

July 1, 1953

Letter from Beria to Malenkov, 1 July 1953

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Summary:

Letter from Beria to Malenkov, 1 July 1953, taking blame for his inappropriate actions.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

To the CC CPSU
Comrade Malenkov

Dear Georgii!

During all these four days and nights that were hard for me, I gave considerable thought to everything, concerning the activity on my side during the last months after the plenum of the CC CPSU, concerning [our] work as well as you personally - and some comrades of the CC Presidium and I subjected my actions to severest criticism, disapproved of myself strongly. Particularly grave and inexcusable is my behavior towards you, where I am a guilty party one hundred percent. Along with other comrades, I also strongly and energetically got down to work with the sole idea to do everything possible and not to let all of us flop without comrade Stalin and to maintain the new leadership of the CC and the government by action. According to the existing instructions of the CC and the government, building up the leadership of the MVD [Ministry of Internal Affairs] and its local organs, the MVD proposed to the CC and the government on your advice and on some issues on the advice of com. Khrushchev N.S. a number of worthwhile political and practical initiatives, such as: on the rehabilitation of the doctors, rehabilitation of the arrested of the so-called Mingrel Nationalist Center in Georgia and the return of the falsely-exiled from Georgia. On [sic] the Amnesty, on liquidation of the passport regime, on correction of the deviation of the party line in nationality policy and in the repressive measures in Lithuanian SSR, Western Ukraine [sic] and western Belorussia [sic], but the criticism is completely justified, the criticism by com. Khrushchev N.S. and the criticism by the other comrades at [the session of] the CC Presidium; with my last participation, to my erroneous wish to send along with the decisions of the CC also the information memoranda of the MVD. Of course, one reduced to a certain degree the significance of these very resolutions of the CC and, that an inadmissible situation emerged, that the MVD, as if it corrects Central Committees of Commun. [sic] parties of Ukraine, Lithuania and Belorussia, while the role of the MVD was limited to implementation of the resolutions of the CC CPSU and the government. I would frankly admit that my insisting on the dispatch of the memoranda was stupidity and political short-sightedness, particularly since you advised me not to do it. My behavior at the session of the Presidium of the CC, and the Presidium of the Council of Ministers, very often incorrect and inadmissible [behavior] that introduced nervousness and excessive harshness, I would say, as I have thought well about it and realized, [this behavior] went so far as to [constitute] inadmissible rudeness and insolence on my part toward comrade Khrushchev N.S. and Bulganin N.A. during the discussion on the German question [sic], of course, here I am guilty without question and have to be denounced thoroughly. At the same time, along with all of you, I tried to introduce initiatives at the Presidium [sic] aimed at the correct solution of issues, such as the Korean, the German, the responses to Eisenhower and Churchill, the Turkish, the Iranian, etc.

My behavior during the reception of the Hungarian comrades [was] untactful, nothing could justify it. The proposals about Imre Nagy should not have been introduced by me, but you should have done it, but at that moment I sprang up idiotically, and besides, along with correct remarks I made some loose remarks and was overly familiar, for which, of course, I should be given a good rap [vzgret]. But I must say in all sincerity that I thoroughly prepared myself and made all my assistants prepare themselves for the sessions of the CC and the government, so that within the limits of my strength and abilities [I tried] to assist in [finding a] correct solution of the issues under discussion. If and when I introduced initiatives, I revised them several times, together with the comrades collaborating with me, so as not to make a mistake and not to let the CC and the government down. In the Council of Ministers I left and had no time to introduce a report and draft resolution on reorganizing the award procedures [nagradnikh del], for I busily worked on that during about two months. As you know, we mulled over [vynashivaly] this question for a long time even while comrade Stalin was [still] alive. Concerning the comrades I work with, I always sought to be a man of principles, of party norms, demanding, so that the orders given to

them were fulfilled, as it was required in the interests of our party and our government. I have never had any other kinds of relations with the above-mentioned comrades. You can take, for instance, the leading officials in the MVD. Coms. [Sergei] Kruglov, [Amaiak Zakharivich] Kobulov, [Ivan A.] Serov, Maslennikov, [Piotr] Fedotov, Stakhanov, [Yevgeny] Pitovranov, [Vitalii V.] Korotkov, Sazykin, Gorlinsky, [Sergei A.] Goglidze, Ryasnoy, [Pavel] Sudoplatov, Savchenko, Raykhman, Obruchnikov, Meshik, Zyryanov and many others, nothing else they had from me other than my demands, how to better organize the struggle with the enemies of the Soviet state, within the country as well as outside. When comrade Stalin passed away, I named you, without thinking, as did other comrades, to be the chairman of the government and that I always considered and consider to be the only right choice. Subsequently I became even more convinced that it is you who will successfully lead together with the ruling collective of the CC and the government. Therefore, my tragedy is that as I have already said earlier, during more than ten years we have been true Bolshevik friends, worked with all our soul under various complicated conditions and were together in [one] mind and nobody disrupted our friendship, so valuable and necessary for me and now exclusively on my own fault, [sic] I lost everything that held us together.

Lavrentii Beria

1 July 1953