

BERIA AND 6 AIDS EXECUTED

SHOT BY RUSS FIRING SQUAD FOR TREASON

Court of No Appeal Passes Sentence

MOSCOW, Dec. 23 (AP)—Lavrenti P. Beria, 54, for 14 years the police boss of the soviet union, has been executed by shooting along with the six associates convicted with him of high treason.

The government newspaper Izvestia announced tonight the carrying out of these sentences. The sentences were imposed by the Supreme court of the soviet union, which sat in the case for five days, starting Friday.

The government announcement said Ivan Koniev, famous marshal of World War II, sat as chairman of the special court session which passed the death sentences.

Shvernik on Court

Also on the court board was Nicolai Shvernik, former president of the soviet union and now head of the council of trade unions.

The Izvestia announcement said the law under which the former police boss and the other accused were tried provided for no appeal.

The announcement said the accused seven died before a firing



Lavrenti Beria
squad today. The law specifically provides such punishment for treason.

Beria was born in 1899 in the small village of Merkeuli on the Black sea coast.

As a student of engineering at Baku in 1917, he threw in his lot with the bolsheviks and was assigned to the secret police.

Until the mid-'30s his work was concentrated in the Caucasus area. Then he caught Josef Stalin's attention with a book on party history in the area.

Directly Under Stalin

Brought to Moscow, he served directly under the dictator.

Executed with Beria were the following six veteran officers of the secret police, convicted as his confederates:

Vsevolod Merkulov, former minister of state security and more recently minister of state control.

V. G. Dekanazov, former deputy minister of foreign affairs during the war and more recently minister of internal affairs in the Georgian republic.

B. Z. Kobulov, former deputy minister of state security and more recently deputy minister of internal affairs.

In Charge of Probes

S. A. Goglidze, who was former chief of all the vast ministry of internal affairs concentration camps in the soviet far east.

P. Y. Meshik, until recently minister of internal affairs of the Ukraine.

L. E. Vlodzimirsky, former head of the department of the ministry of internal affairs in charge of particularly important investigations.

At least three of the executed

men, including Beria himself, Dekanazov, and Goglidze, were, like Stalin, natives of soviet Georgia.

It is likely that Kobulov also was a Georgian.

Beria lost in the race for supreme power following Stalin's death and paid the price for his failure. The government said he and his six accomplices committed high treason, organized an anti-soviet plot, terrorism, and counter revolutionary work. All pleaded guilty, it was announced.

The court's statement said:

"The court established that the beginning of the criminal, treasonable activity of L. P. Beria and the establishment by him of



Koniev [left] and Shvernik

secret connections with foreign intelligence services went back to the time of the civil war when, in 1919, L. P. Beria, while in Baku, committed treason, having occupied the post of secret agent in the intelligence services of the counter-revolutionary Mussavet government in Azerbaijan, which acted under the control of British intelligence organs.

"Affiliated with British"

"In 1920, L. P. Beria, while in Georgia, again committed treason by establishing secret connections with the police of the Georgian Menshevik government which was also affiliated to a section of the British intelligence service.

"Having become minister of internal affairs of the U. S. S. R.



Merkulov [left] and Dekanazov

In March 1953, the accused L. P. Beria was preparing to seize power and began stepping up the promotion of participants in his conspiratorial group to leading posts in the central apparatus of the MVD [secret police] as well as in its local organs.

"L. P. Beria and his accomplices persecuted all honest workers of the MVD who refused to fulfill the criminal orders on the conspirators."

In the period from Stalin's death till his arrest last June, 112 days later, Beria was No. 2 man in the soviet union. He was Premier Malenkov's first deputy. In this capacity he exercised broad influence over all soviet policy.

From the end of the war he ran all soviet atomic weapons development and was responsible more than any one man for soviet success in developing the atom bomb and the hydrogen weapon, the soviet union announced only a few weeks after his fall.

Within a few hours after the official declaration that Stalin was dead, Beria's ministry of internal affairs armies took over the entire center of Moscow. They held it in their grip until Stalin was buried four days later.

Beria spoke along with Malenkov and Foreign Minister Molotov at Stalin's funeral. He used the occasion to "recommend" Malenkov to the soviet peoples. He spoke as a king maker. He probably was.