Khrushchev Study Guide

Khrushchev by William Taubman

BOOKRAGS

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Plot Summary

Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev rises from a peasant background and survives massive purges of his contemporaries to rule absolutely the world's second super power from the mid-1950s to 1964. He becomes a symbol of Russian uncouthness, remembered forever as the lout who banged his shoe at the United Nations. He is also remembered - and he wanted to be remembered - as the man who took the cover off the horrors of Stalinist Russia, emptied the gulag, and for a while allowed literature to flourish.

Khrushchev is born a peasant in 1894, and will always feel tied to the land but will struggle to escape the uneducated peasant mindset. At age 14 he moves to the industrial town of Yuzovka, where he succeeds as a metalworker, marries, begins a family, and becomes involved in radical politics. His involvement in politics diverts him from the education he badly wants and which might have led to a successful career as an engineer or manager.

Khrushchev does well in assignments in the Donbas Region, Kazan, and Kiev, and then experiences a meteoric rise in Moscow's communist party hierarchy despite mediocre performances. The timing of his arrival in Moscow is perfect: Stalin is purging Lenin's Old Guard, creating opportunities for younger players. He enters Stalin's inner circle and appears unthreatening enough to survive while colleagues are perishing. As ruler of Moscow, he is directly responsible for arrests and executions, although he will forever deny such a role, declaring variously that he knew nothing, trusted the party's wisdom, or was powerless to help others.

Before World War II, Stalin sends Khrushchev to control the Ukrainian government and incorporate the western regions seized from Poland under the Soviet-Nazi non-aggression pact. When Hitler double-crosses Stalin, Khrushchev serves as a lieutenant general in the Red Army, and is actively involved in both the major defeats and victories in the southern theater. After the war, he directs the brutal Sovietization of Western Ukraine before being summoned back to the Kremlin as part of Stalin's innermost circle.

Within three years of Stalin's death in 1953, Khrushchev purges secret police chief Beria and outmaneuvers his remaining challengers to consolidate power. In 1956, Khrushchev denounces Stalin and tentatively begins revealing the horror of purges and labor camps, creating a literary thaw he has trouble controlling. Strict ideological adherence to Marxism-Leninism misleads Khrushchev both in agriculture and international affairs. Schemes to introduce corn to the virgin lands prove a long-term disaster, and his open bragging that the USSR will overtake the U.S. in cattle production is an embarrassment. Sincere efforts to improve the people's standard of living never pan out, and in one case lead to massive protests that have to be dealt with in Stalinesque fashion. Confidence in nuclear weapons -- for purposes of bluster only -- leads him to downsize the Red Army, alienating the military, and setting him up to ship missiles to Cuba to prevent a repetition of the Bay of Pigs invasion. Khrushchev miscalculates the U.S. reaction, and the world is brought to the brink of nuclear confrontation before Khrushchev backs down. His hopes for broad-based dytente die

with John F. Kennedy, Khrushchev's adversary-turned-partner, and a final break with Mao's China leaves him even more vulnerable to criticism inside the Presidium.

By 1964, the always brusque, crude, entertaining Khrushchev has grown so caustic, arbitrary, and isolated from his party colleagues, and so inattentive to the danger of being away from the Kremlin for extended periods, that a plot to overthrow him can be organized and executed to perfection. Khrushchev goes into a depressed internal exile but eventually uses the time to dictate extensive memoirs that his son has published in the West. After a series of heart attacks, Khrushchev dies in 1971 and is buried simply in the cemetery that holds many Russian notables, without communist pomp and circumstance.

Chapter 1

Chapter 1 Summary

In October 1964, Nikita Khrushchev is strolling with his chief ally on the Presidium, Anastas Mikoyan, when the secure phone rings. The Soviet Union's economic situation is grim. The military and the intelligentsia are unhappy. Rather than take a badly needed vacation, Khrushchev has spent the summer in typical perpetual, ineffectual motion. The caller is protygy Leonid Brezhnev, insisting Khrushchev return to Moscow for a special meeting. Khrushchev's children have alerted him to a conspiracy but he discounts the information. Khrushchev orders his plane readied and goes to bed, tired and distraught.

In the Kremlin, Brezhnev launches the attack on how Khrushchev has contradicted Leninist doctrines, sown disorganization, ignored colleagues' opinions, and acted unilaterally. Rude, ineffective leadership has left the Soviet Union in ruins, domestically and internationally. When the verbal assault resumes in the morning, Khrushchev is told giving him the responsibilities of prime minister and party leader was a mistake they must correct. He must retire voluntarily. Khrushchev begs forgiveness for inadvertent rudeness. Bearing both posts turned his head. He is proud of having revealed Stalin's crimes. Although it is hard to let go, he will do whatever is best for the party. He hopes some honorary position will be left for him. It is announced Khrushchev is retiring for health reasons. Brezhnev takes over running the party and Aleksei Kosygin the government. Mikoyan visits that evening with promises the new leaders will not keep. The old friends embrace and never see one another again.

Chapter 1 Analysis

"The Fall: October 1964" describes the coup that topples Nikita Khrushchev from control of both the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and the Soviet government. From his protygys' laundry list of reasons for taking their action, we gain a full picture of the traits that bring Khrushchev up, and then down. Note Khrushchev accepts their criticism, but maintains he is no Stalin, and is proud of having transformed the dread totalitarian state. Knowing how the story ends makes it easier to follow Khrushchev's astonishing rise to power.

Chapter 2

Chapter 2 Summary

Khrushchev is born April 15, 1894, in the south Russian village of Kalinovka, and spends his first 14 years there. In his memoirs, Khrushchev has little to say about these years, and he indeed spends a lifetime living down his early poverty. In Kalinovka he learns to work, to fight, and - just barely - to read and write.

Khrushchev's grandfathers serve together in the army. The paternal grandfather, Nikanor, is the more prosperous. Their children, Sergei and Ksenia, marry and settle 275 miles away in Yuzovka. Strong-willed, contemptuous, and resentful, Ksenia keeps Sergei under her thumb and wants her son Nikita to do better than his brother. Khrushchev's early home life lays the seeds for his quest for power and glory. Ksenia instills prayer, rectitude and responsibility in her son, who will neither smoke nor drink until he falls under Stalin's influence, and be attracted to communism precisely because it aims at improving human life and demands a high moral code. Throughout his life, Khrushchev will love the land and seek to improve the peasants' lives, but reject the peasant psychology. Bolshevik doctrine will demand political leaders also be cultural rulers, Khrushchev will self-educate himself but never outgrow his Kalinovka roots.

Chapter 2 Analysis

"Kalinovka's Own: 1894-1908" describes Khrushchev's first 14 years of desperate poverty in the southern Russia village of his birth. Taubman has to use secondary sources to suggest what Khrushchev's childhood might have been like because it is so sparsely mentioned in his published memoirs. Taubman agrees with Freud and Lasswell that Khrushchev's mother's sharp reaction to her failed husband and promising son contribute to Khrushchev's need for power. Note the author's remarks in the prefatory materials on seeking advice from psychiatrists in making sense of Khrushchev and presenting the findings in lay terms.

Chapter 3

Chapter 3 Summary

In 1908, Khrushchev joins father Sergei in Yuzovka, a growing industrial town of 40,000. Life in teeming barracks, mining coal under brutal conditions is transforming peasant workers into first-generation proletarians. Epidemics are regular and lethal. Alcoholism and crime are epidemic. Education offers hope of advancing to the factories, where working conditions and wages are better. Revolutionary groups make little headway in Yuzovka. The Revolution of 1905 goes largely overlooked. By 1913, Bolsheviks number only 400. Yuzovka is prospering and patriotic as World War I starts in 1914, but enthusiasm wanes by 1916, and when the Tsar abdicates in 1917, bloody conflicts erupt between workers and bosses.

Khrushchev begins cleaning slag from mine boilers. At age 15, he apprentices to a fitter and works 12-hour days repairing mining equipment and simpler devices. His self-image improves as skills grow and he distances himself from his peasant roots. He loves to make people laugh and works hard at ingratiating himself with others. By 1912, Khrushchev's political activities are noted by the police and he is fired two different times. In 1914, he finds work in a machine repair shop, which widens his circle of acquaintances. A talented storyteller, Khrushchev becomes highly visible and has the courage to present workers' grievances to management.

Khrushchev befriends Ivan Pisarev, whose home provides a safe venue for political discussions, and marries the eldest of Pisarev's five daughters, beautiful Yefrosinia ("Frosia") in 1914. Daughter Yulia is born in 1915 and son Leonid in 1917. Khrushchev becomes a prosperous "Yuzovka yuppie," and had the Bolshevik Revolution not intervened, might have become an engineer or industrial manager. In 1915, Khrushchev is preeminent among the leaders of a large miners' strike and an organizer of demonstrations throughout 1916. Politics diverts him from the higher education he craves. Politics is a quicker but more treacherous path to power, and Khrushchev will forever regret having cut short his education. Lack of culture will lead to the mistakes that bring his ouster.

Chapter 3 Analysis

"Making It As a Metalworker: 1908-1917" describes the years in which he began his working life as a metalworker, married, began a family, and was introduced to radical politics. Prosperous and happy in these years, Khrushchev seems an unlikely Bolshevik. Politics begin diverting him from the education that could have made him a successful engineer or manager. Without it, he will never respect himself or possess the sophistication to deal with people other than as a Kalinovka peasant with limited technical skills, depending on natural wit and glibness to ingratiate himself to others. We

are introduced to Khrushchev as literary critic, a role we will see him revel in - despite his shortcomings - in later chapters.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 Summary

Yuzovka leans towards the Mensheviks, who emphasize economic improvement, in the struggle against the ineffectual Provisional Government in 1917. Lazar Kaganovich leads the local Bolsheviks. Opponents will later recall Khrushchev joined the party only in 1918, when many peasants were doing so, but he counters ineptly there were so many factions it was hard to keep them all straight, and insists he intuitively sided with the more doctrinaire Bolsheviks.

Khrushchev helps lead a battalion of Red Guards fighting the White Army in Yuzovka, flees southward with it to escape famine, and in the winter of 1918/19 is mobilized into a construction unit posted in an area of barbaric fighting. Khrushchev rises to instructor in the Ninth Army's political department, promoting combat readiness, troop morale, and relations with civilians. Many of Khrushchev's fellow political commissars will later be purged for suspect politics. The Reds prevail in 1921, and Khrushchev reluctantly becomes a commissar. Frosia dies of typhus. In Yuzovka the mines closed, inflation and disease are rampant, crops failed, and 38% of the population was starving. The effects of Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP) are negligible in the Donbas, and the Bolsheviks are very unpopular

As a mine inspector and later a deputy director, Khrushchev fields the workers' anger. Khrushchev qualifies to enroll in a minimum-standards *rabfak* program, where he tries hard but is a poor student. He is rescued from academia by being elected party secretary for the entire school. Improving the students' accommodations, publishing a newspaper, meetings, and coping with emergencies keep him busy, and Khrushchev enters the local Bolshevik elite. Khrushchev endangers himself in 1923 by briefly siding with the Trotskyite position in opposition to Stalin who by 1925 prevails. Trotsky is exiled in 1927, but his popularity in the Donbas continues strong, particularly in Yuzovka.

Khrushchev briefly marries Marusia, whom his mother considers an opportunist concerned only with her own child. Abandoning Marusia breaks one of the three cardinal rules of Khrushchev's life. Soon afterwards, Khrushchev meets Nina Kukharchuk, born in 1900 to a prosperous peasant family in the Ukrainian part of Russian-ruled Poland. Nina's education is interrupted in 1914, but she completes it in Odessa in 1919, joins the Party in 1920, and is assigned to teach in Yuzovka in 1922. Khrushchev is her student. A calm, strict "iron lady," Nina meets the high cultural and moral standards to which Khrushchev aspires but consistently falls short.

In July 1925, Khrushchev is put in charge of the Petrovo-Marinsky District. The NEP has stabilized agriculture, but labor unrest continues, and Khrushchev throws himself into improving miners' lives. He also steps onto the larger political stage in Moscow and Kiev. On his first visit to Moscow, Khrushchev is a lowly non-voting delegate to the CPSU Congress and behaves as a quintessential rube. Stalin makes a powerful

impression on him. At the First Ukrainian Party Conference in 1926, Khrushchev takes an active role, delivering a diatribe full of sarcasm, unsubstantiated accusations, and calls for repressing political enemies. Nine months into an assignment heading the Organization Department, Khrushchev helps oust his boss, is better acquainted with local conditions than the successor, and is finally put in charge by Kaganovich.

Khrushchev moves to Kharkov, develops relations with coal and steel people, but the desk job never agrees with him, and he presses Kaganovich for a transfer to Kiev. He fears the nationalist-minded intelligentsia will look down on him, but Nikolai Demchenko handles them and leaves the workers and peasants to Khrushchev. The Khrushchev family lives in comparative luxury. Yulia and Lyonia are often sick and do not get along with each other. After daughter Rada is born in 1929, Nina spends more time at home, but Khrushchev is almost always absent, making his rounds of factories. They take in Nina's friend Vera Gostinskaya, who helps him prepare talks to the workers. Khrushchev loves the theater and opera and socializing with fellow party leaders. Realizing he will soon be too old for a higher education, Khrushchev overcomes colleagues' skepticism and enrolls in the Stalin Industrial Academy to study metallurgy.

Chapter 4 Analysis

"To Be or Not to Be an Apparatchik: 1918-1929" examines the years that prepare Khrushchev for his meeting with Stalin. Khrushchev's performance during war, revolution, and civil war are unremarkable. He joins the Bolshevik Party only when the political handwriting is on the wall. He finds strong coat tails to cling to and positions himself to reach Moscow with remarkable speed and not as an apparatchik, but as a student. We meet Khrushchev's three wives and begin seeing the pain family life will cause him as his high ideals are not realized by himself or his children. Look for his brief flirtation with Trotskyism to be brought up repeatedly by enemies.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 Summary

The academy, to which Khrushchev enrolls in 1929, is responsible for turning experienced proletarians into socialist executives through three years of study. Like most applicants, Khrushchev arrives not only under-prepared academically, but also too old to be taught. Throwing himself into political activity may be a defense mechanism to keep him from failing academically. In 1930 the party tests Khrushchev by asking him to sign a letter to *Pravda.* He does so and quickly advances into the leadership, where he does anything necessary to expel "deviationist" students. Khrushchev begins working closely with chemistry student Nadezhda Alliluyeva. Khrushchev considers Alliluyeva his "lucky lottery ticket," because few people know she is Stalin's wife. It is also easier on his ego to attribute success to her than to Kaganovich.

In 1930, Khrushchev takes control of the party in Bauman, the smallest of Moscow's ten districts. He shows skill purging rightists and settling scores with academy opponents, and he is moved across town to the largest and most important district, Krasnopresnensky. Its leader is considered first among the district party secretaries. Again, Khrushchev does well enough, mobilizing the district, recruiting party members, and establishing incentives for meeting goals, that he is named Kaganovich's deputy, in charge of running Moscow. The city is in a primitive state and undergoing massive renovation. Housing and social services are lagging. Hunger is widespread. Historical landmarks are being razed. Khrushchev he is attracted to high-tech solutions and jumps at implementing them without due caution or discretion. Khrushchev's greatest project is the Metro, whose construction he speeds up but still fails to complete on time. Nevertheless, Khrushchev receives the coveted Order of Lenin and adds the Moscow Province first secretaryship to his portfolio. He appears in newsreels, his eyes burning with intensity.

In 1934, Sergei Kirov is assassinated in Leningrad. Zinoviev, Kamenev, and 17 others are charged and Khrushchev calls on delegates to a party conference not to shrink from marching across their enemies' corpses for the good of the people. Khrushchev has personal authority in Moscow to oversee purges, and when the Politburo sets a 35,000-victim quota, he over-delivers. He will later claim he could do nothing to save anyone, which is likely true, but he will also claim ignorance of the extensive killing fields, which is doubtful. It is the State's business, and the less you know the better. Khrushchev lives in constant fear of incrimination. Stalin advises him to confess his dalliance with Trotskyism rather than become fodder for "pestering" and "reports." Afterwards, Khrushchev can even less afford to resist signing death warrants.

Khrushchev enjoys the camera and is a good orator. His portrait is carried in Red Square parade in 1936. He both worships and envies Stalin, and aims to cultivate Stalin's best qualities: Clearness of mind, conciseness of formulation, patience, and sympathy with others. Khrushchev reports to Stalin as Kaganovich's deputy, observes

him at Politburo meetings, and treasures informal occasions when the *vozhd* allows himself to be a regular human being. Stalin appears to appreciate those traits in Khrushchev that make up for his own limitations: Friendliness, approachability, simplicity, and straightforwardness. It helps that Khrushchev is physically and intellectually less threatening than his fellow henchmen. Khrushchev is so free with his opinions that Stalin has no fear about hidden loyalties. A Nuremberg-style tribunal would doubtless arraign Khrushchev for crimes against humanity, but he is still, by Kremlin standards, "a nice guy," and cheerful, self-abasement personified.

The Khrushchevs live the good life, hidden from public view, in a luxurious, modern five-room apartment with the other elite. He is entitled to high salary, access to restricted stores, cafeterias, resorts, monthly "sealed envelopes," and food "fit for a king" between Kremlin meetings and retreats. Beneath the comfortable surface, home life is complicated. Khrushchev's father is demanding and thankless; his mother gossips, says politically dangerous things, and supports Lyonia's misbehavior, including abuse of party perks and, in 1935, living with and abandoning two women, leaving one pregnant. Khrushchev works continually and prefers the company of colleagues to his children during time off. He is cheerful and entertaining when they do get together. Nina runs the household after grueling 12-hour workdays at an electric lamp factory. She has no free time to enjoy her husband's social opportunities. After Sergei is born in 1935, Nina quits the factory for a less demanding job, and altogether after Yelena's arrival in 1937. After the family moves to Kiev in 1938, Nina teaches occasionally. Only after her husband's death does Nina lament her life.

Chapter 5 Analysis

"Stalin's Pet: 1929-1937" examines Khrushchev's prewar experience in the Russian capital, beginning ostensibly as a student, but quickly sidetracked into politics. "Stalin's Pet" is intended as a put-down, but Khrushchev is always a willing buffoon, provided he comes out ahead. Khrushchev's rise continues to be rapid, as the purges create many openings. Note how hard Taubman works at being charitable towards the deceiving and self-deceiving way Khrushchev deals with what he knew and when about the purges and his analysis of Nadezhda Allilueva's role in preserving the pet long enough to become a viceroy.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 Summary

Khrushchev doubts he has the experience and qualifications to head the Ukrainian party organization and feels awkward among people whose language he has not mastered. Stalin dispatches him nonetheless in January 1938. Ukraine is second only to Russia itself in its importance to the USSR, and from the time of Lenin, Ukrainians enjoy cultural freedom and native leaders. In 1925 however, Stalin sends the antagonistic Kaganovich to head the party. Khrushchev arrives only after additional failures, and inside six months replaces all party, government, and military leaders save one. Khrushchev approves NKVD arrests, including the mastermind of an assassination plot against him. By 1939, even Stalin sometimes admits innocent people are being arrested by an out-of-control NKVD. At the Fourteenth Ukrainian Party Congress, Khrushchev demands a balance between unmasking and destroying of enemies of the people and the struggle against false slanderers.

Stalin warns Khrushchev to balance his interest in industry with agricultural responsibilities. Andrei Shevchenko, whom Khrushchev hires as his assistant, recommends decentralization of planning, and is sent to feel out the peasants. Stalin dismisses the reform plan as nonsense, but allows experimentation - in Ukraine alone. Khrushchev restructures incentives and tries other programs he will later implement fully only after Stalin's death. The 1939 harvest exceeds 1938's and Khrushchev takes full credit.

Stalin demands Russification of the Ukraine, and Khrushchev conducts it vigorously, while also reaching out to intellectuals like the writer Maksym Ryl'ski, an alleged "rightist," the poets Pavlo Tychyna and Mykola Bazhan, the playwright Aleksandr Korneichuk, and the filmmaker Aleksandr Dovzhenko. Khrushchev finds scientists and engineers - practical intellectuals - less intimidating than artists and writers, but is easily beguiled by them. He swallows the pseudo-science of Trofim Lysenko, the self-aggrandizing, anti-Darwinian "barefoot scientist."

Khrushchev declines an invitation to serve as deputy head of the Soviet government in Moscow in order to develop his own cult in Kiev. He appears everywhere in the Ukrainian press, in the kind of displays reserved for Stalin in Russian papers. Khrushchev delights in adulation, receiving awards, and chumming on film with the top leadership - Stalin, of course, in particular.

After Hitler invades Poland in September 1939, Khrushchev is tasked with Sovietizing and incorporating regions of western Ukraine and Byelorussia that the Poles had mismanaged since World War I. Even after massive imprisonments, executions, and exiles, a majority of voters still object to joining the USSR. With Stalin looking over his shoulder and time short, Khrushchev supervises the voting in "elected" national assemblies that beg the Supreme Soviet to accept their regions into the "fairy land of

true happiness." He also restrains the pace of collectivization and dekulakization, but curses NKVD generals for failing to carry out executions.

Khrushchev expands his circle of powerful friends and acquaintances to include Red Army leaders Timoshenko, Zhukov, Pavlov, and Korponos. In the Kremlin, he is closest to Malenkov and Bulganin. Mutual envy among Stalin's lieutenants and their aloofness from the people bother Khrushchev, and he begins growing disillusioned with Stalin as he sees him close-up. After the fall of France in 1940, the dictator becomes nervous, demands his lieutenants join him in night-long drinking sessions intended to loosen their tongues. The teetotaler Khrushchev finds this disgusting and symptomatic of Stalin's declining mental condition.

In Kiev, the Khrushchev family lives in an elegant villa and even more magnificent dacha on the Dnieper. A steady stream of visitors comes to "Mezhgorie." When visiting Moscow, Khrushchev occupies an apartment grander than his old lodgings. The household remains large and unwieldy. Sergei dies in 1938, but Ksenia lives on. Nina's parents are plucked out of Poland, along with a niece and nephew. All five Khrushchev children live in the apartment. Nina imposes frugal party order on the family. Lyonia marries Liuba Sizykh in 1938. Having been disowned by her deeply religious father after joining Komsomol, Liuba becomes a pilot and meets Lyonia when he also, takes up flying. After their marriage, the couple lives in the Moscow apartment, but offend Khrushchev's puritanism by exploiting the privilege.

Chapter 6 Analysis

"Stalin's Viceroy: 1938-1941" describes the period in which Khrushchev develops an independent identity ruling the Ukrainian party. He prides himself on improving devastated party organization, agricultural and industrial output, and cultivating intellectuals. Cracks develop in his devotion to Stalin by revelations of the extent and brutality of the purges, which he had managed not to see close-up in Moscow, by Stalin's misjudgment about the costly war with Finland, and by Stalin's insistence his aids drink heavily with him as fears about Hitler grow. Khrushchev comforts himself over his pivotal role in incorporating the western regions of Ukraine and Byelorussia into the USSR by believing the peoples' cultural level will be elevated and by limiting the rate of collectivization. Khrushchev is an integral part of the inner circle, as World War II gets under way.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 Summary

The "Great Patriotic War" will consume 27 million Soviet citizens, and millions more will perish in postwar camps for having fallen into German hands. Paradoxically, Soviets will remember this as a time when the nation pulled together against a real foe. Stalin uses nationalism and religion to rally the population, and people dare hope for a better life. Being in the thick of things, Khrushchev is changed by war.

As chief political commissar on a series of crucial fronts, Khrushchev countersigns every military order. He has a voice in any operational matters he demands. Khrushchev envies his colleagues' access to Stalin, but considers them "ciphers" in the war effort. He is named a lieutenant general in 1943. Before being honored for victories at Stalingrad and Kursk, Khrushchev contributes to disastrous defeats at Kiev and Kharkov. Evaluations of Khrushchev's military prowess range from satisfactory to zero. He will pride himself later on arguing with Stalin often during the war and sometimes winning. More often, he curries the dictator's favor through numerous, toadyish reports.

The Khrushchev family flees Kiev for Moscow, and then is evacuated to Kuibyshev, along with much of the Soviet government, the diplomatic corps, and intelligentsia. Sergei is in a body cast after treatment for tuberculosis. Yulia develops dysentery. In the temporary capital, the now-elite Khrushchev's are not cramped into little hotel rooms like the mass of refugees, but enjoy a seven-room apartment and a separate three-room flat for Liuba's family, which she shares with Nina's sister-in-law Irina and Ksenia, still formidable but frequently hospitalized. Lyonia is commissioned in 1939, and flies 27 missions before being shot down. While recovering from battle wounds, he accidentally kills a sailor and is court-martialed. Re-qualifying for active duty, Lyonia perishes in 1943, and his body is never recovered. Khrushchev mentions his son's death in passing in his memoirs and rarely speaks of him. His widow Liuba ends up in a labor camp, leaving daughter Yulia to be adopted by the Khrushchevs. Liuba's son Tolya is constantly in trouble and feels cut off from the Khrushchev clan.

Stalin's nerves crack after Hitler's attack, and for several days he broods alone in his dacha, fearing the Politburo will arrest him. Khrushchev advises Stalin that Kiev can be defended - because that is what he thinks the *vozhd* wants to hear. In fact, he concurs with Timoshenko's withdrawal. When the city falls, Stalin accuses Khrushchev of cowardice but does not arrest him. The same pattern is repeated at Kharkov in May 1942. Views differ on what communications pass between the Kremlin and the front, but it is clear everyone is guilty of the debacle. Khrushchev oversells his plan to Stalin, and then blames Stalin for its failure. Stalin accepts the plan and will not back down. The General Staff does not speak up in time. The Germans head for Stalingrad and the Caucasus. Stalin summons a worried Khrushchev to Moscow, toys with him a few days, but in the end allows him to return to the front. Later in the summer, Stalin will tap out his pipe on Khrushchev's bald head, reminding him the worst disgrace a Roman

commander could suffer was having ashes heaped on his head. Khrushchev never forgets his humiliation, but also never admits responsibility for Kharkov.

The Kremlin knows Hitler wants the Caucasus oil fields, so Stalingrad must be held. Khrushchev may not have proposed the decisive counteroffensive as he later claims, but does play a positive role, shuttling from front to front, checking troop readiness and morale, interrogating prisoners of war, and recruiting and defending spies. He is almost killed by German bombers. It is dangerous not to be regularly in Stalin's presence, and Khrushchev suspects Malenkov and Vasilevsky are keeping an eye on him, intriguing, and submitting false reports about him. As the war progresses, Stalin warms towards Khrushchev, but continues holding the battles of 1942 over his head. In July 1943, the biggest tank battle in history takes place at Kursk. Khrushchev claims a German defector reveals the battle plan to him, he alerts Moscow, and Stalin asks his recommendation. Khrushchev is confident the Red Army is strong enough to hold its ground. Stalin demands the Red Army retake Kiev by the anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution. World War II strengthens Khrushchev's faith in socialism.

Khrushchev begins planning to run the postwar Ukraine. None of the prewar Komsomol leaders have survived, according to the NKVD. Of 48 Ukrainian intellectuals Khrushchev wants to help restore cultural life after the war, 26 have been executed and 16 cannot be located in the prison system. Khrushchev's reaction is not recorded, but he now knows clearly the extent of the terror. Protygy Dovzhenko suggests a documentary film on the liberation, *Ukraine in Flames,* which Khrushchev approves - until Stalin points out ideological mistakes. Khrushchev claims the war distracted him from reading the treatment thoroughly, and signs his friend's dismissal from the film studio. After Stalin's death, Khrushchev has Dovzhenko "rehabilitated."

Chapter 7 Analysis

"Khrushchev at War: 1941-1944" examines Khrushchev's record as a lieutenant general in the southwest command. He is involved in but not fully responsible for two disasters and two victories. He plays a key role as intermediary between the Kremlin and the actual commanders, with some input to Stalin's decision making. Later retellings will be colored by the postwar destiny of the tellers. Khrushchev identifies with the Ukraine and its excessive suffering during the war, and early on begins planning for its rebirth. Khrushchev's eyes are opened about the terror and his split with Stalin seems inevitable - once it becomes safe to rebel.

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 Summary

As the Red Army races towards Berlin in late 1944, Khrushchev is named head of the Ukrainian government and begins reconstruction. World War II claims 30% of the USSR's national wealth - 40% of Ukraine's'. One in six Ukrainians perish, 5.3 million people, and the cities and countryside are left in ruins. All able-bodied men have been drafted, but the remaining men and women are zealous and patriotic. German propaganda about ex-POWs being sent to prison camps is having an effect and the NKVD is treating peasant demands for kerosene and salt as political crimes rather than rights. Khrushchev has lost over 60% of all key party and industrial leaders to terror and war, and new cadres of outsiders sent from Moscow have to be organized, energized, and inspired. Khrushchev is determined to make Kiev into a huge garden zone, but Stalin shoots down his plans to build pipelines to pump milk from 500,000 cows to urban stores. While forbidden to seize the Kholm region from Poland or annex the Crimea from Russia, Khrushchev brings coal production back to 40% of prewar levels and land cultivation to 71%, and is suitably rewarded. On his 50th birthday, Khrushchev is again awarded the Order of Lenin. The restored Ukrainian press glorifies him and, while he claims to dislike flattery, bootlicking, and bombast, Khrushchev does nothing to prevent it.

Khrushchev moves into a luxurious official residence and is joined by the extended family by autumn. His office is large but not remarkable by Soviet standards. Unlike other leaders, Khrushchev does not conceal his fascination with the United States and plies visitors with question about life in America. Khrushchev knows he cannot hide his ignorance and weaknesses and does not try; instead he is constantly filling in blank spots in his knowledge. His only claim to fame is a special relationship with Stalin, about whom he speaks with respect.

Knowing what Stalin will want to hear, Khrushchev admits only gradually partisans are causing trouble and the region is disintegrating. In early 1945, the Ukrainian Politburo authorizes a final liquidation of the guerrillas and the Red Army arrives. It finds nearly every peasant has dug, stocked, and armed a shelter. The underground kills over 30,000 communist officials and sympathizers with purposeful brutality, while the Soviets kill over 110,000 bandits and arrest a quarter of a million more. Black operation units *(spetsgruppy)* are used to flush out collaborators.

Khrushchev cannot conceive of a USSR without Ukraine, or a Ukraine without its western regions. After partisans murder Nina's relatives and try to kill Khrushchev, it becomes personal. He seeks permission to form 1930s-style local "troikas," arrests and murders Greek Catholic clerics, and integrates the church into the Russian Orthodox Church. Bishop Teodor Romzha is murdered on Khrushchev's specific orders.

The rest of the USSR is also in trouble. Stalin cannot preserve good relations with the West and at the same time dominate Eastern Europe and infiltrate the Middle East and Asia. The Marshall Plan forces Moscow to allocate depleted resources to its new satellites. When Stalin cracks down on the intelligentsia, the only way Khrushchev can protect his old friend Ryl'ski is to accept the job of attacking him. Visitors describe the 65-year-old dictator as senile, gluttonous, stubborn, vindictive, and less involved in day-to-day administration. Stalin needs someone to blame.

The 1946 harvest is disastrous and once again Khrushchev has led Stalin to expect too much and tries too late to save the situation. Heartrending letters beg Khrushchev to save the peasants. He finds himself defending the people against his own government. Starvation leads to cannibalism, and he grows bolder in approaching Stalin. Stalin calls him soft-bellied and sentimental, making Khrushchev sure he is no longer trusted, but proposes a system of ration cards. Malenkov and Beria make sure Stalin sees this, and Khrushchev receives a rude, insulting, depressing telegram. Foreseeing disaster for the Ukrainian people and prison for himself, Khrushchev treks to Moscow, but is surprised to receive limited assistance for Ukraine. An "invitation" to deliver a report on the sorry state of agriculture to the Central Committee is a trap intended to force Khrushchev either to declare his differences with Stalin or to bury them forever. In the end, Andreyev delivers the speech that criticizes Khrushchev. Khrushchev presses to set aside enough seed for the spring planting and to drop rigid quotas.

In March 1947 the Ukrainian Central Committee separates the posts of party and government leader. Kaganovich heads the party and Khrushchev loses control of Kiev's province and city parties. Khrushchev engages in "self-criticism" in a formal speech, and his name vanishes from the press. Demotion-Limbo-Arrest-Liquidation is a familiar Stalinist path. Khrushchev falls ill with what is assumed to be a political disease; however, it's pneumonia that brings him near death. Kaganovich risks Stalin's wrath by ordering penicillin for the patient, but their work relations are not good. Kaganovich persecutes Khrushchev protygys and condemns industrial and agricultural shortfalls as manifestations of "Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism." The complaints grow too strident and many make their way to Stalin, who wonders why Khrushchev has stopped co-signing memoranda. Khrushchev is back in the dictator's good graces and his morale improves. On December 26, Kaganovich is recalled to Moscow, and Khrushchev is restored to party leadership. The yes-man Korotchenko heads the government.

Khrushchev's last two years in Ukraine are his best. Harvests exceed targets; collectivization reaches 60%; and the first "agro-city" is put in operation as a birthday gift to Stalin. Khrushchev receives another Order of Lenin in 1948, is applauded at the 1949 Ukrainian party congress, writes voluminously to Stalin, and his face returns to propaganda art. The Khrushchevs are invited to vacation in Yalta, which shows Stalin's regard. The USSR Supreme Soviet passes a Khrushchev decree allowing collective farm assemblies to exile those who fail to work diligently. It will be misused to settle personal scores, but thousands of "parasites" are exiled. Khrushchev supports other Stalinist excesses in 1948-49, but does not initiate them. Loyalty brings Khrushchev into Stalin's inner circle in Moscow.

Chapter 8 Analysis

"Ukrainian Viceroy Again: 1944-1949" shows Khrushchev fall and rise again in the tumultuous post-war years. Khrushchev is growing bolder, but loyalty remains his strong suit. Khrushchev's fiefdom is more devastated by war than the USSR as a whole, and postwar weather is as uncooperative as the Ukrainian partisans. Determined to complete the Sovietization of the western Ukraine begun before the war, Khrushchev reverts to 1930s-style justice. Determined to impress Stalin in agriculture, Khrushchev repeats his military blunder of overselling and then having to scramble to control the resulting disaster. We see him again fearing the loss of all he has gained, but loses only control of the Ukrainian party -- and that only for a while. Stalin, failing fast, seems determined to preserve his loyal liege.

Chapter 9

Chapter 9 Summary

Stalin suffers small strokes in 1945 and 1947 and spends more time at the Black Sea, feeling lonely and growing pathologically paranoid. The revolution degenerates into Russia-first chauvinism and the settling of scores with bloodshed. Formal meetings give way to bizarre all-night drink- and movie-fests by Stalin and his inner circle of Beria, Malenkov, Bulganin, and Khrushchev. Meals are agonizing and interminable, as Stalin makes everyone but Beria sample dishes before he will eat. Stalin forces his guests to drink themselves in a stupor, wanting to loosen their tongues to learn what they are thinking. Khrushchev finds this shameful and disgraceful. Khrushchev is a favorite target Stalin's practical jokes and smiles performing gopaks, because when Stalin says dance, a wise man dances. Wise men also endure Stalin's long-winded stories. It is better to be humiliated than annihilated.

To vacation with Stalin at the Black Sea is terrible, collectively, but going solo is worse. Still, putting up with the ordeal gives opportunity to draw conclusions useful to one's own purposes. Khrushchev still admires Stalin's mind and is determined to learn from him. The wartime aura has dimmed and many actions are odious, but Stalin remains a Marxist, dedicated to the working class, and is able, when sober, to give good advice. Stalin is, however, more suspicious of others, but declining memory gives associates room to maneuver. It is a perilous situation.

As the Old Guard falls, somewhat younger leaders jockey for position. Full Politburo members Beria and Malenkov head the faction that appears unbeatable, while Zhdanov and protygys Voznesnsky and Kuznetsov head the so-called "Leningrad faction." Politburo colleagues perceive Malenkov as weak and inexperienced, and Beria too strong and threatening. Zhdanov dies in 1948, the Leningraders are accused of factionalism and assorted other sins, removed from office; in 1950 they are sentenced to death and summarily shot. At the Nineteenth Congress in 1952, Stalin tears mercilessly into Molotov and Mikoyan, and decides Voroshilov is a Western spy and Kaganovich is no longer useful. Malenkov's delivery of the main report seems to anoint him Stalin's successor. Stalin replaces the Politburo with an expanded Presidium of 25 younger leaders, apparently setting up a final purge of the Old Guard. Beria cannot evade charges the NKVD failed to break up an assassination plot by Kremlin physicians, and the arrest of the innocent doctors horrifies Khrushchev, who reproaches himself for not speaking up for them. There is speculation about machinations on Khrushchev's part more active than he admits. Ukrainian protygys appear in key government, party, and police positions as Malenkov allies in Moscow are purged.

Stalin does not encourage friendships among his lieutenants, but the Khrushchev and Malenkov families are close from the 1930s onward. Neither can afford not to cultivate the other. Khrushchev also wears a mask when dealing with Beria, whom he fears is trying to drag him into quotable anti-Stalinist talk, and is careful never to offend or

alienate him. Beria's criticism of Malenkov begins before the war, and he now admits he stays near the useful, weak-willed, cultured man to keep tabs on him. Khrushchev becomes skilled at games-within-games, at "reading" Stalin and Beria, and allowing them to misread him as still a crude and limited man.

Based on his postwar record in Moscow it is easy for rivals to underestimate Khrushchev. He deals well with the housing crisis, introducing prefabricated reinforced concrete apartments, but agricultural polices reduce the peasantry to virtual serfdom. Khrushchev introduces useful innovations, takes personal affront when backwardness or underproduction thwarts his plans, and no longer refrains from bullying subordinates. Khrushchev is overzealous about establishing agro-cities, an idealistic urbanization of the countryside. Stalin appoints a committee chaired by Malenkov to hound Khrushchev publicly about endangering the collective farm system. Beria disciples blast Khrushchev in the press, and Malenkov makes hay with the agro-city theme at the Nineteenth Party Congress in 1952. Khrushchev is not only shamed; he is fearful of removal, on edge, and not sleeping. Stalin, however, retains a soft spot in his heart for his "little Marx," and orders Malenkov to soften his report, then taps his pipe on Khrushchev's forehead.

Stalin is not up to addressing the 1952 Congress, and assigns the task to Malenkov. Khrushchev will speak on party statutes, an assignment that makes him nervous. Beria attacks him not stylistically, and Khrushchev is ill in bed while the Congress discusses his presentation. While not self-educating himself, Khrushchev, while relaxing and enjoying himself, fills in many cultural blanks. Colleagues are not impressed, continuing to consider Khrushchev a fishmonger. Their condescension is itself useful.

Khrushchev's daily schedule is dictated by Stalin's whim. Iron-willed Nina makes sure no one in the household says anything openly that could cause trouble. She socializes with other Kremlin wives when expected. The Khrushchev children drop plans and jump when needed for some function. Speech is formal at home and family secrets closely guarded - because they are all potentially political. Daily routines are never broken under Nina's watchful eye, and privileges not abused. Khrushchev knows Beria is watching.

Stalin's birthday in 1949 is celebrated grandly, despite his feigned indifference. The climax is an international communist gathering at the Bolshoi Theater. The lieutenants gauge their relative importance by where they and their wives are seated. The speeches are interminable. Stalin sits between Mao Zedong and Khrushchev, who, *ex officio,* is the evening's official host. Still, the place of honor is a coup. On May Day 1952, Khrushchev blends in among Stalin's lieutenants, no longer a junior associate or distinctively dressed. He alone salutes Stalin and shakes his hand. New Year's Eve 1953, Stalin forces daughter Svetlana to dance, in a cruel, brutish expression of affection. He treats Khrushchev in the same manner.

Chapter 9 Analysis

"The Heir Nonapparent: 1949-1953" is a massively convoluted and complex analysis of how Stalin's lieutenants prepare for the dictator's demise. Khrushchev is not among the chief contenders. He maintains friendship with Malenkov and Beria to play them off against the other. No one seems to notice the Moscow party leader position himself, *in fact* is, the same position his job does *ex officio,* at the grand birthday party: At Stalin's failing right hand.

Chapter 10

Chapter 10 Summary

When Khrushchev's phone rings March 1, 1953, he is expecting a summons from Stalin, whose dacha he left at 4 AM after the usual partying. It is not until almost 11 PM that Stalin's guards enter his quarters against orders and find him on the floor, felled by a massive stroke. Malenkov and Beria (and perhaps Khrushchev) arrive first and Beria postpones summoning medical assistance. Stalin lingers three days in a coma. Khrushchev and Bulganin take the nighttime vigil. Beria, who will later brag to Molotov he saved them all by killing Stalin, does not hide his hatred when the patient is unconscious, but kisses his hand whenever Stalin comes to. Khrushchev chairs a March 5 meeting of the leadership, but Malenkov and Beria dominate it. Beria nominates Malenkov to head the government and Malenkov names Beria to head the police. With the spoils divided, they return for Stalin's death agony. At the end, Beria darts from the room, certain he is now unstoppable. Khrushchev sheds sincere tears - but even in the gulag, victims mourn the loss of Stalin.

During Stalin's final months, Khrushchev is second or third in the Kremlin hierarchy. In the post-Stalin listing, he slips to fifth. It is assumed the three speakers at Stalin's funeral - Molotov, Beria, and Malenkov - are a triumvirate, but within two and a half years, Beria will be executed, Malenkov demoted, and Molotov fading. Bulganin will be the formal prime minister, but Khrushchev the real Kremlin power, having manipulated the party apparatus and wielded foreign and domestic policies to ally with and then betray the triumvirate. Khrushchev is proud of how he finally revealed his Machiavellian side, particularly in bringing down the evil Beria.

Stalin's death announcement predicts the Soviet people will rally around the new leadership, but they are in deeper trouble than they anticipate. Nearly 2.5 million prisoners languish in labor camps, half a million of them "political." Rebellions in the camps are smashed, but the living must be freed and the near-dead rehabilitated. This will be costly. The criminals who put them away must be punished. Khrushchev risks reaching out to the intelligentsia to begin "The Thaw," even though it could grow into a deadly flood. Malenkov announces the country's agricultural problems are over, although harvests are smaller than before World War I and individual plots produce much of the nation's food supplies. On the international scene, Stalin leaves an appalling legacy in Europe and China. The Soviets have thermonuclear bombs but no long-range bombers, actual or in planning. ICBMs are years away and the Presidium understands nothing about developing technologies. The U.S. has -- and flaunts -- air superiority, constantly flying over Soviet territory from bases that ring the nation. The psychological impact is devastating. Finally, the capitalists know Stalin's associates have experienced only one-man rule and will play double and triple games to sort out who will get the top spot.

Khrushchev is *ex officio* chairman of Stalin's Red Square funeral. He stands aside, looking somber. Only Molotov shows a kind of "love and bitter grief." Malenkov steps down as senior Central Committee secretary after becoming prime minister. Three of his protygys join the upper echelons. His partner Beria controls the police, runs strategic arms programs, and has obtained material to blackmail his associates. Molotov seems content to be foreign minister. Khrushchev's colleagues treat him as a "second-rater," naming him senior Central Committee Secretary but, in a return to pre-Stalin patterns, stripping the job of political and economic affairs, and the exclusive right to sign Politburo meeting protocols.

A burst of reforms occurs, with blood-drenched Beria the prime mover. He restores Molotov's wife from labor camp, orders records searches for falsified cases, declares the Doctors' Plot a set-up, proposes a mass amnesty for 1.2 million nonpoliticals, and prohibits routine brutality in police investigations. In foreign affairs, Beria seeks rapprochement with Tito's Yugoslavia, relaxation of Stalinist practices in Hungary, and reunification of a neutral Germany. Beria's first "hundred days" overwhelm his competitors, but also give them ammunition to use against him. The coup against Beria begins with Khrushchev's suggestion to slow down rubberstamp adoption of Beria's. Khrushchev's support on the German question surprises Beria and puts him off guard, and he tries to enlist Khrushchev in a plot against Malenkov. Khrushchev, however, goes to Malenkov and convinces him Beria must fall. Taking extraordinary care to keep Beria's eavesdropping network from detecting him, Khrushchev convinces Bulganin, Voroshilov, Kaganovich, Molotov, and Mikoyan - the last most cautiously and only at the last moment. Beria controls Kremlin and Moscow ground troops capable of defending him if they are alerted before Beria is in custody. Khrushchev arranges for the commanders to be absent in the morning, and for armed men to be smuggled into the Kremlin. Marshal Zhukov and four assistants (including Brezhnev) arrive. Only once they are hidden inside the Kremlin are details of the plot revealed.

Beria arrives and Malenkov makes the case against him, backed by the co-conspirators. Khrushchev speaks particularly sharply about the arrogant, self-seeking careerist who scarcely acts like a true communist. Beria understands his plight slowly, admits to "mistakes," and asks not to be expelled from the party. He is remanded to custody pending a full investigation, and is hauled away to an underground bunker. Khrushchev knows how easily the coup could have been smashed. The secret police must surely have picked up hints of the plot, but may have thought the secret meetings were meant to lull others' vigilance pending Malenkov's arrest.

In classic Stalinist fashion, Beria is accused of being an "enemy of the people," his wife, son, and MVD associates are arrested. Fearing incrimination, the Presidium listens to interrogations on closed-circuit radio. A special court is formed for the six-day trial in December, at which the defendants are denied counsel and appeal. The Presidium specifies the verdict beforehand. A three-star general fires a shot into Beria's forehead. For several months prior to his execution, Beria had been used as a scapegoat for the worst of Stalinism. The aim was to keep Stalin's reputation intact and the surviving lieutenants' hands clean.

After the victory over Beria, Khrushchev grows more self-assured, more dynamic, and independent. Colleagues defer to him, but still underestimate him. They promote him to First Secretary, expecting him to know his place, but this puts the full party machinery at his disposal. The special closeness between Khrushchev and Malenkov (mirrored in their family life) cannot survive Kremlin political culture. Colleagues choose sides. Malenkov tries to broaden his popularity through tax reductions, increases in procurement prices, and encouragement of individual farm plots, but remains colorless. Khrushchev behaves respectfully, travels the provinces, and makes use of files confiscated from Beria. Malenkov undermines the axioms of Stalinist foreign policy by declaring U.S.-Soviet relations need not end in nuclear war, giving Khrushchev an opportunity to scream heresy. In November 1953, Malenkov chastises high-level party officials for corruption, but Khrushchev declares the party must remain the nation's foundation - and is greeted with applause.

Indignant that Malenkov steals the mantle of reformer, Khrushchev is determined to steal it back. He demonstrates how Malenkov's 1952 boasts are false and exceeds Malenkov's new proposals to expand the free market. Khrushchev becomes the regime's leading spokesman on agriculture, and is candid: The hungry and unclothed do not care about ideology. Over local objections in Kazakhstan and western Siberia, Khrushchev pushes a crash program to cultivate the "Virgin Lands," and rather than bribing peasants, Khrushchev mobilized 300,000 idealistic youth for a great socialist adventure. Most are ill-prepared, and commandeering equipment away from the non-Virgin Lands harms harvests there. Agricultural and ecological disaster looms, but short-term, Khrushchev displays the kind of leadership Malenkov lacks.

In 1954, Khrushchev gains a reputation for openness by allowing visitors to Stalin's closed Kremlin, but behind the scenes, he is blackmailing Malenkov over the 1949 Leningrad Affair. Its victims are rehabilitated posthumously, Malenkov protygys are variously fired or executed, and Malenkov himself is quietly set aside as Khrushchev men take over key roles, including Ivan Serov in the KGB. In the spring of 1954, Khrushchev wins the allegiance of regional party bosses, and by the fall is confident enough of his power to travel to China. In the end, Malenkov's preference for light industry, views on nuclear war, and backing of Beria's plan to sell out East Germany bring him down. He is branded a "political coward," a favorite Stalin aphorism. Malenkov is allowed to remain on the Presidium.

Khrushchev remains in awe of Stalin's oldest associate, Molotov, but Molotov declares the Virgin Land project "absurd," differs with Khrushchev on how to solve the crisis in public housing, and refuses to admit Yugoslavia as a socialist state. At that year's plenum, everyone rallies behind Khrushchev about Yugoslavia, Molotov recants and in the end is not purged; however, he watches for the first opportunity to get revenge.

Chapter 10 Analysis

"Almost Triumphant: 1953-1955" shows Khrushchev revealing his Machiavellian side in getting rid of the dangerous Beria, before Beria can get rid of him. Stalin's death and

funeral and Beria's arrest, show trial, and summary execution provide drama. Khrushchev's outmaneuvering Malenkov and Molotov, bloodlessly, shows how the post-Stalin regime changed and yet remained the same. Beria's brief reign concentrates on gulag and foreign affairs, both of which Khrushchev will appropriate and advance in Chapter 11. The modus operandi of the plotters will repeat in 1957 and 1964.

Chapter 11

Chapter 11 Summary

The Twentieth Congress in February 1956, as the first regularly scheduled since 1939, is expected to sort things out in the aftermath of a dictator even *Pravda* is forgetting. Set speeches hold only a hint of what Khrushchev will unleash after the foreign observers depart and Soviet delegates are seated for an unscheduled, secret session. Khrushchev delivers a devastating four-hour attack on Stalin's "grave abuse of power." He killed honest, innocent communists, led the war badly, deported whole peoples, alienated Tito, and ruined agriculture. Stalin betrayed Lenin as Lenin predicted he would. Khrushchev pledges to return the USSR to Leninism. He and his Politburo colleagues learned about Stalin's crimes too late to resist, but Stalin died before he could kill off the Old Guard who remembered his shameful acts. The party must get to the truth - but not reveal it to outsiders, who would use it to injure the USSR.

Shame, shock, and surprise silence the hearers. Admonished for their failure to oppose Stalin, the Presidium members sit stony-faced. The need for such candor stems from revelations in the Beria indictment and the tales of former political prisoners. With a napve faith in socialism, Khrushchev takes the lead in gathering information, reconsidering cases, and releasing prisoners. An old Ukrainian comrade somehow survives the gulag and provides Khrushchev rich detail, which he incorporates into the secret speech. Mikoyan presses Khrushchev to denounce Stalin, and later resents Khrushchev's taking the credit for the moral victory. Molotov and Kaganovich question the wisdom of stirring up the past and opening themselves to criticism, but Khrushchev puts them off by guaranteeing Beria will be held primarily responsible. As unforgivable facts emerge, Khrushchev wonders whether they will have the courage to tell the truth. Pospelov and Aristov prepare a draft to which Khrushchev adds biting personal stories and from which he deletes some statistics. He dictates awkward attempts at excusing the lieutenants' failure to restrain the "tyrant." Well-educated *Pravda* editor Shepilov prepares yet another version, and someone creates a final version from all of the sources and suggestions from Mikoyan and others. This penultimate version is circulated to Presidium members, who are shocked and request it at least be kept from the press.

Last-minute revelations from principals in the Battle of Stalingrad and Leningrad Affair reach Khrushchev's ear, and are added. Forty years after the historic speech, Gorbachev will marvel at the "huge political risk" Khrushchev took and the moral test he passed. Khrushchev comes home from the congress beaming and politically strengthened. Key supporters are elevated to Presidium and Secretariat posts, and the Central Committee is loaded with new members who owe their positions to Khrushchev. The intelligentsia hails him. The family moves into a magnificent new villa in the exclusive Lenin Hills, near the Mikoyans, Kaganoviches, and Bulganins.

Khrushchev likely wants the "Top Secret" speech to reach the public, and a translation finds its way into the *New York Times*. In the USSR it is widespread but never officially published, while Stalin's portraits loom everywhere. Continuing to think like Stalin, Khrushchev worries the blow may have been too powerful and seeks to limit critical analysis, lest it polarize society. Anti-Stalinists concentrate on sore spots Khrushchev avoided, questioning whether the Soviet system itself is not at fault for Stalin's crimes. Some academics flout party discipline in ways anticipating the later Gorbachev reforms in the 1980s, while others refuse to believe the stories, do not see the point of washing the party's laundry in public, or even believe Stalin punished those who had oppressed them. Stalin's memory is most cherished in his native Georgia, where 60,000 march, carrying signs calling for Khrushchev's downfall. Khrushchev intervenes sharply when Georgians call for secession. The Presidium condemns "hostile outbursts." *Pravda* denounces "excess liberalism" and reprints Chinese editorials praising Stalin's "historical inheritance." On June 30, the Central Committee essentially rewrites the secret speech in a bland Stalinist tone.

Nevertheless, the pace of rehabilitations increases, as commissions are sent to the labor camps to examine sentences. At the May Day celebration, Khrushchev's numerous toasts condemn Stalin and mention Molotov and Voroshilov, ostensibly to defend their honesty. Khrushchev is determined to give an honest account before he dies. Khrushchev's obvious emotion touches foreign ambassadors, who applaud, but rubs the nerves in colleagues who can no longer stand one another. In June, Khrushchev forces Molotov and Kaganovich to step down from high positions but allows both to remain on the Presidium.

Visiting President Tito finds Khrushchev triumphant, and they take turns condemning Stalin's treatment of Yugoslavia. Soon afterwards, however, Polish workers at Poznbn striking for "Bread and Freedom" are put down. Hungary is a potential tinderbox, where Mbtybs Rbkosi emulates Stalin and has purged reformist Imry Nagy. Khrushchev knows leading communists in both countries, assumes what is good for the USSR is good for its allies, and neglects to consult East European leaders before giving his secret speech. Reading it gives Polish President Bierut a fatal heart attack, and anti-Soviet and anti-Russian protests erupt. In Hungary, Rbkosi's intellectual forum condemns Stalinism and Mikoyan is sent to investigate. The Kremlin replaces Rbkosi with Erntz Gertz, who proves no more capable of holding Hungary together. The stakes for the Soviets are high, and colleagues blame Khrushchev for the mess. Stalin, Khrushchev tells the Polish communists, was cruel, unjust, and abusive, but had the party's interests in mind. Circumstances prevented anyone from opposing him, especially at the end, when he suffered a persecution mania.

By October, W?adys?aw Gomu?ka, recently released from jail, is elected party chief and the Soviet-imposed defense chief is fired. Khrushchev is afraid Poland may break away at any moment, and shows up, uninvited, in Warsaw on October 19, with Molotov and Kaganovich, a clear sign the crisis has undermined his authority. Gomu?ka swears Poland needs Russian friendship more than Russia needs Polish friendship and Poland cannot exist independently. He begs Khrushchev not to allow his troops to enter

Warsaw. Khrushchev orders the troop movement halted, but that night changes his mind, with Molotov's excited approval. He reverses it again by next day - for the last time - and avoids "nervousness and haste," as Mikoyan advises. ?ka's triumph and demanding a Nagy take-over. In Moscow, the Presidium except Mikoyan favors dispatching Soviet troops, and next day, Soviet armored vehicles are attacked with Molotov cocktails. Mikoyan and Suslov, sent to monitor the situation, report panic among senior Hungarian officials. Gertz is replaced by Jbnos Kbdbr, and pre-communist-era politicians are included in a new government, but still opposition to the Red Army continues. For a few hours the Soviet leadership appears to accept the loss of Hungary, and admit to failing to respect the sovereignty of fellow socialist states. Nagy becomes more radical in a vain effort to master the revolutionaries, calls for Hungary to leave the Warsaw Pact, and talks with the envoys about withdrawing Soviet troops.

Khrushchev agonizes about rebellion spreading to Romania, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany. The West will say the Soviets are weak or stupid, and Stalin's prediction of disaster befalling his successors will come true. Mao first calls for Soviet restraint in Hungary but later demands Moscow intervene. On October 31, Khrushchev tells the Presidium they must restore order in Budapest, lest the English and French act as they have that day in Egypt, landing troops to take back the Suez Canal from Gamal Abdel Nasser. Khrushchev (wrongly) fears America will back England and France in both trouble spots. Mikoyan continues to argue against the "terrible mistake" of military intervention, but Khrushchev is certain spilling blood now will spare more bloodshed later. Khrushchev feels besieged as he, Malenkov, and Molotov travel around the Balkans informing their allies of the plan, which costs 20,000 Hungarian and 1,500 Soviet lives.

Chapter 11 Analysis

"From the Secret Speech to the Hungarian Revolution: 1956" discusses Khrushchev's decision to come clean about Stalin's abuses in the 1930s. It is a watershed event in Khrushchev's career and the history of the Soviet Union. It creates a lasting aura for Khrushchev in the West and polarizes liberal and conservative intellectuals in the Soviet Union. Echoes of the speech and the motivations behind it - purgative, vindictive - will remain with Khrushchev throughout his life and motivate the Gorbachev/Yeltsin reforms that eventually break up the USSR. The most immediate consequence of the secret speech is the hope of freedom that spreads behind the Iron Curtain. Poland escapes Soviet tanks narrowly, but Hungary does not. Khrushchev and his colleagues cannot allow Hungary to escape, and part of Khrushchev's legacy (and personal laments) will be the Stalinesque crushing of the Hungarian revolt.

Chapter 12

Chapter 12 Summary

The Hungarian bloodbath deepens Khrushchev's self-doubts, and begins mentioning his age at times of crisis. Unrest had been building inside the Soviet Union since the Twentieth Congress, and events in Poland and Hungary are hailed as anticipatory to a fourth Russian revolution. Though active protestors are still rare, the Central Committee panics. Brezhnev is put in charge of a committee tasked with restoring the "dictatorship of the proletariat." Hundreds of protestors are sentenced to prison camps in 1957 for counterrevolutionary crimes - just before Khrushchev boasts to the world the USSR holds no political prisoners. The Virgin Lands produce a record harvest, and Khrushchev begins a non-stop tour of the agricultural lands, passing out medals and reminding leaders he is their man, rather than Malenkov or Molotov.

Khrushchev aims to restructure industrial management, overtake American agriculture, and win over the artistic intelligentsia. Khrushchev recommends abolishing most national economic ministries and replacing them with 105 regional economic councils. Molotov objects that the plan is not properly prepared, while Koganovich will later judge Khrushchev spoiled an idea that was not in itself bad. Critics begin using anecdotes and proverbs against Khrushchev.

Propelled by recent agricultural success, on May 22, Khrushchev pledges the USSR will overtake the U.S. in per capita output of meat, butter, and milk in a few years - marking the first time the basic Bolshevik axiom has been given a time limit. Agriculture Minister Matskevich suggests vast improvements are possible independent of capitalism. Critics pounce on the impulsiveness, quoting Gosplan figures Khrushchev cannot refute. Rather than retreat, Khrushchev grants CBS Television an interview, where he jokes it may take until 1961 rather than 1960, to counter Western economists' skepticism.

As Soviet writers enjoy "a great holiday of the soul" after the Twentieth Congress, reactionary authorities feel the need to regain control. Khrushchev, who had been both patron and scourge of the arts in Ukraine, is ill at ease laying down the law on ideological discipline to artists and writers. Predictably, Khrushchev tells the Writers' Union board on May 13, 1957, that certain writers incorrectly understand the essence of party criticism of Stalin's personality cult. He rants incoherently about ideological faults in Dudintsev's *Not by Bread Alone* and a literary almanac, *Literaturnaya Moskva.* Khrushchev is out of his depth and listeners are appalled. Conservative writers have a vested interest in bringing Khrushchev back to their side. Mikoyan tries to convince Khrushchev that Dudintsev's novel confirms his own pronouncements on Stalinism, but Khrushchev has decided it is slanderous. No one tells Khrushchev *Literaturnaya Moskva* is a two-volume work, and he vilifies it as a filthy brochure. Embarrassed, Khrushchev half-apologizes and seeks to cheer up the literary types. He sponsors then manages to turn up the tension, and debates publicly, matters that ought to have been confined to party gatherings. Molotov, Kaganovich, and Malenkov will all use

Khrushchev's behavior at the picnic against him in the Presidium, whose atmosphere is now becoming unbearable.

Molotov has consistently opposed Khrushchev since 1954, most strongly over de-Stalinization. Khrushchev will dub him the ideological leader of the conspiracy to overthrow him that begins shortly after the bullying of the writers. Kaganovich, the "knife sharpener" in the "Gang of Eight," loathes how his former protygy now lords it over him. Molotov and Kaganovich hate each other. Malenkov, the main organizer, has no use for either man. Malenkov has supported Khrushchev's policies more than the others, but is convinced he will be purged unless they eliminate Khrushchev before he can expand the Presidium. Voroshilov, the figurehead head of the Soviet state, joins only because he resents Khrushchev's mockery. Prime Minister Bulganin is also on Khrushchev's list for mortifying public gaffes, womanizing, and drunkenness. Khrushchev put Bulganin in charge of the government in order to shine by comparison. No friend of the ringleaders, Bulganin draws closer to them as his gorge rises, and he has access to resources and information vital to the success of the plot. Saburov and Pervukhin, never close to Khrushchev, are recruited after the stormy picnic with warnings Khrushchev is out to get them. Shepilov is the first true intellectual Khrushchev takes under his wing and appears to be grooming as his political heir. Shepilov falls in love with Khrushchev's simple, democratic nature, but is now concerned by much of what his mentor is saying. He joins at the last moment; convinced by Kaganovich that a man that illiterate cannot govern a country. When the coup fails, Khrushchev will vilify Shepilov the most and never again trust an academician.

The Gang of Eight recruits Marshal Zhukov, who had been so instrumental in the Beria coup, and one of the sharpest critics of Khrushchev's embarrassing behavior. Zhukov is concerned Khrushchev has destroyed all vestige of collective leadership. Shepilov gets Khrushchev protygy Yekaterina Furtseva to tell tales on the boss, giving the plotters three of five Presidium candidate members and a majority of those with full memberships. The Stalinism of the three ringleaders brings Mikoyan back to Khrushchev's side, for Mikoyan sees him as an unpolished diamond, albeit easily carried away.

The Gang of Eight expects Khrushchev to concede electoral defeat in accordance with party rules - just as they had in 1955. They invite him to a meeting about a trip to Leningrad, then declare the meeting a session of the Presidium - much the same tactic used on Beria. There has been loose talk in Moscow for a while about upcoming party and government changes, and the KGB must surely have picked up echoes of the conspiracy. The whole party leadership shows up for the wedding of Khrushchev's son Sergei on June 16, but they behave oddly and leave the reception early. The mood is obvious; one aide says Khrushchev knows a coup is coming.

Khrushchev tries to get out of attending the presidium, but gives in. A number of members are still en route when he arrives. Malenkov demands Bulganin rather than Khrushchev chair the session, which, he announces, will candidly discuss Khrushchev's behavior. Only Khrushchev and Mikoyan object to this *de facto* demotion, and are voted down. Voroshilov demands Khrushchev be removed as party leader for unbearable

behavior. Kaganovich brings up Khrushchev's 1923 dalliance with Trotskyism. Others pile on the bandwagon. Mikoyan works to restrain Khrushchev, who accepts some of the criticism and promises to correct his mistakes. Khrushchev is reeling when a recess is called, and gloomy and silent at a reception that evening. Mikoyan works the phones to rally Khrushchev's protygys, and Saburov alone is lost. Khrushchev and Malenkov each call Bulganin. The opponents hold the second day, and Khrushchev is almost himself again, knowing time is on his side. The KGB along with the military airlift members to Moscow. Khrushchev put many of them in their present posts, so they are loyal. The "anti-Party group" has no backup plan and no support outside the Presidium, and goes into retreat.

On June 20, the rebels drop the demand Khrushchev step down as party leader, but propose there be no first secretary. A pro-Khrushchev petition is accepted over frustrated, enraged protests, and the Presidium agrees to a Central Committee plenum the next afternoon. In a marathon session, most opponents give up quickly. Khrushchev names those implemented in Stalin's crimes, outdoing the candor of the secret speech. Sniping by Molotov, Malenkov, and Kaganovich during individual speeches only provokes greater fury in Khrushchev. Zhukov, the most popular member of the Presidium because of his World War II record, levels the gravest charges with an intensity that surprises his allies. He declares the three are the "main culprits" responsible for 38,679 executions in 1938, including Khrushchev's friend Yakir.

Malenkov, as head of the NKVD, is the guiltiest. Zhukov accuses Khrushchev of complicity but in effect pardons him. Malenkov and Kaganovich demand Khrushchev come clean on his part in death-dealing troikas, but otherwise offer little resistance. Only Molotov remains defiant, and Khrushchev pronounces him the guiltiest, having been Stalin's right-hand man. Molotov counters that he objected more often to Stalin than any of them. Shepilov urges the plenum to focus on Khrushchev rather than his critics, and Mikoyan admits Khrushchev is, "hotheaded, hasty, and sharp-tongued," but innocent of the indecencies critics charge him with. The Leningrad Affair is brought up and Khrushchev accuses Malenkov of bloody hands. Khrushchev is less forthright than his colleagues in recanting his actions during the 1930s. The June 1957 plenum is the closest Stalin's henchmen come to a day of reckoning. Khrushchev's rivals are publicly denounced, lose their high posts, but remain in the party. After the "victory" he will recount repeatedly, Khrushchev begins to fear his anti-Stalinist decisions. The years 1956-57 teach Khrushchev, perhaps, that socialism - and his own authority with it - could unravel if Stalin were totally discredited.

Chapter 12 Analysis

"The Jaws of Victory: 1956-1957" details the "anti-Party group" that rallied against Khrushchev following the troubles in Eastern Europe and Khrushchev's particularly crude behavior dealing with writers. Taubman declares if a Nuremburg-style tribunal were held for the crimes of the Stalin era, Khrushchev and those who oppose him in 1957, would all be indicted. In 1957 there is no purge, bloody or not. Stalin's henchmen remain in control of the USSR. The ghost of the *vozhd* is still to be reckoned with.

Khrushchev survives the kind of plot he sprung on Beria years before and the one he will not survive seven years hence. Most of the plotters in 1964 are now on the scene, as junior members of the communist party hierarchy.

Chapter 13

Chapter 13 Summary

Even before defeating the "anti-Party group," Khrushchev takes control of foreign policy through barnstorm trips abroad, both under- and overwhelming those he meets. Marxist-Leninist ideology heightens enmity towards adversaries; and the USSR is both accustomed to bullying satellites and finds it difficult to deal with non-socialist statesmen. Khrushchev comes to foreign policy ignorant and ill-equipped - and he knows it.

Khrushchev crosses paths with foreigners from childhood and forms images of their traits. He first steps foot on foreign soil when the Red Army invades Poland in 1939. After the war, Stalin cannot be bothered with Polish matters and Khrushchev negotiates with the Poles to set up a provisional government, oversees the rebuilding of Warsaw's major utilities. By 1951, he has met many leading foreign communists at Stalin's dacha in Yalta. In 1945, he is impressed by glimpses of the powerful, inscrutable Charles de Gaulle, and manages to exchange a few words with General Eisenhower as he reviews a Red Square parade.

Stalin keeps foreign policy to himself. Everyone but Molotov, Zhdanov, Vyshinsky, and Mikoyan is an errand boy. Information on events like the Soviet-Yugoslav split and Korean War are not readily available. Only Molotov has contacts with capitalists, and no one dares show interest in defense policy, for fear of being labeled a foreign agent. Thus, Khrushchev is ill-equipped for the task he now undertakes. His first premise is the Soviet cause is just, despite the history of its dubious actions in Poland and Romania. Khrushchev is certain Germany, France, and Italy will stage revolutions - if for no other reason than the Soviets want it so badly. Khrushchev is also convinced the USSR is in danger, although the Socialist countries now form a buffer around its borders.

Marxism-Leninism holds economic imperatives dictate capitalist foreign policies, but Khrushchev concentrates more heavily on personalities and dislikes Churchill, Truman, and Acheson. Stalin taunts his lieutenants' destiny to be strangled by imperialists after his death. Khrushchev's views diverge from Stalin's over recognition of U.S. aid during the war, the Berlin blockade in 1948, the support given to Kim Il Sun in the Korean War, and the invasion of Japan in 1945 (Khrushchev is the only Politburo member to favor it). Like Stalin, Khrushchev trembles, seeing the Soviet Union a "great big target range" for U.S. bombers, but unlike Stalin, is determined to seem fearless and strike fear in Western opponents.

After Stalin's death, Beria tries to cut Soviet foreign commitments, while Malenkov moves towards conciliation with the West. Most Western diplomats regret Molotov's stepping down as foreign minister in 1956, because he steered between confrontations and concessions, but he runs foreign affairs after Beria's fall and Malenkov's demotion. Khrushchev combines the qualities of his three rivals -- boldness, bluster, mercurialness

- as he enters the foreign arena in 1954. Westerns are amazed at the rigidity of his thinking on the West and willingness to swallow the propaganda he helped create. Khrushchev requires his translator, Oleg Troyanovsky, to correct his thought, and Malinovsky to explain concepts in single syllables. Khrushchev is quick but not intelligent, and has a chip on his shoulder.

Sino-Soviet relations seem in fine shape in 1953, but this is deceptive. Stalin had supported Chiang Kai-shek during World War II to appease the U.S., and hailed Mao's victory mildly. Mao leaves Moscow after his first visit in 1949 with less support and cooperation than he expected. The Korean War strains Sino-Soviet relations when Stalin leaves it to the Chinese to save the North. In 1953, Khrushchev resolves to manage Mao better than Stalin had, but Mao is condescending. In 1953-56, Moscow effects the "greatest transfer of technology in world history," giving Beijing $2 billion at a time the Soviets are suffering shortages. Russians are tutoring Chinese in many fields and helping them develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Moscow forces the West to give China a chair at the 1954 Geneva Conference on Indochina and Korea, backs the Chinese shelling of the offshore islands, and invites observers to the founding of the Warsaw Pact. Khrushchev consults Mao frequently on Eastern Europe in 1957. He offers a sample nuclear bomb.

In 1954, Khrushchev goes to Beijing determined to triumph. He sets out with no sense of the scale or difficulties his promises will entail, and refuses to listen to opposing arguments. Mikoyan gets Khrushchev to postpone some deliveries until after 1960, but still he expends great political and economic capital in return for a tiny return. When he freely offers to return regions Russia taken long ago from China, Mao demands they leave behind heavy artillery at Port Arthur. Khrushchev dislikes the "typically Oriental" atmosphere in Mao's court, full of hypocrisy and deception, and leaves Beijing certain conflict with China is inevitable. The tides turn in 1956-57. Mao is unwilling to smash Stalin's cult of personality while building one of his own and doubts Khrushchev has the maturity to lead a major nation. After Poland and Hungary, Mao and Khrushchev's roles reverse. Mao questions Khrushchev's "revolutionary morality," and Zhou notes he is incapable of the "self-criticism" the Chinese leadership engages in.

Mao backs the winner in the battle with the "anti-Party group" and visits the USSR. Mao is moving away from the Soviets in economic and foreign policy matters, but still praises Khrushchev. Mao uses Chinese proverbs to camouflage his views on collective leadership, but is forthright about nuclear war: It is fortuitous, because the survivors will become socialists; the Soviets can retreat and wait for the Chinese to rescue them. Khrushchev cannot tell whether Mao is joking, but showers him with attention and hospitality. Mao oozes dissatisfaction and disrespect in return. Russians are snobs and Khrushchev an uncouth fool.

Khrushchev's visit to Belgrade in May 1955 is riskier than the trek to Beijing. East European Stalinists refuse to acknowledge the CPSU's primacy. Reconstituting the Soviet camp on a more voluntary basis is made harder by Khrushchev's bullying tactics. Tito is unwilling to establish party-to-party ties until Stalinism is dead and buried in the USSR. Khrushchev follows his well-vetted text, blaming Beria rather than Stalin for the

terror. Tito snubs his guest, and at the restrained reception, Khrushchev gets drunk, tries to kiss everyone, including Tito, asking that bygones be bygones. After the Twentieth Congress acknowledgement of multiple paths to socialism and the April 1956 disbanding of Cominform, Tito visits the USSR, and finds the Soviets on their best behavior. Negotiations prove difficult. Khrushchev believes Tito is ready to export his brand of communism to Poland and Hungary, and Gertz distances himself from Moscow. During the Hungarian revolt, Yugoslavia harbors Nagy and descends to personal mockery of the always sensitive Khrushchev, who feels obliged to launch a campaign against Yugoslav "revisionism" to keep Tito from infecting other countries.

By 1954 if not sooner, Khrushchev is paying close attention to East-West relations. He is unhappy with Molotov's lack of initiative, but dares not confront him until he takes care of Malenkov. Khrushchev turns to matters of the economy and reducing defense costs. His solution is to rely on nuclear weapons. The USSR has only 120 bombs and no way of delivering them to the U.S. Khrushchev decides to bluff, figuring others will accept his logic that these weapons are so destructive no sane person will use them. Eisenhower's "New Look" strategy envisages stopping Soviet aggression by massive nuclear retaliation rather than through conventional forces. Khrushchev knows the Semyorka (R-7) rocket will be available only in mid-1956, but begins jousting with it immediately. Khrushchev will woo the West with "peaceful coexistence" while trying to undermine it, a napve position Molotov considers tantamount to a crime.

The Kremlin begins giving lavish, drunken banquets for diplomats, some of which misfire. During one party in June 1956, Khrushchev manages to "insult literally every country in the world." Khrushchev's first negotiating partner is Julius Raab, the Austrian chancellor and it goes well. His next test is the Geneva summit in July. Eisenhower and Khrushchev want to size each other up, but the "German Question" offers little room for compromise. Khrushchev goes vowing the USSR will not kowtow, but humiliation begins at the airport; Bulganin not Khrushchev is the Soviet chief of state and receives the official greeting. Bulganin does most of the talking at formal sessions, but Khrushchev does not hesitate to interrupt and dominates the dinners and informal conversations. Molotov advises him on etiquette, but cultivated Europeans are appalled at Khrushchev's table manners.

In formal negotiations, the positions are clear: the USSR will not budge on Germany, disarmament, or Western interference in its sphere of influence. Eisenhower is passionate on the "futility of war in the nuclear age," and makes clear to the Soviets he will not attack them. This prompts Khrushchev to increase his bluff and bluster. Khrushchev notices Eisenhower depends heavily on Dulles, which further emboldens him to threaten war in a crisis. Khrushchev returns from Geneva satisfied and joyful at having represented his country worthily.

Khrushchev and Bulganin ask Eisenhower to invite them to the U.S., which Ike would have done, had Dulles not considered it impulsive. A post summit foreign ministers' meeting accomplishes nothing, and Khrushchev rattles his nuclear bombs. He turns his attention to luring West Germany away from NATO. In October, Khrushchev and Bulganin visit India, Burma, and Afghanistan, areas that had not interested Stalin.

Molotov labels as "adventurism" Khrushchev's view that offense is the best form of defense. Khrushchev's constant patter steals the lead from Bulganin, and he announces a unilateral troop cut of 640,000. Dulles interprets the secret speech as a sign the Soviets are contemplating reform and he wants to keep the pressure on them. Part of the pressure is the first U-2 spy flights.

Unwelcome in Washington, Khrushchev accepts an existing invitation to Britain, where he hopes not to make a fool of himself. Khrushchev screens Bulganin's speeches, and shoves him aside any time basic policy is under discussion. Khrushchev manages almost to act like a gentleman, sparing Queen Elizabeth his usual braggadocio. The "B. and K." tour accomplishes little more than keeping the diplomatic offensive alive.

Eisenhower sees the dawn of a new day as the Soviets withdraw from Hungary. Khrushchev enjoys looking strong and resolute and foiling the imperialists. Resumption of the Cold War is not a bad thing from Moscow's point of view, as exploits in Egypt show in the summer of 1956. Soon after Cairo receives Czech arms, it nationalizes the Suez Canal. The Kremlin tries to avert war with Britain and France, but the Israelis launch a preemptive attack. Syria begs for Soviet help. Bulganin suggests Soviet-American cooperation in arranging a truce, and issues Khrushchev-drafted threats when Eisenhower refuses. When a cease-fire is signed in November, Khrushchev is convinced the threat of nuclear weapons is key and that not many bombs are needed for his rattling to be effective.

Chapter 13 Analysis

"The Wider World: 1917-1957" breaks the pace of the biography by taking an overview of a half-century of Soviet foreign policy. It shows Stalin perversely relishing the thought that his ill-prepared lieutenants will fail in foreign affairs after his death. Khrushchev's early experience with foreigners is limited to social settings and submissive Eastern-bloc situations. In 1956-57, however, the spirit of the secret speech permeates the region, inspiring the oppressed in Poland and Hungary to free their bonds. At the end of Chapter 13, Khrushchev is still partnering overseas with Bulganin, intent on disarmament talks, and rattling his nuclear weapons. The rest of *Khrushchev* revolves around these matters and agriculture.

Chapter 14

Chapter 14 Summary

Marshal Zhukov is the USSR's leading war hero, restored from exile by Khrushchev after Stalin's death, and named defense minister in 1955, candidate member of the Presidium in 1957, and full member after playing a key role in defeating the "anti-Party group." Zhukov is a frequent visitor to the Khrushchev dacha and seemingly safe in his position for as long as Khrushchev leads the party. The invitations to the Crimea, however, are intended to keep an eye on Zhukov as Khrushchev plots his elimination. As Zhukov sets out on a political mission in the Balkans, Khrushchev meets with other generals and KGB chief Serov to make sure he has their support, and then gets the Central Committee to pass a resolution condemning Zhukov. No one speaks in the marshal's defense when he returns to Moscow and pleads to save his career. The charges are planning to seize power, undercutting party controls over the military, and fostering his own cult of personality. Many of the accusations are exaggerated if not untrue, but Khrushchev believes them. Zhukov's militant anti-Stalinism at the June plenum backfires by suggesting Khrushchev had been Stalin's accomplice as much as Molotov, Malenkov, and Kaganovich. That is unforgivable. With Zhukov gone, Khrushchev stands alone as leader of the USSR.

The Twenty-first Party Congress in early 1959 celebrates Khrushchev personally. Yekaterina Furtseva, Aleksei Kirichenko, and Aleksandr Shelepin are his most loyal retainers and laud him fulsomely. Only slightly less fawning are the independent elders Suslov and Kosygin. The 1958 grain harvest is 30% higher than 1957 and 70% above the 1949-53 average, largely thanks to Khrushchev's Virgin Lands program. These are Khrushchev's best years but also the period in which he begins to take on the traits his enemies will cite when they overthrow him in 1964. He closes himself off in a narrow circle of people, some of whom indulge his worst tendencies. His democratic approach gives way to authoritarianism. Freedom of action makes him arrogant.

Alone at the top, Khrushchev is too dominant for his own good and defenseless against his own weaknesses. He can speak on topics he knows nothing about and establish policy on a whim. He has four chief assistants: Troyanovsky for foreign policy, Shevchenko for agriculture, Vladimir Lebedev for culture and ideology, Grigory Shuisky for general affairs. A "Press Group" shapes his speeches and makes presentable the actual words he pronounces after abandoning his script. This small center of power cannot control the vast party-state system, which dares not criticize Khrushchev openly, but distorts the information flowing to him, delays implementing his decisions, or carrying them out so zealously that they turn into parodies of what he intends. Having backed Khrushchev in June 1957, the party *aparat* expects him to support it now.

Khrushchev's treatment of his defeated rivals is mild. Molotov gets off the easiest -- assignment as Soviet ambassador to Outer Mongolia, where on-going criticism of Khrushchev and griping about China policy get him sent to Vienna and eventually

expelled from the party. Malenkov is convinced Khrushchev hates him as he is sent into ever deeper isolation in northern Kazakhstan and later summoned to Moscow to answer questions on his role in the terror. Kaganovich, who pleads for his life after the plenum, is sent to manage a potash plant in Perm province, expelled from the party, but allowed to return to Moscow in retirement. Shepilov is sent to Central Asia and eventually expelled from the Academy of Sciences and the party. Voroshilov remains titular head of state until 1960 and a member of the presidium even longer. Pervukhin and Saburov do well. Bulganin is demoted to the State Bank and later the Stavropol Economic Council. On Mikoyan's advice, Khrushchev fires his faithful KGB chief because he has so much blood on his hands, and replaces him with Aleksandr Shelepin.

Convinced capitalism is calamitous on the whole, Khrushchev sounds like a born-again free-marketer defending collective farmers' rights to hold individual plots and livestock until the cooperatives reach the stage this is unnecessary. When exhortations fail to get results, he issues laws and decrees. Khrushchev is impressed by American know-how, and comes in contact with a gabby, cantankerous Iowa corn farmer, Roswell Garst, who is interested in easing East-West tensions. Garst visits Khrushchev's dacha in 1955, shows him on a map what parts of the USSR are best suited for corn, and advises him on fertilization, irrigation, mechanization, and insect control. There is no stopping Khrushchev on the crusade to plant corn. He orders 5,000 tons of hybrid seeds. Khrushchev advises cronies to look before they leap, but pushes production everywhere, in order to have sufficient feed for cattle in order to overtake the U.S. on schedule. Khrushchev chastises cadres that cannot or will not perform. He is convinced the people are capable of miracles when kolkhoz chairmen and scientists with fancy degrees do not get in the way. Khrushchev prides himself in having learned architecture by riding around, listening to people, studying the best examples, and reading.

In 1958, Khrushchev decides the new collective farms no longer need Machine Tractor Stations (MTS) to supply equipment and operators. He urges gradual implementation, but by the end of the year, 80% of all farms have purchased former MTS machinery. The results are disastrous: other investments have to be put off, skilled operators move to the cities, the equipment is used inefficiently, and production drops. Khrushchev's underlings continue telling him what they think he wants to hear. The Ryazan party boss, as an extreme example, is hailed as a Hero of Socialist Labor for attaining monumental success in meat production. Then the widespread fraud and corruption that underlie the official report are discovered - and the truth that production is one-sixth the amount promised - he shoots himself rather than face investigation.

Khrushchev also boasts about the USSR's industrial achievements and breakthroughs in science and technology. *Sputnik* puts the U.S. behind, and Khrushchev brags his ICBMs can reach any part of the globe - even though they are not yet operational. Khrushchev uses the missiles' psychological effect on the West to justify cutting back on conventional weapons, which puts him at odds with the military. No provision is made for housing or employing those furloughed, and there is grumbling in the ranks. Khrushchev believes he knows more about military matters than the professionals. In 1958 he comes up with a plan for protecting ICBMs in underground silos and argues with leading rocket scientists for his still-impractical idea. When the solution for the

practical problem appears in an American technical journal, Khrushchev lectures the experts on the need to keep current with the literature, and considers the launch of the USSR's first silo missile a personal triumph. Defense Minister Malinovsky has no choice but to listen to Khrushchev's stubborn arguments that the next war will be missile-based.

Stalin leaves a dreadful housing shortage that Khrushchev begins to address as a stop-gap measure through construction of prefabricated apartment houses to be replaced by more adequate buildings in 20 years. The *krushchoby* (a mocking term combining Khrushchev's surname and the word for slum) are crumbling but still in use when the USSR collapses in 1991. Soviet education also needs reform. Under Stalin, schools had turned into training grounds for the elite. In 1958, Khrushchev begins pushing for longer programs, preparation for trade, factory, or farm work, and/or higher education for working-class children. Industry and university officials balk at Khrushchev's proposals, block implementation during his tenure, and abandon the approach after his fall.

The post-Stalin cultural thaw gains momentum. As Khrushchev hopes, a 1957 World Youth Festival in Moscow impresses the world with Moscow's openness, but also sparks interest in elements of Western popular culture Khrushchev finds offensive. Liberals and conservatives both seek his support in a culture war, but he has neither the time nor the inclination to read disputed works until advisers with axes to grind bring them to his attention. In 1954, Khrushchev had acquiesced in the firing of Tvardovsky from his post as editor of *Novyi mir,* but now listens patiently and tolerantly as the liberal poet makes a case against "bureaucratization" of literature. Tvardovsky convinces Khrushchev to meet with the writers he berated in public, but the Writers' Union, where conservatives predominate, prevents it.

An Italian publisher releases Boris Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* - a felony offense for the author - and he is awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1958. Newspapers launch a fierce campaign; the Writers' Union expels Pasternak and demands he be deported. Khrushchev, who admits he has read only excerpts from the novel, selected to prove its anti-Soviet character, orders the persecution ended. In his memoirs, Khrushchev will claim he nearly authorized the novel's publication. Tvardovsky is restored to the editorship of *Novyi mir*. Khrushchev speaks extemporaneously to the Third Writers' Conference in May 1959, displaying ignorance and insecurity. After lurching between topics disconnectedly, he half-apologizes for having too little time for reading and for speaking crudely, without a text. Liberals build a Khrushchev cult in an effort to fight the Stalin cult.

Khrushchev's isolation at the top is also visible in his dealings with foreign communists. He boycotts the Yugoslav party congress in 1958, suspends the country's line of credit, and orders Imre Nagy executed in prison. Khrushchev nearly admits being systematically misinformed about Yugoslav matters when he receives Ambassador Mi? unovi? at his dacha. Hope for better relations with China fade fast with the Great Leap Forward, which will result in the worst famine in Chinese history, but whose immediate effect is to challenge Moscow for primacy in world communism. Just as Mao is demanding greater "self-reliance," Khrushchev proposes joint submarine fleet and

Soviet bases along the Chinese coast. These remind Mao of Stalin's tactics, and when Ambassador Yudin cannot explain his boss' ideas adequately, Mao demands Khrushchev come to Beijing. He drops everything and complies, only to face a new round of humiliation and condescension. The Soviets go home thinking nothing worse can happen, but China bombards the offshore islands without consulting them, triggering an international crisis that could have drawn the USSR into a world war. The U.S. assumes Khrushchev is behind Mao, but Mao is actually intent on scuttling growing U.S-Soviet dytente. Moscow remains neutral when Chinese and Indian troops face off, but withdraws with promise of a prototype atom bomb.

Chapter 14 Analysis

"Alone at the Top: 1957-1960" shows Khrushchev trying to come to grips on his own with Stalin's legacy in a variety of areas, always hindered by sycophantic underlings and his own mixed feelings of superiority and inferiority. How the split with China came about is particularly enlightening and entertaining. The Twentieth Congress continues to crop up.

Chapter 15

Chapter 15 Summary

Despite his desire to reduce East-West tensions, on November 10, 1958, Khrushchev surprises everyone by demanding the status of Berlin be normalized. The capital of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) should be under the control of East German boss Walter Ulbricht. U.S. Ambassador Thompson figures this is Khrushchev's way of forcing a summit meeting. On November 27, in his first-ever press conference, Khrushchev announces the "malignant tumor" of West Berlin must be removed, and gives the Western powers six months to demilitarize the "free city" or face having to deal with East Germans rather than the Soviets for access to the city. Eisenhower is belligerent. The standoff will not be end until the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. Khrushchev acts because Berlin is a locus for dissatisfied skilled workers and professionals fleeing from the East to the West, and political subversions flowing from West to East. Ulbricht is concerned Adenauer will get hold of nuclear weapons. Khrushchev appears to have had no fear that his colleagues would object to his dictating policy unilaterally on November 10, but allows them to get his November 27 memorandum. Khrushchev is confident the West will not start a war over Berlin.

When Khrushchev resumes courting the West, Dulles adopts the position that the USSR is not living up to its promises. Khrushchev gives eight interviews to Western journalists, rattling rockets and appealing, more urgently, for summit-level talks. At a gala New Year's Eve dinner, Khrushchev toasts the wartime Grand Alliance and praises Eisenhower personally, while ignoring fellow socialists. Eisenhower rebuffs a series of Bulganin letters suggesting a summit; requiring things go through proper diplomatic channels. A secret agent masquerading as a junior embassy officer in Washington determines the sentiment towards an *informal* Khrushchev visit to the U.S., and in March, Khrushchev fishes publicly for an invitation.

International incidents intervene (the execution of Nagy, a military coup in Iraq, the landing of Marines in Lebanon and Jordan, Egyptian President Nasser's visit to Moscow), and Khrushchev likens it all to playing chess in the dark. In July, Khrushchev calls for a meeting of the Big Four plus India, or something under the aegis of the U.N. Security Council, which would legitimize Nationalist China at Mao's expense. The U.S. refuses. The Taiwan Straight crisis raises tensions, as Khrushchev vows to treat an attack on China as an attack on the USSR. Negotiations are the only way to weaken American domination worldwide. If West Germany receives nuclear arms, Khrushchev's prestige will plummet. Adenauer wants to integrate his country into Western Europe without destroying the chances for German reunification. Western recognition of East Germany along the lines Khrushchev is proposing is anathema to Adenauer, and for however much they find him galling, the U.S. presidents follow his lead. France's de Gaulle is even more adamant than Adenauer, whose help he needs in restoring France's major-power status and preventing an eventual German/Soviet alliance. Britain's Macmillan is the most pliable, but is soon to be marginalized. Eisenhower sees

giving in to Khrushchev as leading to the destruction of the Western alliance and the isolation of the U.S. Still, he is nearly as disturbed as Khrushchev over the international stalemate and nuclear danger. Ulbricht sees Berlin as a prize, but he also values East German access to Western markets; Khrushchev's plan will require a military build-up the Soviets cannot afford. Unsure whether Khrushchev is bluffing, Western leaders set out to prove they are not.

The West's initial response to the ultimatum is cautious. Spending 8 hours with Khrushchev in December 1958, U.S. Senator Hubert Humphrey finds him humorous, clever, and well read on the U.S. political situation. Khrushchev confides that the USSR means business, and has tested a 5-megaton bomb, having rockets with a range of 9,000 miles. During their conversation, Khrushchev returns to the topic of Berlin, "a thorn" and "a cancer," more than 20 times. Khrushchev recommends an end to belligerent exchanges and the cycles of proposals and counterproposals. The USSR is prepared to accept anything reasonable. Humphrey advises the Administration to study Khrushchev's psychology carefully, but feels he is a man Ike can do business with.

Khrushchev passes word to Vice President Nixon there will be no war over Berlin, and suggests Nixon visit the USSR. The U.S. demands a period of "relative quiet" in Berlin as a prerequisite. Frustrated over inaction, Khrushchev sends Mikoyan to Washington to understand how much change has taken place since Stalin's death and show how sincere the Soviets are about wanting to negotiate. Eisenhower rejects a summit and compromise over Berlin.

Worried the world is drifting towards war, Macmillan invites himself to Moscow. Khrushchev manages to insult the prime minister several times, but in the end Macmillan makes two points - which happen to be the essence of what Khrushchev has been saying for months. Khrushchev drops his May 27 deadline and suggests a foreign ministers' meeting if a summit is not acceptable. The British are amazed at Khrushchev's dominance of his colleagues, his ability to speak without notes, and grasp of detail; but who has difficulty following logical arguments, hostility towards intellectual refinement, acute consciousness of power, and a deep inferiority complex. Troyanovsky is amazed at how aggressively and provocatively Khrushchev treats his guest.

The foreign ministers meet in Geneva on May 11 and Khrushchev is euphoric, but by mid-June, the ministers are deadlocked. The West will not yield its basic rights or formally recognize East Germany. The Soviets are willing to accept an interim agreement to preserve Western rights in Berlin and allow the two Germanys to negotiate. That East German observers are present in Geneva is *de facto* recognition of Ulbricht's regime, but Ulbricht is willing to let a settlement languish for years. Khrushchev wants action, and on June 7, declares "world public opinion" demands a summit meeting. He meets nervously with the patrician Averill Harriman, on June 23, criticizing all of his former colleagues and declares he is jealous of his prerogatives. He admits that even his supreme word in the Presidium can be gotten around. The USSR wants U.S. friendship, but not from weakness. He reminds the envoy of the strength and depth of the Soviet nuclear arsenal. Harriman challenges Khrushchev's "appallingly

dangerous" words, but Khrushchev does not back down. He is determined to liquidate Western rights in Berlin.

Khrushchev believes he knows how far he can push Eisenhower, and speaks more boldly than Stalin ever had. Eisenhower brushes off Khrushchev's bluster, refuses to be dragooned into a summit, and, puzzling about what kind of a man he is dealing with, orders the State Department to study the possibility of inviting Khrushchev to the U.S. Eisenhower comes to the conclusion this will help break the logjam. Still, he demands there be progress in Geneva as a precondition. Eisenhower is disturbed when an unqualified invitation is conveyed, which a flabbergasted Khrushchev accepts on July 21. Khrushchev takes the "snafu" as a sign the U.S. has finally accepted the socialist state and that his Berlin policy has worked.

Geneva, now a sideshow, continues unproductive, but Vice President Richard Nixon visits Moscow. The two men share sensitivity to being slighted and determination not to be intimidated. The results are verbal slugfests. Khrushchev boasts about his rockets, confides his agents have stolen U.S. secrets, threatens to destroy Western Europe on the first day of a war, and denies menacing anyone. At an American exhibition, which Nixon opens, Khrushchev denounces the showiness and brags the USSR will surpass the U.S. soon. The two statesmen poke fingers at each other in a televised "Miracle Kitchen" debate. Khrushchev impulsively suggests they drive to his dacha, where he continues bragging about the Soviet military.

The announcement of Khrushchev's visit causes dismay among allied leaders. They fear the Americans are too napve and incompetent to stand up to the Soviets and intend to exclude them from decisions. De Gaulle rejects Eisenhower's offer of a "Western summit" before the visit, so the president tours the capitals in turn. The meetings convince him he has little room to maneuver and that delaying resolution of the German and Berlin problems is advisable. Eisenhower tries to lower expectations. On September 10, he stipulates two conditions for a formal four-power summit: 1) Western rights in Berlin must be respected and 2) the Soviets must somehow show they are serious about negotiating a reduction in world tensions. This is a retreat from previous American insistence on real progress before a summit. Eisenhower looks forward to achieving a personal breakthrough with Khrushchev.

Khrushchev sees the journey as recognition of the Soviets' existence and power. He is mindful of the need to behave well. Khrushchev has passed tests in India, Burma, and England, but the importance of America is decisive. The foreign ministry, KGB, and speechwriters draft remarks for all occasions, but Khrushchev will abandon them all. Khrushchev agonizes about how to get beyond peaceful coexistence and resolve the difficult questions. He is afraid of being snubbed and humiliated, since he is not technically a chief of state. He is also concerned about being taken to Camp David until he is told it is the president's dacha. Khrushchev wants to include a leading writer to lend cultural weight to the delegation. Sholokhov is eventually accepted, despite his drinking. Presidium members oppose the unbusinesslike idea of taking family members along, but Mikoyan argues Nina will have a calming influence on her explosive husband. Nina and the children are added to the retinue. Khrushchev insists they land precisely

on time. After exploding at an August 3 press conference, Khrushchev begs indulgence if he commits any slips of the tongue. They are going to the U.S. with an open mind and pure heart.

Khrushchev recalls how Stalin had always put down his lieutenant's diplomatic skills, and uses this to be morally and psychological ready for the meetings. His nerves are strained with excitement. The Americans prepare a stunning ceremony, but the crowds lining the motorcade are stone-faced, and Khrushchev cannot comprehend that this might not be government-ordered. He is determined not be over amazed at the grandeur of America, which requires he rein in his natural curiosity. He does a credible job of containing himself at a formal state dinner and an agricultural research center in Beltsville, MD. He is upbeat and constructive addressing the National Press Club and refuses to be provoked during questions-and-answers. He deflects with humor a question about the meaning of "we will bury you," a phrase Khrushchev had used in November 1956. Westerners want not to believe it means victory in economic and political competition. He cannot joke away a question about the Hungarian revolt, but Soviet journalists think he handles it well enough to establish the "Khrushchev style" in the West.

The next step in the itinerary is noisy, choking New York City, where speakers at a reception are "provocative" but do not convert Khrushchev to capitalism. Khrushchev observes guests at Harriman's reception, the cream of the eastern establishment, resemble Civil War posters, but without the pig snouts artists gave capitalists. American-style cocktails allow Khrushchev to circulate, but tobacco smoke irritates him. People are constantly either probing or instructing him. He is happy to move on to the next event at the Economic Club of New York. Khrushchev speaks mildly on trade and peaceful coexistence, but questioners afterwards remind him of "a bunch of tomcats on a fence." He has not come to America to beg.

After a trip through Harlem, the party flies to Los Angeles, and by the time of his midnight speech, Khrushchev is frazzled. He clashes with the deputy mayor, a White Russian ymigry, but enjoys the cream of Hollywood society, Marilyn Monroe in particular. A Greek-American movie mogul who picks up the tab for the Warner Brothers visit, insists on telling his rags-to-riches story, which Khrushchev has to top: he is a coal miner become prime minister of the great Soviet state. Such an admission is both painful and satisfying, and his intended short speech grows long. The Los Angeles police department cites security concerns when barring Khrushchev from Disneyland. Khrushchev cannot understand that random roadside protesters are not plants by Eisenhower meant to insult him. During a dinner at the Ambassador Hotel, Khrushchev feels like the performing elephant he remembers seeing as a boy in Yuzovka, and the mayor's welcome brings up the "we will bury you" phrase again. Khrushchev is furious and threatens to leave the U.S. if people will not take his mission of peace seriously. A horrified hush falls over the room as he rants on, and at the end he demands U.N. Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge be ordered to report everything he just said. The diplomat does not, however, pass it along to Eisenhower.

Los Angelinos could not be kinder as they bid the Russians farewell, and Khrushchev is sure ordinary Americans love him; only Eisenhower's "bastards" do not. Khrushchev refuses to look at the Atlas missile displayed outside Vandenberg Air Force Base, but tells journalists he has many more than that - and better equipped. San Francisco's mayor makes up for the snubs, and the visit is marred only by remarks made by members of the United Automobile Workers. Khrushchev deems UAW President Walter Reuther, a betrayer of the class struggle.

After a short visit to Garst's farm in Iowa and a stop in Pittsburgh, Khrushchev is helicoptered to Camp David. Khrushchev and Gromyko walk in the forest to plan tactics, certain their cabins are wired. At 9:20 AM Eisenhower and Khrushchev take up the German question. The U.S. will not allow its position in Berlin to change; otherwise anything is possible. For Khrushchev this is impossible, but he is willing to guarantee West Berlin as a free city. Khrushchev reminds Eisenhower of the changes made since Stalin's day and the broad public support he has at home for improving relations between their two countries. Khrushchev is dismayed Eisenhower's proposals offer little hope for progress in 10-15 years or beyond. Washington is now imposing an ultimatum. Khrushchev is ready to burst. Eisenhower nearly loses control. Gromyko is frozen. Khrushchev is certain the trip will fail, but warms during an impromptu visit to Eisenhower's Gettysburg farm and grandchildren.

Next morning's discussions begin badly about trade issues. Eisenhower's depiction of China forces Khrushchev to defend his ally, and Sino-Soviet relations and differences are dropped from the agenda. Germany comes up again and the two leaders find themselves in agreement. Eisenhower agrees to attend a four-power conference, but they disagree on a communiquy. Khrushchev wants to demonstrate progress. Eisenhower explodes that unless fixed time limits are removed from the Berlin talks he will withdraw. They compromise. That evening, Khrushchev addresses the American people on television, praises their kindheartedness, and commends their president - his friend - who sincerely wants to improve relations.

Khrushchev's return flight is met by the whole Presidium, many party and government leaders, and the diplomatic corps. Khrushchev tells thousands in the sports stadium about his trip. It is an icebreaker, the promise of a new era of peace. Eisenhower is a wise, courageous, determined statesman, who enjoys the full support of his people. The two leaders, of course, realize they cannot clear away all the accretions of the Cold War in one sitting, and there are evil forces in America that will try to keep the Cold War going. Fifty times Khrushchev is interrupted by applause, and expectations rise much higher than he will be able to deliver. Khrushchev is so euphoric he thinks he can make up with Mao, but a China trip is disastrous. In January he announces another massive cut in military troop strength.

In February, the Warsaw Pact's Political Consultative Committee declares it is ready to begin settling international issue by negotiations. Khrushchev personally supervises arrangements for an Eisenhower visit to the USSR, June 10-19, determined to at least match the Camp David hospitality. He orders a golf course built for Eisenhower. He orders the military and KGB to allow Eisenhower to fly aboard Air Force One within the

borders of the USSR. Neighborhoods in Moscow and Leningrad get face lifts. Americans begin receiving phone calls from Russian friends. The U.S.'s image as a "class enemy" is fading, and Soviet ideological watchdogs are alarmed. Khrushchev is concerned one false step and all his labors can go up in smoke.

Chapter 15 Analysis

"The Berlin Crisis and the American Trip: 1958-1959" concentrates on Khrushchev's tour of the United States. Particularly notable are Khrushchev's reactions to protests in various locales; he cannot conceive that President Eisenhower is behind these affronts personally. In the USSR he would certainly be responsible. The "Khrushchev style" is mentioned - a combination of homespun good humor and angry defiance. We have seen this throughout the book on Khrushchev's way up and will see it bring him down. Discussion of the Berlin question gets tedious, but the very tedium shows what Khrushchev had to break through to make progress on what he understood to be the most crucial question facing mankind: survival in a nuclear age.

Chapter 16

Chapter 16 Summary

May Day celebrations at the Kremlin are intended to project public support for the regime, but many marchers are in it just for a good time. Khrushchev is awakened at dawn by a call reporting another American U-2 spy plane is heading towards the heartland of the USSR. Khrushchev hurries to an emergency Presidium meeting. Western reconnaissance overflights have been occurring since 1946, but grew more brazen in 1952. U-2 missions were fairly regular - and protested by the Soviets -- in 1956-57, but sporadic thereafter. Khrushchev is obsessed with U-2 flights, but keeps silence about them at Camp David.

Every U-2 mission requires presidential authorization, but since Khrushchev's American trip, Eisenhower has authorized none -- despite Democratic campaigning about the USSR being ahead in the "missile gap" - until April 9, 1960, when all the key missile and nuclear facilities were photographed and could not be downed. Khrushchev cannot believe his "friend" Eisenhower would provoke him just before the May 16 summit in Paris, and orders Malinovsky to read the riot act to his generals about the failure to bring down a U-2. The CIA convinces Eisenhower that the first operational ICBM site at Pelsetsk must be photographed soon and, reluctantly, the president gives his okay, but bad weather delays the flight until May 1. Planners hope May Day will have the Soviet defenses on a low state of readiness as "operation Grandslam" takes off from Pakistan with orders to cross the USSR and land in Norway.

As pilot Francis Gary Powers approaches Sverdlovsk, a high-altitude T-3 interceptor is ordered to ram him but never gets close. A Soviet rocket explodes near enough the U-2 to down it, and although the CIA is certain no pilot could survive, Powers parachutes onto a collective farm, where baffled peasants hand him over to the KGB. People at the Red Square parade notice Marshal Biryuzov whisper something to Khrushchev that cheers him up. Khrushchev intends to keep secret Powers' capture, to see what kind of story Washington will invent. He assumes rogue elements in the CIA rather than Eisenhower is responsible. This will allow the Paris summit to go on. When Khrushchev finally springs his trap, Eisenhower will be chagrined, apologize, and sit still for a show trial of the captured pilot. Instead, the U-2 incident will be the beginning of the end for Khrushchev. It proves to colleagues the imperialists are still dangerous and the Soviet military too weakened to meet the challenge.

In the afterglow of his American trip, Khrushchev feels a nuclear test ban is almost certain, which is why in December he recommended the deepest cuts in the armed forces since 1924. It was a difficult sell before the Supreme Soviet and neither the Warsaw Pact nor the GDR were consulted, but Khrushchev is certain the West will deplete its resources competing with the formidable missile force the West believes the Soviets have deployed. On New Year's Eve, Khrushchev speaks through an alcoholic haze about his American trip, his certainty a third Eisenhower term would solve all

problems, and nuclear war is suicidal -- and then boasts of Soviet nuclear arms. Khrushchev grows extraordinarily close to U.S. Ambassador Thompson, and apparently picks up signs the summit might not meet his expectations.

In February-March 1960, Khrushchev practices "populist sightseeing" in India, Burma, Indonesia, and Afghanistan, reveling in adulation at each stop and playing pranks. Ten days later, Khrushchev flies to France to deal with the self-confident, frustrating de Gaulle, who finds his guest competent on fundamentals but prone to answering questions with set formulas. They both oppose German reunification, but not on West Germany's role in European politics. Disarmament and Africa also come up, but the trip is primarily to see and be seen. Khrushchev boasts of Soviet strength but is careful not to speak of burying anyone. Khrushchev's head is spinning with confidence in his world position as he heads back to Moscow, and takes the revolutionary step of not reporting to the Soviet people.

While Khrushchev is traveling, the military seethes over troop cuts. His "America-first" policy alienates the Chinese and builds dangerous false hopes at home. The Presidium cautiously questions the current direction, and Khrushchev tones down his euphoria. Aides differ over whether Khrushchev scuttles the summit because he knows it will not live up to advanced billing, but clearly enjoys the "game" of trapping Eisenhower on the U-2 incident. The U.S. lies clumsily.

Three hours into a speech before Supreme Soviet, Khrushchev reveals a U-2 is shot down, but withholds information on the pilot's fate. As he hammers on about American treachery and intransigence, the hall is in bedlam. Khrushchev intends still to go to Geneva, with a pure heart. At a diplomatic function, a deputy foreign minister inadvertently mentions the pilot is being questioned, which forces Khrushchev to play his hand: he purposefully withheld the information lest the Americans invent another lie. He goes on a rollicking rampage against military control of the American government; to the point Soviet generals tell Thompson their leader is being imperious and running risks in his glee. When Eisenhower finally comes clean, Khrushchev feels personally betrayed. Eisenhower's "impudence" becomes a *leitmotif*. Several Presidium members favor calling off the Paris trip, and Khrushchev tries to talk himself out of going, but sees this as a further loss of face.

Khrushchev changes his mind - and decides to wreck the summit - only en route to Paris. De Gaulle finds him a completely different person as he bristles with ultimatums. Eisenhower is looking for some way to save the summit, and Macmillan is willing to do anything. When formal sessions begin May 16, Khrushchev and Eisenhower do not shake hands. Khrushchev demands to speak first, and launches into 45 minutes of prepared vitriolic, fearing to speak extemporaneously. Talks must be postponed until Eisenhower is out of office. Eisenhower is furious but responds softly: U-2 flights will not resume and U.S.-Soviet bilateral talks should take place. De Gaulle chides Khrushchev as a child for making such a big deal out of an airplane and allowing them all to gather, knowing he intends to scuttle the summit. Khrushchev demands publication of the promise as a prerequisite to attending a second session of the summit. Briefing Warsaw Pact diplomats, Khrushchev crudely reports getting nowhere with Eisenhower.

Khrushchev holds a raucous, rambling press conference, much of it a tantrum, but including some humor and hope for peace. Khrushchev is likened to "a woman scorned." China is pleased. Kremlin colleagues see only disaster.

Khrushchev will defend his bravado handling of the U-2 incident in his memoirs, claiming dytente is only part of his policy. He continues traveling abroad (Romania, Austria, and Finland) and domestically, gloating about progress, but with a defensive undertone. He pledges to return to negotiations after the U.S. election and renews his threat to settle the Berlin question unilaterally. Khrushchev invites himself to a Romanian party congress, obliging other national party leaders to follow suit. China and Albania refuse. Khrushchev is stunned when the Chinese release a secret Soviet "Letter of Information" criticizing all their positions, and he lashes out at Mao personally. He follows up by pulling all Soviet advisers out of China, despite the economic, political, and intelligence costs to the USSR. The ambassador to China and Brezhnev try to rein in this impulsiveness; Andropov, in charge of inter-party relations, can do nothing, and considers it one of Khrushchev's most flagrant mistakes. Moscow and Beijing will call a truce briefly late in 1960, but long-term, relations between them are out of control.

Khrushchev announces he will attend the U.N. General Assembly in 1960, to preach his favorite themes, dig at Eisenhower, and perhaps suggest moving the U.N. out of New York. Gromyko is worried other world leaders will boycott. The U.S. State Department puts travel restrictions on the Soviet diplomats. He is exhilarated by his first and only ocean voyage. He is offended by the reception the *Baltika* receives, but projects a jaunty mood, challenging Eisenhower to an impromptu summit. Khrushchev is a whirling dervish in New York, speaking, giving press conferences, and appearing on David Suskind's television show. New York offers Khrushchev unceasing attention but no respect. The Hungarian violence in 1956 dogs him.

For security reasons, he is forbidden daily walks; it is too noisy and smoggy to sleep, in Manhattan and at the Soviet mission's Glen Cove estate. He breaks U.S. restrictions to embrace Fidel Castro in Harlem. He meets Nasser twice, with little effect, and resents the Third World's failure to support him at the General Assembly. At a formal U.N. session, Khrushchev pounds his fists to protest a speech, joined by a hesitant Gromyko and finally all communist delegations. Security forces have to silence him on another occasion.

The most famous incident is the shoe-banging on Khrushchev's last day in New York, a performance in which Khrushchev takes great delight, and which he justifies on the grounds the minority has to do something to make itself heard. Fellow communists are embarrassed. The appalling behavior will be thrown in Khrushchev's face in 1964. He will claim to remember pre-revolutionary Russian parliamentarians acting that way and assume Western legislators still do. Spitting (figuratively) on the U.N. for sticking its nose into African matters in which the USSR is interested, Khrushchev demands the secretary-general be replaced by a three-member executive and the headquarters relocated to Europe. This idea, entirely Khrushchev's own, flies in the face of long-standing Soviet opposition to revising the U.N. charter. Kremlin colleagues consider it incomprehensible.

Chapter 16 Analysis

"From the U-2 to the UN Shoe: April-September 1960" shows Khrushchev dedicated to dytente, but willing to allow it to be delayed 15 years when Eisenhower admits being behind the U-2 overflights. Khrushchev is digging his political grave by unilaterally cutting the Soviet military, embarrassing colleagues through histrionic behavior, amazing them by unilateral formulations that go counter to established Soviet policy, and by heating up conflict with China. The U.N. trip is something of a placeholder while the U.S. decides who will succeed Khrushchev's ex-friend.

Chapter 17

Chapter 17 Summary

Khrushchev returns in mid-October to face an agricultural crisis. In August he had reported positively to the Presidium on Astrakhan harvests. In fact, Soviet agriculture is facing the worst year since Stalin's death. The Virgin Lands are particularly disappointing. Khrushchev has built considerable expectations and to energize agriculture, Khrushchev travels widely around the country, pouring out contempt on bumbling and corrupt functionaries. On March 31, 1961, Khrushchev proposes a 15-point program to revivify agriculture, which counts on miracles.

Khrushchev has nightmares about peace slipping through his hands over Berlin. He needs the West to recognize the East and to end the expense of propping up Ulbricht, who has grown more independent since the Paris debacle. Khrushchev counts on the new U.S. president. During the campaign, Khrushchev stays neutral, but is known to hate Nixon, a known quantity but also a McCarthyite cold warrior; he rejects Republican pleas to release downed American fliers before the election. Profiles of the president-elect tempt Khrushchev to think about trouncing a rich man's weak and inexperienced son; suggestions of Kennedy's susceptibility to pressure by the military-industrial complex give Khrushchev pause for reflection, but he is delighted by the Democratic victory. Unbeknownst to Khrushchev, Kennedy is determined to stand up to him precisely because of his background as Joseph Kennedy's son. Concerned about a lost year on a nuclear test ban, Khrushchev sends out feelers - bordering on abject supplications -- to the president-elect, but JFK makes clear he can do nothing until he assumes office.

Khrushchev finds "constructive things" in JFK's inaugural address and releases the downed fliers as a gesture of good will. Addressing a meeting of international ideologues, Khrushchev demands Soviet-style coexistence be officially adopted. He denounces Mao's views on nuclear war and opposes "local wars" that can escalate into major conflicts. "Wars of national liberation," however, are inevitable and sacred. Eisenhower would have understood this as standard rhetoric, intended to keep Khrushchev from having to take action, but Kennedy is alarmed. His State of the Union address declares Soviet aggression and subversion will not prevail. The U.S. launches its first ICBM, increases its defense budget, and does not respond to pleas for an early summit. JFK takes Khrushchev's eagerness to meet as a sign of weakness, which he is determined to counter by toughness. Khrushchev tires of the "waiting game," and flies off on his agricultural barnstorming without receiving Thompson back from Washington, where the ambassador has been unsuccessfully pushing the new administration to see Khrushchev's side of the Berlin question.

A summit appears unlikely, but does take place, after the U.S. is twice tarnished: by Yuri Gagarin's space flight and the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. The flight of *Vostok* is not announced until it is successfully over, but then Khrushchev begins

reaping political benefit from it. Four days later the U.S. fails to overthrow Fidel Castro, whom Khrushchev only recently accepts as a Marxist and begins flouting under Uncle Sam's nose. Fearing direct U.S. military involvement in the coup would spark a Soviet response in kind like in Berlin, Kennedy authorizes a mission so limited, failure is foreordained. Khrushchev's first response to the Bay of Pigs is genuine alarm, followed by angry clichys. He is delighted Kennedy is this weak and presses to meet. A deeply depressed JFK surprises him by agreeing.

Kennedy announces increases in defense spending before the June 3-4 meeting in Vienna, and Khrushchev declares a German treaty cannot long be postponed. Suffering from and medicated for a variety of secret illnesses, JFK is not at his best as he studies briefing books. De Gaulle warns Khrushchev not to test Kennedy's manhood. Advisors agree the president must avoid ideological arguments. Khrushchev arrives determined to get results and looking down on the indecisive, gutless president who botched the Bay of Pigs, and subjects him to two days of ruthless, barbarous brutality. Only much later will Khrushchev say he preferred JFK to Eisenhower as more flexible, reasonable, and cautious.

Kennedy doggedly pursues the ideological line his advisers oppose. Khrushchev at first tries to avoid fruitless discussions of whether communism is destined to replace capitalism, but allows JFK to blunder into a corner, seemingly accepting the status quo. The president tries later to specify the geopolitical balance may not be upset, but refuses the argument, pulling Cuba and Berlin into the discussion. Kennedy warns of nuclear danger and Khrushchev feels obliged to defend his interests. Khrushchev goes "berserk" when the "bury you" chestnut is raised again. Kennedy asks consideration for his weak position at home, but Khrushchev launches a diatribe on Berlin. Jaqueline Kennedy is more perceptive about Khrushchev than her husband and he appreciates her sharpness.

On June 4, the two sides agree on a cease-fire and neutral government in Laos, but Kennedy references U.S. commitments in Asia and elsewhere earn outbursts from Khrushchev: Why can the U.S. do whatever it wants, but the USSR must not poke its nose anywhere? This is megalomania. Talks on nuclear testing go nowhere, because Khrushchev sticks by his calls for complete, general disarmament. He emphasizes he wants to agree personally with Kennedy on Berlin; in the absence, he is willing to challenge all Western rights in East Germany. Berlin is not Laos, Kennedy declares, and belligerent rhetoric makes Khrushchev first petulant, then disingenuous, and finally nasty. Khrushchev vows not to resume nuclear testing unless the U.S. does, and foresees the sun rising even if the German questions clouds relations a while more. The USSR will sign a treaty with East Germany in December; it is up to the U.S. whether this will mean war.

JFK claims there is no ultimatum until Khrushchev publishes it on June 11, and gives a tough speech on the anniversary of the Nazi invasion, dressed in his general's uniform. Kennedy offers no immediate response. Advisers push for a variety of tactical military options in Europe. Robert Kennedy uses a back-channel connection to the Kremlin established in May to crow to Georgy Bolshakov that his brother prefers death to

surrender. A $3.5 billion military build-up and forceful address to the nation on July 25 by Kennedy convince Khrushchev he has misread JFK. He interprets the address as a "preliminary declaration of war," and blusters to Warsaw Pact allies if Kennedy starts a war he will be the last president of the United States. Khrushchev's greatest fear is that Kennedy is so weak that reactionaries will be able to drag him into a war. He sees the U.S. as barely governed, unstable, and unpredictable. Americans can be restrained only by scaring the daylights out of them. In August, Khrushchev breaks his promise not to test nuclear weapons and is opposed by physicist Andrei Sakharov, whose intrusion into politics Khrushchev condemns.

Fearing Western economic boycott over a treaty with Ulbricht and knowing claims about ICBMs are fictitious, diplomats and general's work to restrain Khrushchev. In March 1961, Ulbricht proposes building a wall to separate East and West Berlin and stem the flow of refugees. Khrushchev rejects this as too dangerous, until American political speeches suggest there will be no opposition. Eventually, he orders the wall go up in stages. He comes to see Kennedy's promise to defend West Berliners being different from liberating East Berliners. The wall saves face for Khrushchev and emboldens him for a face-off over Cuba.

Chapter 17 Analysis

"Khrushchev and Kennedy: 1960-1961" examines Khrushchev's views on the 1960 presidential election and the early dancing around each other between victor Kennedy and Khrushchev. Assumptions come to the fore: Neither man reads the other correctly. After a substantial interlude dealing with agriculture, party reorganization, and de-Stalinization, Chapter 19 will pit the leaders of the two great superpowers head-to-head.

Chapter 18

Chapter 18 Summary

The 1961 harvest looks to be excellent, industrial output appears to be exceeding targets, a second cosmonaut has orbited the earth, and the giant new Volga hydroelectric station gives hope for the future. Three years earlier, Khrushchev named a drafting committee under Boris Ponomarev to analyze where the USSR and U.S. stand vis-a-vis one another economically now and 10-15 years hence. This is part of his dream to revise the party program of 1919, still in effect. Efforts in 1936, 1948, 1952, and 1956 to measure how far the USSR has traveled toward socialism's ultimate goal - communism -- have fallen short of completion and point to a precise, realistic, broad-gauged redefinition now, and Khrushchev is enthusiastic. Khrushchev deletes excessive detail from Ponomarev's October 1958 draft, tells the Twenty-first Party Congress in 1959 that communism is imminent, and orders further projections.

Unfortunately, these are based on the boom years of the later 1950s, and many estimates are unscientific if not outright fabrications. In April-July 1961, Khrushchev edits the final draft and dictates 46 pages of comments and corrections, rendering the document even more utopian. While hedging on some unlimited social pledges, Khrushchev fails to see how human nature will preclude the paradise he is describing and his own policies will heighten the strains in trying to bring about progress. Needing to make his mark ideologically, Khrushchev wants to substitute more highfalutin' language for Lenin's "dictatorship of the proletariat."

The program is approved by the Presidium and Central Committee, with Khrushchev predicting communism within 20 years. The capitalist West will be left far behind by then and rural populations will enjoy conditions of life comparable to those in the cities. Khrushchev rejects politically cloaked suggestions he is promising too much. The draft program is published August 30, 1961, and 4.6 million party members and other citizens begin a mammoth "discussion." At the Twenty-second Party Congress in October 1961, Khrushchev boasts the entire Soviet population will be "materially provided for" within 10 years, and the new program is unanimously adopted. Khrushchev genuinely looks forward to the Soviet people enjoying the good life after so much sacrifice, but does not figure he will live to see the coming of communism. He dislikes statistics and does not appreciate that people will demand an explanation for the failure of his projections.

Seeing Stalin's wartime tolerance of religion as outlived, Khrushchev begins a crackdown that peaks in 1961. Many Stalinists applaud the efforts, which are in fact a return to strict Leninism. "Relics of the past" have no place in the vision of a shining communist future Khrushchev is painting. Open Orthodox parishes shrink from over 15,000 in 1953 to fewer than 8,000 in 1963. Some hold Khrushchev had residual religious convictions and the repression caused him guilt, which led him to seek greater public adulation.

The Twenty-second Congress assesses the state of the Soviet Union and the world for the first time since 1956. Khrushchev has provided ample material for criticism, but the proceedings extol his stewardship and celebrate his achievements. He speaks ten hours in total and is hailed by both Brezhnev and Podgorny for his energy, passion, bonds with the people, simplicity, and ability both to learn from and teach the masses. Some Western Kremlinologists begin seeing signs of struggle at the top. Stalin receives less criticism because this is not in the celebratory spirit of the gathering. Khrushchev agrees to criticize the "cult of personality" because Mao is trying to grow one for himself, but his remarks open a flood of anti-Stalinist rhetoric that detracts useful proposals (e.g., term limitations). A letter from Molotov results in him, Malenkov, and Kaganovich being expelled from party. Stalin's role in the terror is made clearer than in 1956, including involvement in assassinating Kirov. Stalin's body is ordered removed from Lenin's tomb and reburied under concrete. Khrushchev makes a point of showing he personally is nominating the new Central Committee, and omits his name from the list, so colleagues will have to call on him to serve.

The 1961 harvest is disappointing and contrasts sharply with the new party program. Demand exceeds supply as farmers enjoy more income. Many blame Khrushchev for food shortages, and he nearly despairs of finding a solution. He can only bluster, harangue, and divert attention. At the March 1962 plenum, attended by non-communists (a Khrushchev innovation), he condemns both ignorant peasants and overly learned agronomists. He urges the building of new factories to manufacture farm equipment, but then urges farmers to do with what they have, since heavy industry and the military cannot afford the shift in resources. He proposes yet another layer of bureaucracy between the countryside and the capital. He raises retail prices on farm products by up 25%-35%. This makes economic sense, but it does not cover the increasing cost of production and causes a ripple effect in reducing factory wage earners' purchasing power. Strikes begin the day the price increases take effect, June 1, 1962. In Novocherkassk, the director of the locomotive factory confronts the protestors Marie Antoinette-style, and demonstrators stop the major Saratov-Rostov railway line.

Police, KBG, and Red Army mass to "restore law and order." Some say Khrushchev gives the order to fire on the 10,000 peaceful but angry protesters, for fear turmoil will spread. It does spread. There are a few 1930s-style show trials and executions. Authorities are determined to conceal the toll in dead and wounded. Khrushchev feels badly, blames others, and omits Novocherkassk from his memoirs.

After Novocherkassk, Khrushchev sends nine more memoranda on agriculture to the Presidium. On vacation at the Crimea, he has a brainstorm: Split the party, which has always stressed unity of workers and peasants, into two branches, one specializing in agriculture and the other in industry. Colleagues Brezhnev, Podgorny, and Polyansky are publicly ecstatic but privately appalled and indignant. Khrushchev is amazed they take it so well, and discusses the reform as a done deal, months before the Central Committee can consider it.

In 1962 the anti-Stalin campaign gains momentum, driven by liberal intellectuals, taking advantage of the Twenty-second Congress. Solzhenitsyn, still writing underground, hails

the public revelations and submits a manuscript to *Novyi mir.* Editor Tvardovsky is now a candidate member of the Central Committee and privy to disheartening facts about the economy and pressure on Khrushchev from archconservative writers to call off the embarrassing open intellectual warfare. Tvardovsky considers Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the life of Ivan Denisovich* a masterpiece and proceeds cautiously; when Khrushchev hears *One Day* read aloud to him, he is smitten and nearly invites the author to his dacha. Khrushchev defends the book's orthodoxy twice before the hostile Presidium, and decides the truth must be told about the labor camps. *Pravda* publishes a poem, "The Heirs of Stalin" by Evtushenko - the greatest triumph in the cause of reform, but next day Kennedy reveals Khrushchev has secretly sent missiles to Cuba.

Chapter 18 Analysis

"'A Communist Society Will Be Just About Built by 1980': 1961-1962" shows Khrushchev at the top of his game, unchallenged, freewheeling, but the subject of grumbling at all levels and all walks of life. The Novocherkassk demonstration and the quiet campaign to publish Solzhenitsyn stand out as illustrations of the limitations on absolute power. Chapter 18 is a breather between international political battles. Behind the machinations described here, Khrushchev has been organizing the event that will show him at his most noble and bring about his downfall.

Chapter 19

Chapter 19 Summary

On October 14, 1962, a U-2 flies over Cuba, its photographs are analyzed by the CIA, and the findings - the Soviets are building launch sites capable of striking the U.S. - are delivered to McGeorge Bundy, National Security Adviser. Bundy allows Kennedy to sleep. When informed, JFK's first reaction is to bomb the sites. Soviet activity has been growing in Cuba since July; surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) are detected in August, leading to speculation about what they might be protecting. Partisan Republicans insist it is an *offensive* build-up. Kennedy's advisers (nicknamed ExComm) wonder whether Khrushchev has gone insane, and JFK orders a detailed analysis. Former ambassadors Bohlen and Thompson figure it is a chip for bargaining U.S. missiles out of Turkey.

Thompson, who knows Khrushchev better than anyone, tells the president Khrushchev is running out of time and needs a showdown over Berlin. Kennedy agrees and admires the bold, cunning Soviet strategy. Secretary of State Dean Rusk suggests hardliners have pushed Khrushchev out of control. No one considers the Russians' stated goal: Protect Castro from invasion.

Unlike Stalin, for whom the Third World is a sideshow, Khrushchev welcomes revolutions. While he is touring the U.S. in 1959, the cautious Presidium votes down military aid to Cuba, but Khrushchev reverses this and dispatches weaponry. Mikoyan visits Cuba in 1960 and is charmed by Castro. So is Khrushchev in Harlem. On June 9, 1960, Khrushchev places Cuba under Soviet nuclear protection. Castro is grateful and moves towards the Soviet camp. After the Bay of Pigs debacle, Khrushchev assumes Kennedy will strike again, perhaps on the pretext of a violation against the U.S. base at Guantbnamo. The U.S. is indeed planning political and economic warfare, attempts on Castro's life, and ultimately a military intervention in October 1962. Kennedy tells interviewer Adzhubei the U.S. is unprepared for a hostile neighbor so near at hand and suggests the USSR handled Hungary in the same way. JFK's words get exaggerated by the time they reach Khrushchev, and he expects the worst.

When the KGB determines an invasion is not imminent, plans to ship SAMs to Cuba is shelved, but two months later, Khrushchev wants to put medium-range rockets into Cuba. The U.S. is holding massive naval maneuvers in the Caribbean and there is danger Castro may side with Mao. Memories of Stalin's prediction of his successors' foreign policy failures, Chinese accusations of his being "capitulating to imperialism," and a personal stake in Castro's survival, concentrate Khrushchev's mind. Khrushchev could station conventionally-armed Soviet troops in Cuba as a "trip-wire," the U.S. tactic across Europe, or even arm them with strategic-class nuclear weapons, if his intention is to deter a U.S. overthrow of Castro's government. Instead he puts in nuclear weapons not to fire, but to frighten. As long as he gets them in and operational before they are detected by the Americans, Khrushchev doubts there will be any problem. Kennedy does not understand this basic Khrushchev logic.

U.S. intelligence cannot dismiss Khrushchev's bluff about overall ICBM superiority until mid-1961, but in October the USSR tests a 50-megaton bomb. The U.S. announces its "second strike" capability exceeds the Soviet first-strike, and JFK discards the "no-first-strike" doctrine. Khrushchev has lost the feigned advantage while the U.S. has gained an actual one. Furthermore, conventional Soviet forces are now under strength, thanks to Khrushchev's policies. At his dacha in February 1962, Khrushchev meets with top military commanders, missile designers, and Presidium members and learns Soviet ICBMs are no match for the Americans' and are in short supply. Medium- and intermediate-range missiles are abundant, however. Targeting them on the "soft underbelly" of the U.S. will provide a balance of power - and a taste of their own medicine.

Cuba and Berlin are not initially related, because the wall effectively ends the Berlin crisis. At worst, East and West shadow box over the residual issue. Khrushchev explodes when a blockade of Berlin is proposed to counter Washington's quarantine of Cuba. The secret Kennedy/Khrushchev "Pen Pall Correspondence" shows Khrushchev backed to the wall and desperate over Berlin. Khrushchev is certain the U.S. will not go to war over the city, and decides a peace treaty is the only alternative. Khrushchev tells Thompson's successor as ambassador, Foy Kohler he wants an agreement with JFK over West Berlin to take place at the U.N. General Assembly session. This might have been a ploy to distract attention from Cuba. On another international front, Sino-Soviet ties break down further in 1961-62.

Khrushchev's contention that sending missiles to Cuba is from the start a collective decision, is self-serving and false. Khrushchev first mentions them as a "hedgehog" to ram down Uncle Sam's pants after learning how precarious the Soviet military situation is from his defense minister. He has discussed a quick deployment with Mikoyan and revelation of the situation to JFK at the U.N. Mikoyan doubts such speed is possible and expects Castro to object. It is a dangerous plan. Khrushchev stops soliciting opinions and begins rallying support. Undercover agent Aleksander Alekseyev, who has grown close to Castro, is summoned home to Moscow and named ambassador to Cuba. Alekseyev doubts Castro will accept nuclear weapons for fear of alienating Latin America. Khrushchev will not back down from his presumptions and orders Castro convinced.

At a Soviet Defense Council meeting, super secret, handwritten orders are given to General Gribkov to prepare an initial operational plan. Khrushchev endorses them and the Defense Council ratifies a resolution, pending an inspection trip to Cuba. When some Central Committee members try to equivocate on approving the plan, Khrushchev gets tough. A delegation is sent not so much to consult with Castro as to tell him Soviet plans and assure him JFK will not set off a nuclear war. The flight is kept secret, but Castro smells something is up. Castro tries to decline but is told Cuba has no right to be narrowly self-interested. In 1963, Castro spends several weeks in the USSR but never finds out fully what is going on. The Presidium agrees unanimously.

Whereas Khrushchev wants a small expeditionary force, the army plans an armada much more likely to attract U.S. attention. Troubling is the fact Khrushchev will have no

physical control over the nuclear weapons in Cuba; that will be in the hands of the elderly General Issa Pliyev, fresh from crushing dissent in Novocherkassk. He is calm and intelligent, but a risk-taker. In Cuba, Pliyev is quarrelsome with his aides and with Castro. Operation Anadyr begins in mid-July under the strictest port and shipboard security. Over the next three months, 85 ships make 150, grueling, 18-20 day, round-trips to Cuba. Living conditions in the Cuban outback are terrible. Construction is done by hand and camouflage is a joke. Missiles begin arriving October 4 under KGB guard; warheads are stored separately on a Soviet ship. Deployments are running behind schedule when the U-2 overflies with impunity, although the SA-2s are operational. There is no way, even without U-2s that the U.S. would not detect the massive build-up.

Khrushchev has no contingency plans, just a notion it is "relatively safe" to provoke JFK. This ignores Khrushchev's belief JFK is not in charge of the U.S. government. Cubans call for publicizing the agreement (minus specific weapons details), but defer to the Soviets' greater experience in dealing with the U.S. Had Kennedy said in April what he does on September 4 - that it will be gravely dangerous for the Eastern bloc to militarize Cuba in any way - Khrushchev might have stepped back. By mid-August, CIA has evidence of lightweight cargoes arriving in Cuba. Cuban defectors tell of missiles in the jungle, probably defensive SAMs. Republican criticism forces JFK to draw a line and he draws one beyond where he believes the Soviets to be. He does not believe the Soviets are crazy enough to put offensive nuclear weapons in Cuba.

Khrushchev could have halted the armada September 5, before any nuclear weapons had arrived. Instead, he takes the dangerous path of accelerating delivery, adding armaments, and assuring the Americans he is up to nothing. Uninformed of Khrushchev's plans, on September 4, Soviet Ambassador Dobrynin assures RFK the premier likes his brother, and does not wish to embarrass him in the congressional elections. On September 11, JFK asks Congress to call up the reserves, which contradicts Khrushchev's assumption JFK wants to look the other way and keep a post-election summit on track. Secret emissary Bolshakov learns JFK is under right-wing pressure to invade Cuba but wants to compromise; Khrushchev orders Bolshakov to observe the president minutely. Bolshakov meets an edgy RFK and repeats the assurance Cuban arms are defensive.

From ExComm's first meeting on October 16, it is determined the missiles must go, and few favor talking them out. This time Khrushchev tried deliberately to deceive Kennedy and Kennedy had foisted that on his country. Meeting with Gromyko October 18, Kennedy decries the dangerous situation, forswears invading Cuba and claims to be restraining others who want to. JKF wishes he could lay bare the Soviet lie but does not mention the offensive missiles. Surely, Gromyko senses the U.S. is on to the plan, but is too cautious to file a detailed report with Moscow. Air strikes, full invasion, and blockade are the U.S. options; blockade is transformed into "quarantine" for legal reasons and JFK chooses it October 21. Dobrynin ages ten years reading an advanced text of the president's address to the nation.

Khrushchev knows the missiles can be easily wiped out and the action will be a surprise. The pre-announcement of a presidential address might signal willingness to

negotiate. Khrushchev polls the Presidium on next steps in Cuba and Berlin - and perhaps linking them. Grasping at straws, Khrushchev suggests they declare the equipment is Cuban. The Presidium forbids the use of nuclear weapons without explicit permission. An hour before Kennedy's speech the English text is translated for the Presidium. Khrushchev is relieved it is not an ultimatum. Certain he has saved Cuba, he begins composing a hot reply, denouncing naked interference and threatening catastrophic consequences. All spend the night in the Kremlin lest foreign correspondents suspect Soviet officials are nervous. The tough letter to JFK is further revised in the morning and broadcast over Radio Moscow. Soviet military readiness is increased.

Khrushchev has no contingency plans. The thought of Soviet ships being boarded at sea is humiliating. It is one thing to threaten with nuclear weapons and another to use them. Khrushchev cannot be sure Kennedy will not, and while Kennedy is happy nothing has happened so far, he is uncertain about Khrushchev's next move. The CIA reports no slowdown in the shipments or construction. Kennedy sends a two-paragraph message to Khrushchev asking him for mutual caution. RFK pays a call on Dobrynin, which ends with both resigned to sea warfare in the morning. Dobrynin gives a candid account to Khrushchev to enable him to visualize the nervous atmosphere in Washington.

At 10 AM the quarantine goes into effect and U.S. forces go openly on DEFCON2 - the step one stage of war. Officials in Moscow are unusually polite as the order is transmitted to them. Until the Dobrynin report, Khrushchev had Soviet naval officials on orders to defend themselves, but then waivers on what to do about tankers still at sea (most of the weapons have already reached Cuba). He writes demanding Kennedy consider how he would act in his position and declares the USSR cannot accept a blockage - one hour before accepting it.

On October 25, Kennedy sends a calm reply, regretting the crisis has deteriorated U.S-Soviet relations and hoping Khrushchev will agree to cooperate in restoring the earlier situation. Khrushchev is touched by the letter - and intimidated by DEFCON2. He rejects any further caustic exchanges with Kennedy, wants to turn the ships around, dismantle the missile sites and allow U.N. inspection. Only Malinovsky and Gromyko are less than enthusiastic. On October 26, preparations continue for the round invasion and air attack options and at the U.N. Ambassador Stevenson reveals the U-2 photos. The decisive intelligence about the buildup of forces in the Southeast proves to be false, but frighten Khrushchev into sending a contrite letter about breaking the knot of war. He proposes the kernel of the compromise he and Kennedy will reach. He composes the letter without consulting the Presidium and bypasses the Foreign Ministry, which usually transmits messages to embassies. As the translated telex begins arriving in Washington, it is clearly encouraging.

On October 27, Khrushchev is in no mood to look back, but, no longer fearing an immediate invasion, prepares a second letter, demanding the Americans pull their missiles out of Turkey. This letter is polished, calm, formal, and broadcast over Radio Moscow to avoid delay. While this letter adds a condition, it also admits publicly that

Soviet missiles are in Cuba. The Turkish aspect, however, stuns the White House. Surrendering those missiles will be a loss of face. JFK chooses to respond to the first letter and ignore the second. By this point, however, one U-2 accidentally transgresses Soviet air space and a second is shot down over Cuba. American hawks demand revenge on Cuba and NATO defense of the Turkish missiles. Convinced Cuba will be invaded, Castro drafts an urgent appeal to Khrushchev not to allow a U.S. first strike.

Khrushchev is appalled. RFK and Dobrynin discuss means of including the Turkish missiles, provided their removal is kept secret. The Presidium meets, expecting American air strikes, and hurries to broadcast an acceptance of the U.S. conditions. Besides the public letter, Khrushchev writes RFK and an enraged Castro, whom he blames for the crisis. Khrushchev still wants to mention Turkish concessions to avoid the appearance of caving in to the imperialists. RFK will give only an oral confirmation. The Radio Moscow broadcast is heard just before ExComm is scheduled to meet, and JFK writes Khrushchev about his "important contribution to peace."

Chapter 19 Analysis

"The Cuban Cure-all: 1962" is the climax of *Khrushchev,* describing in detail the thirteen days of high drama in which the U.S. and USSR faced off over Soviet missiles installed in Cuba. The author acknowledges but quickly dismisses Khrushchev's attempts to share blame for yet another impulsive idea gone badly wrong. We see him blustering, flustered, frightened, and finally clear that world peace is worth more even than his political face, which, as we will see in the last two chapters, is fatally darkened.

Chapter 20

Chapter 20 Summary

Khrushchev does not let Chinese charges of adventurism and capitulation spoil his claim to victory in an impassioned speech before the Supreme Soviet. Moscow hails him for saving the world from thermonuclear destruction, but the Presidium feels humiliated, particularly when Kennedy drags his heels on concessions and tries to up the ante. Castro is livid about not being consulted and being blamed for proposing a nuclear first strike. He places five conditions on reconciliation with the Soviets that Khrushchev cannot deliver. To mollify his "surrogate son," Khrushchev sends Mikoyan to Havana. Mikoyan's wife dies in his absence and Khrushchev's failure to attend her funeral leaves a bitter taste in his old allies' mouth. It does not help Khrushchev's mood that JFK in private and Americans at large. quite openly crow about throwing him out of Cuba. Having learned bluff and bluster do not work, Khrushchev is lost internationally.

Anxious to parlay the Cuban settlement into bilateral talks on a nuclear test ban, disarmament, and Germany, Khrushchev sends an envoy to JFK's inner circle to persuade him to attend a summit. Kennedy, however, wants only to talk about implementing the Soviet pullout from Cuba, and in December hardens his position on on-site inspections, after Khrushchev had gone out on a limb and gotten the Presidium to accept three per year. Enraged, Khrushchev insinuates in a note to RFK that Senator Goldwater's moods dictate U.S. policy. Khrushchev vows to himself never to be made a fool of again.

In March 1963, the Defense Council meets to choose between two ICBM programs, and the assembled generals and engineers aggressively lobby Khrushchev. There is no money for tactical nuclear weapons, Khrushchev declares and lashes out against expanding the draft; he declares this misuse of young people's talents "wrecking" (a dreaded term from the 1930s). Khrushchev stuns the military by calling for the deep cuts that will be carried out only decades later.

In November 1962, the Central Committee confirms Khrushchev's plan to divide the party, but this only causes bewilderment, because there are no provisions for ideology, education, and culture. Those who remind him (correctly) of Lenin's emphasis on party unity are berated and never again trusted, but not purged. Bureaucrats fear for their jobs should a two-party system evolve, and upwards of a third of the provincial committees simply do not implement his plan. Whether Khrushchev is trying to build a new political base is debatable, but his emphasis is on "professionalizing" the party functionaries who oversee the economy, in order for the economy - particularly agriculture - to grow. A split party allows failing cadres to be more categorically blamed. Everyone comes under Khrushchev's tongue-lashings.

As additional "camp literature" follows *One Day* into print, conservatives begin exploiting Khrushchev's post-Cuba foul mood. A private exhibit of avant-garde art is ordered

moved to the vast Manezh Exhibition Hall across form the Kremlin, and unorthodox artists take this as official approval. It is, in fact, a set-up by the Artists' Union and Central Committee secretary Leonid Ilychev. Told he is being mocked by the art displayed, Khrushchev shows up, looks around, and declares it "dog shit," shameful, and homosexual. He rages on against jazz, such pornographic dances as the foxtrot, and paintings fit only as urinal covers. In the aftermath of this tirade several Stalinists are restored to prominent cultural posts, but liberals continue to petition Khrushchev not to give in to the past. Khrushchev wants to smooth things over, and even toasts a reluctant Solzhenitsyn at a formal reception December 17.

Khrushchev's formal speech, intended as conciliatory, is a two-hour harangue that horrifies Presidium colleagues. He ridicules the work of sculptor Neizvestny, showing clearly his own utter ignorance about art. Khrushchev's imagery ends up in the toilet, and he takes a perverse pleasure in his crudeness. He warns the liberals never to think of him as the "number one Stalinist"; he is Pinya, the hero of a short story he read long ago, leading the way to freedom. Passive resistance among writers and artists continues, with 140 finding some excuse for not obeying a Central Committee summons.

During a two-day gathering of 600 artists and party/government officials, Khrushchev tries to behave like his colleagues, but again sets aside a moderate prepared text to castigate "renegades" that cooperate with Western journalists to slander the Soviet system. He silences the poet Andrei Voznesensky, accused with Vasily Aksyonov of praising Pasternak, with the cry "Slander!" and suggests he emigrate immediately. Viewers cannot be sure Khrushchev is not having a seizure as he rants on, demanding modesty and responsibility. Khrushchev mistakes the painter Golitsyn for Aksyonov and tears into both personae. Learning Aksyonov's father has survived the camps, Khrushchev tears again into Stalin and Beria and defends his own record in Ukraine. He tells Ehrenburg, whose memoirs admit knowing about the horrors (and who had left the hall), that Stalin was a madman on the throne, insane, but ever on the alert against subversion. Even the conservatives are stunned by Khrushchev's performance.

A visit from Castro in the spring of 1963 raises Khrushchev's spirits. Castro receives the red carpet treatment and appears satisfied after the Kennedy/Khrushchev correspondence is studied together. They talk about the rift with China and now Albania, and Khrushchev complains that Russia is like a tub of dough: Impossible to make a permanent impression in. He recommends Castro take fast, violent steps to crush any political opposition, but to coddle the intelligentsia, who can offer much, but can also let you down. In June 1963, Khrushchev is still trying to convince himself Cuba ended in victory.

Liberal writers and artists try to re-win the favor of a Khrushchev, embarrassed by his own boorishness. At a Central Committee plenum on ideology and culture, he rambles for hours on many topic, demands committee members unanimously adopt resolutions he springs on them, and opens the voting to nearly 2,000 guests. In July, Khrushchev steps in personally to resolve the conflict over whether to revoke the first prize award to Fellini's *8?* at the Third International Film Festival. He views the surrealistic film with son

Sergei and flies into a rage over not understanding it. He does, however, order Ilychev not to interfere with the professionals' decision. On other occasions, the conservatives manage to use Khrushchev's lack of education to incite him against the liberals.

When Western reporters get wind of an ideological pogrom in Moscow, Khrushchev is polite convincing Ehrenburg to attend a conference in Leningrad; he asks that bygones be bygones and permits the writer to censor his own work. Ehrenburg declares Khrushchev will go down in history for "eliminating Stalinist lawlessness," and Khrushchev glows. Rather than attend the event, Khrushchev invites a small group of writers to his dacha afterwards, where he rambles on against the bourgeoisie. Khrushchev is not certain an anti-Stalin poem by Tvardovsky is not also anti-Soviet, but allows it to be published in *Izvestia.*

Relations with Washington improve after JFK lauds the Russians' wartime sufferings in a speech at American University and calls for a fresh start in relations with the USSR. They begin by installing a hot line for communicating in times of crisis. A test ban treaty takes only ten days to negotiate once on-site inspections are dropped by the U.S. Ambassador Harriman observes Khrushchev mocking his generals. Khrushchev is anxious to expand the sphere of discussion to cover normalizing the whole world situation, but negotiators say a non-aggression agreement between NATO and the Warsaw Pact could foster aggression at this time. Khrushchev hopes Kennedy will visit Moscow to sign the test ban treaty, but JFK sends only Rusk. Rusk holds firm on the issue of Berlin, but Khrushchev is upbeat, figuring he will have six more years to deal with JFK, with whom he has re-established a relationship and would know better than to behave as he did in Vienna.

Khrushchev is preparing for bed when preliminary word comes of shots being fired at Kennedy, and waits with his family for confirmation. Khrushchev appears in shock for hours, taking the news as a personal blow. He appears to weep as he signs the condolence book and adds a personal note to JFK's widow. He is told by the head of the KGB about accused assassin Lee Harvey Oswald's Russian connection, but is guaranteed Oswald does not work for them. Khrushchev believes American reactionaries, intent on torpedoing dytente are responsible. The KGB tells Khrushchev Lyndon Johnson supports conservative and reactionary views; Kennedy family members pass along views that LBJ will be incapable to realizing JFK's plans.

Moscow and Beijing trade accusations at each other's party congresses, but agree to peace talks. These fail when Khrushchev's invective against Stalin is turned back on him and the question is raised whether Khrushchev can be completely clean. His fruitless efforts at dytente are criticized as detrimental to the entire socialist camp. Talks break down, and the signing of the test ban treaty with the U.S. is denounced in Beijing as a sell-out. A worldwide propaganda battle erupts. This final rift in Sino-Soviet relations both frees Khrushchev of concern about Mao's opinions and requires his colleagues - even those who differ with him about China -- to rally around him. At a December 1963 plenum on the split, Khrushchev acknowledges opposition and suggests it is time for the Presidium to consider retiring him.

In the summer of 1963, Khrushchev comes up with his latest panacea for agriculture: Mineral fertilizers, American-style. He pushes through the Presidium a 6 billion-ruble crash program and blithely tells the visiting U.S. Secretary of Agriculture he will slash the defense budget to pay for it. Drought, however, destroys Khrushchev's plans. He explodes at Kosygin's suggestion the USSR buy grain in the West, but eventually gives in to over 10 million tons' worth. In the autumn, Khrushchev condemns inefficiency, clumsiness, ignorance, and waste that could not be imagined in American agriculture. Unable to understand the problems, Khrushchev is nervous, angry, and quarrelsome. He cannot find adequate scapegoats, and he cannot bring himself to challenge his core belief in the Marxist system. He is fascinated with political reforms, glasnost on government affairs, and self-managed "workers' councils" on the Yugoslav pattern he observes in 1963. When a town outside KremGES renames itself in Khrushchev's honor, he is infuriated at the position this puts him in. Filmmakers also cannot resist the temptation to produce outrageously hagiographic treatments of Khrushchev, which he does not ban.

In May 1964, Khrushchev travels to Egypt to help dedicate the Aswan High Dam. Rather than learn about Egyptian customs, Khrushchev lectures on land reclamation, and desalinization. Fearing his reception will be low-key, Khrushchev is overjoyed by the millions who line the road from Alexandria to Cairo. Nasser, however, demands more money and weapons than Khrushchev can provide, and is unwilling to coexist peacefully with his neighbors. They exchange their nations' highest medals (although Nasser had once advocated driving communists into concentration camps). Khrushchev seems out of sorts as the Aswan visit ends and three weeks of sightseeing commence. Several times he refers to himself as still a peasant and not irreplaceable. After Egypt, in July, Khrushchev goes to Scandinavia simply because he is embarrassed to reschedule yet again. His speeches there are lackluster.

Khrushchev thinks and talks about retiring. Fellow "oldsters" intent on not retiring assume he is joking about making way for youth. He has no successor, however, and fears the battle that will erupt for lack of a procedure for transferring power. A handpicked successor could be a threat before he steps down, and two heirs apparent would ensure conflict ahead. Khrushchev's first top lieutenant, Aleksei Kirichenko, proves too aggressive and is replaced by Frol Kozlov, a former metallurgical engineer of limited intelligence. Beginning in the summer of 1963, some Presidium members begin gravitating to this pro-Stalinist reactionary careerist. Khrushchev puts down some backtalk from Kozlov, but is spared having to do anything about him when Kozlov suffers a stroke. Khrushchev rejects Shelepin, Podgorny, and Brezhnev for the number two job. Khrushchev creates fear - and enemies - by constantly talking about the need to expand the Presidium to bring in young people.

Khrushchev's 70th birthday marks the summit of his cult, as he is hailed nationwide in all the media for leading "The Great Decade." Colleagues ignore his orders not to waste money on presents. Brezhnev delivers a fulsome speech and hugs Khrushchev, but he and Suslov look nervous. Khrushchev, who has craved the attention and been mortified by it, speaks too long. Since March, Khrushchev's colleagues have been conspiring against him. Brezhnev briefly thinks of arresting him when he returns from Scandinavia,

but the conspirators spend the summer securing support to avoid a recurrence of the 1957 failure. Like Khrushchev, Brezhnev is uneducated and uncultured, puts on airs as titular head of state, and resents the mockery he hears about himself and rival Podgorny. So shameful is Khrushchev's behavior at the July 1964 plenum that his successors never publicize it. He demands exile of the Agricultural Academy from Moscow, and abolition of the venerable Academy of Sciences, after real scientists led by Sakharov, denounce Khrushchev's nomination of three Lysenko followers. He explodes at daughter Rada, who uses her training as a biologist to try to make him understand genetics.

Khrushchev is away from Moscow 170 days in 1963 and 150 more by November 1964. He appears mellow in Czechoslovakia, but in the Virgin Lands snaps at Shevchenko and wife Nina. He jokes at a military base about diverting funds from the civilian economy to tanks and other equipment obsolete in a nuclear era, but it falls flat. After visiting the Tyura-Tam missile range, receiving Indonesian president Sukarno, and inspecting the Crimea, with ten days left in power, Khrushchev heads to his dacha for vacation.

Chapter 20 Analysis

"The Unraveling: 1962-1964" shows how Khrushchev's spends his last two years in power -- in not-so-quiet desperation. The author suggests things might have been different had Kennedy lived (or Johnson not been too preoccupied to work on dytente), then concentrates on showing a powerful man being torn between rival factions, political, military, and artistic. He wants to retire but the Soviet system has never experienced an orderly succession. Lenin and Stalin both died in power and their followers fight for the top. Khrushchev cannot create the conditions in which he could retire voluntarily, and his colleagues, sick of him by this point, are plotting even as they celebrate his 70th birthday. Rereading Chapter 1 at this point might be useful, now that all the names and grievances are fully developed.

Chapter 21

Chapter 21 Summary

The *Pravda* announcement of Khrushchev's ouster two days after the fact, describing his method of ruling vividly but does not mention his name. Security and communications at his Lenin Hills residence and dacha are changed and his transportation downsized. Khrushchev is depressed at being a loafer. Nina learns second-hand of her husband's ouster while vacationing with Brezhnev's wife. She hurries home from Prague and takes control of the household. As a party member, she accepts the decision and may even have been relieved. Khrushchev wants neither to be consoled nor comforted. He takes long walks. Visitors are few and not desired. Sergei tries to interest him in hydroponics, but the light has gone out of his eyes. In the autumn, Khrushchev is ordered to vacate his dwellings for a smaller Moscow apartment and dacha. Khrushchev sits silently through the celebration of a last New Years at the old dacha. Mikoyan is the only one brave enough to phone greetings - their last conversation.

When Khrushchev drives too near Red Square during a celebration for returning cosmonauts, he is ordered to the dacha pending completion of the new residence in early 1965. The modest but cozy house is set amid orchards and meadows, where Khrushchev likes to sit. Khrushchev reads *Pravda,* and listens to the Voice of America and BBC on a small portable radio he carries everywhere. He derides *Pravda's* unbelievable propaganda. He withdraws from early attempts to meet bigwig neighbors and to give agricultural advice to the coop authorities. Eventually shy tourists begin approaching him for photographs and to listen to his stories, and this enlivens him. He is disinterested in letters that pour in from around the USSR and abroad but Nina enjoys them and answers a few, giving them to her husband for signature. In 1970, KGB chief Andropov cuts them off. Khrushchev begins reading, but rejects war memoirs and other biographies in favor of Russian fiction and books on nature and technology.

After reading a samizdat typescript of *Zhivago*, Khrushchev wishes they had not banned it. He does not enjoy Solzhenitsyn and Orwell's novels, however. Sergei finds equipment to show his father historical and Disney films. Family and friends visit more often, as do some of the writers and artists Khrushchev earlier excoriated. For a while, Khrushchev takes up photography, which he enjoyed during the war. Eventually he grows bored. He is more enthusiastic and consistent about gardening, working himself to exhaustion and recruiting helpers, including 10-year-old grandson Nikita. Khrushchev's favorite pastime is staring into open-air bonfires for hours. He likes spring best and dreads autumn, which reminds him of death. Exile allows Khrushchev to reflect on the misdeeds of his life. He condemns his successors' jailing of two dissident writers and invading Czechoslovakia, and wishes he had had time to open the doors of freedom wider.

After resisting the idea of writing his memoirs for fear of the furor it could cause, Khrushchev makes the project the centerpiece of his last years, as a means of purgation and self-justification. He begins tentatively until in August 1966, journalist Lev Petrov (granddaughter Yulia's husband) convinces him to deal systematically with the Cuban missile crisis. Soon Khrushchev is dictating several hours a day. Sergei helps him prioritize and follow a plan. Khrushchev has no access to KGB-controlled archives, and prefers not to have Sergei obtain published materials for him. His memory is still excellent. Nina succeeds Petrov as typist/editor, but is too slow to suit her husband. He rejects the idea of asking the Central Committee for a professional; it they offer one he will accept, but they have no need for his memoirs. In time the flow of words reaches 3,500 typewritten pages, first dealing with Stalin and his experience in Moscow and Ukraine, then the war, then the period up to Beria's ouster. He intends to skip over his years in power, for fear of offending his successors and appearing immodest about his own achievements. Eventually he overcomes this and writes hundreds of pages about everything except his childhood. At the very end he owns up to his stormy relationship with the intelligentsia.

In the summer of 1967 an American filmmaker makes a documentary about Khrushchev for NBC-TV, and security is increased. Defiant, Khrushchev intensifies work on his memoirs. He is summoned to a dressing-down by Kirilenko, Pelshe, and Demichev, told to stop doing the work proper to the central Committee, and ordered to turn over everything already dictated. Khrushchev objects he is writing not history but autobiography, which is legal under the constitution. They can jail him or confiscate his writings, but he protests their activity. By now, he is shouting exaggerations. Composing himself, Khrushchev protests the bugging of his dacha and leaves victorious but shaken. He dictates little more until the end of 1968.

Sergei has made copies of the typescript and hidden them in secure places, and now arranges it to be illegally smuggled abroad and prepared for publication. An intricate proof of the authenticity of the material is demanded by the publishers. KGB chief Andropov, while declining to read the typescript, helps it reach the West. Because of the project, Aleksei Adzhubei is fired from *Izvestia* and Sergei from the *Missile Design Bureau*. Khrushchev writes through the summer of 1969, and then begins rereading. Vadim Trunin edits the project. After KGB agents break in and search for microfilm manuscripts, Khrushchev devotes even more time to his memoirs until felled by a serious heart attack on May 29. While he spends three months in Moscow recovering, the KGB tails Sergei and eventually confronts him over the tape recordings. When Khrushchev emerges from the hospital, pale and weak, he authorizes overseas publication. When hauled in to Pelshe's office, Khrushchev signs a statement declaring *Khrushchev Remembers* a "fabrication" and "falsification," but then blasts the current leadership as Stalinists ruining his reforms. Khrushchev laments he lives under virtual house arrest as he finishes writing about Stalin's horrors. He wishes to die an honest man -- even to be crucified. Playwright Mikhail Shatrov says Khrushchev regrets all the blood shed in his lifetime.

Shortly after this meeting, Khrushchev suffers another heart attack. Released from the hospital, he resumes dictation but is clearly suffering depression. He dresses for his

77th birthday and perks up for Sergei's birthday, even lighting his last bonfire. Talk of suicide worries the family. At the Adzhubeis in September, he talks gently with his grandson-in-law and recalls the boyhood prophecy of a great future. Back home, Khrushchev is in pain. Next day he walks into the hospital without assistance but suffers a massive heart attack. He improves over the next few days to the point he is joking again, but dies alone on September 11 after heroic measures fail.

It takes days for the state to decide about a funeral. In the meantime, the dacha is locked and Khrushchev's personal effects, mementos, and remaining tapes and papers are confiscated. No Red Square ceremonies are permitted, but the Central Committee will pay for services at a shabby suburban morgue and burial in Novodevichy Cemetery, the resting place of many famous Russians. The Central Committee announces the death briefly in *Pravda* on September 13, too late for many to attend the funeral. No condolences come from former colleagues, but a flood of foreigners write, and some messages make it through the censors. The wake and meager cortege lack stateliness. The KGB rings the cemetery (closed for the day, along with the nearby Metro stations and other means of public travel). Sergei talks about his father, Nadezhda Dimenshtein thanks him on behalf of the millions he released from camp or rehabilitated, and Sergei's co-worker thanks him for returning his father's good name. Plainclothesmen try to prevent 200 onlookers from approaching the grave but relents under pressure from the family. Mikoyan comes forward to place a wreath on the closed grave.

Chapter 21 Analysis

"After the Fall: 1964-1971" describes the years of exile most noted for the monumental task of writing Khrushchev's memoirs. Like Pasternak, Khrushchev becomes an underground writer forced to publish in the West. Reflections on this, the constitution, the folly of propaganda, and the need of socialism to be an attractive system are most notable.

Characters

Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev

The subject of this biography, Khrushchev is the son of a weak father and a dominant mother who will always feel tied to the land but struggle to escape the peasant mindset that surrounded him for his first 14 years in Kalinovka. He next moves to the industrial town of Yuzovka, where he succeeds as a metalworker, marries, begins a family, and becomes involved in radical politics, which diverts him from the education that might have led to a career as an engineer or manager. He experiences a meteoric rise in Moscow's communist party hierarchy despite mediocre performance, just as Stalin's purges are creating opportunities for younger players. He transfers to Kiev to lead both the Ukrainian government and party before World War II, serves as a lieutenant general in the Red Army during the war, and directs the Sovietization of Western Ukraine after victory. He is part of the inner circle that awaits Stalin's death in 1953 and within three years has outmaneuvers them to achieve ultimate power.

In 1956, Khrushchev denounces Stalin and tentatively begins revealing the horror of purges and labor camps, creating a literary thaw he has trouble controlling. Strict ideological adherence to Marxism-Leninism causes problems in agriculture and international affairs. Confidence in nuclear weapons -- for purposes of bluster only -- leads him to downsize the Red Army, alienating the military. Khrushchev becomes increasingly caustic, arbitrary, and isolated from his party colleagues, who in 1964 overthrow him and send him into internal exile.

Nina Petrovna Kukharchuk Khrushcheva

Khrushchev's third wife, Nina is born in Vasiliev village, Kholm province, in a prosperous peasant family. She studies in Lublin and Kholm until the outbreak of World War I, then evacuated to an elite girl's school in Odessa. After graduating in 1919, Nina works in the school office, joins the communist party in 1920, and spreads propaganda in villages near the front. After the Red Army is forced out of Poland, Nina studies briefly in the Sverdlov Communist University in Moscow before being assigned to the Donbas to help purge careerists and teach history and economics. She arrives in Yuzovka in 1922, where Khrushchev is one of her students. From 1926-28 Nina studies political economy in the Krupskaya Pedagogical Institute in Moscow, then returns to Kiev to lecture in the party school. Nina's first child, Nadia, dies in her third month in 1927. Rada is born April 4, 1929, Sergei in 1935, and Yelena in 1937. Only after Yelena's birth does Nina leave the factory for a less demanding job. Nina is always head administrator of an extended family, always including her in-laws, but the rest of the cast varying with time and place.

The family lives in Kiev 1938, where Nina teaches occasionally; Moscow; Kuibyshev during World War II, and Moscow again. Nina's accompanying Khrushchev on his trip to America breaks Soviet tradition, but is allowed in the hope she will have a good

influence on him. After Khrushchev's ouster in 1964, Nina runs the dacha where they spend most of their time. She outlives her husband by seven years, dying in 1984.

Joseph Stalin

The Georgian-born Bolshevik revolutionary, whose real name is Josef Vissarionovich Dzhugashvilli, Stalin is the not well-trusted lieutenant of the first Soviet leader, Vladimir Lenin. Stalin wins the power struggle that follows Lenin's death in 1924, prevailing over Leon Trotsky in 1925 and exiling him in 1927. In the 1930s Stalin purges the rest of the original revolutionaries, and then expands the terror to include the military and the rich peasantry (kulaks). This creates room for younger men like Khrushchev, who both worships and envies Stalin, and aims to cultivate Stalin's best qualities: clearness of mind, conciseness of formulation, patience, and sympathy with others.

After the fall of France in 1940, Stalin grows nervous and demands his lieutenants join him in night long drinking sessions intended to loosen their tongues. Stalin's nerves crack after Hitler's attack on the USSR, and for days he broods alone in his dacha, fearing the Politburo will arrest him. Stalin demands Kiev and Kharkov be defended at any price and blames Khrushchev when both fall. Even after victories at Stalingrad and Kursk, Stalin holds the battles of 1942 over Khrushchev's head. Stalin suffers small strokes in 1945 and 1947 and spends more time at the Black Sea, feeling lonely and bizarre all-night drink-movie-fests by Stalin and his inner circle of Beria, Malenkov, Bulganin, and Khrushchev. Stalin dies in 1953 before he can purge the Old Guard. At the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956, Khrushchev delivers a devastating four-hour attack on Stalin's "grave abuse of power," and for the rest of Khrushchev's tenure at the top, Stalin's defenders and detractors will struggle in the USSR, Eastern Europe, and China.

Lazar Kaganovich

Stalin's sycophantic chief aid, Kaganovich lets Khrushchev ride his coattails to preeminence in the Ukrainian Party structure. Born to a poor Jewish family in Kiev Province, Kaganovich apprentices to a shoemaker, joins the Bolsheviks in 1911, and is a Bolshevik leader when he first meets Khrushchev in Yuzovka in 1917. Kaganovich advances Khrushchev from Yuzovka to Kharkov to Kiev in 1928-29. Twice Stalin sends Kaganovich to control nationalism in Ukraine (1925-28 and 1947), but has to recall him when he alienates the people. His usefulness to Stalin ends and he is excluded from the inner circle in 1952. Back in grace after Stalin's death, but loathing how his former protygy lords it over him, Kaganovich in 1956 is the "knife sharpener" in the "Gang of Eight" that seeks to oust Khrushchev from the party leadership. Kaganovich pleads for his life after the coup fails, and is sent to manage a potash plant in Perm province. He is expelled from the party in 1962 but is allowed to return to Moscow in retirement. He dies in 1991.

Vyacheslav Molotov

The loyal, bloodthirsty, hard-working revolutionary who serves as Stalin's foreign minister until March 1949, when he imagines he was sold out to the Americans. Molotov's wife, Polina Zhemchuzhina, the "first lady of Moscow," whom Stalin assigned to cultivate Israeli's first ambassador to Moscow, is sentenced to the labor camps. In 1952, Stalin denounces Molotov's "cowardice and defeatism" at the Nineteenth Party Congress, and Khrushchev fears Molotov will perish if Stalin lives much longer.

Nevertheless, after the dictator's death, Molotov consistently opposes Khrushchev over de-Stalinization, and Khrushchev dubs him the ideological leader of the "Gang of Eight" that try to oust him from party leadership. Still respecting Molotov, Khrushchev sends him as Soviet ambassador to Outer Mongolia, but there he criticizes Khrushchev to the local central committee, gripes about declining relations with China, and proposes a new "Confederation of Socialist States" to save the day. He defends his record on the Austrian State Treaty of 1955, declaring Khrushchev's *ad hominem* attack resembles the Mensheviks' propaganda against the Bolsheviks. Molotov reminds people he met Lenin personally, which underlines his claim to represent the true faith. Khrushchev takes offense, and minimizes and isolates Molotov.

In 1960, Molotov is transferred to the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, far away from the Chinese. In October 1961, Molotov dispatches a detailed critique of Khrushchev's new party program and is subject to fierce new attacks and is expelled form the party. He is readmitted in 1984 and dies in 1986.

Georgy Malenkov

Beria's ally in the jockeying for position that follows the fall of the Old Guard in 1952, Malenkov is unprepossessing, active, sociable, reasonable, sagacious, silent on the big issues, but a good implementer and worker of the telephones. An "enlightened technocrat," he lacks experience in party organization, although he is in charge of party organization and a full member of the Politburo since 1946, the same year he is dropped from the Central Committee Secretariat. Colleagues perceive him as weak. In 1956 Malenkov is the main organizer of the "Gang of Eight" that tries to oust Khrushchev from the party leadership. Malenkov has no use for Molotov or Kaganovich (his fellow chief rebels), and has supported Khrushchev's policies more than the others. They, however, convince him he will be purged unless Khrushchev is gotten rid of. Malenkov is convinced Khrushchev hates him as he is sent to northern Kazakhstan into deeper and deeper isolation. He is later summoned to Moscow to answer questions on his role in the terror. Malenkov dies in 1988.

Lavrenty Beria

Malenkov's ally in the jockeying for position that follows the fall of the Old Guard in 1952, Beria is head of Stalin's secret police. A full Politburo member since 1946, smart,

calculating, cynical, and openly ambitious, Beria is monstrous in carrying out Stalin's terror, personally torturing prisoners and recreationally raping women he spots while cruising Moscow. Even Stalin fears Beria. Colleagues, whose reports to Stalin Beria tears down, can portray as treason a brief period in 1918 when Beria served in an anti-Bolshevik government in Azerbaijan. In 1946, Beria loses direct control over the police ministries.

As one of the three eulogizers of the dead dictator in 1953, blood-drenched Beria is certain he will succeed Stalin. He restores Molotov's wife from labor camp, orders records searches for falsified cases, declares the Doctors' Plot a set-up, proposes a mass amnesty for 1.2 million nonpoliticals, and prohibits routine brutality in police investigations. In foreign affairs, Beria seeks rapprochement with Tito's Yugoslavia, relaxation of Stalinist practices in Hungary, and reunification of a neutral Germany. Khrushchev unites the triumvirate against Beria, through Marshal Zhukov acquires the loyalty of the army, and seizes, tries, and summarily executes Beria.

Ksenia Khrushcheva

Khrushchev's mother, a strong-willed, contemptuous, and resentful woman, Ksenia keeps husband Sergei under her thumb and wants her son Nikita to do better than him. Ksenia instills prayer, rectitude and responsibility in her son. She outlives her husband and is an irritating part of the extended family ruled absolutely by her daughter-in-law Nina.

Sergei Khrushchev

Khrushchev's father, a seasonal laborer for the railroad and brick factory. A never-do-well, Sergei dies in Moscow in 1949, provided for but forgotten by his famous son.

Yefrosinia Ivanovna Khrushcheva ("Frosia")

Khrushchev's first wife, Frosia is the eldest of his comrade Ivan Pisrarev's five daughters, pretty and feminine. Frosia bears two sons, Yulia in 1915, and Leonid in 1917, before succumbing to typhus during the Civil War.

Marusia Khrushcheva

Khrushchev' second wife, Marusia has an illegitimate daughter with whom she is preoccupied. She cannot cope with her stepchildren, for which mother-in-law Ksenia is highly critical, and the marriage fails.

Yulia Nikitovna Khrushcheva

Khrushchev's first child, born to Frosia in 1915. She and her brother Lyonia do not get along. She dies in 1981.

Leonid Nikitich Khrushchev ("Lyonia")

Khrushchev's second child, born to Frosia in 1917, Lyonia is a terrible hooligan, encouraged by his grandmother Ksenia. In 1935, Lyonia lives with and abandons two women, leaving one pregnant. He marries the other, Liuba Sizykh, a pilot in 1938 after he takes up flying. The couple lives in the Moscow apartment, but offends Khrushchev's Puritanism by exploiting the privilege. During World War II, Lyonia serves with distinction as a fighter pilot, is shot down once and recovers (nearly getting court marshaled during his furlough), re-qualifies for combat, and is killed in action. His body is never recovered, giving rise to rumors he was captured and offered for barter.

Rada Nikitovna Khrushcheva Adhzhubei

Khrushchev's third child, his first by Nina, Rada is born April 4, 1929. At Moscow State University, where she studies journalism, Rada meets Aleksei Adzhubei, and they marry August 31, 1949. Aleksei becomes editor of *Izvestia,* a political position that linked to his father-in-law, so when Khrushchev is ousted so too is Aleksei, who dies in 1993. Rada is a successful editor for many years.

Sergei Nikitich Khrushchev

Khrushchev's favorite son, born to Khrushchev's third wife Nina in 1935, Sergei is a rocket engineer and his father's regular walking companion and sounding board. Sergei learns about the 1964 plot to overthrow his father, but Khrushchev discounts it. After his father's ouster, Sergei convinces him to write his memoirs, helps him develop and adhere to a work plan, copies everything and finds safe storage. At his father's request he arranges and smuggles a copy out of the USSR and has it published as *Khrushchev Remembers.* Sergei loses his job as a result of the memoirs. He and wife Valentine emigrate to the U.S. and become naturalized citizens. Sergei continues writing about his father.

Yulia Nikitovna Khrushcheva

The Khrushchevs' granddaughter whom they adopt and raise as their own child after mother Liuba Sizykh is sentenced to the labor camps.

Liuba Sizykh Khrushcheva

Lyonia's brash and beautiful wife, whom he marries in 1938, Liuba is disowned by her deeply religious father after she joins Komsomol, becomes a famed pilot, and meets Lyonia when he too takes up flying. Liuba's past is marred by a brief expulsion from Komsomol after being denounced for having a Trotsky book in her room. Liuba has a son, Tolya, by a previous marriage.

Lydia Mikhailovna Shevchenko

Khrushchev's elementary school teacher, a radical atheist, who introduces him to revolutionary literature. Lydia's image as a formative force comes to be bolstered by sycophantic Soviet authors, but on the day Khrushchev dies in 1971, he remembers Lydia's prediction of his future greatness.

Mischa and Ilya Kosenko

Khrushchev's close friends and coworkers in Yuzovka. In 1938, Khrushchev encounters Ilya and learns he quit the Bolshevik party when required to participate in "dekulakization." Khrushchev offers to relocate his family to Kiev, but Ilya declines.

Pantelei Makhinia

A Yuzovka miner who aspires to be a foreman, Makhinia introduces Khrushchev to *The Communist Manifesto* and other pamphlets, and inspires him with his own poetry.

Vera Gostinskaya

Nina Khrushchev's fellow teacher, who with her daughter the Khrushchev's take in while living in Kiev and later Moscow. The two women hail from the same part of Poland, study together at the Krupskaya Pedagogical Institute in Moscow, Vera in history and Nina in political economy. An ardent communist since the age of 15, Vera helps Khrushchev prepare lectures to the workers.

Nadezhda Alliluyeva

Stalin's young wife, a chemistry student at Industrial Academy, Nadezhda works closely with Khrushchev after his election as Bauman District party boss. Born in 1901, she works briefly for Lenin before being sent to Tsaritsyn, where she meets and marries Stalin. After bearing two children, she signs up for classes, taking no advantage of her relationship with the dictator. In fact, she opposes his cruel policies, and after a public quarrel at the 15th anniversary of the revolution in 1932, shoots herself to death.

Iona Yakir

Khrushchev's close friend, a general in the Ukraine with a sterling Bolshevik record, Yakir dares defend close associates who are arrested and is himself denounced as a traitor. Khrushchev visits him hours before his arrest, and worries he will be implicated. He does nothing to prevent Yakir's condemnation, but remembers him often during his de-Stalinization campaign from 1956 onward.

Anastas Mikoyan

Khrushchev's chief ally on the Presidium at the time of his overthrow, Armenian-born Mikoyan has survived from the days of Lenin. In 1952, he is rudely denounced by Stalin at the Nineteenth Congress, and would likely have perished had Stalin lived longer. He becomes Khrushchev's "expert" on Cuba. He is the only former colleague to phone New Years greetings and to show up for Khrushchev's funeral.

Leonid Brezhnev

Khrushchev's first lieutenant in the Kremlin, Brezhnev summons his boss to Moscow to face dismissal. Like Khrushchev, Brezhnev is uneducated and uncultured; unlike Khrushchev, he is dour and colorless.

Vladimir Semichastny

The head of the KGB under Khrushchev, Semichastny owes both his first party position in 1946 and his assignment to head the secret policy in 1961 to Khrushchev. Nevertheless, he participates in the plot to overthrow Khrushchev.

Andrei Zhdanov

A leader of the "Leningrad Faction," loyal, submissive, and perfectionist Zhdanov keeps Stalin's favor, but his health is poor and he dies in August 1948. His son later marries Stalin's daughter, Svetlana Alleiluyeva.

W?adys?aw Gomu?ka

The Polish communist chief, recently released from jail in 1956, Gomu?ka convinces Khrushchev not to allow the Red Army to enter Warsaw.

Kliment Voroshilov

The figurehead head of the Soviet state, Voroshilov resents the mockery he takes from Khrushchev and joins the "Gang of Eight" conspiracy in 1956. He retains his titular position until 1960 and position in the Presidium even longer.

Nikolai Bulganin

The Soviet prime minister, Bulganin travels widely with Khrushchev but is on Khrushchev's fools' list; Khrushchev puts him in charge of the government in order to shine by comparison. No friend of the "Gang of Eight" ringleaders, Bulganin draws closer to them as his gorge rises, and he has access to resources and information vital to the success of the plot. The "fool" Bulganin is demoted to the State Bank and later the Stavropol Economic Council.

Maksim Saburov

A member of the "Gang of Eight," Saburov is convinced Khrushchev, to whom he is never close, is in 1956 out to get him.

Mikhail Pervukhin

A member of the "Gang of Eight," Pervukhin is convinced Khrushchev, to whom he is never close, is in 1956 out to get him.

Dmitri Shepilov

The final member of the "Gang of Eight," Shepilov is the first true intellectual Khrushchev takes under his wing and appears to be grooming as his political heir. Shepilov joins the conspirators at the last moment, convinced by Kaganovich that a man that illiterate cannot govern a country. After the coup fails, Khrushchev vilifies Shepilov more than anyone and never again trusts an academician. Shepilov is sent to Central Asia but later allowed to live in Moscow. Shepilov is expelled from the Academy of Sciences in 1959 and from the party in 1962.

Ivan Serov

A nice man, Serov helps organize the Katyn Forest massacre in Poland, helps Stalinize Ukraine and the Baltics, deports the "lesser" peoples, pacifies East Germany, and is Beria's deputy in Stalin's final years. He serves Khrushchev faithfully as KGB chief because he has so much blood on his hands, and Khrushchev at first rejects Mikoyan's advice to drop him, but makes the move in 1958.

Oleg Troyanovsky

One of Khrushchev's four chief assistants, Troyansky is responsible for foreign policy. He begins as a translator but comes to be a major adviser, traveling with and on behalf of Khrushchev in the 1960s.

Andrei Shevchenko

One of Khrushchev's four chief assistants, Shevchenko is responsible for agriculture. He travels extensively, gathering data to support Khrushchev's often harebrain schemes to revitalize agriculture.

Vladimir Lebedev

One of Khrushchev's four chief assistants, Lebedev is responsible for culture and ideology.

Grigory Shuisky

One of Khrushchev's four chief assistants, Shuisky is responsible for general affairs.

Roswell Garst

A gabby, cantankerous Iowa corn farmer, who is interested in easing East-West tensions. Garst visits Khrushchev's dacha in 1955 and wonders how the Russians can know so little about American agriculture when they are able to steal atomic secrets in three weeks. Garst shows Khrushchev on a map what parts of the USSR are best suited for corn and advises him on fertilization, irrigation, mechanization, and insect control - all processes the Soviets lack. Khrushchev visits the Garst farm during his U.S. tour.

Walter Ulbricht

The pushy leader of the communist German Democratic Republic (GDR) in the 1950s-60s, Ulbricht is a hard man for Khrushchev to control as he seeks to build dytente with the U.S.

Konrad Adenauer

The cantankerous leader of the Federal Republic of Germany in the 1960s, an annoyance to the leaders of the Western democracies.

Charles de Gaulle

The imperious President of France in the 1960s, de Gaulle is so determined to return France to international greatness that he sides with Khrushchev on basic Berlin policy.

Dwight D. Eisenhower ("Ike")

The thirty-third President of the United States (1956-61), Eisenhower is elected on the strength of his reputation as supreme commander of the Allied invasion of Europe in World War II. Khrushchev claims to respect him, but criticizes the way he lets hardliners control U.S. foreign policy. Eisenhower stubbornly resists Khrushchev's calls for disarmament.

Richard M. Nixon

Eisenhower's vice president, Nixon visits Moscow to open a U.S. trade exhibition, and locks horns with Khrushchev on television. In the 1960 U.S. election, Khrushchev favors Nixon's Democratic opponent, John F. Kennedy, even though some officials claim he will be less easily manipulated.

John Foster Dulles

President Eisenhower's Secretary of State, Dulles consistently advises caution when dealing with Khrushchev.

Llewellyn Thompson

The U.S. Ambassador to Moscow in the Eisenhower Administration, Thompson knows Khrushchev very well. After retiring, he continues advising Kennedy during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Henry Cabot Lodge

The U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. in the Eisenhower Administration, Lodge serves as special administration representative on Khrushchev's American tour.

John F. Kennedy

The thirty-fourth President of the United States (1961-63), JFK is young, inexperienced, and rich, and Khrushchev calculates he can be intimidated over Berlin and Cuba, although he suspects right-wingers may be running the government instead of the president. The two statesmen gain a measure of respect for each other as they defuse

the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, and look forward to broader talks on dytente. Khrushchev is personally crushed by JFK's assassination in 1963.

Robert F. Kennedy

JFK's brother and closest confidant, RFK's responsibilities far exceed his job as Attorney General. He is the administration's point man for contacts with the Soviet embassy and a secret backchannel to Moscow.

Mao Zedong

Leader of the Peoples' Republic of China, Mao is a strong ideological counterforce to Soviet communism and dismissive of Khrushchev as Soviet leader.

Josip Broz Tito

Leader of the Yugoslav communist party, Tito is branded a political heretic by Stalin, and wooed by Khrushchev until he proves insists on exporting his brand of socialism to the rest of the Balkans.

Fidel Castro

Leader of Cuba after the 1959 revolution, Castro is held at arm's length even after he declares himself a communist, but after Khrushchev meets him, he treats him as a surrogate son. Still, Khrushchev tries to blame him for the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.

Leonid Pasternak

The author of the Nobel Prize winning novel *Doctor Zhivago,* whose publication outside the USSR nearly gets him exiled. Khrushchev eventually reads the novel and is sorry he had not authorized its publication.

Aleksandr Tvardovsky

The liberal Russian poet whose status as editor or non-editor of the influential literary magazine *Novyi Mir* is an indicator of how the ideological winds are blowing during the Thaw.

Objects/Places

The NKVD/ MVD/ KGB

The Soviet secret police, known under a variety of names (and hence abbreviations), it is responsible for carrying out Stalin's terror in the 1930s and beyond. It is the backbone of Beria's power in 1953, but its director is too complacent to see the plot closing in on him. Khrushchev uses the KGB less brutally perhaps, but does not dismantle its information-gathering function. After his downfall, he chides successors on having the KGB bug even his bathroom.

The Politburo/ Presidium

The top-most decision makers in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, chosen from the members of the Central Committee, who in turn are chosen from local party units nationwide. The name changes in 1952 but the function remains the same.

Kalinovka

Khrushchev's birthplace near the Ukrainian border.

Yuzovka/Stalino/Donetsk

The town in the Donbas industrial region where Khrushchev began his work life in 1908, Yuzovka was founded in 1869 and named for the Welshman John Hughes, whose New Russian Company, a vast industrial complex, mined coal, rolled steel, and produced manufactured goods. Yuzovka was renamed Stalino in 1924, and Donetsk in 1961.

Moscow

The capital of the USSR, Moscow in the 1930s when Khrushchev arrives to study is being painfully rebuilt from the overgrown village dominated by church spires into a modern city. Khrushchev's career advances as he administers the smallest (Bauman) and the largest and most important district (Krasnopresnensky) of Moscow's ten administrative before becoming de facto rule of the city, responsible for building the Metro. The center of the city is the Kremlin, the ancient fortress of the tsars taken over as headquarters of the communist party and Soviet government. Red Square is the venue for political parades, the largest of which is on May Day. Dignitaries review parades from atop Lenin's tomb, shared 1953-61 by Stalin's remains.

Kiev

The capital of Ukraine, the second most important of the Soviet republics, Kiev enjoyed a brief independent reign in the Middle Ages, and was a center for Ukrainian nationalism from the 19th century onward. The uncultured Khrushchev feared being looked down upon by Kiev's intelligentsia.

Kuibyshev

The city in on the Volga River south of Kazan to which the Soviet government, the diplomatic corps, and intelligentsia are evacuated after Hitler's invasion of the USSR. Nina heads the extended Khrushchev family there while her husband serves in the Red Army.

Berlin Crisis

A major East-West confrontation, caused when Khrushchev declares his intention to sign a formal peace treaty with East Germany and grant it control over access to West Berlin. Both Eisenhower and Kennedy hold fast against this, and only the building of the Berlin Wall allows the issue to fade away.

Cuban Missile Crisis

The closest East and West come to nuclear war; the Cuban Missile Crisis begins when Khrushchev decides to plant intermediate missiles in Cuba to gain parity with U.S. ICBMs. He and JFK hold a war of wills and words, but reach compromise at the last minute.

Themes

Pre-emption

Do unto others before they can do it to you is a major precept of the Soviet leadership, beginning with Stalin's elimination of the original Bolshevik Old Guard, then the generals who might use their troops to oppose the Soviets, and then devolving into wholesale, indiscriminate bloodshed. Stalin's lieutenants, encouraged not to trust one another or socialize, live in constant fear of provoking his wrath, but even Beria, who controls the secret police, knows Stalin is untouchable (although Beria claims enigmatically to have saved his colleagues the trouble of killing Stalin by somehow arranging his demise in 1956).

Beria proves himself the most dynamic of the collective leadership, and the others, led by Khrushchev, arrange his judicial murder - for fear otherwise he will do them in. The same mentality is at play (albeit there are other motivations as well) when the "Gang of Eight" tries unsuccessfully to oust Khrushchev. They are dealt with far more mercifully than would have been the case under Stalin. Pre-emption is not a motivation for the successful 1964 plotters, but the reasons for the earlier failure are kept firmly in mind.

Assumption

Guessing what another's motivations and machinations might be rather than systematic study of the situation is the modus operandi of the Soviet leadership. Stalin assumes Hitler will not invade in 1940, despite overwhelming evidence, leading to staggering, nearly fatal military losses.

Stalin and Khrushchev assume the Red Army will quickly prevail, even though the purges have decimated the general staff and officer corps and war games have shown the military's preparedness is insufficient. Khrushchev assumes the threat of nuclear obliteration will hold the West at bay and downsizes the conventional forces of the Red Army to divert funds to the civilian sector. He assumes no one will be crazy enough to use nuclear weapons, no matter how much he blusters, brags, and threatens. He assumes if he can place intermediate- and short-range nuclear missiles in Cuba before the U.S. discovers them this will be accepted in stride. He assumes JFK will understand his motivation of preventing a U.S. invasion of Cuba rather than feel threatened itself.

Based on this assumption, he precipitates the worst post-war crisis the world has known. Khrushchev assumes Marxism-Leninism is correct, and because it states capitalism will inevitably fail, it is safe for him to pursue dytente. He assumes hardworking Soviet peasants - and, more so, impassioned, energized Komsomol youth - can overcome an unwieldy system and surpass U.S. agricultural output, despite what economists say. He assumes Lyndon Johnson will not be the positive negotiating partner he had assumed the late JFK would be after the Cuban Missile Crisis, and

abandons dytente, and the arms race accelerates. Khrushchev assumes his power is sufficient that he can absent himself from Moscow and treat his colleagues with disdain, and he is overthrown.

Ideology

Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin establish that capitalism must inevitably give way to socialism, and after an indeterminate period in which the "dictatorship of the proletariat" purges society of capitalist poison, a golden era of communism will begin. Almost immediately, the economic chaos caused by wars demands Lenin compromise and allow limited private ownership under the New Economic Program (NEP). Stalin will reduce the USSR to famine and murder millions of resistant peasants as he returns to the "orthodox" system of collectivization. Marxism-Leninism considers religion a relic of the capitalist past, but Stalin needs the church to rally the people against Hitler, and ideology again gives way to necessity.

When he has consolidated power, Khrushchev will return to Leninist orthodoxy by persecuting the church almost as thoroughly as Lenin had. De-Stalinization is a massive attempt to clear the name of Marxism-Leninism, but the sharp Chinese ideologue Mao Zedong calls Khrushchev to task for accommodating to the West. Khrushchev never has the courage, but appears to have had the urge, to abandon ideology to allow a two-party system, greater freedom of expression, and other features of glasnost and perestroika that will emerge in the 1980s. Khrushchev's abandonment of the principle of collective leadership - never practiced in the Soviet era - provides the ideological underpinnings for his removal in 1964. Forced into retirement, Khrushchev's eyes appear to have opened, and he expresses many unorthodox ideas in his memoirs and conversations with his son Sergei and remaining friends. The propaganda in *Pravda* now seems hollow to him. The invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1967 is illegal (although its motivation is similar to his own crushing of the Hungarian revolt a dozen years earlier).

Style

Point of View

Khrushchev is an exhaustive academic biography, written as a third person, past tense narrative. Lengthy quotations are rare, but brief, rapid-fire quotes to establish color and character are common. Endnotes are fairly extensive and need not be consulted each time in order to understand the narrative.

Setting

Khrushchev is set in the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), primarily from the 1930s through the 1971. As material on Khrushchev's early years, from his birth in 1894 until the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, is sparse, little attention is given to the early period, although the author attempts to give a feel for the tsarist society against which Khrushchev and his colleagues revolted. Kiev and Moscow are the key loci of action before World War II, then we follow Khrushchev around Ukraine. Attention turns to the Kremlin after Stalin's death in 1953, but once Khrushchev gains sole control of the USSR, we follow him on travels at home and abroad. After his downfall in 1964, we see Khrushchev at his dacha, then in the hospital, and finally laid to rest in Novodevichi Cemetery.

Language and Meaning

Khrushchev is told in straightforward American English in a popular tone, despite the academic purpose. The meaning is straightforward: To narrate an extraordinary life. Little attention is given to lyric description (the setting is too stark), but the story is by no means dull because the subject is so irrepressible and much of his character rubs off on the narrative, particularly when Khrushchev's earthy sayings are quoted.

Structure

Khrushchev consists of a preface, introduction, twenty-one titled chapters, an epilog, and standard academic back material. Note in particular the sparse but useful glossary. The preface and introduction explain how the book came about and why so often the author needs to debate which - if any - biased version of the truth is to be believed. Khrushchev's writing of his memoirs is described in Chapter 21, but they are a major source for the entire book. He and his colleagues have axes to grind and varying memories of events. Most Soviet archives are still not available to Western scholars. This established, Taubman deals first with the handful of days in 1964 when Nikita Khrushchev goes from being the supreme ruler of the USSR to a pensioner under virtual house arrest. The arguments used by his associates to justify toppling him are presented rapid-fire to create a full picture of a character that changes little from his

formative years. Chapters 2 through 20 proceed chronologically from birth to chairmanship. Each chapter begins with a summary whose transition into the actual material to be covered is often ill defined. Chapter 21 deals with Khrushchev's funeral. The brief Epilog follows the remaining principles to their deaths or the present day.

Quotes

"Even if Khrushchev's recollections are accurate, they still constitute retrospective mythmaking. For although he was a budding political activist, he was equally, if not more, devoted to making it as a metalworker, to courting and marrying an educated and attractive woman from a fairly prosperous family, to fathering children, and to earning enough money to live in an apartment that was large and luxurious by the standards of the day." Chapter 3, pg. 38.

"From Stalino to Kharkov to Kiev to Moscow, all in a year and a half. However, Khrushchev's motives and machinations are still not clear. Where there was smoke (the ouster of Moiseyenko, strained relations with Stroganov, his Kiev colleagues' assumption that he was at odds with Demchenko and Kossior, the Kaganovich connection), there was probably fire. Despite his seeming modesty and straightforwardness, Khrushchev was already scheming with the best (or worst) of them. But if his Kiev colleagues assumed his craving for culture was mere manipulation, which revealed more of their preoccupations than his own. They couldn't believe his desire to educate himself was genuine; he couldn't conceive of himself without an added measure of learning." Chapter 4, pg. 69.

"When 'a list was put together of people who should be exiled from the city,' Khrushchev later said, he didn't 'know where these people were sent. I never asked. We always followed the rule that if you weren't told something, that meant it didn't concern you; it was the State's business, and the less you knew about it the better." Chapter 5, pg. 101.

"But Khrushchev answered in kind: 'Don't blame me for all that. I'm not involved in that. When I can, I'll settle with the 'Mudakshvili' in full. I don't forgive him any of them - not Kirov, not Yakir, not Tukhachevsky, not the simplest worker or peasant.' "Stalin's real Georgian name was Dzhugashvili. Khrushchev altered it by playing on one of the many Russian words for 'prick,' *mudak.* Olga, twelve at the time, later asked her father what their guest had been talking about. " 'You mean you heard it all?' he exclaimed. 'Get this straight, if you mention a word of this conversation to even one person, they'll shoot both him [Khrushchev] and me.'" Chapter 6, pg. 122.

"In early 1947 Stalin fired Khrushchev as the Ukrainian party leader (while allowing him to remain head of the Ukrainian government) and dispatched Lazar Kaganovich from Moscow to replace him. In short order, Khrushchev disappeared from public view, fell gravely ill, and nearly died. Behold, another miracle! By the fall of 1947 he had regained his health, and Stalin reappointed him party chief. Moreover, 1948 and 1949, among the worst years in Soviet history, proved perhaps the most satisfying of Khrushchev's career." Chapter 8, pg. 181.

"To the top Soviet leaders nervously surveying the scene for signs of one another's status, the most important symbol was the seating arrangement. The day before, Stalin had agreed to suspend his rule of sitting 'modestly' in the second row onstage. Instead he was in the first row with Mao to his right and Khrushchev to his left. Although

Khrushchev's seat of honor reflected his role as Moscow party chief and hence official host for the evening, it was still a coup. But on this occasion too Khrushchev knew his limits. Noticing that the cornucopia of flowers had almost hidden Stalin's face, Adzhubei whispered to his wife, 'Why doesn't Nikita Sergeyevich move them aside?' Rada replied, 'Because Stalin hasn't asked him to.'" Chapter 9, pg. 234.

For Khrushchev, Stalin's death was a decidedly mixed blessing, just as his patronage had been. Stalin had been a benefactor who threatened to destroy him, both mentor and tormentor in turn. His death freed v from physical fear and psychological dependence. But it also exposed him to deadly new dangers - first from his Kremlin colleagues, later from himself, and all the while from the terrible legacy that Stalin's heirs faced and that eventually defeated them all." Chapter 10, pg. 240.

"Other leaders might blame bad harvests on bad weather and on the nation's past troubles, but he almost never did. As he put it with characteristic candor in a 1955 speech, 'Comrades, this is already the 38th year of Soviet power. That's not a short amount of time. That means we should be ashamed to keep blaming Nicholas II. [Laughter in the hall.] The man's been dead for a long time.'" Chapter 10, pgs. 261-262

"In the end Khrushchev exercised prudent restraint. But that shouldn't obscure the ignorance he exhibited, the primitive pressure he employed, his desperate, indecisive searching for a solution, and his good fortune that Gomu?ka proved both more pliable than Khrushchev originally feared and more capable of pacifying his fellow Poles." Chapter 11, pg. 294.

"Two months later Khrushchev was still steaming. A week after that the Soviet leader invited Mi?unovi? to sit next to him at a concert and whispered a fierce protest against a 'disgusting' caricature of himself and Bulganin that had appeared in the Belgrade newspaper *Politika.* When Khrushchev handed over the offending paper 'like a sort of *corpus dilecti,'* the Yugoslav ambassador pointed out that the bald man standing next to Bulganin wasn't Khrushchev but Eisenhower." Chapter 13, pg. 346.

"Literature had long been the conscience of the Russian nation, a kind of 'second government' (the phrase is Solzhenitsyn's). The Communists demanded that art glorify positive heroes of the revolution. For a leader who sought to renovate the Soviet system, reform-minded writers and artists were a natural constituency. But liberal intellectuals wanted to move farther and faster than Khrushchev did, while conservatives exploited his old-fashioned taste to turn in against the liberals. Balancing both sides in Soviet culture wars would have been difficult even for a more sophisticated leader, but for Khrushchev, it proved impossible." Chapter 14, pg. 383.

"Khrushchev's deepest fear seemed to be that he was being played for a fool by the Americans. Humphrey urged the administration to study Khrushchev's personality carefully, to expose the impressions of all who had met the Soviet leader, "not to a diplomat but to a psychiatrist.' Yet the same qualities that demanded a shrink offered a

golden opportunity: 'This is a man who is very much up our line.... Just the sort of man with whom a man like Ike could do business.'" Chapter 15, pg. 408.

??$??$ % ? ? ! " D E " ... ¦ § ?TZ CH t shoe (a loafer/sandal, according to his son, because he couldn't stand tying laces), waved it threateningly, and then banged it on the table, louder and louder, until everyone in the hall was watching and buzzing. Gromyko, sitting next to Khrushchev, looked extremely pained. With a 'grimace of determination' and the look of a man 'about to plunge into a pool of icy water,' the foreign minister removed his shoe and began tapping it gently on the desktop as if hoping his boss would notice but no one else would." Chapter 16, pgs. 475-476.

"But Semichastny also reported 'a few isolated unhealthy utterances,' including several from military men. 'The cult of personality remains just as it was,' one officer had said. 'No matter how bad Stalin was,' said another, 'he cut prices every year, but nowadays nothing's being done except raising prices.' A third warned, 'If the people were to revolt now, we wouldn't try to put them down.'" Chapter 18, pg. 523.

"JFK couldn't help 'admiring Soviet strategy,' he told his old friend British Ambassador David Ormsby-Gore on October 22. 'They offered this deliberate and provocative challenge to the United States in the knowledge that if the Americans reacted violently to it, the Russians would be given an ideal opportunity to move against West Berlin. If, on the other hand he [JFK] did nothing, the Latin Americans had no real will to resist the encroachments of Communism and would hedge their bets accordingly.'" Chapter 19, pg. 531.

"Of a Soviet workers' paradise that locked up its borders, he had this to say: 'Paradise is a place where people want to end up, not a place they run from! Yet in this country the doors are closed and locked. What kind of socialism is this? What kind of shit is it when you have to keep people in chains? What kind of social order? Some curse me for the times I opened the doors. If God had given me the chance to continue, I would have thrown the doors and windows wide open.'" Chapter 21, pg. 631.

Topics for Discussion

What are Khrushchev's views on the peasantry?

What are Khrushchev's views on religion?

What are Khrushchev's views on science and technology?

Was Khrushchev ever a true Stalinist? Provide examples to substantiate your answer.

How did Khrushchev survive the purges of the 1930s that claimed most of his colleagues?

Could Khrushchev be convicted of crimes against humanity? Substantiate your answer.

How do you explain the rude reception Americans gave Khrushchev during his visit?

Was Khrushchev's "image" as a crude clown ever of help to him? Substantiate your answer.

Are the reforms of the 1980s in any sense Khrushchev's legacy? Substantiate your answer.

What was Khrushchev's biggest flop?

What was Khrushchev's greatest success?