triumphed over the Nazis



October 1952

19th Congress of Communist Party

1 192 delegates

A 10 minute standing ovation

18th Congress: 1 108 delegates
(out of 1 970 executed or
deported)





Stalin in attendance

A short speech (closing ceremony)

Rumors: Stalin ill?



A reception at the
Kremlin

Stalin in good spirit
Stopped drinking Vodka &
smoking his pipe



7 November 1952

Traditional military parade
(Red Square) – The 35th
anniversary of the October
Revolution



Georgy Malenkov

Stalin's loyal confidant since
the early 1920s

Stalin's successor?

Nikita Khrushchev

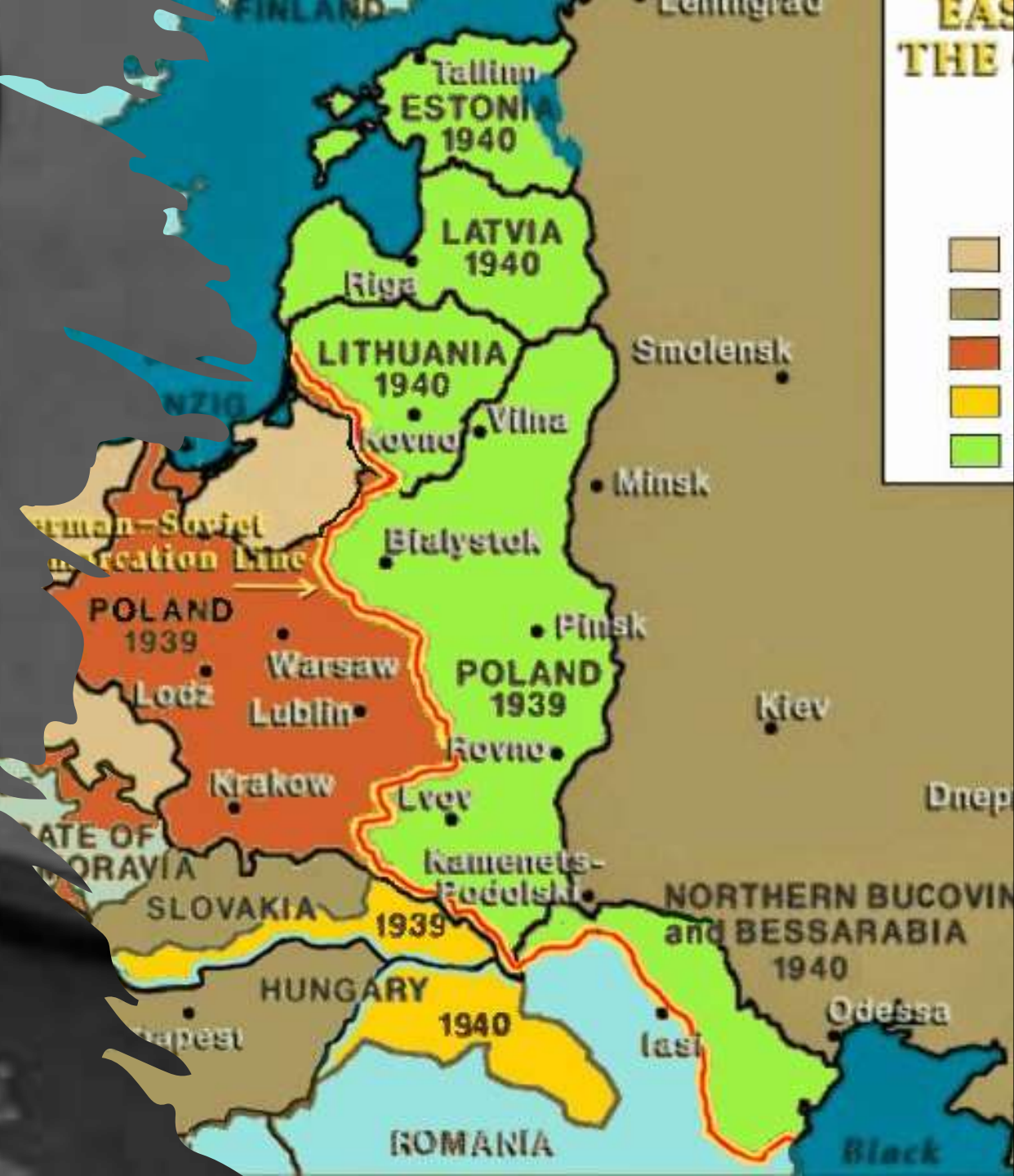


Close to Stalin since 1949



Active participant in the Great Purges of 1936-1938

Nikita Khrushchev to supervise the “sovietization” of occupied Poland after September 1939





Lavrenty Beria

The head of the Soviet secret
police (NKVD)

Terror, the Gulags, mass
executions...

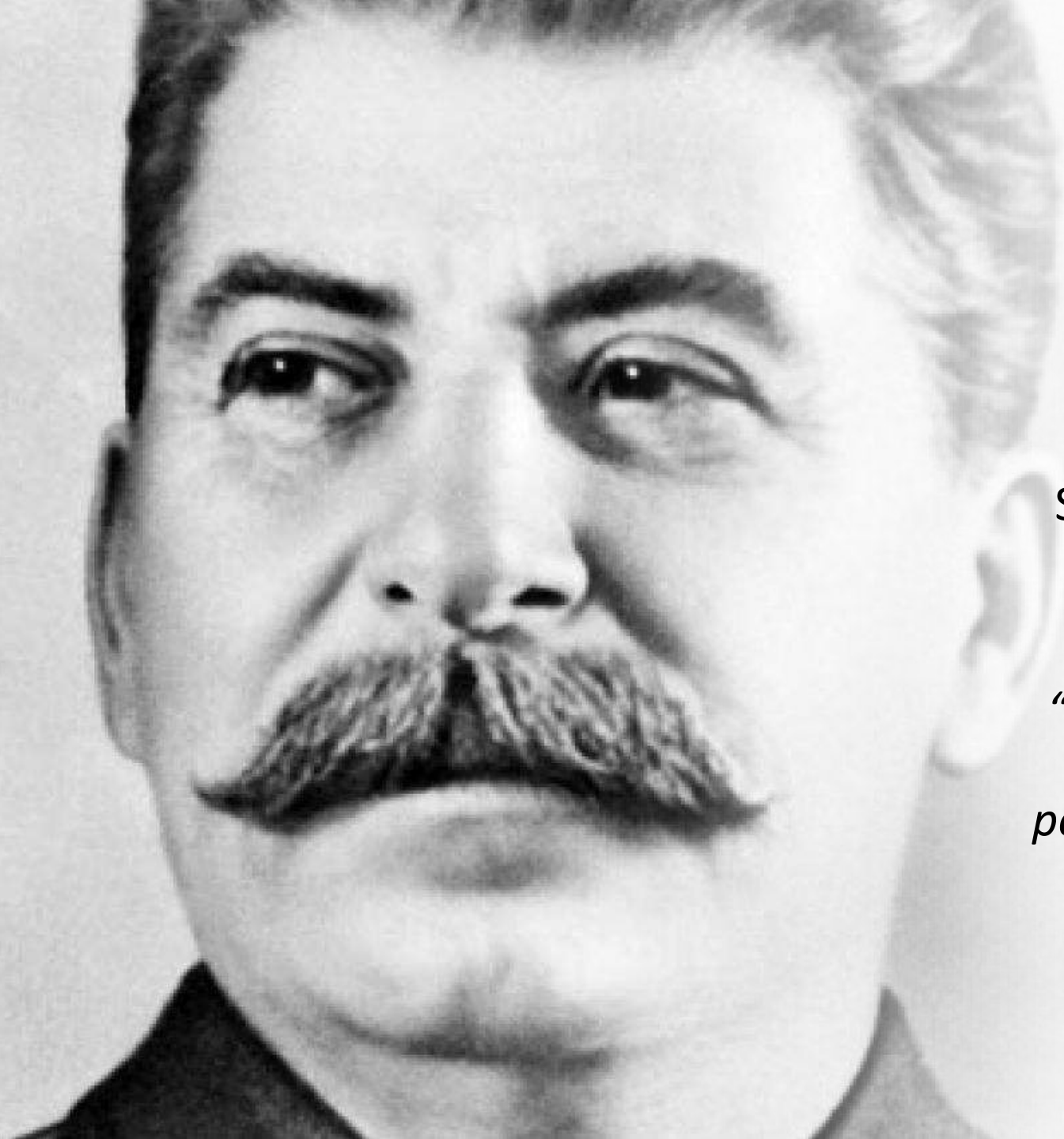
Still close to Stalin in 1952
but for how long?



Kliment Voroshilov



Nikolai Bulganin



Stalin immortal?

Stalin's succession NEVER
discussed

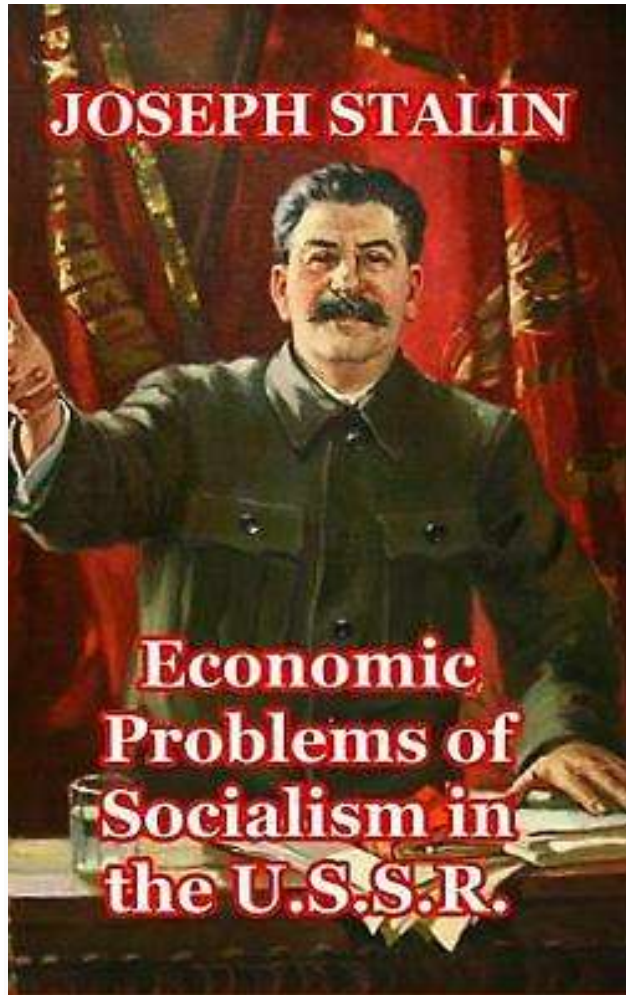
*"What will you do without
me, you who are as
powerless as newborn blind
kittens?"*



Falling from Stalin's favor

Anastas Mikoyan & Viatcheslav
Molotov

Could happen overnight!



Stalin's last book

Lack of enthusiasm



Mikoyan & Molotov accused publicly by Stalin of being Western spies and of "*servile submission to America*"



December 1952

Voroshilov accused of being
an American spy

Stalin's secret resolution
accusing Beria of "*criminal
negligence*" within the NKVD



Stalin's last conspiracy theory
(January 1953)

The "Doctor's Plot"

9 of the Kremlin's most prestigious doctors accused of murdering two of Stalin's closest aides several years earlier

AND

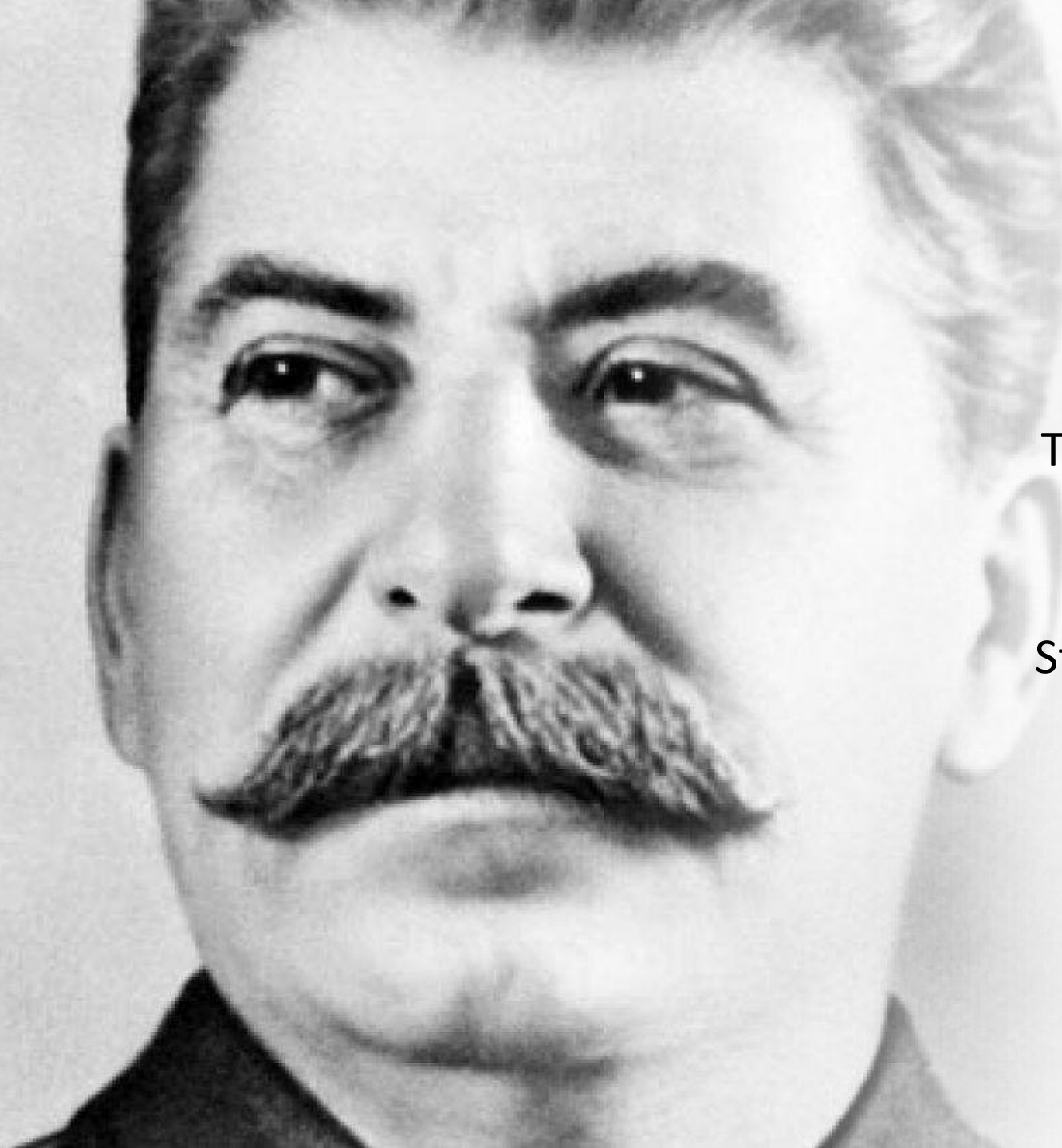
Planning the murders of Soviet prominent officials



Stalin's last conspiracy theory (January 1953)

A majority of Jewish doctors accused of being financed by the **American joint Distribution Committee** (Jewish relief organization based in NYC)

State Security Ministry accused of not doing enough to prevent the plot



Likely first signs of another great purge

The Doctors' trial scheduled for mid-March 1953

Stalin's plan to deport Soviet Jews



28 February 1953

A dinner party at Kuntsevo
until 5am

Stalin in good spirit



1 March

No phone calls from Stalin
Strict orders not to bother
Stalin

11pm: growing concerns



2 March

3 am: Beria, Bulganin,
Malenkov & Khrushchev back
at Kuntsevo

Stalin found on the floor of his
bedroom

What to do?





A collective decision

Lazar Kaganovich & Voroshilov
(Vice-Presidents of the Council of
Ministers) hurried to Kuntsevo

Several doctors summoned



Remember Stalin's "Doctor's Plot"?

Many of the most prominent medical experts arrested including... Stalin's personal physician!

Diagnosis: Stalin is dying

5 March: a medical bulletin
Stalin is dead!



Many inconsistencies

The daughter's account: 10 hours
between the moment Stalin was found
and the arrival of the doctors



What about the bodyguard?

Stalin discovered by one of the
guards

Malenkov & Beria joined by
telephone

No answer from Beria

His orders: no doctor to get near
Stalin without his approval

Beria and Malenkov alone at 3am on
March 2 (kuntsevo)

The others and the doctors only
showed up at 9am



Who to believe?

Stalin closest collaborators
deliberately delayed the
intervention of the doctors

Dates & circumstances falsified





A country in shock?

Nearly 200 000 gatherings & meetings in memory of Stalin

A profound sorrow? Or fear of the unknown?

Stalin unpopular (amongst peasants especially) before WW2

1943-1944

The name of Stalin associated with
Soviet victory over Nazi Germany
(*The Great Patriotic War*)

Postwar popularity despite
economic difficulties

Tens of thousands letters sent to
Stalin every month



What's next?

The fight for power

How to ensure the regime's
survival?

Consensus: some changes
necessary

Khrushchev vs. Beria





Beria at the helm

Beria the “reformer”

Severe social and economic
difficulties

2.5 million prisoners (Gulags)

Collectivization: poor results



Far-reaching reforms

1.2 million prisoners liberated

4 April: the end of the so-called
Doctor's Plot

The accused doctors rehabilitated

The end of travel restrictions within
the Soviet Union

Legalizing the Orthodox Church?



26 June

Beria accused of planning to
*“dismember the Soviet Union
and restore capitalism”*

Khrushchev to his
colleagues: Beria as a danger
for their security and the
future of the Soviet Union



Beria executed

A fake trial

Beria too powerful for his own
good



The Soviet Union in 1953

The post Stalin era: how to
move forward?





The **20th** Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union

The second death of Joseph Stalin

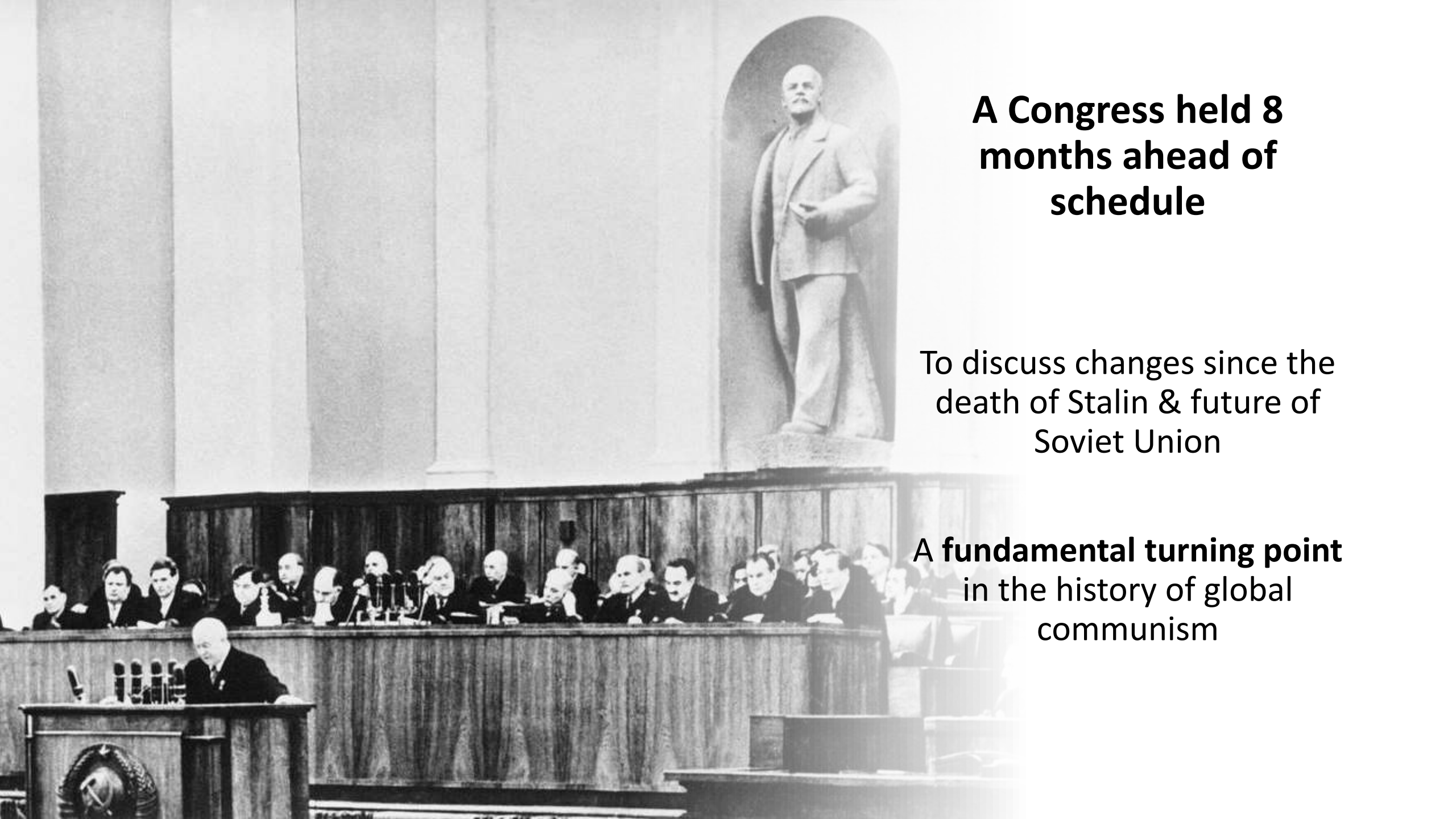


14 February 1956

The opening of the 20th
Congress of the CPSU

The representatives of 55
foreign communist parties in
attendance

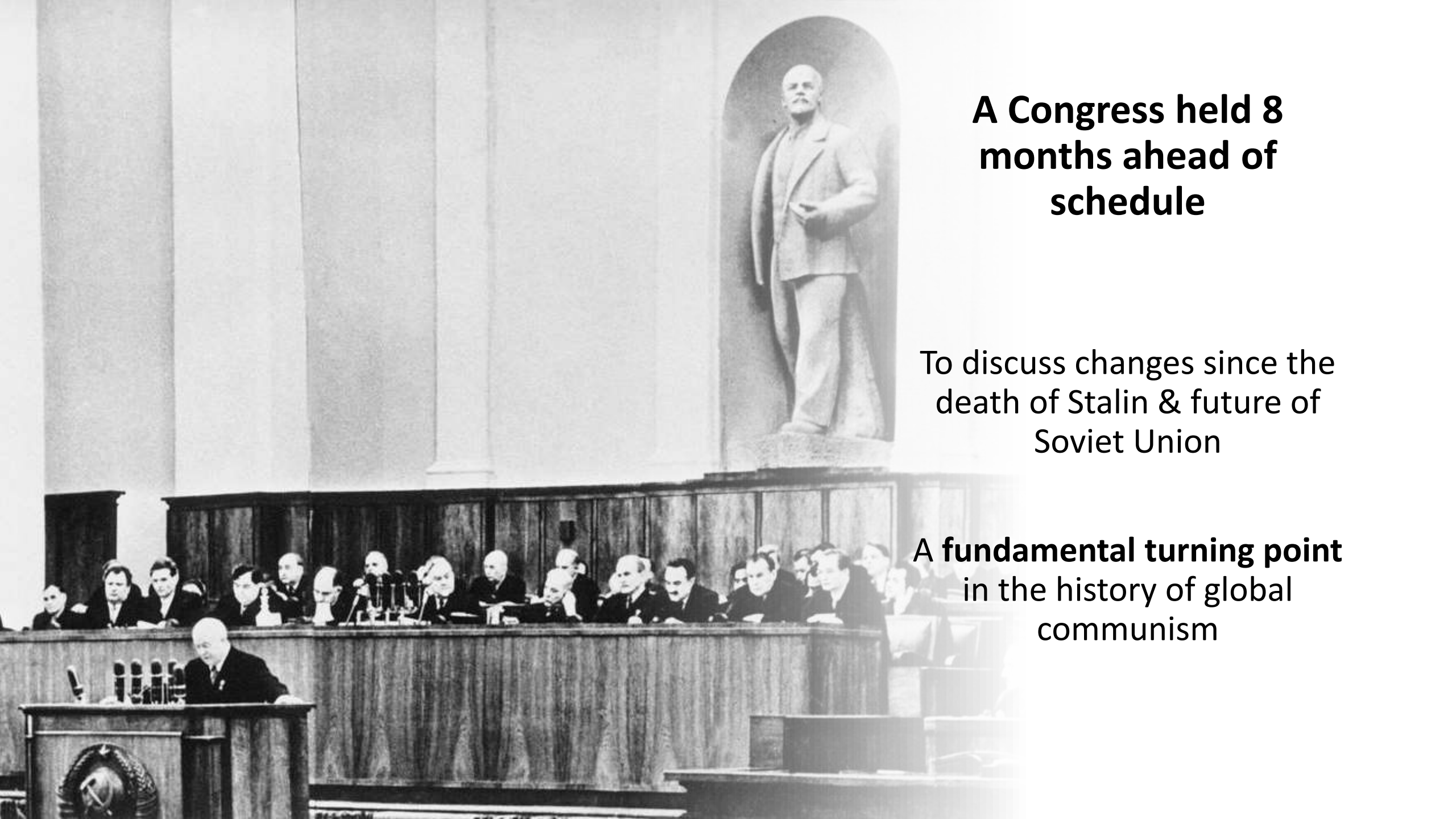
1 430 Soviet delegates



A Congress held 8 months ahead of schedule

To discuss changes since the death of Stalin & future of Soviet Union

A fundamental turning point in the history of global communism



A Congress held 8 months ahead of schedule

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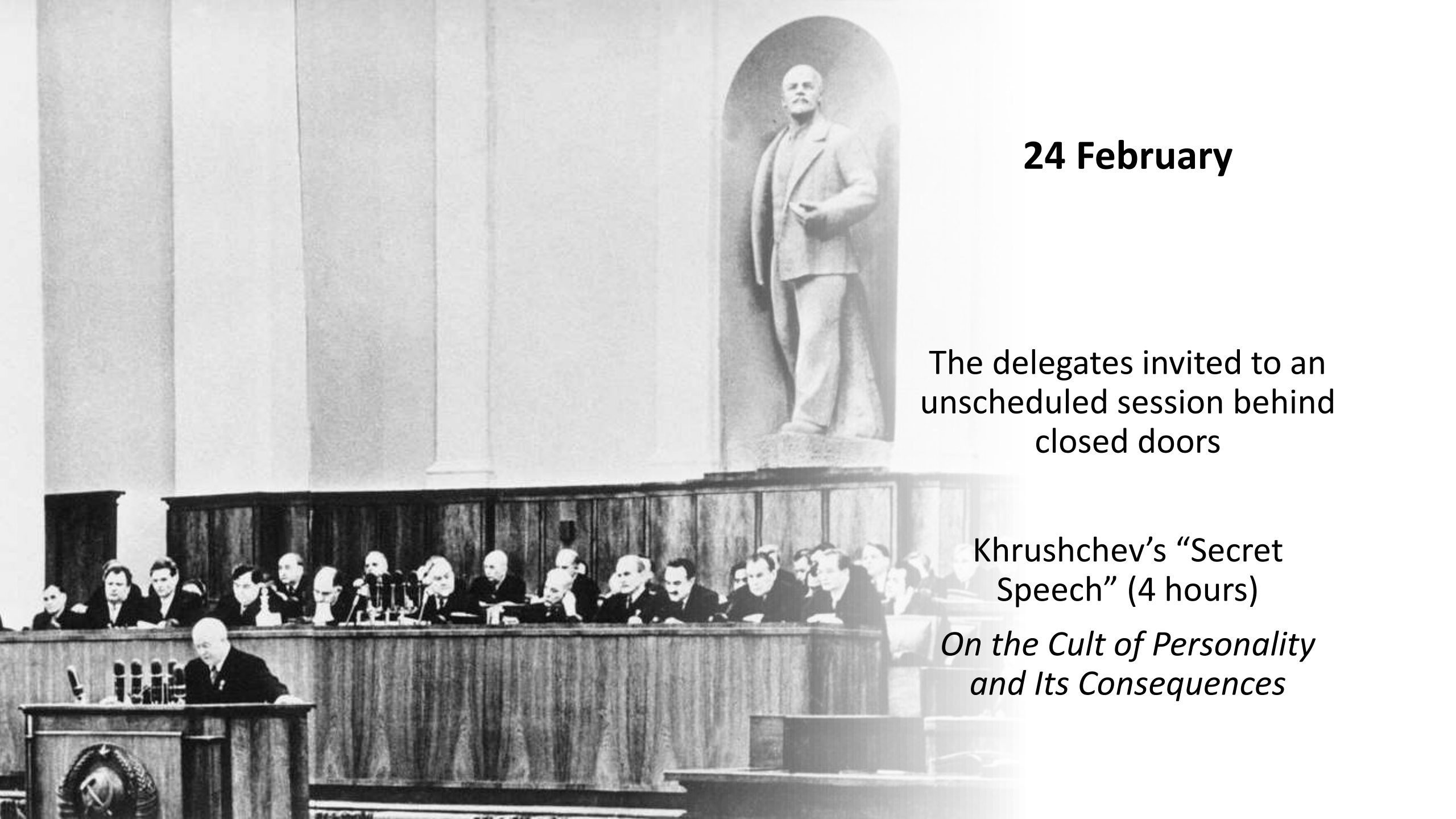
“Peaceful coexistence”

A more flexible Soviet model

“Local, national path to socialism” possible

The principle of “**collective governance**”: a veiled attack against the “**cult of one person**”

(No mention of Stalin)



24 February

The delegates invited to an
unscheduled session behind
closed doors

Khrushchev's "Secret
Speech" (4 hours)

*On the Cult of Personality
and Its Consequences*



How Stalin developed his Cult of Personality

*The “supernatural
characteristics akin to those of a
god”*

Stalin’s new image: a paranoid,
rude & incompetent dictator cut
off from his own people

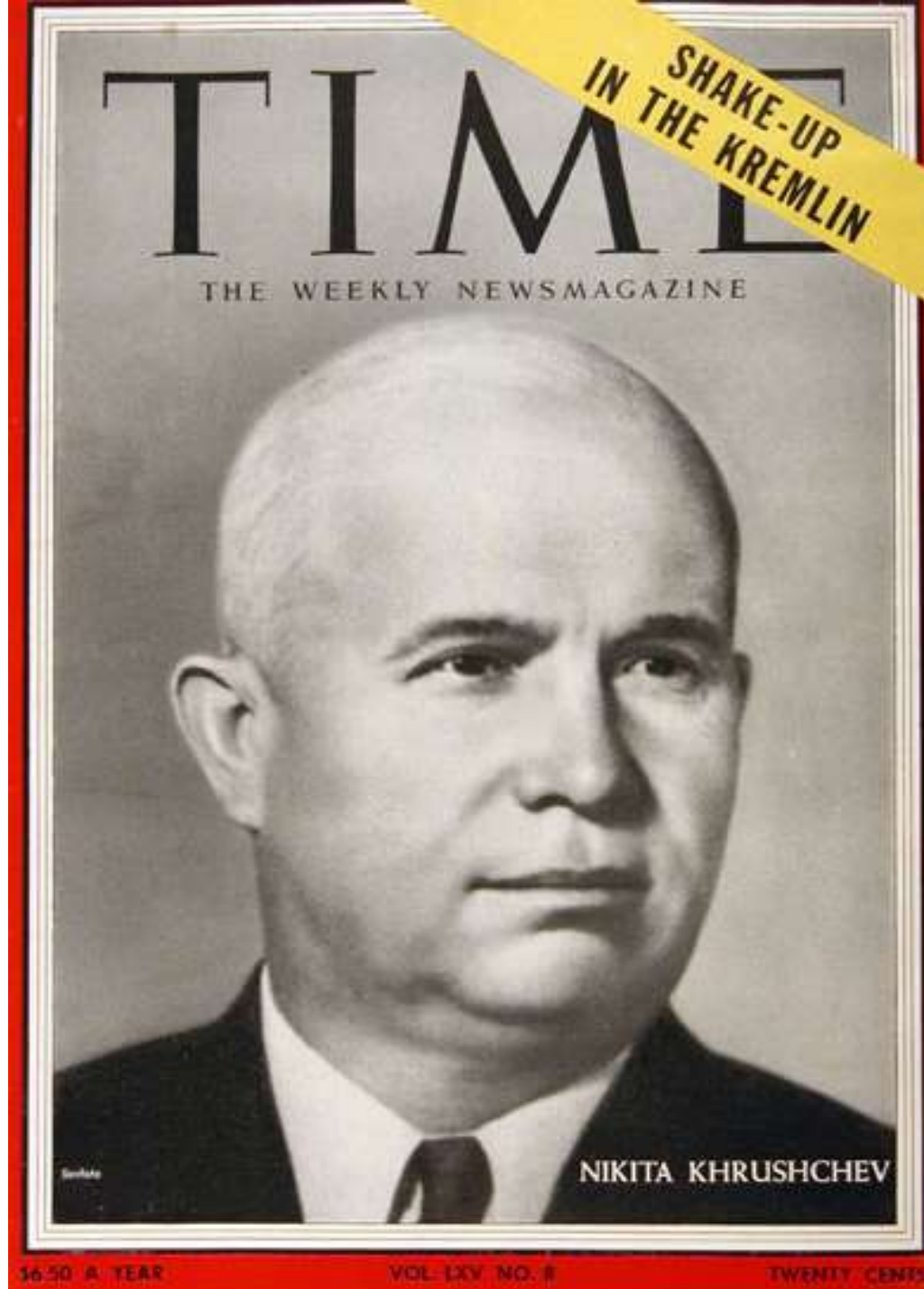
Why the “Secret Speech”?

Few information until the early 2000s

Khrushchev formally acknowledged being the author of the Speech in 1970 (his *Memoirs*)

Khrushchev vs his colleagues?

The (incomplete) opening of Soviet archives: a bold move full of **omissions!**





Khrushchev: a major
political actor under
Stalin

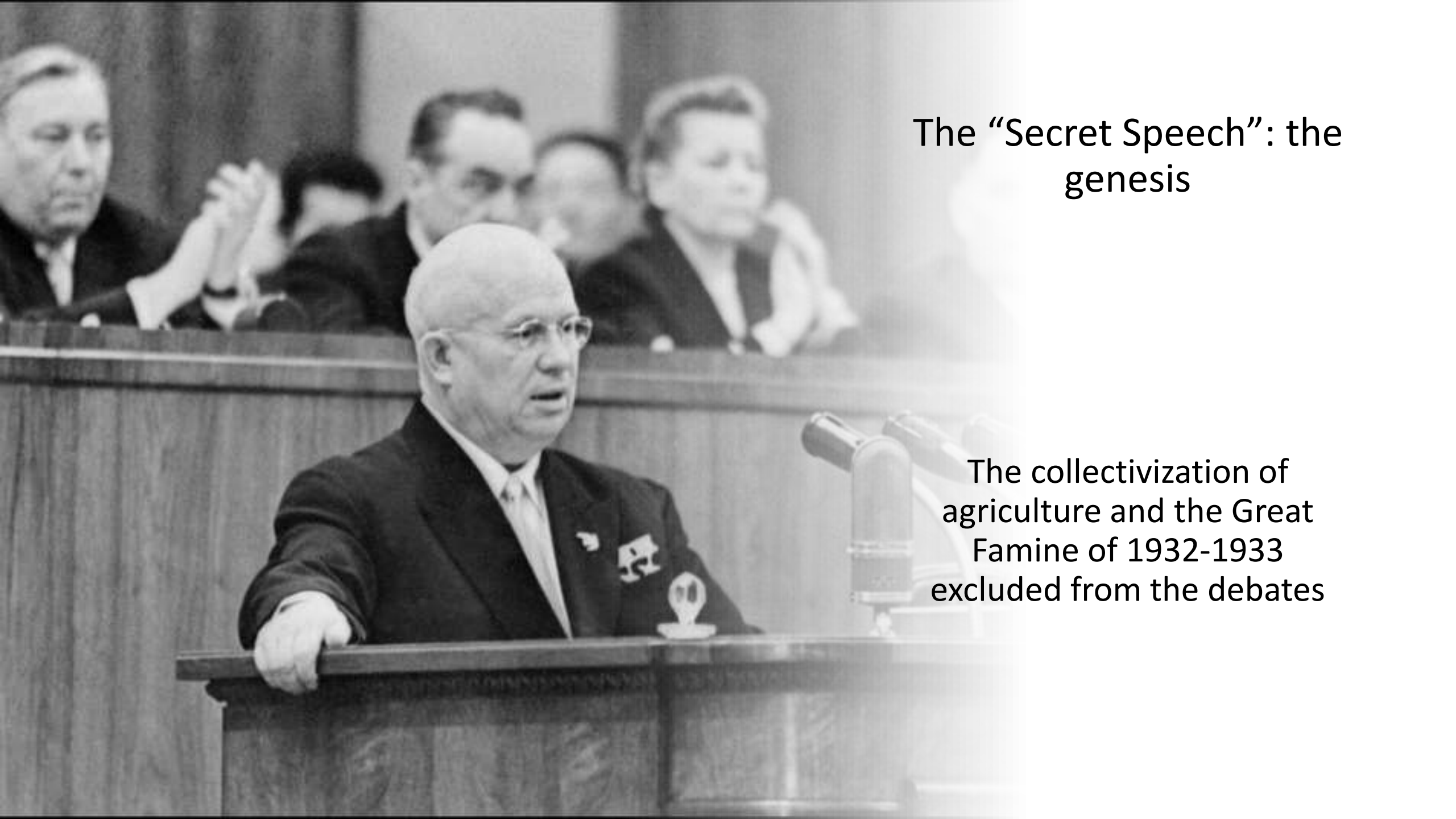
Remember the Great Purges
of 1936-1938?

The “Secret Speech”: the genesis

Fall 1955: Khrushchev met with
Gulag survivors

December 1955: a **special
commission** to understand the
mechanism behind repression
towards members of the Central
Committee of the CPSU





The “Secret Speech”: the genesis

The collectivization of agriculture and the Great Famine of 1932-1933 excluded from the debates

Strong opposition

Why reminisce on the past?

Stalin associated with the
*“many victories of the Soviet
people”*

People to say: *“where were
you? What were you doing?”*

Make sure *“not to throw the
baby out with the bath water”*



The “Young” behind two hardcore Stalin’s supports

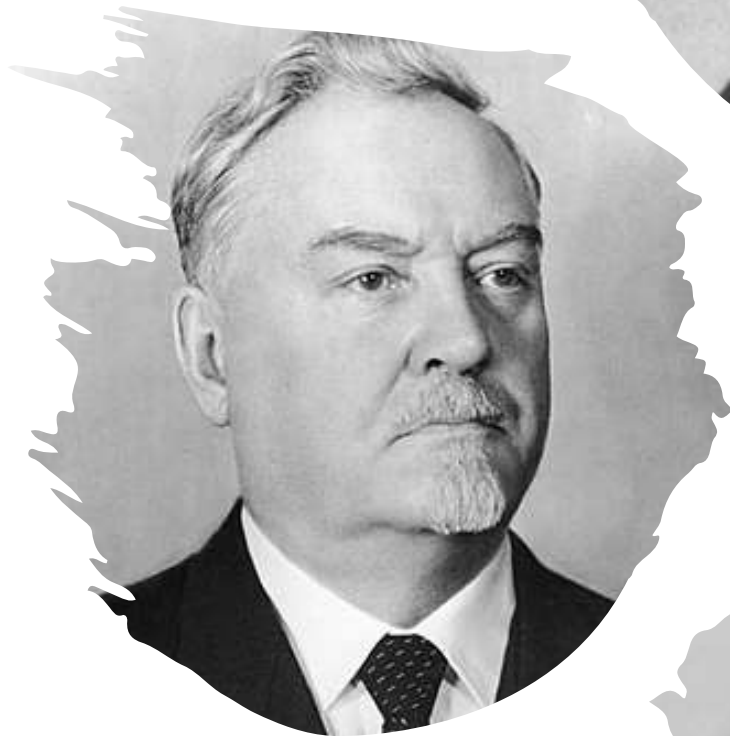
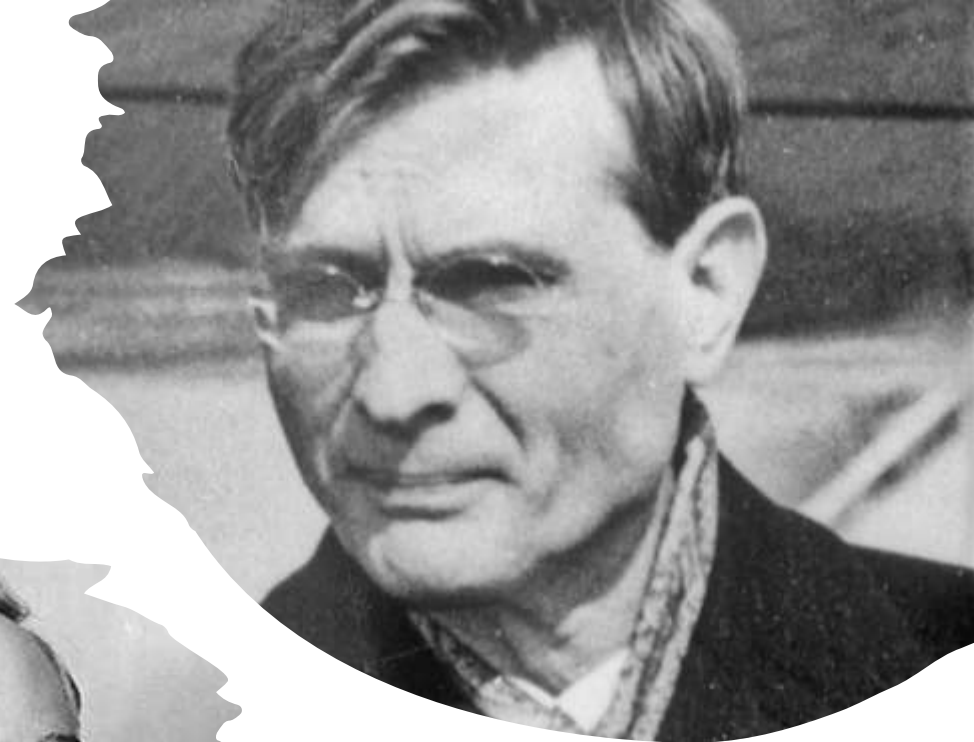
“Collective governance”

=

Revealing the truth

“If we say nothing, we take the risk that someone else will”

Khrushchev prevailed





The **Pospelov Report**

Pyotr Pospelov to head the Special
Commission

High-ranking Party official & staunch
Stalinist

Editor-in-Chief of the *Pravda* & director of
the Institute of Marxism-Leninism

Conclusions based on the archives



The Pospelov Report

Damning conclusions

Repressions against members of the
CPSU in 1937-1938

98 members of the Central Committee
tortured and executed (out of 139)

The Secret Police responsible of
violating *“socialist legality”*

The Pospelov Report

Mass repression impossible
without Stalin's backing

Stalin: the man responsible

Arguments used by Khrushchev in
his "Secret Speech"



The omissions

Conclusions pertaining to the mass repressions (the Great Purges) ignored by Khrushchev

WHY?

Khrushchev: a key actor in the Great Purge!



30 July 1937: NKVD Order 00447

The Great Purge extended to
*“former kulaks, criminals and other
anti-Soviet elements”*

A system of quotas per region
sanctioned by Stalin, Molotov,
Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Mikoyan &
Khrushchev

...ОДНОГО КОМПОНА ВНЕШНИХ Д...
...ГО ДАЛЯ 1937 г. В 00447 ГОР. И О. И. И.
...риалами следствия по делам антисоветских формирований
...нается, что в деревне осело значительное количество
...ов, ранее репрессированных, скрывавшихся от репрес-
... из лагерей, ссылки и трудпоселков. Осело ино-
... репрессированных церковников и сектантов, быв-
... участников антисоветских вооруженных выступле-
... . Остались почти не тронутыми в деревне значительные кадры
... антисоветских политических партий /всероз, грузинков, дашне-
... , мусавитов, иттихадистов и др./, а также кадры бывших
... тивных участников бандитских восстаний, баян, каретелей,
... иттихадистов и т.п.
... Часть перечисленных выше элементов, уйдя из деревни в ге-
... рале, проникла на предприятия промышленности, транспорт и на
... отрогальстве.
... Кроме того, в деревне и городе до сих пор еще гнездятся
... значительные кадры уголовных преступников - скотоконокредов,
... ов-рацидистов, грабителей и др. отбывавших наказание, бе-
... из мест заключения и скрывавшихся от репрессий. Неодо-
... мость борьбы с этими уголовными контингентами создала
... условия безопасности, способствующие их преступно-

What to share or not to share?

The conclusions of the Pospelov Report to be shared with the 20th Congress delegates?

A behind the door session?

What reactions to expect?
How to explain Stalin's role?



Khrushchev & mass repressions

Mass repressions in Ukraine (1938)

120 000 people executed



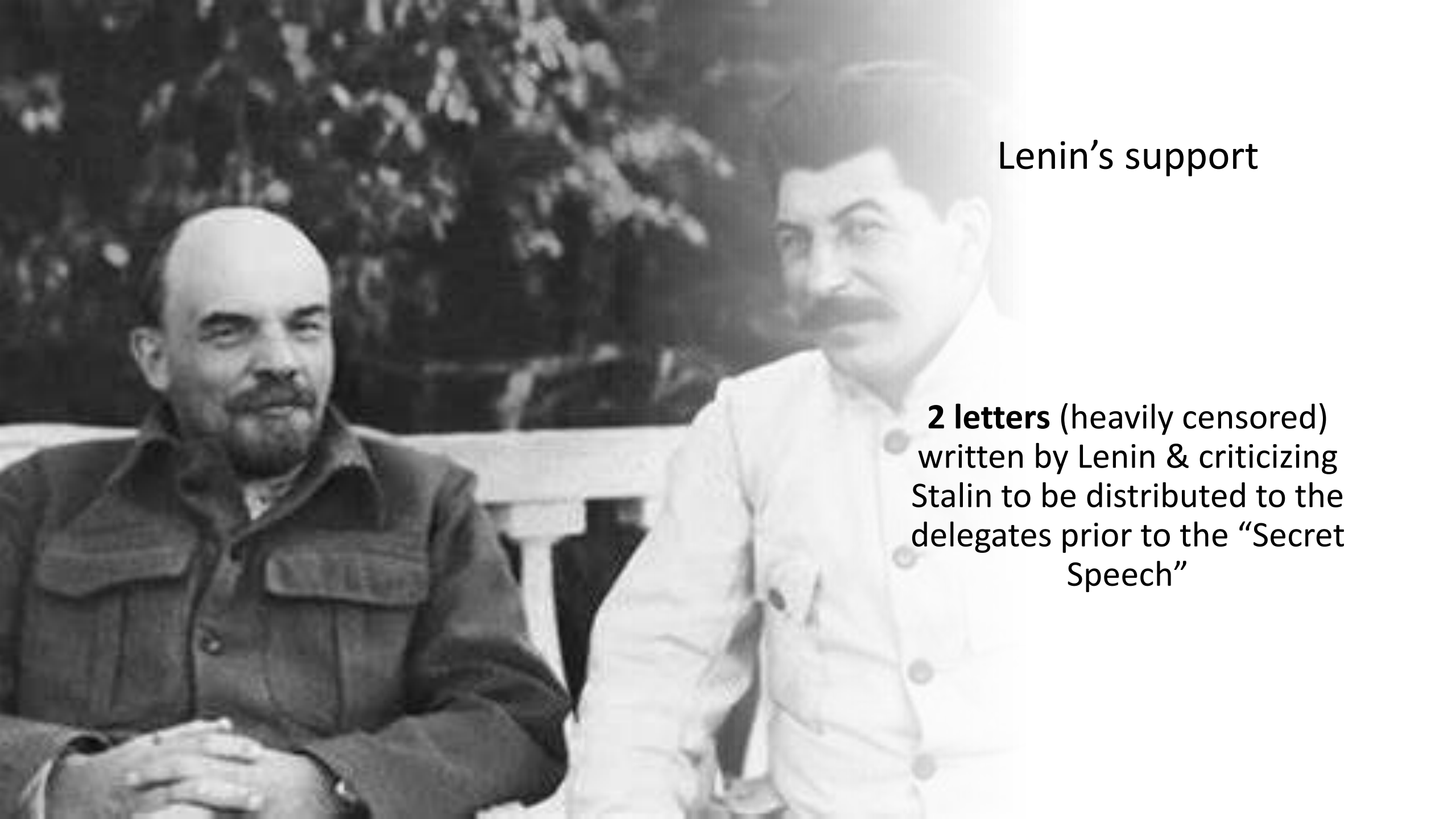
A consensus

NOT to share everything with the delegates

Finding a middle ground: to say something
but NOT everything

A **new report** focusing mainly on Stalin's
"Cult of Personality" to be read to the
delegates





Lenin's support

2 letters (heavily censored)
written by Lenin & criticizing
Stalin to be distributed to the
delegates prior to the "Secret
Speech"



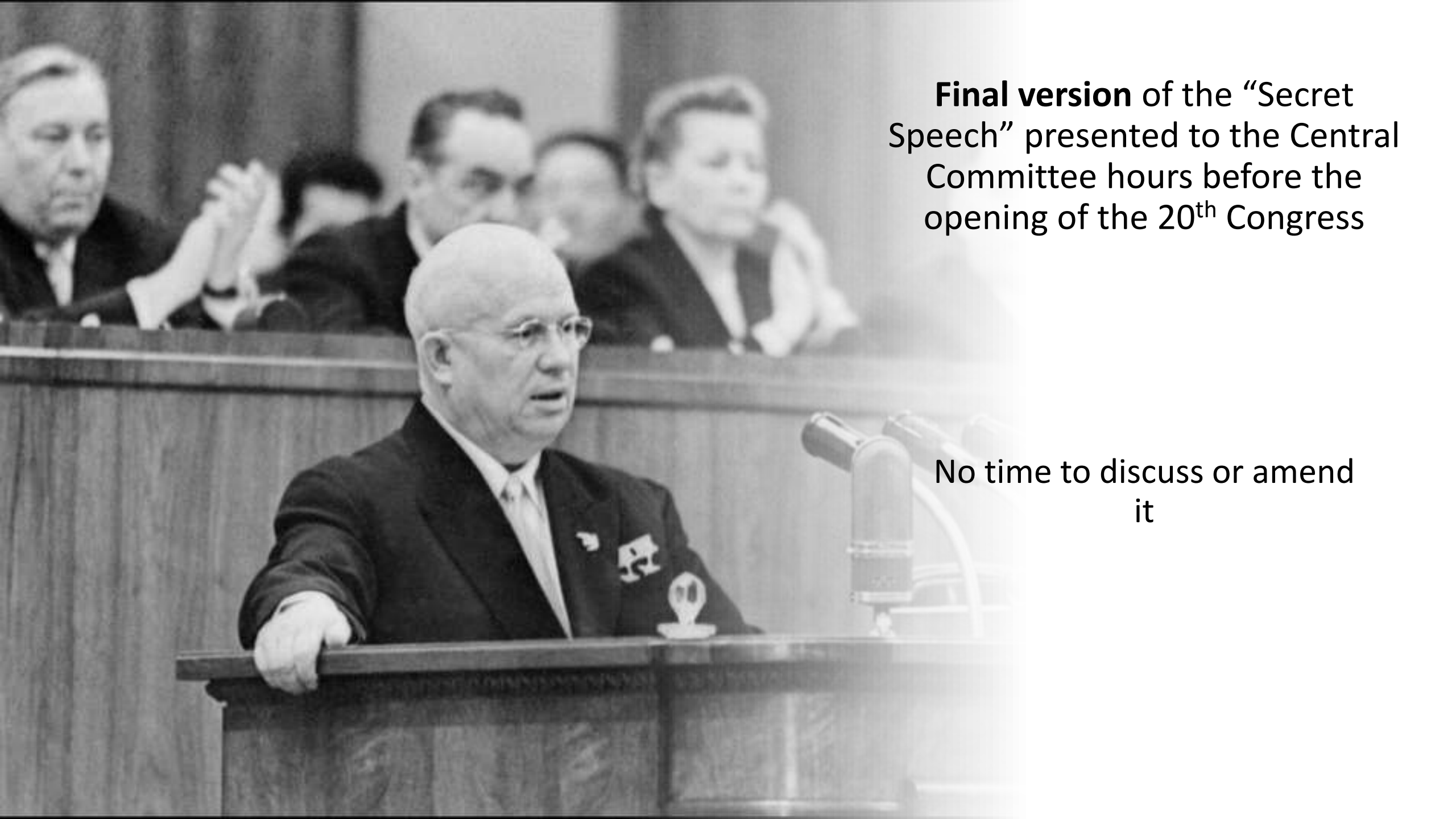
Pospelov invited to rewrite his report

A shorter report to include no numbers, no mention of operations of mass repressions

Stalin's tactical and strategic errors following the 1941 German invasion

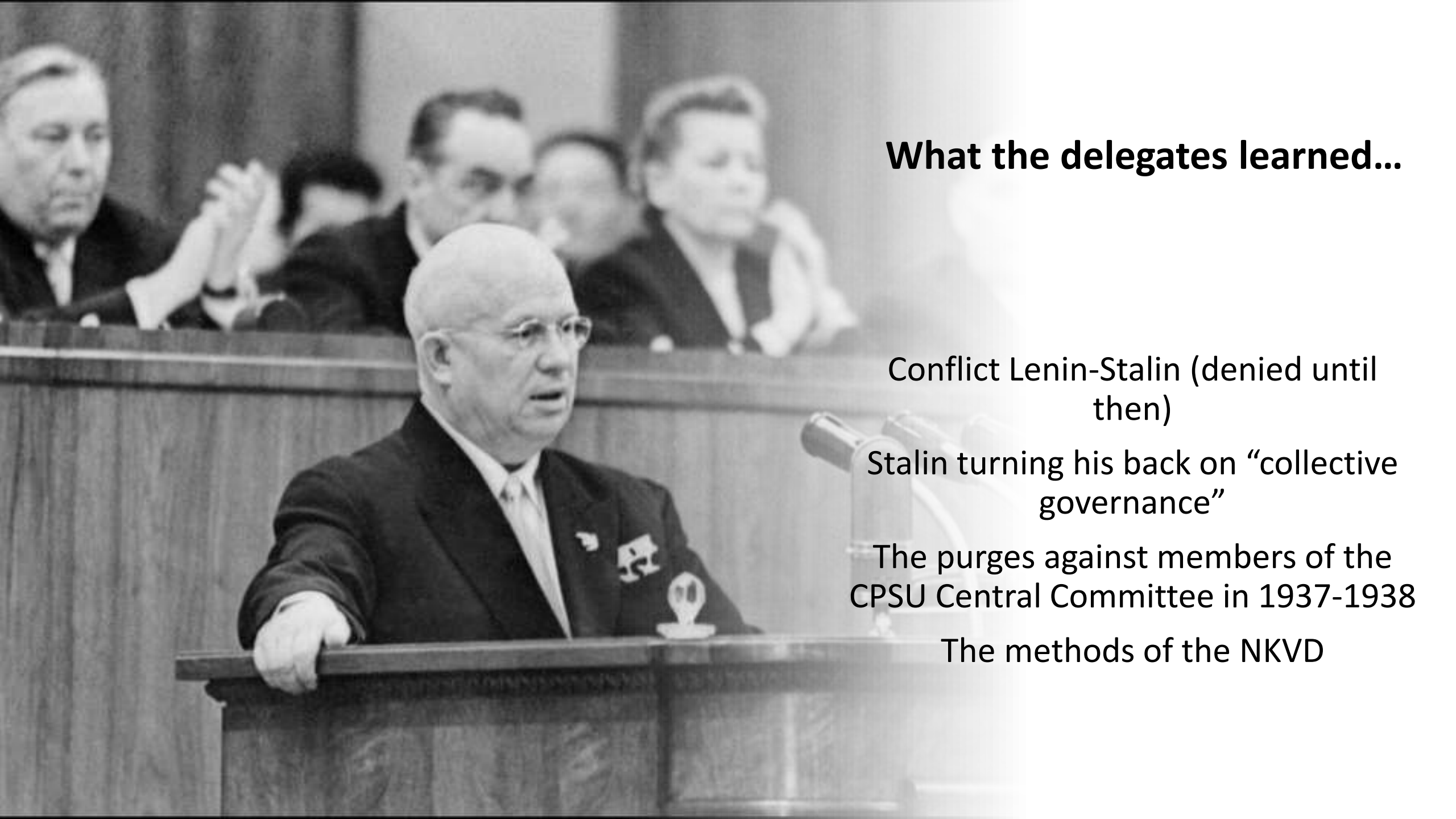
The Doctor's Plot

How Stalin terrorized his colleagues



Final version of the “Secret Speech” presented to the Central Committee hours before the opening of the 20th Congress

No time to discuss or amend it



What the delegates learned...

Conflict Lenin-Stalin (denied until then)

Stalin turning his back on “collective governance”

The purges against members of the CPSU Central Committee in 1937-1938

The methods of the NKVD

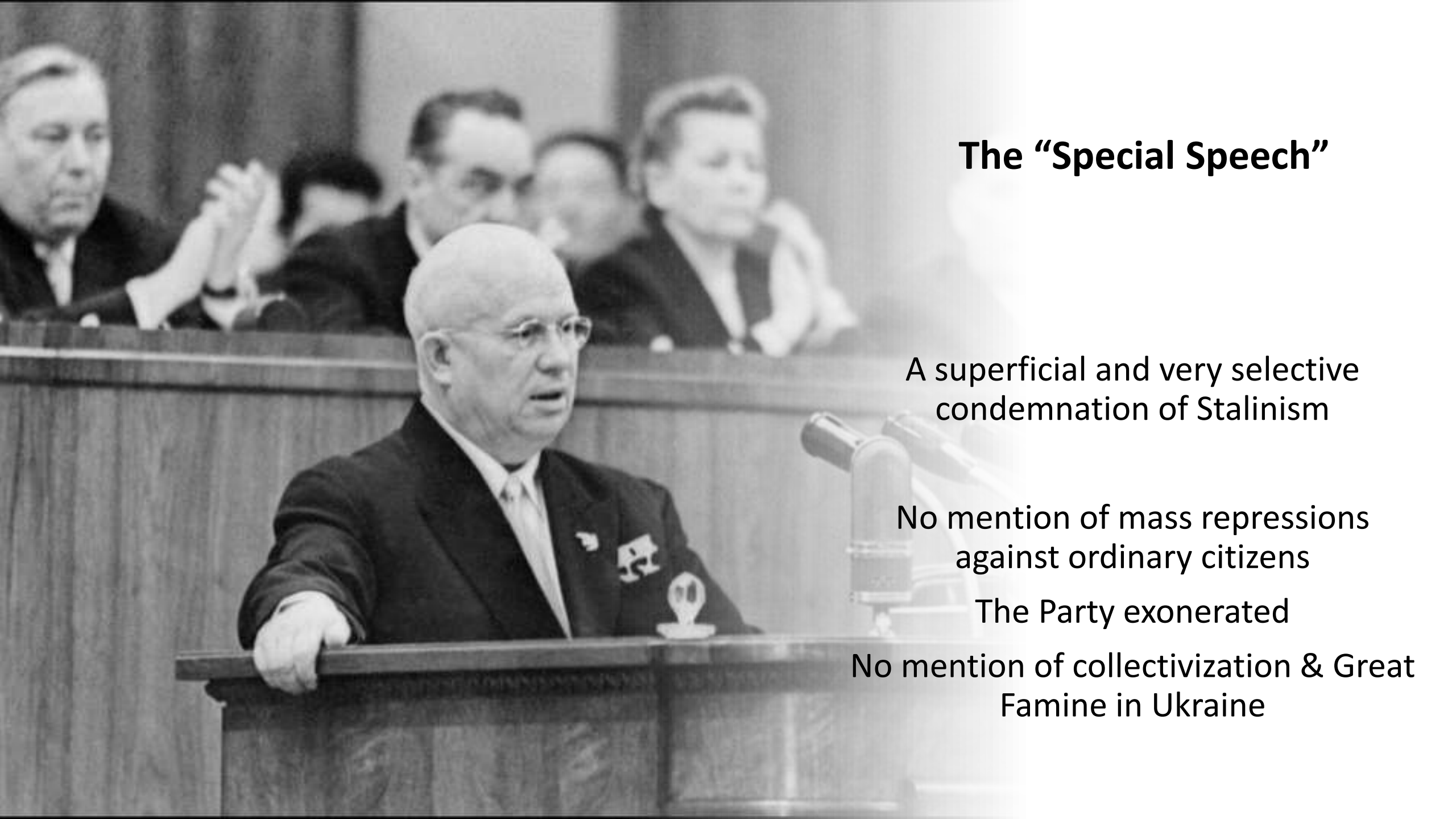
Stalin as an incompetent war leader

Stalin responsible for the initial military disasters (1941-1942)

The methods of Beria (mass deportations of peoples accused of collaborating with the Nazis)

Fake conspiracies & plots





The “Special Speech”

A superficial and very selective
condemnation of Stalinism

No mention of mass repressions
against ordinary citizens

The Party exonerated

No mention of collectivization & Great
Famine in Ukraine



A not so secret speech!

Behind closed doors

"Nothing must transpire"

BUT

"Secret Speech" widely
distributed amongst regional
Party Committees

"Ne dlia petchati ("Not to
share in writing")

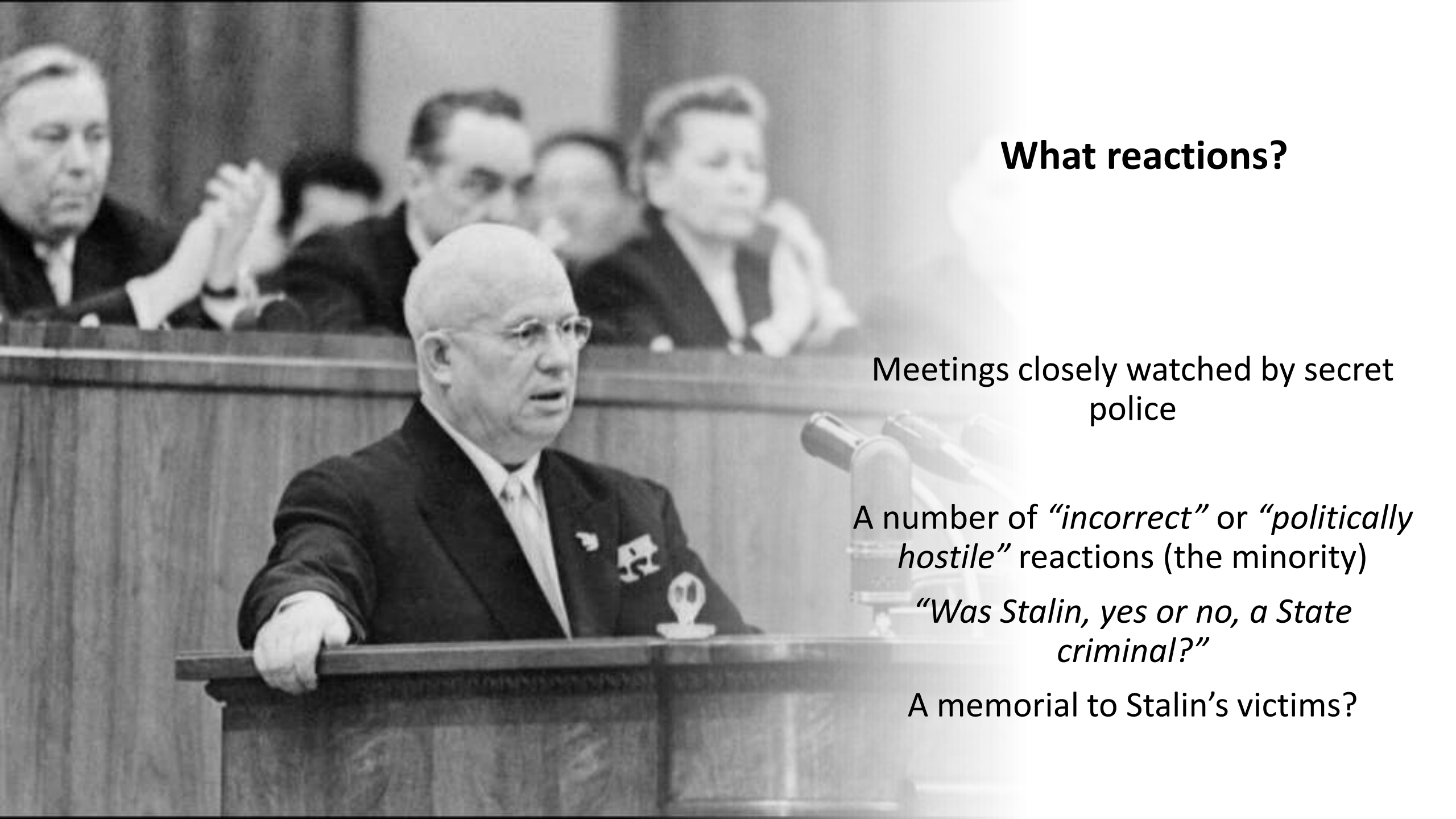


Local Party leaders

To summon an assembly of
Party members and read the
Report

7 million Party members
aware of the Speech within
days

Communist Youths (18
million)



What reactions?

Meetings closely watched by secret police

A number of *“incorrect”* or *“politically hostile”* reactions (the minority)

“Was Stalin, yes or no, a State criminal?”

A memorial to Stalin’s victims?



Many defended Stalin
and his actions

The benevolent leader who
achieved victory against the
Nazis

AND

Transformed a backward
Russia into a world
superpower



Diverse reactions

Majority shrugged at Stalin's
"cult of personality"

Some refused to believe the
Speech

Others: "*why bring one's
dirty laundry in public?*"



Riots in Georgia

Stalin's birthplace

"Long live the great Stalin"



And the outside world?

Speech distributed to the Heads of foreign communist delegations

Free to discuss with other members of their delegation

The New York Times Book Review

JANUARY 4, 1956

REVIEWERS

... ..

The authentic voice, raising more questions than it answers



At Stalin's side, 1952. Left to right: Malenkov, Voroshilov, Beria, Molotov, Bulganin, Khrushchev, Kaganovich and Mikoyan.

By HARRISON E. SALISBURY

First things first. This is Nikita S. Khrushchev speaking—speaking in a voice that often is his familiar earthy self, falling at Stalin (and paying off old party scores), again justifying the brutal, most dangerous movement, proving himself once more. He says, "That son-of-a-bitch Mao," Mao ("that a real man") and Malenkov, whom he a while ago considered an L.P.K. and S.P.K., traditionally reviling history to burnish his image and, finally, like a great Russian patriarch, calling upon his countrymen to create a new and better society, a free more pleasant community of men under, of course, what he calls the banner of Marxism-Leninism.

At the same time Khrushchev unconsciously perhaps as first before him the Indian, Gandhi, the prophet of the Khembli system, the horror of the Stalin years, the abatement of Soviet assets by the gangster advice of Stalin's police. ("When I do it like have it done to me.") Sometimes, he reveals, Stalin passed around to be signed by the Politburo the verdicts on their closest associates. But sometimes not. The procedure was so casual that to this day Khrushchev cannot quite remember whether he signed the death warrant of his brilliant associate, N. A. Vlasovskiy. "That's what was meant by 'objective sentencing,'" he adds.

But don't let me get too deep into Mr. Salisbury, an excellent managing editor of The Times, is the author of "The 800 Days The Siege of Leningrad."

Khrushchev Remembers

With an introduction, commentary and notes by Edward Crankshaw. Translated and edited by Stroke Tolson. Illustrated. 670 pp. Dutton, \$10.00, Dutton & Co. 210.

"Khrushchev Remembers" without attempting to define more precisely what this book is and what it is not. It is not a memoir in the conventional sense. Indeed, Khrushchev probably has never put his thoughts down in writing.

We are dealing here with a corpus which begins as an incoherent jumble of rambling family-legend reminiscences. These are notes (often confused and incoherent) have been veined, patched, excised, joined, revised, distorted and crossed through a variety of "collages" which probably began with Khrushchev himself and his immediate entourage, including pen-law and ex-convicts such as Abdul Adzhidai. Other figures in the plot almost certainly belonged to a Politburo member or two, and one or more figures of the Soviet police apparatus which finally came to have authorized the chance-to-the police library agent, Victor Louis, to convey the package, complete with a narrative album of family snapshots, to the West. There the Boston-based editor-specialist of Time, Inc., and LIFE, Simon, with the aid always consulting aid of Khrushchev's Edward Crankshaw, have masterfully transformed this haphazard into a fascinating document which, if devoid of spectacular revelation and notably questionable in accuracy, at least gives us a

glimpse of Russian life at the top under Stalin, under Khrushchev, and as it is today.

Khrushchev seems to have summarized his tapings. Judging from fragmentary internal evidence in 1965 or 1966, a year or two after he fell from power and at a time when no energetic and ambitious man might still hope for some kind of a political comeback. The latest segments were dictated toward the end of 1969 or early 1970 (this can be established by his references to events after the death of Nikita Khrushchev in the autumn of 1963, and to Fidel Castro's 1970 sugar-cane quota of 10 million tons, that is, at a time when Khrushchev could not hope for a return to power but could still try, perhaps, to dramatize his resignation, encourage any surviving Khrushchevites, pay back enemies and lay some guidelines for the future.

If these were Khrushchev's notes, those of the party and police apparatus who permitted the materials to reach the West almost defy intelligent analysis.

A case can be made that someone (Khrushchev himself?) wanted police legitimacy in using Khrushchev as a weapon against the neo-Stalinist regime of Brezhnev-Kosygin-Podgorniy. Or, alternatively, that someone is trying hard to glorify Khrushchev and his liberalizing reforms to do

liberally placing the package in the West. Two items are notably bound in each Khrushchevian dossier. The book contains a paragraph to Ivan S. Iren, Khrushchev's own police chief ("an honest, straightforward, reliable comrade despite his mistakes") who was dismissed in 1955, and a previous tribute to the recently deceased General Penkovskiy ("General Penkovskiy is still alive and well. I wish him one hundred years of life and happiness"). Penkovskiy was the great uncle of Geng Penkovskiy, the Soviet agent whose exposure as an extremely high-level conduit to Western intelligence caused an enormous scandal in Soviet Government and police circles.

At the same time Khrushchev makes vague allusions to not only of Stalin's police side like Turgid, Tuzikov and Buzov but of a variety of police-political figures prominent in the Red Army, such as Kuzik, Malinin, Shchadenko and Marshal P. I. Guderian, long the head of the Red Army's "Political Administration," and whose Khrushchev described as crying in a paragraph of fear at the height of the Stalingrad battle: "Stalingrad is doomed! Don't leave me behind!"

Even from this hasty survey it is obvious that we are confronted with something by no means without precedent in the murky history of documents originating (or pretending to originate) in Russia since the Bolshevik regime. Despite still questions over the "Khrushchev letter," the "Liberator Moscow" and a host of other uncertainties.

Without entirely ruling out other possibilities, I think it fair to say that I do not recall a document as honest as

16 March 1956

New York Times: first foreign newspaper to report on the "Secret Speech"



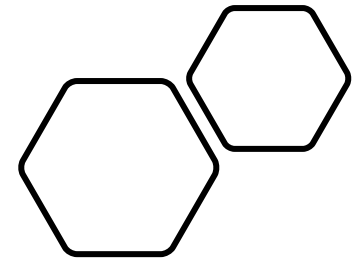
Meanwhile in
Washington...

To publish the “Secret
Speech” of not?

CIA & Eisenhower
administration on the fence

“Secret Speech” released to
the public







Maurice Thorez

Foreign Communist Parties

Silence & embarrassment

No official directives from
Moscow

The Speech: a fake?



Poland: the weakest link

“Secret Speech” translated in
Polish and widely distributed
amongst Polish communist
leaders

Boleslaw Beirut



Massive protests in
Poland

The first consequences of the
“Secret Speech”

Uncontrolled distribution of
the Speech

Immediate repression





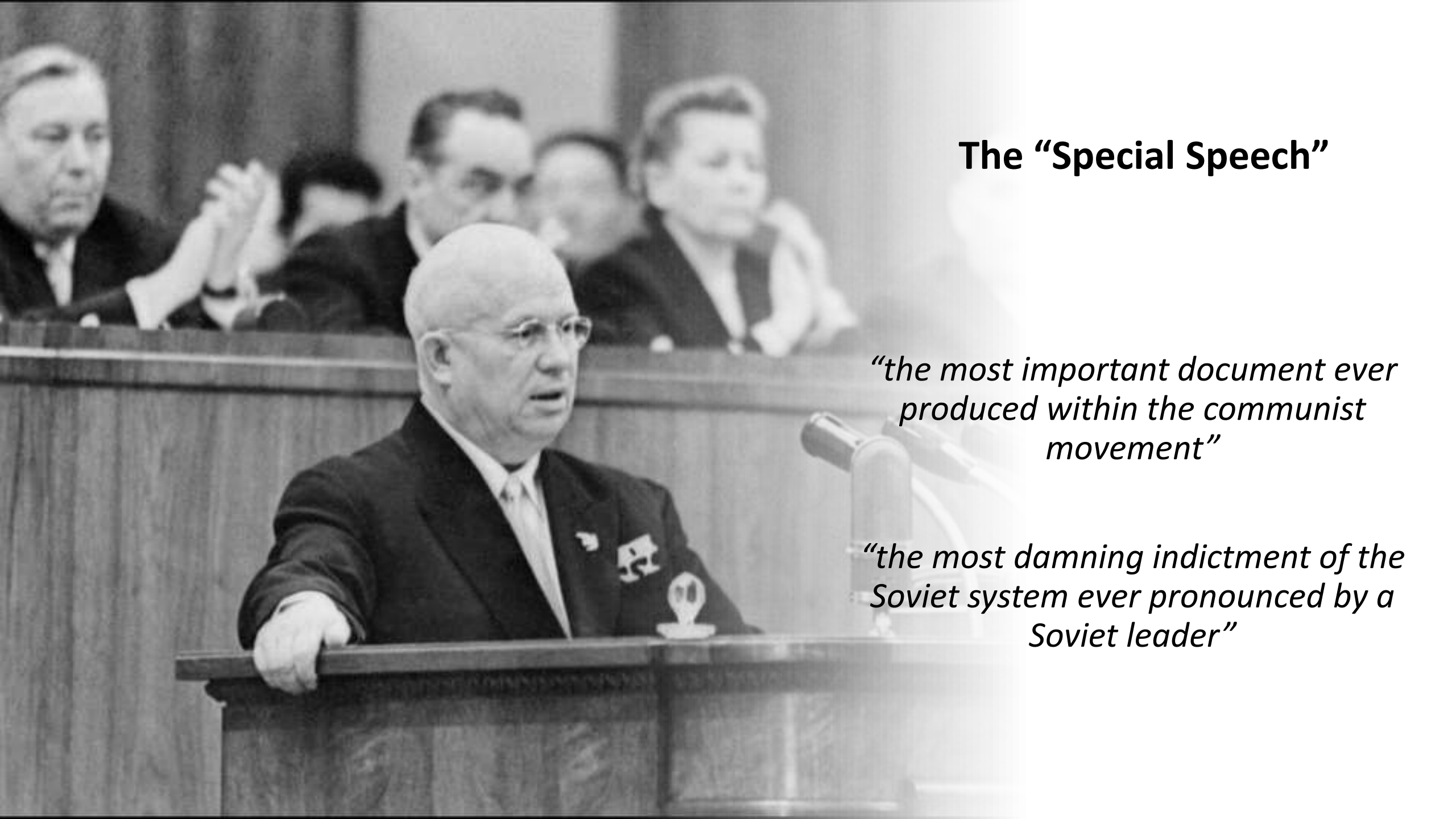
30 June 1956

A “rectification”

Stalin as “*a great
theoretician and organizer*”

Communism still a just cause

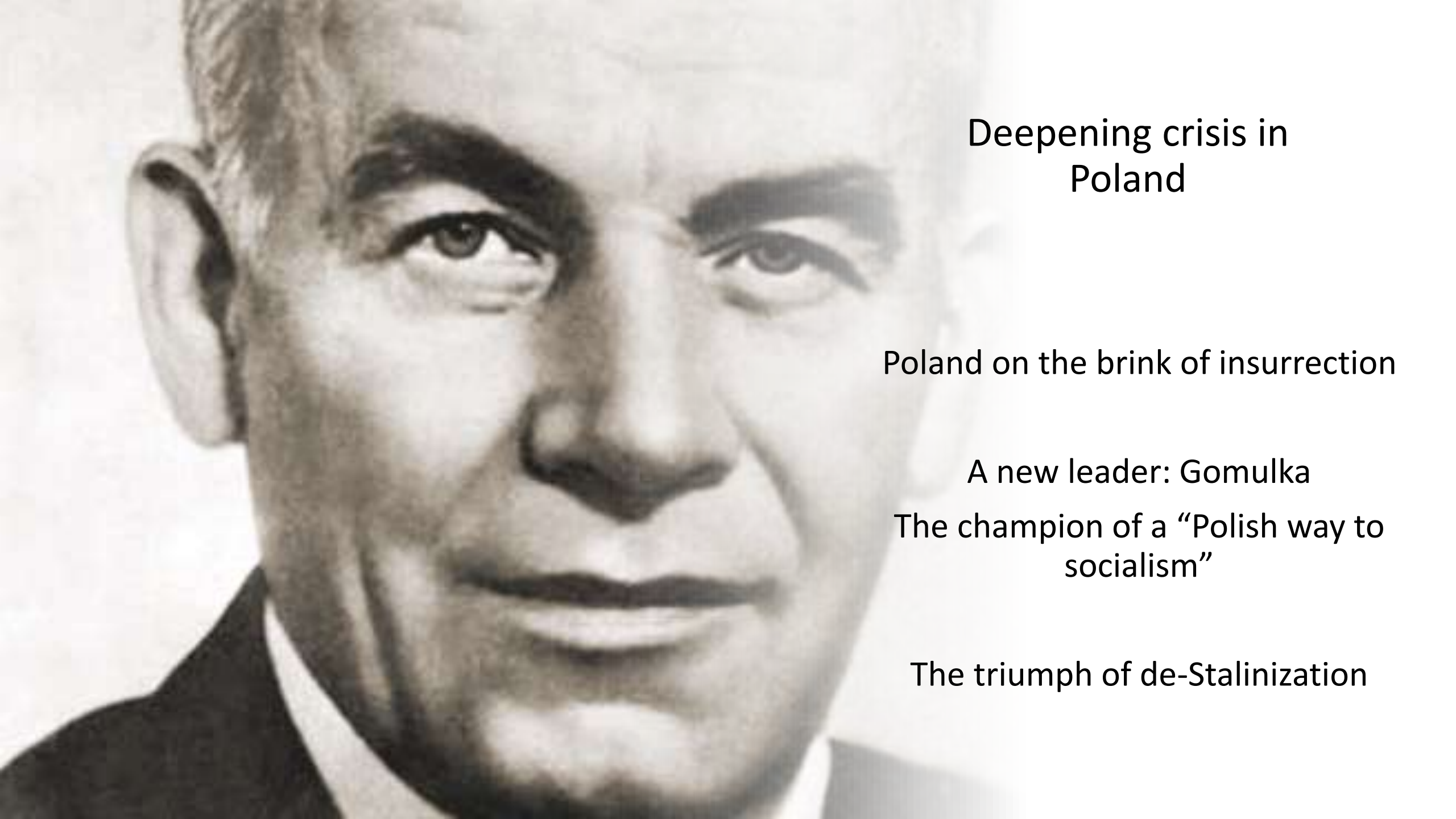
“The engine of History”



The “Special Speech”

“the most important document ever produced within the communist movement”

“the most damning indictment of the Soviet system ever pronounced by a Soviet leader”



Deepening crisis in
Poland

Poland on the brink of insurrection

A new leader: Gomulka

The champion of a “Polish way to
socialism”

The triumph of de-Stalinization



The Hungarian Revolution

Bloody repression in
Budapest

中蘇友好同盟互助

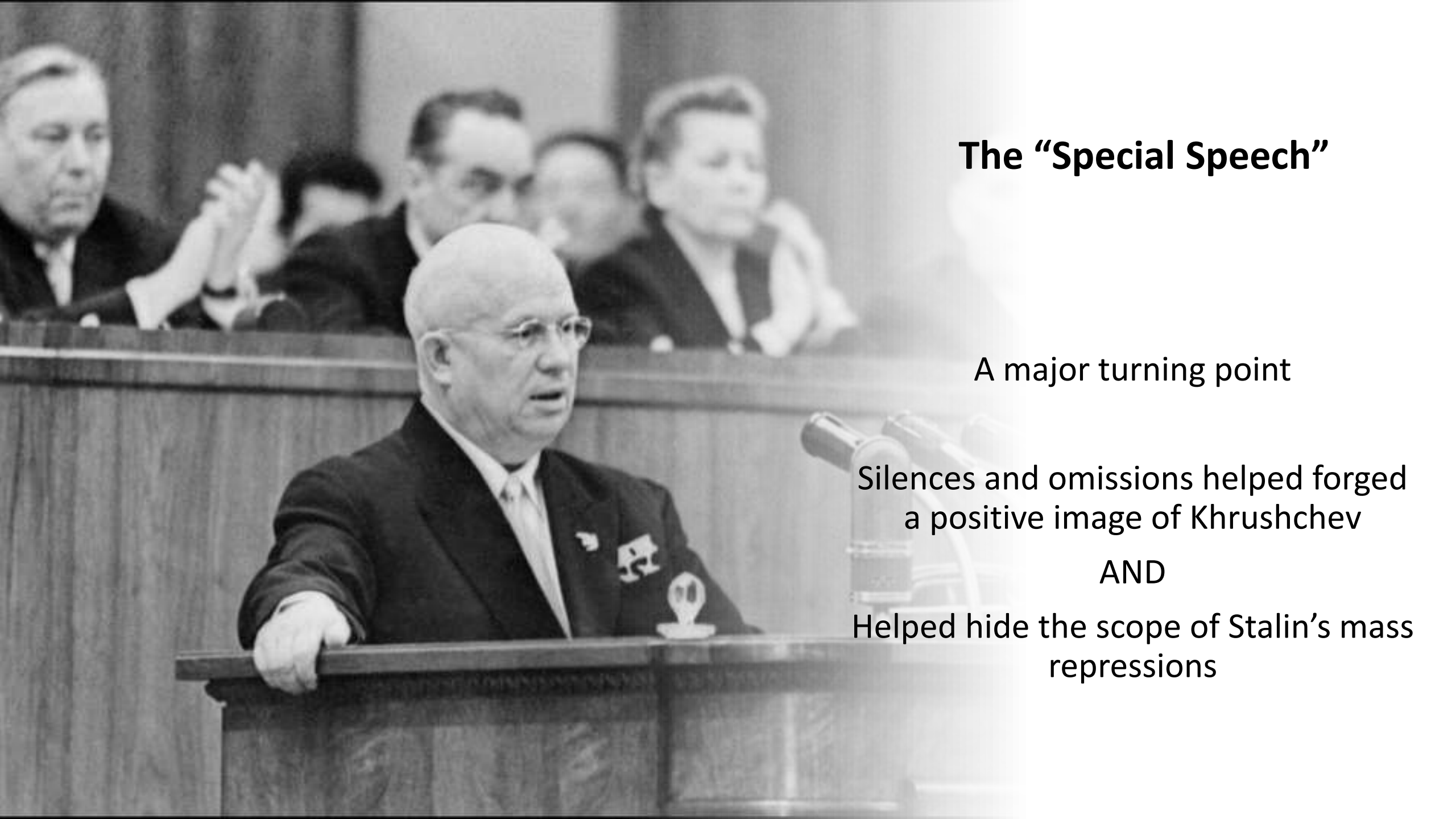
促進世界持久和平



Growing Sino-Soviet tensions

Mao: *“The Soviet Union may attack Stalin, but we will not”*

The Soviet Union accused of losing its revolutionary edge
No to Moscow’s *“revisionism”*



The “Special Speech”

A major turning point

Silences and omissions helped forged
a positive image of Khrushchev

AND

Helped hide the scope of Stalin’s mass
repressions