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*Anna S. Kimerling*

# **POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS OF THE STALIN PERIOD: THEIR CONTENT, PECULIARITIES AND STRUCTURE**

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*Anna S. Kimerling*<sup>1</sup>

## **POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS OF THE STALIN PERIOD: THEIR CONTENT, PECULIARITIES AND STRUCTURE**<sup>2</sup>

The article examines the content, peculiarities and procedures of mass political campaigns that took place between 1946 and 1953 as part of Stalinist policy. The author analyzes the term 'campaign', describes the role of 'letters to the authorities' (complaints) and examines two types of political campaigns: 1) campaigns mobilizing the population for 'the construction of Socialism' and 2) repressive campaigns to eliminate enemies. Archive and newspaper materials help reconstruct the procedure of campaigns where each stage had its functions.

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Key words: political campaign, letters to the authorities, Stalinist period, Soviet history, Soviet press.

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<sup>1</sup> National Research University Higher School of Economics – Perm. Laboratory of interdisciplinary empirical research, researcher, [kimerlinganna@gmail.com](mailto:kimerlinganna@gmail.com)

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## Introduction

One often comes across the term ‘campaign’ in documents of the late Stalinist period. This category was widely used in the political processes of the time, from harvesting and Supreme Soviet elections to disclosing ‘enemies’ and ‘traitors’. Various campaigns were actively covered in the media and discussed at meetings, at party organizations, factories and institutions. The authorities kept a close eye on the progress of campaigns. In other words, campaigns were a significant phenomenon in the mentality of both party officials and common activists.

Surprisingly, historians of the Stalinist period have not paid sufficient attention to this phenomenon. In the 1990s, Stalinist campaigns were the reason for quite a few historical studies; however, no papers were directly devoted to them. In those papers, campaigns were either used to substantiate the concept of totalitarianism as applied to the USSR (which is, in fact, correct, but does not rule out the necessity to study the nature of campaigns), or were described in a narrative way. During the 2000s, the trend has been based on a different methodology. The emphasis in this period’s historiography is on everyday life: routine practices, entrenched ways of thinking, individual adaptation mechanisms, while campaigns form the background. In both cases, campaigns are regarded as a “universal category of historical thinking”, and “explaining factor” and not the subject of research, rephrasing Vakhstein.<sup>3</sup>

The main research topic of this article is the role and essence of campaigns in the broad context of the late Stalinist period. The aim of this paper is to study campaigns as a special historical phenomenon, as a special mechanism of political governance in the post-war Soviet state, which connects the actions of central and local authorities with behavioral strategies of particular groups of Soviet citizens. This highlights one more aspect of Soviet reality which usually stays in the background: its unstable character, latent proneness to conflict, and the systemic disruptions of daily life, that is, everything that was associated with campaigns in the language of that epoch. Hence, it is necessary to introduce the campaign as a scientific concept.

Most historians studying the 1940s and 1950s either prefer to provide a narrative of particular cases (The Doctors’ Plot, The Struggle with Cosmopolitanism, etc.), ignoring typological similarities between such phenomena, or regarding campaigns as something unfolding in the context of ideology, the struggle for power or the fight against dissidence. At

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<sup>3</sup> Vakhstein V. K konceptualizacii soobshhestva: eshhe raz o rezidental'nosti, ili rabota nad oshibkami// Sociologija vlasti. 2013, № 3, S. 16.

best, they use the concept of 'ideological campaign'. Campaigns are reduced to one-time events, mostly ideological by nature, and are not seen as carriers of more complex functions, such as mass mobilization, the consolidation of Soviet society, the development of new practices of political behaviour, or the correction of flaws in the Soviet management system. As a result, the epoch is seen as either a series of largely incoherent events linked, at best, by Stalin's will (the version preferred by psychologists), or as a direct illustration of a simplified model of totalitarianism with an atomized and manipulated society, strict discipline, etc. (the version favoured by political scientists). Neither of these versions are fully satisfying.

A study of campaigns, especially at a local level (provincial towns, districts and local organizations), shows that all campaigns share a common procedure and set of tools and practices that respond to 'signals from above' expressed either as direct or implicit orders. This is why the term 'political campaign' is proposed to denote this phenomenon. Firstly, it permits various campaigns to be viewed in a broader context, as a combination of discourses and practices imposed from above and created locally; secondly, it makes it possible to conceptualize campaigns, that is, use the same set of terms to describe, compare and analyze different historical events as manifestations of a single pattern of actions with the same structure and procedure.

From this angle, it becomes clear that political campaigns were the main tool for managing behaviour in the late Stalinist period, and a kind of political institution. In this article, I define the role of campaigns in the political life of the late Stalinist period; propose a classification of campaigns; identify their stages; define the functions of each structural element of campaigns; and describe practices used in the course of campaigns. The latter means that emphasis is on campaigns held on the local level.

At present, there are no general theoretical studies of the procedure and specific features of Stalinist political campaigns. Kyuzadzhan<sup>4</sup> and Gertstein<sup>5</sup> examine some aspects of ideological campaigns in the context of the history of Nazi Germany and China. This research maintains that propaganda in the media is the main method of public influence. Dobrenko<sup>6</sup> examines the Stalinist propaganda campaigns during the Second World War.

Papers by Fromm<sup>7</sup>, Diligensky<sup>8</sup>, Andreyeva<sup>9</sup> and Volobuyev<sup>10</sup> on social psychology help to clarify the motivation of the social behavior of people with mythological

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<sup>4</sup> Kyuzadzhan L.S. *Ideologicheskie kampanii v KNR 1949-1966 gg.* M., 1970.

<sup>5</sup> Gertstein R. Je. *Vojna, kotoruju vyigral Gitler.* Smolensk, 1996. S. 389 – 452.

<sup>6</sup> Dobrenko E. *Grammatika boja – jazyk batarej.* // *Volga.* №10. 1993. S. 132-149.

<sup>7</sup> Fromm Je. *Begstvo ot svobody.* M.: Progress, 1995.

consciousness, explaining people's boundless confidence in the authorities who use the image of an enemy to mobilize the population to fulfill their aims.

The other side of campaigns, public responses in the form of letters to the authorities, is the subject of research of both historians and linguists. Kutyreva<sup>11</sup>, Bodisko<sup>12</sup>, Lebina<sup>13</sup>, Livshin and Orlov<sup>14</sup>, Romanovsky<sup>15</sup>, and Fitzpatrick<sup>16</sup> analyzed complaints to the authorities. Using this source, various aspects of Soviet life were reconstructed. Zubkova<sup>17</sup> describes the procedure of working with letters from the public in the post-war period. The phenomenon of *donos* (information, 'squeal') is examined by Kozlov<sup>18</sup>, Korolev<sup>19</sup>, and Nerar<sup>20</sup>. Surovtseva<sup>21</sup> analyzed types and genres of letters to Stalin by Soviet writers

Historical and sociological studies by Dilas<sup>22</sup>, Geller<sup>23</sup>, Pihaja<sup>24</sup>, Hazagerov<sup>25</sup>, Leibovich<sup>26</sup>, Zubkova<sup>27</sup>, Zima<sup>28</sup> dwell on the peculiar features of Soviet totalitarianism. Some historical studies of the Stalinist period use the term 'ideological campaigns'. There is a series of papers on different aspects of nation-wide post-war campaigns (see, for example, Kostyrchenko<sup>29</sup>, Rubashkin<sup>30</sup>, Babichenko<sup>31</sup>). However, local and regional campaigns do not receive much coverage. The most notable papers here are by Genina (Campaigns against Cosmopolitanism in Siberia, 1949—1953<sup>32</sup>), Gizhov (Ideological Campaigns of 1946–1953 in

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<sup>8</sup> Diligensky G. Social'no-politicheskaja psihologija. M.: Nauka, 1994. - 304 s.

<sup>9</sup> Andreeva G. Social'naja psihologija. M.: Aspekt Press, 2001. - 384 s.

<sup>10</sup> Volobuev O.V. Sovetskij totalitarizm obraz vruga // Totalitarizm i lichnost'. Perm', 1994. S. 5-7.

<sup>11</sup> Kutyreva L.V. Zhaloby kak istochnik po istorii krest'janstva Urala: (Opyt kontent-analiza) // Kolichestvennye metody v issledovanijah po istorii sovet'skogo rabocheho klassa i krest'janstva: Sbornik nauchnyh trudov. Sverdlovsk, 1991. S. 50-69.

<sup>12</sup> Bodisko V. H. Glava 5. Dnevnik i pis'ma // Professionalizm istorika i ideologicheskaja konjunktura: Problemy istochnikovedenija sovetskoi istorii. M., 1994. S. 158-197.

<sup>13</sup> Lebina N. Povsednevnaia zhizn' sovetskogo goroda: Normy i anomalii 1920—1930 godov. SPb.: Zhurnal "Neva" - Izdatel'sko-torgovyj dom "Letnij Sad", 1999. 334 s.

<sup>14</sup> Livshin A.Ja., Orlov I. B. Vlast' i narod: «signaly s mest» kak istochnik po istorii Rossii 1917-1927 godov // Obshhestvennye nauki i sovremennost'. 1999. № 2. S. 94-104.

<sup>15</sup> Romanovsky V.K. Pis'ma rabochih kak istochnik dlja izuchenija social'nogo oblika rabocheho klassa 20-h godov // Vspomogatel'nye istoricheskie discipliny. T. XXI L., 1990. S. 54-65.

<sup>16</sup> Fitzpatrick, Shejla. Povsednevnyj stalinizm. Social'naja istorija Sovetskoi Rossii v 30-e gody. Gorod. — M.: ROSSPJeN, 2001.

<sup>17</sup> Zubkova E. Poslevoennoe sovetskoe obshhestvo: politika i povsednevnost' 1945–1953. — M., 1999.

<sup>18</sup> Kozlov V. Fenomen donosa // Svobodnaja mysl'. 1998. №4. S. 100-112.

<sup>19</sup> Korolev S. Donos v Rossii. Social'no-filosofskie ocherki. M., Progress-Mul'timedia, 1996.

<sup>20</sup> Nerar F.-K. Pjat' procentov pravdy. Razoblachenie i donositel'stvo v stalinskom SSSR (1928-1941). M.: Rossijskaja politicheskaja jenciklopedija (ROSSPJeN); Fond «Prezidentskij centr B. N. El'cina», 2011. 401 s.

<sup>21</sup> Surovtseva E.V. Zhanr «pis'ma vozhdju» v sovetskuju jepohu (1950-e – 1980-e gg.). M.: «Airo-XXI», 2010.

<sup>22</sup> Dilas, Milovan. Lico totalitarizma. M., 1992.

<sup>23</sup> Geller M. Mashina i vintiki. M., 1994.

<sup>24</sup> Pihaja, Rudolf'. Moskva. Kreml'. Vlast'. 40 let posle vojny. 1945-1985. M.: Rus'-Olimp, Astrel', AST, 2007. — 720 s.

<sup>25</sup> Hazagerov G. Skifskij slovar' // Znamja. 1999. №12. s. 167-175.

<sup>26</sup> Leibovich O.L. Reforma i modernizacija v 1953-1964 gg. Perm', 1993.

<sup>27</sup> Zubkova E.Ju. Poslevoennoe sovetskoe obshhestvo: politika i povsednevnost'. 1945-1953. M.: ROSSPJeN, 1999. 229 s.

<sup>28</sup> Zima V. Golod v SSSR 1946 - 1947 godov: Proishozhdenie i posledstvija. M.: Institut Rossijskoj istorii RAN, 1996.

<sup>29</sup> Kostyrchenko G. V. Tajnaja politika Stalina: vlast' i antisemitizm. M.: Mezhdunarodnye otnoshenija, 2003.

<sup>30</sup> Rubashkin A. Zhdanovshhina. // Zvezda. 2006. № 8. S.120-142.

<sup>31</sup> Babichenko D.L. Pisateli i cenzory. Sovetskaja literatura 40-h godov pod politicheskim kontrolom CK. M., 1994.

<sup>32</sup> Genina E. Kampanija po bor'be s kosmopolitizmom v Sibiri (1949 – 1953 gg.). Kemerovo, 2009. 255 s.

Saratov and Kuibyshev Provinces<sup>33</sup>), Leibovich (on Courts of Honour in Molotov Province<sup>34</sup>), and the research on the Doctors' Plot in the Urals by the author<sup>35</sup> of this article. Ushakova<sup>36</sup> reconstructed ideological and propagandistic campaigns of the pre-war Stalinist epoch.

The methodological basis of this research is the concept of the reconstruction of historical facts developed by *École des Annales*. The essence of this concept is expressed by Block who said that to understand history it is necessary to discover the sense of the phenomenon in question, and reveal the motivation of the people who acted in the circumstances which they 'read' in their own manner. To understand those circumstances, the author refers to the concept of totalitarianism in the version developed by the Arendt school.

Comparing different political systems, Almond equates totalitarianism with a tyranny which uses rational bureaucracy, modern communication technology and violence. The basis for the emergence of a totalitarian regime is a far reaching social disintegration caused by the destruction of horizontal social links.<sup>37</sup> It is important to note that in Almond's definition the model of totalitarianism is theoretical and abstract compared to actual historical models. In the social lives of individual countries, totalitarianism is just one of the structures of social organization, closely intertwined with other structures from the previous epochs, or with newly developed ones. "Pure" totalitarianism is a product of intellectual activity, an instrument for studying social reality, but it is not reality itself. The application of the epithet 'totalitarian' to a society means that, in the view of the researcher, totalitarian trends and structures seem to predominate in it. It is in this sense that we can speak of a totalitarian regime in the Soviet Union between the 1930s and the 1950s.

The research is based on the material of regional and central archives, reminiscences, diaries and media articles.

## **Political Campaigns of the Stalin period: Their Content, Peculiarities and Structure**

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<sup>33</sup> Gizhov V. Ideologicheskie kampanii 1946-1953 gg. v rossijskoj provincii: Po materialam Saratovskoj i Kujbyshevskoj oblastej // Nauchnaja biblioteka dissertacij i avtoreferatov disserCat <http://www.dissercat.com/content/ideologicheskie-kampanii-1946-1953-gg-v-rossiiskoi-provintsii-po-materialam-saratovskoi-i-ku#ixzz2yY2C5vJD>

<sup>34</sup> Leibovich O. V gorode M. Ocherki social'noj povsednevnosti sovetskoj provincii. M.: ROSSPJeN, 2008.

<sup>35</sup> Kimerling A. Terror na izlete. «Delo vrachej» v ural'skoj provincii. Perm': izd-vo PGIK, 2011. 163 s.

<sup>36</sup> Ushakova S. Ideologo-propagandistskie kampanii v praktike funkcionirovanija stalinskogo rezhima: novye podhody i istochniki. M.: ROSSPJeN, 2013. 215 s.

<sup>37</sup> Almond G. Comparative political Systems //Journal of Politics. 1965. Vol. 18.

During the Stalin period, political campaigns were frequently and effectively used as an instrument of mobilizing the population to fulfill the tasks set by the government. Campaigns were an extraordinary governance measure, as neither the Soviet Constitution, nor the Party Programme, the Resolutions of the Communist Party Congress or legislation made provision for this means of socialist construction. The word *campania* (campaign) in the Party jargon was opposed to *campaneishchina* (stop-and-go style), a word with a negative connotation denoting the vices of the lowest rank Party officials: sloppy work, officialdom, bureaucracy.

The term ‘campaign’ referring to Soviet political life can be found in the second edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia:

“Campaign – 1) specially organized work during a certain period of time; activity for the realization of important events (e.g. an election campaign, a sowing campaign).”<sup>38</sup>

To further clarify the meaning, the editors of the encyclopedia included a separate entry on military campaigns. In fact, the word has military roots. In the European literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, “...a campaign means a series of military actions connected by a single strategic plan and intended to reach a single strategic aim”.<sup>39</sup>

The use of the military jargon in Soviet political texts or, to be more exact, in political actions, was not by chance. Popov and Drobyshev explain this by the peculiarities of the Soviet model of totalitarianism: “The ideology of totalitarianism creates an atmosphere of war even at times of peace.”<sup>40</sup> The fact that military vocabulary was widely used to describe exclusively peaceful pursuits reveals not just the political mentality of the Party leaders, but also the style of the political behaviour of those who Stalin in 1937 referred to as the party generals, officers and corporals.<sup>41</sup> The implementation of such policy is only possible under certain social-economic and cultural conditions inherent in totalitarian regimes.

The authorities strove to control all spheres of public life using all available means. They dictated new moral norms and arbitrarily changed the standards of everyday behavior. With the help of the media, literature and educational institutions, the authorities were creating a ‘new individual’ with new values and a new mindset. All aspects of human independence were subject to relentless extirpation. Totalitarian power aims to abolish freedom and to erase human spontaneity in general. The major characteristics of a totalitarian society are social disintegration and absence of structure. Individual and group interests were superseded by state interests.

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<sup>38</sup> BSJe. 2 izd. M.: izd-vo «Bol'shaja sovetskaja enciklopedija», 1949-1960. T. 19. S. 546.

<sup>39</sup> Engel's F. Kampanija //Marks K. Engels F. Soch. 2 izd. T. 14. S. 242.

<sup>40</sup> Popov N.N., Drobyshev G.A. O nekotoryh osobennostjakh sovetskoj raznovidnosti totalitarizma. // Totalitarizm i lichnost'. Perm', 1994. S.12.

<sup>41</sup> Sm.: Stalin I.V. O nedostatkah partijnoj raboty i merah likvidacii trockistskih i inyh dvurushnikov. Doklad na plenum CK VKP(b) 3 marta 1937 g. // Pravda. 29.03.1937.

### **The role of complaints to the authorities in political campaigns**

A universal symbol of this new loyalty was the *donos*, an anonymous letter to the authorities informing them of someone's wrongdoing. Hatred towards the class enemy and suspiciousness were fostered from early childhood. Propaganda worked actively to achieve this.

Children were supposed to participate in political campaigns. On February 12, 1953 in the middle of the Doctors' Plot case, The Molotov youth newspaper published a front page article consisting largely of the enumeration of cases when young people's letters were of service to the authorities. The article ends with a traditional reminder of the Capitalist threat and an appeal, "Our young correspondent, [...] it is not enough just to see flaws, it is necessary to fight with them. Come to grips with all kinds of evil. Unmask implacably the false-faced, the unmindful, the gossips - the worst enemies of our state. Don't hesitate to criticize everything that pulls us back! ... We look forward to your letters."<sup>42</sup>

Being constantly on the look-out for enemies became part of each citizen's consciousness. The aims of this state education were to create this kind of joint responsibility and strip people of their habitual social connections. The new moral system placed ideology above kinship and traditional morality. Exposing the enemy gradually became the first commandment of a loyal citizen.

The scope of *donos* activity increased dramatically. Conquest quotes the following numbers: according to Ukrainian newspapers published in 1938, a citizen from Kiev gave information against 69 people, and another one against 100; in Odessa one Communist denounced 230 people, while in Poltava one Party member "disclosed" the whole local party organization.<sup>43</sup>

The word *donos*, however, was used only in colloquial language. The public morality of the 20<sup>th</sup> century still disapproved of it.

The official language preferred to replace this word with other terms: "to signalize", "to inform", "to bring to the attention", "public criticism", "Communists' suggestions", "signals to the press". Criminal lingo enriched colloquial language with the word "*stuchat*" ('to squeal'). In the official language, the word *donos* was replaced by *zhaloba* ('complaint').

At first, lexicographers could not completely avoid the word *donos* in Soviet dictionaries. Its definition fully reflected the pejorative connotation this word had among the liberal thinking minority. In a dictionary of 1934 the word *donos* was associated only with the counter-

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<sup>42</sup> Junkor // Molodaja gvardija. 12.02.1953

<sup>43</sup> Konkvest R. Bol'shoj terror. Riga: «Rakstnieks», 1991. T.2. S. 8.



revolutionary context and was defined as “an instrument of struggle used by bourgeois and Black Hundred reaction against the revolutionary movement.”<sup>44</sup> However, in the Dictionary of Contemporary Russian Language published in 1954, there is no entry for *donos*, only the corresponding verb, *donosit'*. Its second definition is “to inform a person or an institution of a certain fact”.<sup>45</sup>

The word *zhaloba* (“complaint”) in the same dictionary is defined in practically the same way: “a statement informing of an illegal or wrongful action committed by a person or an institution”.<sup>46</sup> The word *donos* had practically disappeared from party and state documents of the Stalin epoch.

Complaints were a special and significant phenomenon of Soviet reality. They had at least four functions. First, they were a way for the public to exercise their democratic right to participate in state government and their right to justice. Soviet citizens were encouraged to regard mass whistleblowing and complaints about the violations of socialist rules and regulations as true grassroots democracy.

The second function of complaints was to provide feedback to the authorities. The development of the complaint system is explained by the peculiarity of totalitarian regimes, as the well-being of officials depended not on their performance but on their reputation in the eyes of their superiors. This led to flattery and subservience and it made the officials write progress reports that would not anger their superiors. For this reason more often than not local officials sent the information which was expected by the authorities and which did not reflect the actual state of affairs. However, the authorities could not do without true information, as its lack posed a threat to their position. Therefore the government encouraged citizens to complain and punished them for failing to do so.

Thirdly, “workers’ complaints” could be used in political campaigns which served as the grounds for a yet another surge of repressions. A case illustrating the mechanism of complaint is that of Lydia Timashuk, who informed the authorities about the professors of medicine who, in her opinion, had misdiagnosed Andrei Zhdanov. The first letter was sent in 1948 and was addressed to Lieutenant General Vlasik, Head of the Main Guard Directorate of the Ministry of State Security (MGB). The letter did not produce the desired effect, as all Timashuk got was a talking to and a demotion soon afterwards. Then she wrote a second letter to the Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party Kuznetzov, who was supervising the MGB. She

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<sup>44</sup> Tolkovyj slovar' russkogo jazyka. Pod red. Ushakova D.N. M., 1934. S.766.

<sup>45</sup> Slovar' sovremennogo russkogo literaturnogo jazyka v 17 tomah. T. 3. M.-L., 1954. S. 979-980.

<sup>46</sup> Slovar' sovremennogo russkogo literaturnogo jazyka v 17 tomah. T. 4. M.-L., 1955. S.18.

received no reply. The third letter was addressed to Kuznetsov again. Again there was no response. The time had not come yet, although the letter unambiguously points out the fact of a misdiagnosis: “Even the electrocardiogram manifested a myocardial infarction. It is absolutely unclear why this fact was not taken into account by the consultants. [...] It is strange that Professor Yegorov insisted that I should not write the diagnosis that seemed obvious to me.”<sup>47</sup> For four years Timashuk’s letters were kept in the archive, and in 1953 they triggered the Doctors’ Plot case, and a huge wave of repressions.

During political campaigns the number of complaints surged, as their authors had a much better chance of achieving the desired result. Besides, this helped people to vent their discontent. Kungur Communist Party Committee reported on April 11, 1953: “The number of complaints has significantly increased. During the first three months of 1952 we received 76 complaints, and during the first three months of 1953 this number grew to 103. The nature of complaints has changed, too. Before they concerned mainly communal issues, and now they are more about disorders at factories and institutions”.<sup>48</sup>

Curiously, the mass repression campaigns before the war often did not rely on complaints, as the investigations rested upon the confessions of the accused.<sup>49</sup>

Fourthly, letters to the authorities of different levels were an important form of identification with those authorities, who were perceived as the sole protectors of stability in the changing world, an embodiment of order and security, and a source of benefits. Complaints addressed to Stalin himself played a special role. Zubkova writes, “Writing letters to the bosses is also the ultimate attempt to break out of the vicious circle of the humdrum of everyday life. [...] Some would appeal straight to the supreme power, assuming that their complaint would not be appreciated by the local authorities”.<sup>50</sup>

Complaints could be different in form: oral or written, expressed to someone directly or behind a their back, signed or anonymous, individual or collective. Party and state bodies were obliged to respond to each complaint or criticism. Factories and institutions had special log

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<sup>47</sup> Malkin V. Sem' pisem Lidii Timashuk // *Novoe vremja*. – № 28. – 1993. Malkin V. Sem' pisem Lidii Timashuk [Seven letters of Lydia Timashuk]. *Novoe vremja*, 1993, Vol. 28.

<sup>48</sup> Otchet o vedenii sekretного i prostogo deloproizvodstva v Kungurskom GK KPSS. 11/IV-1953.// PermGANI. F. 158. Op. 21. D. 13. S. 16.

<sup>49</sup> Sm.: Kabackov A.N., Fedotova I.Ju. «Pishite to, chto ja prikazyvaju» - massovaja operacija po prikazu 00447 v g. *Krasnokamske // Vestnik arhivista*. №1. 2011. – pp. 150-163.

Lejbovich O.L., Koldushko A.A., Kazankov A.I., Shabalin V.V., Chashhuhin A.V., Kimerling A.S., Stankovskaja G.F., Kabackov A.N., Shevyrin S.A. «Vkljuchen v operaciju». *Massovyj terror v Prikam'e v 1937-1938 gg.* [“Included in the operation.” Mass terror in Perm in 1937-1938]. M., 2009. 318 p.

<sup>50</sup> Zubkova E.Ju. *Poslevoennoe sovetskoe obshhestvo: politika i povsednevnost' 1945–1953* [The postwar Soviet society: politics and everyday life 1945-1953]. Moscow, 1999. 173 p.

books where complaints were recorded, and the facts they contained were to be investigated within a strictly specified time period.

If the accused person was a member of the Communist Party, such ‘Letters and Complaints’ were discussed at party meetings, and the wrongdoer was subjected to reprimand and had to follow a ‘plan of rectification’. Irrespective of whether the facts mentioned in the complaint were proven, the plaintiff was entitled to a response. The authority to which the complaint was addressed provided the response, and it had a formalized content. In particular, it informed the plaintiff whether the investigation had confirmed the facts set forth in the complaint and of the measures taken. The response could be either written or oral (the latter if the plaintiff could be summoned to office of the authority).

If the complaint was addressed to a newspaper, it could be published in the “Letters to the Editor”, or could be forwarded to the authority mentioned in the complaint for measures to be taken. In any case, the organization that was the object of the criticism had to respond.

The correct way of dealing with such letters was formulated at a plenum of Ilyinski District Communist Party Committee: “A letter addressed to a newspaper or to an institution is not a private letter. This document should be under control of officials who should carefully study the nature of such letters, make appropriate conclusions and take measures”.<sup>51</sup> Each local party organization was to report on their work with complaints and letters.<sup>52</sup> The newspaper was obliged to make sure that the situation was rectified and the guilty persons were punished as soon as possible. Within two or three months the newspaper would publish a report under the rubric “Following Up on Our Publications”.

The spread of whistleblowing in society was intended to create an atmosphere of general mistrust. The Stalinist system made people feel their isolation more acutely, and at the same time it provided them with an opportunity to identify with a great cause and follow a strong and wise leader. This reveals one of the mechanisms of the ‘escape from freedom’ described by Fromm, which consists of a person’s wish to give up their individual independence in order to associate with someone or something external, to obtain the strength that the individual is lacking.<sup>53</sup>

### **Politicization of private life**

The authorities weeded out all opposition. They demanded total compliance, making the individual accept all their rules, including those concerning the mental sphere, adopt the imposed

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<sup>51</sup> Protokoly plenuma Il'inskogo RK KPSS. 6.01.1953. // PermGANI. F. 104. Op. 17. D. 3. S. 4.

<sup>52</sup> Spravki instruktorov Komi-Permjackogo okružhcoma KPSS o partijno-politicheskoj rabote s kadrami. 1953. // PermGANI. F. 200. Op. 42. D. 31.

<sup>53</sup> Fromm Je. Begstvo ot svobody. M., 1990. S. 124.

worldview and give up independent opinions and independent critical judgment. Collective principles drove out the private ones even in everyday life and in interpersonal communication. Social sub-systems lost their independence. “It became normal for the private individual to identify first with the Soviet people, and only after that with their family or another social group”.<sup>54</sup>

It is not surprising, then, that a woman abandoned by her husband chooses to address the party to resolve this purely family conflict. *Zvezda* newspaper published an article under the title “Family Life is Not a Communist’s Private Affair” on February 11, 1953. A quote from this article is quite characteristic of Stalin’s epoch: “[...T]he unprincipled conduct of party organizations makes party members and everybody else think that their family behaviour is their private affair and that public organizations may not interfere in it.[...] Not only the Party, but the Komsomol and trade unions should use all measures of educational and public influence, so that no single immoral act remains without public condemnation, so that each Soviet citizen feels and sees that they are responsible for their conduct to their comrades and the collective”.<sup>55</sup>

As is usually the case in paternalistic models of government, the public space and private life were not separated. Family life was the subject of public discussion, and the public space became the place for resolving family issues. This process was bilateral, the authorities included family relations in the political sphere, and people themselves were willing to make their family problem known to the authorities. Among letters to the authorities, there are women’s requests to help them improve their relationship with their husbands, or to clamp down on their colleague’s jealous wife. There was a public struggle (via addresses to Secretaries of the District party Committees (*Raikom*) and then the Regional Party Committees (*Obkom*) between the Assistant Secretary of the *Nytva Raikom* (Molotov region) and the jealous wife of one of the committee officials. The former wrote to Prass, the Secretary of the Molotov *Obkom*, “For about 3 years, Mr D’s wife has been jealous of my contacts with him. Everybody in the *Raikom* knows about it. If comrade D. works overtime, I have to leave early. Moreover, I may not enter his office. Once, on coming to *Raikom* (and she comes every day), he was in my office on some business, so she raised hell over the whole building. Speaking to secretary Kazakova, Mrs D. said that if they did not punish P., she’d deal with her herself.[...] Filipp Mikhailovich, please help me, I cannot bear it any more, it really hurts to be accused when you are not guilty. And I cannot keep working in this environment.”<sup>56</sup> The document is stored in the archive together with the report on measures

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<sup>54</sup> Lejbovich O.L. *Reforma i modernizacija v 1953-1964 gg.* Perm', 1993. S. 57.

<sup>55</sup> *Byt – ne chastnoe delo kommunista.* // *Zvezda*. 11.02.1953.

<sup>56</sup> Sekretarju Molotovskogo obkoma KPSS tov. Prassu F.M. ot Pom. Sekretarja RK KPSS P-ovoj . 25.05.1951. *Mashinopis!*. // PermGANI . F. 105. Op. 17. D. 193. L.76

that were taken following this complaint. Obviously, the *Obkom* interfered and sent over an special sector instructor who made his own investigation and interviewed all those concerned. He found that the conflict had been going on for about three years. "It started after some gossip, a Party member, the *Raikom* cleaner [...] told D's wife that her husband was philandering with P., invited her to Raikom, gave her biscuits and oranges, he brought her firewood and harnessed a horse to take her to hospital, and all that was the cause of jealousy which went as far as public accusations in the street.<sup>57</sup> Local party officials have already interfered in this conflict (I spoke to all three of them), the issue was publicly raised at a Party meeting. At the end, the jealous wife promised to "change her attitude to her husband and stop the harassment." All parties to the conflict, including the Raikom cleaner who had been informing the jealous woman of her husband's actions, and the local Raikom Secretary, attended the final meeting with the special sector instructor.

### **Soviet ideological myths and totalitarian consciousness**

Traditional values were gradually dying out or were subject to direct prohibition. As social links were removed, the individual citizen saw the state as the only recourse. Soviet authorities sought to influence the whole society. The individual who was unable to live without social links and needed self-realization, attempted to obtain it by identifying with the authorities.<sup>58</sup> In the system that was being constructed, all citizens turned into children obedient to the will of the strict and ruthless Father. One of the official titles that Stalin was given at the time was Father of Peoples.<sup>59</sup> He was loved, admired and worshiped as a deity. People often addressed him with their personal problems and asked for justice.

In a situation when all traditional social relations had been destroyed and the habitual symbols had lost their significance, there was a turning towards the past with its archaic models of behaviour and mentality. The traditional worldview was replaced by a mythological, sensual, mystic and deeply symbolic one. The totalitarian mind developed a system of myths, irrational explanations of the world and the human. It allowed the individual to live in a made-up world and ignore reality. "It was in this world that, thanks to their imagination alone, people devoid of their roots could feel at home and hide from the endless shocks that their real lives and real experience were pouring on human beings and their hopes."<sup>60</sup> In spite of all the hardships of their

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<sup>57</sup> Dokladnaja zapiska. Instruktor Osobogo sektora obkoma partii Tihonov. 1.06.1951. Mashinopis'. // PermGANI. F. 105. Op. 17. D. 193. L.77.

<sup>58</sup> Sm.: Lejbovich O.L. Reforma i modernizacija v 1953-1964 gg. Perm', 1993. S. 54.

<sup>59</sup> Geller M. Mashina i vintiki. M., 1994. S. 45.

<sup>60</sup> Arendt H. Istoki totalitarizma. M., 1996. S. 466.

daily lives, the Soviet people saw only what was shown by propaganda. The October Revolution was presented as the greatest event in the history of mankind, the beginning of the new world. The USSR was perceived as the palladium of goodness and justice. The people were developing a sense of belonging with the great idea of Communism. Many were happy to have been born in the most progressive country of the world.

Thus, the Soviet individual was born, lived and died inside the myth created by Communist ideology, which answered all questions and served as a roadmap.

In this totalitarian state, the people unconsciously adopted their moral stand to the guidelines dictated by the authorities, so their opinions were changeable and depended on the promulgated ideas.

Nevertheless, the paramount objective of the authorities, to exercise full control over the whole population in all its aspects, was not achieved. The leitmotif that manifests itself throughout the social history of the Stalin epoch is a low profile and mostly unconscious but aggravating struggle of the totalitarian regime embodied by the Leader, with the tendency towards self-determination within the family, village, *kolkhoz*, factory, state institution, church parish, or groups of friends. All sections of the population were involved in this struggle, whether they wanted it or not. The results were mixed. As social life gained stability, the pockets of resistance to totalitarianism grew stronger. To suppress them, the power had to use the extreme methods of new political campaigns which mobilized the public using methods that had first been developed during the Civil War.

### **Types, stages and functions of political campaigns**

It is possible to identify several types of Stalinist political campaigns depending on the aims they proclaimed. First were campaigns that mobilized the population for the “building of Socialism”. For example, the Stakhanovite movement, socialist constructions or election campaigns.

Another type of campaign was intended to organize the masses to fight the enemy. These were always of a terroristic and repressive nature. Their main aim was to cast the blame for the authorities’ economic and political mistakes on a certain group, reinforcing the totalitarian regime.

This kind of political campaign also includes the fight against kulaks during the collectivization period, the fight against bourgeois intelligentsia, the fight against ‘counter-revolutionary saboteurs’, the fight against cosmopolitanism and “the Doctors’ Plot” case.

All political campaigns, for both mobilization and repression, unfolded according to the same plan. They had the following stages: 1) an ideological appeal through central and then local press; 2) an organizational stage; 3) mass mobilization; 4) achievement of the aims of the campaign; 5) a progress report. Each of these stages had its functions.

The first stage had a number of major objectives: first, it signaled the launch of the campaign; second, it declared its aims, and third, it formulated the discourse of the campaign. It started with a front page article in the central press and a proclamation broadcast by radio. Depending on the type of campaign, it either disclosed an offence against the State, or published the Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Council on the forthcoming election. It formulated the aims of the campaign pointing out what and how should be disclosed or where the public should look for enemies. For example, the Doctors' Plot case was officially launched by an article in *Pravda* entitled "Foul Spies and Murderers Disguised as Professors of Medicine", which encouraged the public to continue unmasking unreliable individuals: "There are still ... those that hold bourgeois views and bourgeois morals – **living people** (highlighted in the source), hidden enemies of our people. These hidden enemies supported by the imperialist world will continue to do us harm. [...] Soviet people must not forget even for a minute the necessity to be on the alert."<sup>61</sup>

Podoroga maintains that "Stalin was a man of writing" and describes the communication strategy of Stalin regime in the following way: the regime "regards power as a kind of holy scripture, which was written down even before any text was written about it, a sort of prototext of power wrapped in mythical sacrament and initiation. The masses are selected and shaped through the procedures of correct reading of these power texts. However, it is impossible to be absolutely correct: everyone that tries to read correctly may be accused of distorting the 'letter' and 'spirit' of the text. Saying something wrong here, blundering there, making a slip of the tongue or a speech error, all these 'light' social pathologies, all those cases of aphasia, apraxia, agnosia were not considered as something accidental but were interpreted as true signs, indicators of unconscious political beliefs and as an unequivocal revelation of every individual's guilt. [...] Speech practice as a carrier of communicative features disappears. [...] The stricter the text reading rules, the fewer the possibilities to perform the act of reading itself, so it is gradually replaced by mere admiration for the holy lettering and the face of the Leader".<sup>62</sup>

Newspaper articles were written with regard for mass psychology. According to Gustave le Bon, a French sociologist of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the crowd thinks in images, and the image

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<sup>61</sup> Podlye shpiony i ubijcy pod maskoj professorov – vrachej // *Pravda*, 13.01.1953.

<sup>62</sup> Podoroga V.A. «Golos vlasti» i «pis'mo vlasti». // *Totalitarizm kak istoricheskij fenomen*. M., 1989. S. 109-110.

immediately evokes a series of other images which have no bearing on the first one. The people cannot distinguish between the subjective and the objective. Besides, the crowd is subject to the spirit of destruction. By using image thinking, and organizing appropriate mass events, it is possible to make 'normal people' behave like savages.<sup>63</sup>

The editorials launching the campaigns were written in a simple and vivid manner and contained plenty of similes and epithets. The pathos and emotional intensity of the style appealed to feelings which were already present. When reading the articles, people were supposed to feel righteous indignation and hatred for the enemy named and shamed in the article. Naturally, the articles in the central press were immediately reprinted by local newspapers.

The second, organizational, stage of the campaign was to provide an institutional basis. The front page article was followed by a series of articles in other newspapers, such as *Pravda*, *Izvestiia*, *Komsomolskaia Pravda*, with further details about the new enemy and urging the public to be on the alert. In early 1953, The Molotov newspaper published 12 central press articles on the Doctor's Plot. Five of those were reprinted more often than the others and served as the basis of the campaign: "TASS Chronicle", "Foul Murderers Disguised as Professors of Medicine" of January 13; "Increase Vigilance in All Spheres of Work!", "Against Complacency and Invigilance", and, finally "Announcement of the End of the Doctors' Plot Case". The Molotov regional newspaper reprinted front page articles the day after their appearance in the central press. They were followed by local materials relevant to the nature of the campaign. The first of them was a satirical article by Menshikov published in *Zvezda* on January 16, 1953 "Conman from Kozlovka". The article is about Moisei Solomonovich Seiman who had been transferred from a wood-working factory in Kozlovka to Molotov in 1952 and "started to build up the staff of Molotov House-building Factory by covering the relocation and travelling expenses of the 'reinforcing squad' consisting of his former employees".<sup>64</sup> The author demanded that this outrageous act should be immediately dealt with. The *Partburo* reacted promptly. On February 5, under the "Following up on our publications" rubric, the newspaper announced that the facts had been confirmed and Sheiman had been given a severe reprimand and a warning.

From the end of January, local articles started to publish articles on clannism, suppressed criticism, blinded vigilance, arbitrary staff selection and the forbearance of officials of different levels in almost every issue.

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<sup>63</sup> Sm.: Lebon G. Psihologija narodov i mass. SPb., 1995.

<sup>64</sup> Men'shikov G. Kombinator iz Kozlovki. // *Zvezda*. 16.01.1953.



Time after time, the newspapers would reproduce the same statements, providing additional examples. This consolidated the discourse. Numerous monotonous repetitions programmed people's behaviour and made them act without thinking.

Through the media, campaign organizers spread holistic standard opinions, following a well-planned procedure. They assigned meaning to the words they used and set the rules for word combination. The style and the choice of speech patterns were defined according to the situation. Each word was filled with magic power.

A causal typo in a newspaper made by the typesetter could lead to their dismissal or even to the editor's arrest on political grounds. However, after the war the punishments became milder. For example, in Suksun district newspaper *Za Kommunizm* as of March 26, 1953, a typesetter made a *gross political mistake*: "In the headline of the front page article one syllable is missing, which leads to an offensive distortion in the meaning. Editor Morokhina found the mistake when the newspaper was being printed, but she failed to check the whole circulation. As a result, the subscribers got newspapers with the misprint". At the meeting of the Suksun District Party Committee, the editor was given a reprimand without registering it in her employment card, and it was suggested that the printing staff should do additional training.<sup>65</sup>

The greatest significance was attached to words pronounced by the Leader. Each front page article launching a campaign has a quotation from Stalin's speech. It was usually introduced by an instructional phrase like "as Comrade Stalin teaches us" or "Comrade Stalin has warned..." The indisputable authority of the Leader is explained mainly by the fact that it was he that named the enemy during the political campaign. He came up with labels. The history of Stalin epoch may be represented as a list of words labeling enemies: *belogvardeiskie prikhvostni* (White Army's lapdogs), *kulaki* and *podkulachniki* (kulaks and podkulachniks), *pravye i levye uklonisty* (rightist and leftist saboteurs), Trotskyists, Mendelists, Morganists, rootless cosmopolites. The words could initially have a negative (*vreditel'* - saboteur), positive (leftist), or neutral connotation (genetics), but the Leader, using this word to signify the enemy, imposed a new connotation on.<sup>66</sup> This was reflected in Soviet dictionaries. In 1934, the definition of *cosmopolitanism* in the Soviet Dictionary was "considering the whole world to be one's home".<sup>67</sup> The word had a positive international connotation. In the 1956 edition, the definition was changed: "Bourgeois reactionary ideology denying national traditions and national

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<sup>65</sup> Protokol zasedanija bjuro Suksunskogo RK KPSS ot 3.04.1953. // PermGANI. F. 83. Op. 22. D. 22. S. 171.

<sup>66</sup> Sm.: Geller M. Mashina i vintiki. M., 1994. S. 270-273.

<sup>67</sup> Tolkovyj slovar' russkogo jazyka. T.1. M., 1934. S. 1483.

sovereignty, rejecting patriotism and one's national culture under the fallacious motto of "a man of the world".<sup>68</sup>

This is the way media in totalitarian states shaped reality and could easily change the poles of public opinion. The media carried incontestable authority, and it was practically impossible to doubt its truthfulness.

The second stage of mobilization campaigns actively prepared activists, such as promoters (*agitators*) for election campaigns and members of election boards. This process was also covered in the press, which published articles entitled "Aid to the Agitator", "Aid to the Voter", "Statute on Election".

Front line activists were trained at different levels. The Directorate of Propaganda and Agitation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (*Agitprop*), which was in charge of this process at the central level, sent its representatives to different regions. "In December and January 57 propaganda groups consisting of a total of 427 qualified propagandists visited Regional Communist Party Committees and Central Committees of Soviet republics. The groups included 117 officials of the Propaganda Directorate, 64 social science academics and professors of Moscow universities, and 245 teachers and students of the Higher Party School. Heads and members of the propaganda groups attended a seminar, where they were given instructions by comrades Aleksandrov, Shatalin, Pospelov, Gorkin, Lozovsky, Iovchuk, Shamberg, Ilyichev<sup>69</sup> and others". Apart from the party groups, "16 salaried and unsalaried lecturers and 13 specialists in press, cinema, radio, and cultural-educational institutions" were dispatched to help local party organizations. "Over two months, they gave 225 lectures in 25 regions and republics [...] for party members and other citizens."<sup>70</sup> Regional party committees forwarded the instructions to districts and smaller towns. Their reports had a special section on "Propagandist Training". Here is an example of such a report: "Propagandists attended 3-day seminars, which involved over 400 people. The seminars were held by qualified comrades from the district centre, members of

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<sup>68</sup> Slovar' sovremennogo russkogo literaturnogo jazyka. T.5. M.-L., 1956. S. 1503.

<sup>69</sup> O meroprijatijah, provedennyh Upravleniem propagandy i agitacii CK VKP (b) v janvare - fevrale s.g. po vypolneniju postanovlenija CK VKP (b) ot 7 aprelja 1945 g. «O proverke ispolnenija reshenij CK VKP (b) po otchetnym dokladam obkomov, krajkomov i CK kompartij sojuznyh respublik». Podpisano Aleksandrovym G.F. 04.04.1946. // RGASPI. F. 17. Op. 125. D. 420. L. 1-2.

<sup>70</sup> O meroprijatijah, provedennyh Upravleniem propagandy i agitacii CK VKP (b) v janvare - fevrale s.g. po vypolneniju postanovlenija CK VKP (b) ot 7 aprelja 1945 g. «O proverke ispolnenija reshenij CK VKP (b) po otchetnym dokladam obkomov, krajkomov i CK kompartij sojuznyh respublik». Podpisano Aleksandrovym G.F. 04.04.1946. // RGASPI. F. 17. Op. 125. D. 420. L.3.

the Regional Communist Party Committee.”<sup>71</sup> Heads of propaganda stations were given even more training and had to attend “a series of seminars and meetings”.<sup>72</sup>

The second stage merged with the third: the mobilization of the masses. It was supposed to familiarize people with the content and discourse of the campaign, achieve everyone’s approval and stir the public into action. Meetings, rallies and collective newspaper readings were organized everywhere: at factories, in *kolkhozes* and organizations. At an early stage of the Doctors’ Plot case, a total of 4409 medical workers of Perm Krai attended 147 meetings.<sup>73</sup> This was the first mass response expected by the authorities.

One could not avoid participating in the campaign. For instance, *Raikom* in the village of Gainy adopted the following decree at their meeting of January 19: “a) All party organizations, upon receiving the newspapers, are to hold meetings involving all workers and kolkhoz members, where they must set a note of infamy on the despicable spies and murderers and appeal to all Soviet people to raise vigilance in all spheres of their work; b) party organizations are to hold Party and Komsomol meetings in order to discuss the article in the *Pravda* and appeal for revolutionary vigilance, as there are many circulators of bourgeois ideology and morals in our district.”<sup>74</sup>

The chief object of discussion was the central press publications. The opinions expressed during the discussion were supposed to go along with the general line of the Party. Instead of proving allegations, they used labels and rude epithets. There was no demand for allegations to be proven or even to sound convincing. Nobody doubted the truthfulness of accusations, so in most cases the readers would experience genuine indignation. Already during the first days of the campaign people started to look around for enemies. At industrial rallies, every speaker would criticize some fact about their factory. A foreman of a Novyi Tagil metallurgic plant said at a meeting, “This gang of spying doctors has their tentacles even in provinces. I suggest checking the work of not just the Health Ministry, but all other Ministries as well, especially our plant.”<sup>75</sup>

Incredible rumours about the schemes of foreign spies circulated. Vera Gorelik, a village doctor, recalls that in 1953, at the start of the Doctors’ Plot case, there was a rumour that the

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<sup>71</sup> Informacija Ob agitacionno-massovoj rabote v period podgotovki i provedenija vyborov v Verhovnyj Sovet SSSR po Chastinskomu rajonu. 1946 g. // PermGANI. F. 105. Op. 12. D. 429. L. 24.

<sup>72</sup> Informacionnyj otchet Ob agitacionno-massovoj rabote v period podgotovki i provedenija vyborov v Verhovnyj Sovet SSSR po Komi-Permjackomu okrug. 21.02.1946 g. // PermGANI. F. 105. Op. 12. D. 429. L. 11ob.

<sup>73</sup> Dokladnaja predsedatelja Obkoma profsojuza medrabotnikov ot 1.02.1953 // PermGANI. F. 105. Op. 20. D. 407. S. 1.

<sup>74</sup> Protokol Gajnskogo rajkoma KPSS ot 19.01.1953. // PermGANI. F. 66. Op. 18. D. 10. L. 30.

<sup>75</sup> Informacija o reagirovanii na soobshhenija gazety «Pravda» o podlyh ubijcah pod maskoj professorov-vrachej // CDOOSO. F.4. Op. 52. D. 127. L. 125.

chief doctor of a district hospital in Ukraine had been arrested, and under his bed they had found two trunks full of tubercle bacilli.<sup>76</sup>

The main means of political education was criticism and self-criticism: "The key method which we use to disclose and correct our mistakes, drawbacks and ailments while we further develop and reinforce the Soviet State is our self-criticism and, especially, the grassroots criticism."<sup>77</sup> No public meeting went without criticism. During political campaigns this was an obligatory part of mass activities. Self-criticism was always to be included in any speech or progress report. In the Decree of the Molotov Communist Party Committee prescribing the issues that should be covered in informational bulletins on district and city Party conferences, apart from quantitative characteristics, there was a section on criticism towards the Party Committee itself and on the shortcomings in the preparation for the party conference.<sup>78</sup>

Self-criticism was never sufficient. Other speakers could always add to it. Many people understood how easy it was to find oneself among the accused, so they tried to divert the criticism to a neutral ground or onto someone else.

Mobilization campaigns also included industrial meetings, which nominated candidates for the election or made commitments to over-fulfill the production plans. However, nothing was spontaneous, as the candidates had been appointed and the percentage of over-fulfillment had been prescribed beforehand.

The next stage of the political campaign was enemy identification, which chiefly relied on the 'information' or 'complaints' submitted by citizens. Politically unreliable individuals were identified not only by means of 'complaints', but also by a direct order of party authorities. Regional Party Committees received lists of individuals that had to be subjected to close surveillance, dismissal or arrest. The bosses, or "patrons" of the unreliable individuals were also liable to punishment; they could be given a party penalty or even be expelled from the Party, which was usually followed by their arrest.

In Molotov, the local doctors' plot case had been prepared by the end of January 1953.<sup>79</sup> Its main victims were doctors of the Molotov Regional Clinic, where the central campaign was reproduced to its full extent. The majority of those that came under scrutiny had Jewish surnames. The word 'Jewish' was replaced by "*Semeika podkhalimov*" (Sycophant family), which was common for this campaign terminology.

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<sup>76</sup> Gorelik V. «... Terpeniem izumljajushhij narod» // Znamja. №3. 1997. S. 179.

<sup>77</sup> Razvivat' samokritiku i kritiku snizu. // Kolhoznik (Kochovo). 16.04. 1953.

<sup>78</sup> Kakie voprosy nuzhno osvetit' v informacii po provedeniju rajonnoj, gorodskoj partkonferencii. // PermGANI. F. 976. Op. 18. D. 14. S. 32.

<sup>79</sup> Sm: Kimerling A. S. Terror na izlete. "Delo vrachej" v ural'skoj provincii. — Perm': Permskij gosudarstvennyj institut iskusstva i kul'tury, 2011. — 163 S.

Head of the Administrative Department of Molotov *Obkom* was charged with writing a “Note on Major Flaws in the Work of the Regional Clinical Hospital”. She had written that numerous facts of gross medical malpractice had been revealed, some which had caused lethal outcomes. In the department of gynecology, surgeons failed to extract a cotton tissue from a patient’s abdominal cavity, after which she died. The document also enumerates cases of misdiagnoses in the departments of gynecology and therapeutics and of negligent attitude to patients. Clinical records are kept in a perfunctory way, and the staff is short of over 70 nurses, and 61% of doctors work part-time and overtime, to the injury of patients.<sup>80</sup>

Chief doctor of the Clinical Hospital Kats was declared to be the main culprit. "Chief doctor Comrade Katz[ ...] created a complacent atmosphere, due to which medical errors [...] were not revealed and not criticized. Moreover, having surrounded himself with a family of sycophants and bootlickers, he suppresses the initiative of other staff and the criticism of his own flaws.”<sup>81</sup> This is followed by a list of members of this ‘family’, mostly with Jewish surnames.

The case of the regional hospital was discussed at the *Buro* meeting of the *Obkom* on February 5, 1953, and then at party meetings in the hospital, Regional Health Department and Medical Institute. Party *Obkom* issued a decree, which was dispatched to all district and town Party Committees: “For negligent attitude to his work, hiding the true situation at the hospital and creating a false atmosphere of well-being, and improper staff recruitment, Leonid Viktorovich Kats is to be dismissed from his position and expelled from the Communist Party.”<sup>82</sup>

Doctors who combined working at the hospital with teaching at the Medical Institute, as well as Director of the Institute Mamoiko and Head of Regional Health Department Miloserdove also came under criticism, and were dismissed for ‘improper execution of their duties’.

The objects of criticism realized that what was expected of them was repentance and the acknowledgement of their erroneous ways. The nature and the content of confessions were defined in advance: all they had to do was to repeat the text and add a couple of details. This allowed them to hope for a milder punishment.

Dismissal from work, expulsion from the Party and arrests were an important part of this stage of the enemy fighting campaigns. In fact, terror is part and parcel of totalitarian policies. As Arendt writes, “Terror is the realization of the internal law of motion. It replaces legal boundaries and channels of human communication with steel braces, which tie people together

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<sup>80</sup>Sm.: Spravka o krupnyh nedostatkah v rabote oblastnoj klinicheskoy bol'nicy. Z.Semenova. // PermGANI. F. 105. Op.20. D. 86. L. 77-84.

<sup>81</sup> Spravka o krupnyh nedostatkah v rabote oblastnoj klinicheskoy bol'nicy. Z.Semenova// PermGANI. F. 105. Op.20. D. 86. L. 80.

<sup>82</sup> Protokol zasedaniya Molotovskogo obkoma KPSS ot 5. 02.1953.// PermGANI. F. 105. Op.20. D. 31. L.43.

so tightly that human diversity seems to disappear in one giant individual [...] By pressing the people with the same press, totalitarian terror [...] eradicates the love for freedom from human hearts.”<sup>83</sup> The punishments did not have to follow an actually committed offence. People were usually penalized for belonging to the category that the authorities had appointed for destruction. The punished individuals did not have to express or feel any opposition to the power. The terror was necessary simply to sustain the “subsystem of fear” and to prevent the regeneration of horizontal social links.<sup>84</sup>

Arrests were accompanied by a growth in the activity of the press. Apart from the media, campaigns engaged writers and artists, who had to speak up expressing their condemnation. Writers published articles and works of fiction, in which the characters fight with the new enemy. At the same time, books by writers who had been subjected to repression were withdrawn from libraries. This was another way of breaking interpersonal links. As soon as a person was repressed, both he or she and their deeds had to be forgotten.

Mobilization campaigns at this stage fulfilled the same function of ensuring that the new institutions supported the campaign.

The last stage of the campaign was the report of its successful completion. Not every campaign had this stage. The progress report usually consisted in the proclamation that the aims had been successfully achieved, enemies unmasked, plans over-fulfilled, deputies elected. To preserve the regime, the masses had to be kept in constant agitation, so when one campaign was over, it was immediately followed by another.

Thus, political campaigns underlying Stalin’s policies allowed him to channel mass activity: to get people to look for enemies or participate in the Socialist construction. The campaigns helped to preserve the atmosphere of mistrust and fear, which led to the destruction of horizontal social ties and to the control and management of people. Their other important aim was to unite the citizens and preserve the consolidation of the state.

The campaigns could be intensive or lengthy. They engaged the whole of society, although some targeted only specific social or professional categories of people (for example, artists), and in others the initially small target group tended to be expanded to all other walks of life. For instance, the Doctors’ Plot case started with Jewish doctors and then extended to their ‘patrons’, which could lead to the arrests of their relatives and acquaintances, that is, practically anyone.

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<sup>83</sup> Arendt H. *Istoki totalitarizma*. M., 1996. S. 604-605.

<sup>84</sup> Sm.: Gordon L.A., Klopov Je.V. *Čto jeto bylo?* M., 1989. S.169-170.

Stalin's totalitarian regime substituted the right to write a *donos* for the democratic right of citizens to participate in the government and to enjoy justice. Mass whistleblowing and complaining was to be regarded as the true democratic rule of the people. As a result, the *donos* turned into a common tradition. It was the main form of people's involvement in political campaigns.

Successful mobilization of the masses for the fight with the enemy was possible due to the mythological consciousness typical for individuals living in a totalitarian state. The Soviet people's perception of the world was not consistent with the reality. Instead, they had a system of myths that offered them a self-consistent worldview and role models, and explained the meaning of life. With the support of this symbolic system, the press was able not just to control people's behavior, but change their way of thinking. The myth of the enemy occupied an important place in people's consciousness. Using methods of propaganda, the authorities could always turn yet another category of people into enemies, to involve citizens in a new political campaign.

**Kimerling A.S.**

National Research University Higher School of Economics – Perm. Laboratory of interdisciplinary empirical research, researcher. [kimerlinganna@gmail.com](mailto:kimerlinganna@gmail.com) +79024754058

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