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**Statements of Cde. N. S. Khrushchev at a CPSU CC
Presidium meeting, 25 April 1963**

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Summary:

Khrushchev criticizes the management of ideological work in the cultural industries: film, radio, television, publishing, and theater. He states that science and ideology should be separated into two departments. A discussion about the organization of the Ministry of Culture follows, including the need to establish greater coordination among the republics. Khrushchev criticizes the indulgence of the Writer's Union and emphasizes the need for reform. He recommends the creation of a council of representatives from all the republics to oversee ideological work.

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Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

N. S. Khrushchev. Now about an ideological issue. I would like to state some ideas. We need to somehow organize work about ideological issues on a broader scale. Right now this [CC] sector that we have is unmanageable. The staff that exists deals with this issue symbolically and manages nothing. Now we're criticizing the film [industry]. So there are two people in the CC staff who deal with film industry issues. We've produced 150 pictures. Right? Voice. 106 a year. N. S. Khrushchev. 106, these are feature [films], but how many technical documentaries [tekhnicheskkiye zhurnaly] and newsreels - these are pure politics. So, it is asked, can these people provide assurance? They do not physically have the ability to read through scripts. Consequently, there is complete anarchy here and an unmanaged foundation has been laid. This is impossible. The staff in the Ministry of Culture is evidently large, but is also incapable and cannot manage. Does this appear to be so? Yekaterina Alekseyevna Furtseva. May I give some information? N. S. Khrushchev. Certainly. Ye. A. Furtseva. When there was a Ministry of Cinematography, there were 970 people and they made nine pictures a year. But now we've transferred 112 people to Cde. Romanov, both features and distribution, the entire staff that worked in the federal ministry. N. S. Khrushchev. Therefore, in addition, the concept of a thaw has developed; this fraud, Ehrenburg, artfully added this and therefore during the "thaw" people started not to examine this matter and therefore things turned out this way. Radio. I don't know, how many people were provided us to deal with radio? L. F. Il'ichev. Four people. N. S. Khrushchev. Look, four people here, four people there - all scattered and insufficient, and therefore also unmanaged. Television and publishing. These are all questions of ideology, but what kind. We consider ideology to be agitation and propaganda. This is the weakest means, agitation and propaganda. But the strongest is what lasts longest. An orator finishes his speech and his voice is silent and sometimes the listener does not know what he was talking about. But a book, a film - they leave an imprint and are a material substance, and therefore people can be educated by them. Well, what else? There are these resources. Therefore I would think that it might be necessary to create some kind of body, call it a directorate. I don't know if we will go the route of splitting up departments... There's theater - the theater has enormous importance. Clubs. Look, we put on "Revizor" [The Auditor]. Who was asked, who needs this? What goal was pursued? A good thing, a revolutionary thing for its time. I am convinced that this, the production of this play, is the idea of Igor' Il'inskiy. But Igor' Il'inskiy is a grumbler. Look when he performs on the stage, what repertoire does he take? Crap, only crap. He doesn't take other materials into his arsenal. This is not [Georg] Ots, who performed this song. This is not Ots, this is Igor' Il'inskiy. This is a grumbler, a person whose beliefs are against us, but restrained, restrained opposition, clever. He knows: salt, but don't use too much salt. He is in this position. And he is not alone. Even the Art Theater, they produced "Mary Stuart." I saw it twice. Remarkable, but this play is not for us, not for Tarasova. She carries herself very well on this stage in age and in ability: she really is the Queen of Scotland. But what does he give us? This play is probably not done anywhere in the world except as it is done here, but if it's done anywhere, so why [is it shown to] us? But we have it. It's probably in its third year here. But at one time they put on "Bronepoezd" [Armored Train], and at one time "Khleb" [Bread], "Kremlevskiy Kuranty" [Kremlin Chimes], "Lyubov' Yarovaya" [Spring Love]. These are wonderful plays where she would sound much better than as Mary Stuart. No one is following this and this sector of the [ideological] front is unmanaged. People choose what they want. Pictures. Here they take a work of art and make films from it. I would say that the choice is not based on the cleverness of a theme that would serve our interests, but the influence of the author of the book. Here a picture is being made - I saw from the newspapers - Leonov's [Russkiy] Les [The Russian Forest]. Listen, this is a very tiresome thing. When I read [it] I covered myself all over with bruises and then could only read through the first book. I took the second; well it didn't work at all. There are no exciting resources in the play. What kind of picture could it be? There will be one because Leonov is a living classic and therefore how can he be refused, especially as the one who makes the decision does not tolerate a loss materially, but those are good words which say: look at cultured people, they read works of art and are able to analyze and assess the work. And what kind of picture it can be, I don't know. The thing itself that was written was quite contradictory. There are places like: they are cutting the forest. Well, alright, when they cut it with axes, but now when there are mechanical saws the tractors came and, well, of course, the reality was lost. Listen, this is a person speaking who understands not a thing in life. They are cutting

the forest, bonfires were burning - yes, if people were not cutting the forest and were not using wood there wouldn't be any on earth because the forest supports Man and it ought to grow both with and without us, without Leonov. Anastas Ivanovich Mikoyan. If you don't cut, and don't do clearing, it will rot. N. S. Khrushchev. I told Adzhubey, there was an article by Paustovskiy printed in Izvestiya where he writes that they're processing gravel somewhere near the writer's dacha. Voice. On the Oka [River]. N. S. Khrushchev. And, he says, they're ruining the landscape, it's a beautiful place there, little birch trees are growing, and when he said that, they cited as justification that here it's two kopecks cheaper per cubic meter than in another place. How do you like that, he says, two kopecks. You're full of it! Don't you know what two kopecks are in millions, billions of cubic meters? But what's the difference that they take them here or in another place? We have so many beautiful places. So he wants them not to touch anything around his lavatory. But when raging rivers overflow their banks and wash the shores and knock down birches and pines, then God does this and you have to deal with it. But when the human mind begins to interfere - it's impossible to do it this way. So you see we print this but have to fight. He printed it as if to act and say how a writer can say, two kopecks. But, if so, how many fewer apartments will the people get and how much longer will the satisfaction of the people's needs take while Nature does not suffer. The sum does not change from the shift of the places of the terms [added] - you move 10 km. They're processing here, but in another place they're not processing. But then what is "they're spoiling the landscape?" For this is a habit. If you raise the dead and they looked around, they would see that the landscape had been changed from what it was before, and it would be no worse from this. In general this is stupidity, reactionary stupidity, but it's spread by defenders of nature. They say: he shot and killed a hare and when the hare died, its legs jerked. But the very same day he eats beef. But what is beef or mutton? It's also a ram whose legs jerked when they butchered it. So what's the difference? One is wild, the other tame, a distinction made by God. I saw how peasants made the sign of the cross before they butchered cattle - my grandfather did this, too - and then when they made pitch, they engraved a cross, like Christ told them. So this is ignorance. It was understandable when grandfather did it, but when highly-educated scientists do it... to make a long story short, you understand. (commotion among those present). How can this be done better? Right now there are departments of ideology and science; evidently an artificial combination. They have nothing in common. And then, science is so great in itself and diverse, it is impossible to combine it in one department. Therefore evidently science needs to be made separate. Aleksey Nikolayevich Kosygin. Make an independent department. N. S. Khrushchev. Science and poetry, both are useful, but have different creators and different uses from these works. What else can be said? Any questions? But obviously when a directorate is created and the directorate has departments, there should be reliable people in the departments. Shuyskiy told me that Yekaterina Alekseyevna [Furtseva] called him and said that someone was promoting the idea of eliminating the Ministry of Culture. I think this is incorrect if such an idea was promoted. We need to keep the Ministry of Culture because there will be a CC department and we now have extensive international relations about cultural issues. And therefore the department will supervise the Ministry, but in relations with the West, with the capitalist world, the Ministry will maintain contacts and conclude agreements. L. F. Il'ichev. Then the Committee for Cultural Relations is being eliminated because its main function is cultural ties and it is to be transferred to the Ministry of Culture. N. S. Khrushchev. It might be this way: if the functions remain the same, then we need to have one institution, and not two. I would think that the republics would be included in this Committee so that it be a union-republic [committee] and it not be like right now. Right now they have such autonomy that self-seekers make use of it: it didn't get approved in Moscow, so one goes to Ukraine; it doesn't get approved in Ukraine, so he goes to Byelorussia, and look at what kind of rot gets pushed through. I once was talking to Stalin when I was in Ukraine. A Georgian writer came to me then, I forgot his name. A. I. Mikoyan. Chaisakhurdiya. [Translator's note: an endnote corrects this to K. S. Gamsakhurdiya]. N. S. Khrushchev. Bazhan convinced me to receive him. I said: I have no questions for him. He convinced me to receive him. This was the conversation of a cynic. He began with what a good person you are, everyone knows you, and ended with: listen, it would be good for you in Ukraine to publish my book. (commotion). I said: listen, this

is not my function. Listen, [give] your word and it'll happen. I refused him. But this was before my departure. And he printed it in Ukraine nevertheless. Why did the Ukrainians need it? I don't know whether the Georgians needed it. But he printed it. Yes, it wasn't important to him whether the Ukrainians needed it - he earned money. I told Stalin. I think that Stalin chewed him out. He treated him badly for some reason and Beria treated him poorly. But I cited him as an example. There are many such Chaisakhurdiyans, Ivanovs, Akopyans, they're from all peoples who serve not an idea, but their own pocket. These need to be kicked out [isklyuchit']. Coordinate the publishing business, look what needs to be printed, and then the order needs to be placed. Not literally: you write me something, a commendation. Here's such-and-such a book, it's first priority, and such-and-such is last priority. When the last one's turn comes, God only knows. Then they'll orient themselves. It's not what we're ordering - go and give your work to a capitalist: he'll leave it and say that we'll study it and he'll study it a hundred years. But we're printing everything right now. I think that we'll have to restore order. We're not so rich to print [everything] they think up. It's good to print because all this is governmental and therefore it doesn't cost anyone; he cooked up something and prints it, he's the author. And now a prize [goes] to him, to the Writers Union, and to the Litfond for easy money. And he lives. I would think that more rigid rules need to be established for members of the Writers Union. There's some forge hand there; he's been writing verse for ages and might still be writing now, but he's working as a forge hand at the Likhachev Plant. Look at this Kotsyubinskiy. I was driving today and heard a broadcast. He knew Gorky, he visited him in Italy, and he worked in the Bureau of Statistics of Chernigov Province. But we have this terrible insult. This is wrong. This is debauchery, this is depravity [that] they give free bread to many. Yes, yes, it's free bread, it's easy money. And then they drink. There's nothing to do, he can't write and he drinks hard. We need to retain the old and promote the young. I'm saying, support. This is not money, but moral support. If he is a peasant and starts to write let him also work as a tractor driver. If he is a teacher, let him remain there. Here Solzhenitsyn has written one wretched book, one good one, and now probably has probably quit the school. Voice. He quit. N. S. Khrushchev. So where is he suitable? It's not known whether he's writing a third. Here's the Litfond for you. A writer, already in easy money. But he's not a writer, but a mouth to feed, and the Writers Union is easy money. I think that this is not insulting. This needs to be carried out among the writers so that they understand and the people understand us correctly. If we understand correctly ourselves what we say then the people will correctly understand us. L. F. Il'ichev. As regards Solzhenitsyn, he is seriously ill. N. S. Khrushchev. Let him be sick like a person, but why should he be ill as a member of the Writers Union? He would be supplied with oversight and aid. But now he's like a writer. Why do I say this? This is depravity, this is free money, this is irresponsibility. What's more is that they are accepting him into the Writers Union, [which means] an apartment in Moscow without fail. They wrote to me that some writer wrote so many books, but lives in Irkutsk and they don't give him an apartment in Moscow. D. S. Polyanskiy. It's...he wrote a book, he lives in Irkutsk. N. S. Khrushchev. This is possibly what I'm talking about. They say that he drinks heavily and now everyone there sees this but when he comes to Moscow there are so many people that no one sees it. D. S. Polyanskiy. And 10 people have signed a request to find him housing in Moscow. N. S. Khrushchev. They write anything. Here Ryl'skiy signed [?a petition?] about coexistence. I asked him and he said: he comes in, he asks, well how can you not sign? Now I recognize that I signed incorrectly. (commotion). But they came and said: sign, [so] I signed. (commotion). But he didn't read what was written there. In a word, what I'm getting at is that we need to put things right. Today I read a good article that some American correspondent wrote. He says that there is a new trend of a harsh policy, the centralization of leadership...and more or less from a bourgeois standpoint, but he correctly understands the need for this. He doesn't excuse [this], but says what caused this and for what it's being done. I would even have printed this, but it's not necessary. I think that our people can write no more stupidly. Here, look what lack of discipline there was: Mikoyan said to me, "You know who Okudzhava is? He's the son of an Old Bolshevik. But the Old Bolshevik was also a good-for-nothing person. He was a deviationist, a national deviationist. Hence, of course, a good-for-nothing person. They will say that Lenin supported this opposition. I think that Lenin possibly supported [it] for tactical considerations, but Sergo

[Ordzhonikidze], who fought against him, was right because Sergo held Leninist views. Mikhail Andreyevich Suslov. And Lenin did not support [them] in principle, but about organizational questions... N. S. Khrushchev. Hence Sergo was right, and not Okudzhava. It was Stalin's deed that Okudzhava was shot. There are different periods of time: there was one time when Okudzhava made a political mistake, and another time when he lost his head. This is stupid. Obviously, this left its mark on the son. So we should not support the son in this and strengthen him. But you (turning to Mikoyan) are ready to support [him] with this bandura [Translator's note: a folk instrument] and guitar. Right? A. I. Mikoyan. I did not support [him]. He is simply imitating Vertinskiy. N. S. Khrushchev. So we exiled Vertinskiy. Voice. He then returned. N. S. Khrushchev. He returned, but no longer sang songs. Here they say: they shout Zhenya! Zhenya [Yevtushenko]! Fifteen thousand blockheads shout this way. It's not hard to collect such a population of these blockheads from Moscow. We have thousands of murderers living among us undiscovered. So why have you collected [them]? This is fear and a lack of leadership. This is cowardice that they applaud him. So why did you gather? This is a gang. They say that there were also good people there. There were good people, but the audience was on the side of those who speak against us. Because such a selection was there, because good, honest people who adhere to Party positions, they didn't go there. They pay money, but they listen to crap. But this was crap being flung. I was thinking of possibly creating a commission composed of Suslov, Il'ichev, Satyukov, Romanov, Furtseva, A.S. Stepanov, and Adzhubey and enlisting representatives from Ukraine, Moscow, Leningrad, and all the republics. Think about it. Serious people need to be selected for this committee [sic] from the republics. A council needs to be created, of course, so that this also be democratic and that there be leadership. I was also thinking of possibly recalling Ambassador Chervonenko from China. A. I. Mikoyan. It's a shame to take [him] from there. N. S. Khrushchev. Yes, a pity. Take a look with regard to Nazarenko. He is a very intelligent, principled person. In a word, we have people. Take Uzbeks, Georgians, Armenians. In a word, this doesn't need to be by a central organization that would put pressure on the republics. No. But so that this be a national, democratic organization that would pursue the goal of improving the supervision of ideological work. Aleksey Nikolayevich Kosygin. Are you talking about the CC? N. S. Khrushchev. This is about the CC. They write that the Party is taking this on [beret]. Comrades, this is the only possibility. Only the Party. If not the Party, then a policeman. But a policeman has his own functions and the Party has its own. We need conviction, and not coercion. And then coercion when conviction doesn't work. And don't reject coercion. So let them think. Enlist Boris Ponomarev and Yuri Andropov because these are international issues. A. N. Kosygin. And the Committee for Cultural Relations together with the Ministry of Culture. N. S. Khrushchev. Include Romanovskiy and Zhukov to work this out. L. F. Il'ichev. How are things going to be with the Ideology Commission. Is this to be independent of it, or instead of it? N. S. Khrushchev. I think, instead of it. But why do we then need an Ideology Commission if there's going to be a directorate? A. I. Mikoyan. Two bodies is senseless. A. N. Kosygin. This will be a substantial CC body that will take all matters associated with culture and ideology into its hands. N. S. Khrushchev. Then let's put this in writing. Let them work on it.