

Student Essay on Khrushchev's Reasoning for De-stalinisation

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Essay

Why was a policy of de-Stalinisation carried out by Khrushchev after he became leader of the Soviet Union"

Khrushchev rose to power as an active supporter of Stalin. In helping organise the dismantling of factories to the east and by playing a part in the Soviet victory at the battle of Stalingrad, Stalin made Khrushchev Prime Minister of the Ukraine in 1944 and eventually promoted him to reduce the growing power of Malenkov. Through this given help by Stalin, Khrushchev was able to follow Stalin in absolute power.

However, once in supremacy, Khrushchev caused a sensation by denouncing Stalin in his speech at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party in Feb 1956 regarding how Lenin's last wishes to remove Stalin had been kept a secret. Following Khrushchev's speech, he realised that Stalin's ruthless ways must be modified. Khrushchev wanted to move away from Stalin's methods and reform the Soviet Union. This was to be achieved through "de-Stalinisation." Khrushchev felt it necessary to reduce the cruelty of Stalin's previous dictatorship and ordered the release of millions of political prisoners from Stalin's labour camps. He then continued to rectify Stalin's mistakes by introducing greater freedoms to certain groups of people that were once repressed by Stalin including writers and artists.

Unfortunately for Khrushchev de-Stalinisation caused even further problems in Hungary and Poland where numerous riots broke out calling for bread, freedom and higher wages. Although Khrushchev finally settled the dispute through compromise this was another good intention that contributed to his inevitable downfall in 1964.