

From The Archives

Edited by Nikolai V. Zlobin

Dear Readers! Our journal continues to publish documents that illuminate the political history of the Soviet Union. Some of you have already encountered, on pages of our journal, personal documents and letters of Josef Stalin from his top secret depository, secret materials from the time of perestroika, and the personal archival documents of former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

In this issue, we bring to your attention documents from the formerly secret depository that was owned by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (currently known as the Center Depository and Study Documents of Contemporary History of Russia). All documents are now being published for the first time on the basis of agreement of scientific cooperation between *Demokratizatsiya* and the Russian Center. Submitted materials covered the first years of Soviet rule and are closely tied to top Russian government officials such as Lenin, Stalin, Molotov, Lunacharsky, Ordjonikidze, and many more. In this issue we are publishing only a part of the documents from the rich collection of materials at the journal's disposal. These documents unravel the lives and activities of the leading figures of the Communist Party and Soviet State starting with their accession to power.

The publication of these documents will continue in the following issues. Again, we see our goal as making once secret and inaccessible documents available to large numbers of political scientists. Therefore, in accordance with our traditions, we submit these materials with only brief commentary, allowing researchers to analyze for themselves.

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[From file 558, Pages 1 and 2. The discussion is about the role of the trade unions in connection with the introduction of a new economic policy (November 1920-March 1921). The discussion was begun by L. Trotsky and N. Bukharin joins him. The discussion was finished by adoption of Lenin's "platform of 10" (in the text referred to as "our platform") by the 10th Congress of the Workers' and Peasants' Party (of Bolsheviks). A conversation between Stalin and Ordzhonikidze via direct line. Baku.]

Stalin: Tell me briefly whether the discussion is proceeding in your region and what the results have been.

Ordzhonikidze to Stalin: The discussion has begun, but so far it is only informational in nature. Results . . .

Stalin to Ordzhonikidze: Moscow and Petersburg have come out in support of our platform plank. Propagandists from both sides have spread out to the regions for discussions. Bukharin has affiliated himself with Trotsky. Kalinin is going to Rostove for a few days and bringing literature'. Go to the Caucasus bureau and insist that they dispatch the literature to Baku without delay upon receipt. I do not doubt that our platform will assemble an absolute majority. You should get energetically involved in this matter and strive for recognition of our platform throughout the Caucasus. They tell me that Frumkin and Byeloborodov are not conducting themselves as one should. It

would be good if you could visit the Kuban-Rostov-Stavropol region. Tell the facts about the Georgian question. The problem is waiting in line for us to solve it. Have you received any literature on conflicting opinions?

Ordzhonikidze: When Moscow spoke out in *Pravda* of January 13, Moscow spoke out on the Petersburg letter; they spoke out against it. I have received two brochures. A speech of Lenin's and [a speech] of Zinoviev's. They have both been sent for printing and will come out in two days.

Note to Comrade Ordzhonikidze: The incident between Moscow and Petersburg has long been settled. On the essence of the question, the Moscow Committee, and the whole organization of the Moscow region, spoke out in favor of our platform. During the discussion last week....² Last night a huge majority of the Congress of Mine Workers spoke out in favor of our platform. Moscow and Petersburg are marching side by side behind our platform.

Stalin

[**Cavbureau**, Caucasian Bureau of the Central Committee of Workers' and Peasants' Party (of Bolsheviks) (hereinafter referred to as the CCWPP (1920-1922) was founded by the Central Committee of the Communist Party for general guidance of the party organizations of the Caucasus. It generated the Southeastern Bureau of the CCWPP(B) (1921-1924) founded for guidance of the party organizations of the Don, Stavropol, and autonomies of the Northern Caucasus. **Trotsky, Liev** (1879-1941), member of the Communist Party since 1917. From 1917 to 1926, member of the Politbureau of the Communist Party; from 1918 to 1924, the People's Commissar on Military and Navy Affairs and chairman of the Revolutionary Military Soviet of the Republic. **Bukharin, Nikolai** (1888-1938), member of the Communist Party since 1906, academician of the USSR Academy of Sciences since 1919; candidate to Politbureau of the Communist Party. Since 1924 he was a member of the Politbureau of the Communist Party. After 1919 he was a member of the Executive Committee of Comintern; after 1918, chief editor of *Pravda*. **Kalinin, Mikhail** (1875-1946), member of the Communist Party since 1898. After 1919 he was a Chairman of the All Union Central Executive Committee, member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, supporter of the "platform of 10." **Zinovyev, Grigory** (1883-1936), member of the Communist Party since 1901, member of the Politbureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, chairman of the Petrogradsky Soviet, chairman of the Executive Committee of Comintern, supporter of the "platform of 10." **Ordzhonikidze, G.K.**, at that time, chairman of Cavbureau, supporter of the "platform of 10." **Frumkin, Moisy** (1878-1939), member of Cavbureau, supporter of the "platform of 10." **Beloborodov, Alexander** (1891-1938) at that time, candidate to the member of the WPP, secretary of the Southeastern Bureau of the CCWPP, supporter of the "platform of 10."]

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[From file 558, letter number 2107, a letter from Stalin to V. Lenin, 1921. The document is a

typewritten original; the signature and additions are in Stalin's personal hand.]

Concerning the affair in Turkestan. To Molotov.

Comrade Molotov: I am sending this letter to all members of the Politburo along with other materials concerning Turkestan.

J. Stalin

(In Stalin's hand; the rest is a typewritten original)

Comrade Lenin

Today, I received Safarov's letter and your postscript to it. You write that Safarov is "completely correct." I, myself, think that they are both incorrect, both Safarov and Tomsky. The only difference is that Safarov is more decisive in the war on factions and is more cunning than Tomsky. You may cite the resolutions (by no means foolish) passed by the 1st Congress of Turkestani Communists as a sign of the superiority and correctness of Safarov. But I have to say that I, personally, attribute no serious meaning to these (and similar) resolutions, because they, these good resolutions, have been written and read for two years already, but all the same no "hue has yet been cried" from the regions, and the mass nationalist *basmachestvo*' (banditism) is growing ceaselessly, bringing tens of cotton factories to ruin, destroying the cotton industry, discrediting the prestige of Soviet power and her nationalities policies in Afghanistan, Muslim and non-Muslim India and Persia. Safarov, of course, wags his tail obligingly, saying that the nationalities policy is being conducted correctly "only in Turkestan." In my opinion, the cornerstone of correctly conducting a nationalities policy is the battle (first and foremost a political battle) with mass nationalist banditism, and success in this battle. And look! At a time when in Bashkeria, Kyrgyzia, the Northern Caucasus and the Caucasus proper mass national banditism is already liquidated (I'm not counting individual bandits, who are still being fished out of the general population), in the main region of Turkestan, in the center of the cotton industry, in Fergana, mass nationalist banditism is growing unchecked.⁴ What sense can there be in repeating good resolutions year after year in the face of this fact? Is it not clear that Safarov and Tomsky are both incorrect?

In order to quickly carry out our nationalities policy, we need to place on our spearhead circumspect, judicious and systematic work on getting all true Soviet and party elements, regardless of nationality, to close ranks around the Soviet and Party organs of Turkestan. Two years of favorite practice have shown us that Safarov can conduct neither systematic nor judicious nor circumspect policy—he usually exaggerates a few truths from our nationalities policy, crudely twisting the plank and speaking out beyond all boundaries of reason. The results are as follows: 1. Exacerbation of the national enmity between Russians and the indigenous populations [of Central Asia], between the Kyrgyz and the Uzbeks, and between the Uzbeks and

the Turkmen; 2. Growth of *basmachestvo* (in Uzbek and Tadjik regions); 3. Chronic squabbling in Party and Soviet organs; 4. Endless appeals from Turkestan to the Center; 5. Hysterical hints about resignation from Safarov. One is forced to compare Safarov with Ordzhonikidze, who is working in a region with much more complex interweaving of nationalities than Turkestan, but all navigated without squabbles, without hysterical hints about resignation....

The conclusion is clear: Safarov must be removed (he cannot be given independent, management work, for he himself needs management).

Nevertheless, I will not put this question before the Central Committee at this time, preferring to wait for the return of Joffe and the results of his trip.

5/IX - 21

J. Stalin

PS. Today (9/IX) I saw the presentation of comrade Rudzutak, from which it is clear that the policies of Safarov not only enable the exacerbation of the national dissension, but destroy destroy^o our party organization in Turkestan as well (the departure of the Russian railroad workers from the party representing better elements of the party in backward Turkestan) and compromise the party in the eyes of the workers (the outrageous behavior in the carrying out the "land policy"). There is nowhere else to go. We cannot wait anymore. Continuing to answer for Safarov's escapades is unacceptable. I propose to recall Safarov and Joffe immediately and to place the question of Safarov's removal [from here to the end written in Stalin's hand], absolutely inviting comrade Rudzutak to the session of the Politburo.

9/IX - 21 J. St.

Comrade Molotov! I ask you to put the underlined sentence at the end into the agenda for the Politburo.

St.

[**Turkestan**, The Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (1918-1922) of RSFSR. Included are the territories of contemporary Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tadjikistan, Kirghisia, and Kara-Kalpakia. **The 6th Congress** of Turkman Communists took place in 1921. **Safarov, Georgy** (1881-1942), member of Communist Party since 1908, candidate to Politbureau of the Communist Party CC, member of Turkestan Bureau of the Central Committee CC. **Tomsky, Mikhail** (1880-1936), member of Communist Party since 1904, at that time he was chairman of the Turkestan Commission the All Union Central Executive Committee and the Soviet of People's Commissars of RSFSR. **Ioffe, Adlof** (1883-1927), member of Communist Party since 1917; after October 1921 he was the chairman of the Turkestan Bureau of the Communist Party CC. **Molotov, Vyacheslav** (1890-1986)- member of the Communist Party since 1906, at that time he was the secretary of the Communist Party CC. **Rudzutak, Yan** (1887-1938)- member of the Communist

Party since 1905, at that time, member of Turkcommissio of the All Union Central Executive Committee and the Soviet of People’s Commissars; since 1920 he was the chairman of the Soviet of People’s Commissars of the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. **The Turkestan Commission of the All Unon Central Executive Committee and the Soviet of People’s Commissars of RSFSR** (1919-1922) was founded for aiding Turkestan, and had the authorities of a state and Party body. **Turkestan Bureau of the Communist Party CC** (1920-1922), plenipotentiary representation of the Communist Party CC which was aimed at strenghtening Party organizations of Turkestan.

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[File 558, letter number 2107, pages 1, 2. A letter from Stalin to Lenin, on stationery of a People’s Commissar of Worker and Peasant Inspection. Signed in Stalin’s hand]

22/XI - 1921

c/o SNK° To Comrade Lenin

These disgraceful actions brought to light by Comrade Kiselyov do not represent anything out of the ordinary—they are characteristic of (at a minimum) two-thirds of our rented businesses throughout Russia (judging by materials of the RKI⁷). In the eradication of this evil, the RKI cannot provide direct help, as its competency does not extend to rented businesses, but only obliquely, by means of exerting pressure (in the course of inspection) on government property given for rent can it influence the course of affairs for rented businesses, but this is insufficient. The VChK⁸ has more authority to deal with this evil, but I do not have enough agents to carry out such work on a nationwide scale, in view of which I am forced to limit myself to episodic actions, applying the harshest penalties as a deterrent. A better means would be to invest personal reponsibility (by special decree) in the supervisor of the rented business such that, in the event of the disccovery of disgraceful behavior such as that mentioned in Comrade Kiselyov’s document, [there would be] mandatory execution by firing squad first for the supervisor of the rented business, and only secondly for the renter/thief.

J. Stalin

[Kiselev, Aleksy (1879-1938), member of Communist Party since 1898. Since 1921, he was the chairman of a “Small Soviet of People’s Commissars”—Commission for Preliminary Consideration of issues of agenda of RSFSR Soviet of People’s Commissariat meetings.]

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[File 5, letter number 1170, pages 1, 2. The document is a typewritten original; Lunacharsky’s

signature is done with his own hand. Letter from A. Lunacharsky to the SNK⁹]

TO THE COUNCIL OF PEOPLE'S COMMISSARS

Dear Comrades:

The government has decided firmly and completely correctly to abandon Petersburg and move the capital of Soviet Russia to Moscow, even in the event that we should receive a more or less extensive truce.

But, of course, the government cannot remain indifferent to the long-term fate of an enormous, first-class world revolutionary center. Petersburg will be forced to be austere. It must painfully endure a process of decline in both political and economic relations.

Of course, the government is trying by all means to ease this torturous process, but it still will be impossible to save Petersburg from the sharpening of its industrial crisis, the further growth of unemployment, the related dissatisfaction of the masses which remain in the area and their thinning out to the detriment of the revolutionary population as a whole.

All of this is both difficult in and of itself and fraught with dangers for the fate of Soviet power in Petersburg.

Of course, with the departure of the Council of People's Commissars and the TsIK¹⁰ all power will ultimately be transferred into the hands of the Petersburg Council of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. But it would be rash to invest this most important role of the director of Soviet life in Petersburg only in the chairman of the Council, Comrade Zinoviev, in light of all his given qualities. Here a collegium is necessary. In my opinion, one of the People's Commissars must be imported for this collegium, and a relatively popular one in Petersburg at that. He might be placed in the capacity of People's Commissar of the Northern Oblast for Coordination of the Activities of Councils of the Oblast and Permanent liaison with the Government in Moscow. Any energetic and experienced comrade could be the third member of the collegium.

I have decided to offer myself to the comrade people's Commissars for the post of their official representative in Petersburg. I think that the news about my remaining in the city would ease the bitterness, at least a little, of the capital the government abandoned. I will not undertake the administration of military, police and industrial matters, but will undertake as far as possible to support the spirit of good-spirit [thus in the original—the editors]¹¹ trust in Soviet power, to be an advocate for Petersburg before you (if, in the overall state perspective you begin to lose sight somewhat of the heroic center of the revolution) and, being active in its entire fate, to be an advocate for the prestige of the government before the masses.

I recognize all the responsibility which I take on myself, all of the burden, the danger, the—let us say almost deadliness of the position which I am asking your permission to take,

but—if I am not mistaken—it is my duty to take it: in the first place I promised the masses of Petrograd, with whom I am in ceaseless contact, more than once not to abandon Petrograd until all possibilities had been exhausted. Secondly the masses, unless I flatter myself, have a well known trust in me and thirdly, I am less needed in the center than the others, as Comrade professor Shternberg could be placed in my current post.

I ask the Council of People's Commissars to look over this, my application, and give its agreement in the nearest term.

People's Commissar A. Lunacharsky

[The Russian Federation government moved to Moscow, the capital of Russia, 10-11 March 1918. **Zinovyev, Grigory** (1883-1936), member of the Communist Party since 1901, member of the Politbureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, chairman of the Petrogradky Soviet, chairman of the Executive Committee of Comintern, chairman of Petrograd Soviet. **Shternberg, Pavel** (1865-1920), member of the Communist Party since 1905; member of People's Commissariat on the Education Board.

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[File 2488, pages 1, 2, 3. Letter from Molotov on the stationery of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party. The letter is written in Molotov's handwriting, the reply is written by Stalin. A letter from Molotov to Stalin and Stalin's answer follows.]

Comrade Stalin!

I consider Comrade Dzerzhinsky's established practice of sending letters in the name of the People's Commissar to communists in the transportation field improper. Communists in the transportation field are coming to be in an unusual position with respect to the People's Commissar for Railroad Transport, [taking] directives not from the party, not from party organizations, but from the People's Commissar. This is hardly good, even if the People's Commissar is quoting party decisions and practices. Comrade Dzerzhinsky is requesting of the Central Committee, not for the first time, an official stamp similar to the real stamp of the People's Commissar for his missives to communists. In the given case, I, as a communist, will not object decisively unless you object.

The next time, however, it will be necessary, in my opinion, for Comrade Dzerzhinsky to address himself as the People's Commissar to the transportation workers in general (to one or another category of worker) and not only to communists. The party itself should have dealings with communists.

V. Molotov

Stalin's answer to Molotov

Dzerzhinsky's circular does not say anything new, it simply talks about the fulfillment of the circulars of the TsIK.¹² I think that it would have been possible to allow Dzerzhinsky to send his circular.

[**Dzerzhinsky, Felix** (1877-1926), member of the Communist Party since 1895, at that time he was a member of Organizational Bureau of the communist Party CC, chairman of GPU, the People's Commissar of Communications.]

Notes

1. This and all emphases in this translation appear in the original.
2. Thought not continued in the original.
3. The *basmachestvo* was a rebellion against Soviet power in Central Asia. In this document, Stalin defines it for Lenin simply as "banditism."
4. The Russian word translated here as "unchecked" is slightly vulgar, suggesting incontinence.
5. Word repeated in the original - probably a typographical error.
6. Council of People's Commissars.
7. Workers and Peasants Inspectorate.
8. All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combatting Counterrevolution and Sabotage (Cheka).
9. Council for People's Commissars.
10. Central Executive Committee.
11. This note appears in the Russian text, referring to the fact that what should have been an adjective was written as a noun.
12. Central Executive Committee.