



**Death of Stalin:
The Soviet Union Central
Committee**
Historical Crisis

Pioneer Valley Model United Nations

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Welcome

Hello delegates, and welcome to the Death of Stalin Committee! This committee is a historical crisis reenacting the internal strife inside the USSR that followed Joseph Stalin's death in 1953.¹ In this committee, delegates will assume the roles of politicians, military commanders, and communist party leaders in the USSR.

The committee begins in March 1953, immediately after Joseph Stalin's death. With the Cold War ongoing, you must choose a new General Secretary to lead the USSR through any future crises and lead the Communist Party by upholding the Marxist-Leninist doctrine on which the Communist System is based.

Aside from choosing a new General Secretary, this committee faces several other questions, chief among these being what to do about the policy of police terror, repression, and totalitarianism which Stalin implemented.¹ Should this doctrine continue? Or is a “de-Stalinization” needed to secure the future of communism? Will the death of Stalin lead to another Great Purge?

Additionally, there are growing calls for industrial and agricultural reform. Some see this as saving the Soviet Union, but others view it as abandoning the principles of Communism. Will the Soviet Union undertake drastic structural reforms to its economy? Or will it stay the course risking stagnation? Can the Soviet leaders find a middle ground?

With the USSR the world's leading communist power in the ongoing Cold War, domestic issues are not the only things this committee must consider. The question of how the USSR should act on the international stage looms large. Will Stalin's death thaw the hostility with Western powers? What stance will Moscow take towards its fellow Communist nations in Eastern Europe?

As politicians jockey for influence in Moscow, the future of the Soviet Union, communism, and the world all depend on the decisions you make. Delegates will need every ounce of diplomacy, deceit, political maneuvering, and military might that they have if they want to shape Soviet communism in their image.

Introduction to the Chairs

Chair: Zach Gale

Welcome to PVMUN V! My name is Zach Gale, and I am your Chair for the Death of Stalin. I am a senior at UMass Amherst, majoring in Accounting in the Isenberg School of Management. I've been doing Model UN since Middle School, and I've served on staff at each of the last two PVMUN Conferences. Last year, I served as Undersecretary-General of Crisis for UMUN III (which included responsibility for ad-hoc as well), and received Honorable Delegate at FCMUN XVI. Outside of MUN, I like to play tennis, softball, ski, watch movies, read, and follow football, college football, baseball, and UMass hockey. I wish you all the best of luck; you're going to need it. Your country is counting on you.

Cordially,

Zach Gale

Co-Chair: Shreyas Donti

Greetings delegates! My name is Shreyas Donti, and I will be your co-chair for this committee! I am currently a senior at UMass Amherst, studying Computer Science & Electrical Engineering, two majors very far from Model UN! I've been doing Model UN since middle school, and I've served as Chair, Crisis Director, Crisis Staff, and even Delegate of many conferences, including FCMUN XIV where I received a Best Delegate award. I've also previously served as the Secretary-General of PVMUN II & III, and am returning now to PVMUN V as a Co-Chair! Although my background may be in STEM, I've found Model UN to be the perfect place to

sharpen my communication skills, make new acquaintances, and learn more about history and politics, and I hope you will find one these things as you take part in our committee, all while fighting for the glory of the Motherland!

Best,

Shreyas Donti

Introduction to the Crisis Director

Crisis Director: Daniel Muller

Hello Delegates! My name is Daniel Muller, and I am your Crisis Director for this committee! I am a sophomore at UMass Amherst, majoring in Political Science and Economics with a minor in Portuguese, and I am also the current treasurer for UMass MUN. This is my second year in UMass MUN and my first time being a crisis director. Outside of MUN, I love playing soccer, reading, drawing, map-making, and swimming. I am also a volunteer firefighter for the Amherst Student Fire Department. I am looking forward to meeting all of you and hope to see some devious scheming in committee!

Good Luck,

Daniel Muller

Special Mechanics

During this committee, delegates will have access to two special mechanics to replicate both the “purges” that the Soviet Union was notorious for, as well as the election of a new General Secretary to replace Stalin as leader of the nation.

Purging

At any point when the chair is taking motions, a delegate may accuse another delegate of treason and call for a vote on expelling them from the party. Following this, the committee will immediately enter a “purge moderated caucus” without a vote. The procedure will be as follows: the accuser will have 1 minute to speak → the accused will have 1 minute to defend themselves → the committee will vote on whether the accused is guilty. If a simple majority finds the accused guilty, they are “purged”. Their character will be killed, as is befitting of anyone who betrays communism, and the delegate will be given a new character at the following notes cycle. Following a “purge moderated caucus,” the committee will resume taking motions as normal.

If a minister is purged or killed through other means, their deputy will assume the position along with all the powers the position holds (for example, if the Minister for Internal Affairs is purged, the Deputy Minister for Internal Affairs takes his title and portfolio powers).

Electing a General Secretary

To elect a new General Secretary, you must submit a directive nominating a delegate. If the resolution passes **with a 2/3 majority**, the nominated delegate is now the new General Secretary. This is a powerful position, so choose wisely!

Portfolio Powers of the General Secretary

The General Secretary may unilaterally submit directives to the dais. Any resolution that the General Secretary unilaterally submits will automatically pass unless a **2/3 majority** of the committee votes to override it during the voting procedure.

If at any point a resolution submitted by the General Secretary fails to pass, this will be seen as a lack of confidence in their leadership, and they lose the title of General Secretary and a new one may be chosen.

If the General Secretary is purged, they lose the title of General Secretary and the Committee may choose a new one.

History of the Topic

Stalin's Rise

Following the death of Vladimir Lenin, the father of Russian communism and first leader of the USSR, in 1924¹, the Soviet Union faced a brief but brutal power struggle. Through a series of cunning moves and strategic alliances, Joseph Stalin forced his opponents, including Leon Trotsky, out of the party, establishing himself as the General Secretary of the Soviet Union.² Having gained total control over the Soviet Union, Stalin enacted two major policies: “Socialism in one country”, or the idea that communism needed to be secure in Russia before it could spread across the world, and the abandonment of Lenin’s quasi-capitalist New Economic Policy in favor of headlong state-organized industrialization.¹ The latter of these policies would have profound and devastating effects, as it saw the mass collectivization of agriculture and the killing or imprisonment of farmers who resisted Stalin’s policies. This collectivization and large-scale murder of farmers led to widespread famine, which killed over 10 million peasants.¹ Stalin did, however, succeed in industrializing the previously largely rural and underdeveloped nation.¹

Stalin still sought to cement his grip over the nation, however. In late 1934, he secretly orchestrated the assassination of a potential rival, Sergey Kirov.¹ Stalin then used the murder as an excuse to begin his first “great purge” of the Communist Party. With the help of his secret police, the NKVD, Stalin accused numerous high-ranking politicians, industrial managers, and military leaders of treason and, in a series of show trials, sentenced them to death.¹ These purges quickly spread to all sectors of soviet life, with neighbors accusing neighbors in an attempt to save themselves. The government of the USSR tortured and killed tens of millions of Soviet

¹ Britannica, “Joseph Stalin”

² History Matters, “Why Didn’t Trotsky Take Over the USSR”

citizens.¹ While Stalin himself would eventually end the purge, he cemented a culture of paranoia and fear for the remainder of his rule.

The Great Patriotic War

In 1941, the Soviet Union suddenly faced a new, external threat when Hitler invaded the nation, dragging the USSR into World War Two. Stalin was quick to assume the role of supreme commander in chief.¹ German forces drove deep into Russia, pushing to the gates of Moscow. As winter came, the tide began to turn. With the successful defense of Moscow in 1941 and victory at Stalingrad the following winter, Stalin's Red Army began pushing the invaders back (due in part to supplies from the Lend-Lease Act).³ With the prospect of Soviet capitulation over, Stalin began meeting with American president Franklin D. Roosevelt and British prime minister Winston Churchill to lay out plans for the post-war world.¹ He secured Soviet overlordship of much of Eastern Europe through the establishment of a series of puppet states.

The war as a whole would finally end on August 6, 1945, when the US dropped an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima, followed by a second on July 26th in Nagasaki.⁴ On the same day, Soviet troops invaded Manchuria, capturing Japan's continental holdings.⁵ Though the war was over, the sheer power displayed by the bombs terrified the Soviet Union. Four years later, the Soviet Union would complete and successfully test its own atomic bomb.⁶ For the first time in history, the world's two superpowers could wipe humanity off the map at the press of a button. The Cold War had begun.

³ Britannica, "Eastern Front"

⁴ National Archive Museum, "Atomic Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki"

⁵ Imperial War Museums, "Soviet Invasion of Manchuria"

⁶ History Matters, "How Did the USSR Get Their Nukes?"

Opening of the Cold War

Following the defeat of the Axis powers, allies quickly turned against each other, and an “iron curtain” fell across Europe, dividing it into a capitalist, US-aligned West and a communist, USSR-aligned East. Stalin quickly painted the West as the new ideological enemy, launching another purge, this time targeting anything or anyone accused of supporting the West.¹

As he grew older, Stalin’s paranoia and suspicion deepened. At his command, countless party members and Soviet citizens disappeared at the hands of the NKVD, often in the middle of the night. This would ultimately climax in the 1953 purge of most of the doctors in Moscow.¹ Ironically, this would be Stalin's undoing, as on March 5th of that year Stalin suffered a massive stroke in the middle of the night.¹ Without competent medical aid, he died in his sleep.

Now, on March 6th 1953, this committee is called to choose Stalin’s successor, as well as deal with the issues plaguing the Soviet Union.

Character Positions

Georgy Malenkov

Faction: Anti-reform (political), pro-reform (economic)

Georgy Malenkov made his name as one of Stalin's closest supporters, deeply involved in the Great Purges of the 1930s. During World War Two, Stalin chose him as a member of the State Defense Committee, which was responsible for directing the soviet war effort, making him one of the five most powerful men in the nation. He oversaw military aircraft production, as well as the Soviet effort to develop an atomic bomb. After the war, Malenkov became deputy prime minister and second secretary of the central committee. These positions put him just below Stalin in the Soviet hierarchy, and he is widely regarded as the most likely heir to Stalin.

Malenkov is a pragmatist at heart, believing that science and engineering talent were more important than ideological purity. Due to his experience in the Soviet atomic bomb program, he witnessed firsthand the destruction that nuclear weapons are capable of. This led him to push for peaceful coexistence with the West and a reduction in nuclear arms. While opposed to any political reform, Malenkov is pushing for the USSR to refocus production away from heavy industry (such as the creation of industrial or military machinery) and towards consumer goods.⁷

Vyacheslav Molotov

Faction: anti-reform

For nearly three decades, Molotov was Stalin's most faithful supporter. He promoted Stalin's efforts to create a highly centralized "command economy" during the 1930s and aided Stalin's purging of political rivals. Stalin, recognizing Molotov's bureaucratic skills, made him chair of the Council of People's Commissars in 1930 to oversee the governmental bureaucracy during this period of internal upheaval. Molotov was also deeply involved with Stalin's Great Purge of the Communist Party in the later 1930s, cosigning arrest warrants and execution orders that sometimes contained thousands of names. Molotov never wavered in his conviction that Stalin's policies, which murdered several million Soviet citizens and inflicted enormous hardship on the country, were necessary for the defense of the Soviet Union against its capitalist enemies. In May 1939, Molotov suddenly replaced Maksim Maksimovich Litvinov as people's commissar of foreign affairs. In this position, he negotiated the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which established a nonaggression deal between Germany and the Soviet Union, as well as secretly divided Eastern Europe between the two powers. By 1949, however, Molotov was losing Stalin's favor. Stalin ordered the arrest of Molotov's wife, and when the Central Committee rubber-stamped the arrest, Molotov did not defend her and abstained from voting rather than violate party discipline. In March 1949, he was replaced as foreign minister, and in 1952, Stalin sharply criticized Molotov in a speech to the politburo. Molotov probably would have been one of the principal victims of a

⁷ Britannica, "Georgy Maksimilianovich Malenkov"

new blood purge that Stalin was preparing, but he was saved by the dictator's death on March 4, 1953. Immediately after Stalin's death, however, Molotov was restored as Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Molotov remains adamantly loyal to Stalinism, despite his temporary fall from grace. Obsessed with ideological purity and adherence to communist principles, he absolutely opposes any reforms to the economy or political system. On foreign affairs, Molotov refuses to work with the West, seeing them as an evil that the Soviet Union will eventually destroy, even if that means another world war.⁸

Nikita Khrushchev

Faction: Pro-reform

While he may not be as internationally recognized as Malenkov or Beriya, Nikita Khrushchev is no doubt one of the powerhouses of Soviet Politics. His rise began when Joseph Stalin's close associate, Lazar M. Kaganovich, secretary general of the Ukrainian Party's Central Committee, recognized his dedicated and thorough work by choosing the young Khrushchev to accompany him as a nonvoting delegate to the 14th Party Congress in Moscow. For the next four years, Khrushchev was active as a party organizer. By 1933 he had become second secretary of the Moscow Regional Committee. During the early 1930s Khrushchev consolidated his hold on the Moscow party ranks. After the war, Khrushchev was made first secretary of the Ukrainian Communist Party, where he restored the civil administration of the region and rebuilt the region. In 1949, Stalin called him back to Moscow, where he took over his old job as head of the Moscow City Party and was concurrently appointed as Secretary of the Central Committee. Thanks to his stints as head of the Moscow City Party, Khrushchev has shaped much of the Communist Party's middle management. Khrushchev therefore has allies spread across Moscow and Ukraine, giving him firm control of the party machinery.⁹

Policywise, Khrushchev believes in the superiority of Communism, and has said it is only a matter of time before it would destroy the Capitalist system for good. He is an expert in agriculture and mining, and desires to "overtake the West" in food production by initiating massive programs to put vast tracts of virgin lands in Kazakhstan and Siberia to agricultural use with the help of urban volunteers. On the industrial front, Khrushchev is willing to relax military production to allow a wider array of consumer goods to improve the soviet standard of living. Finally, Khrushchev seeks a "de-Stalinization" of soviet politics, relaxing censorship, allowing some criticism of the government so that it can improve, and ending the culture of fear, purges, and political violence.¹⁰

⁸ EBSCO, "Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Molotov"

⁹ Britannica, "Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev"

¹⁰ PBS, "Nikita Khrushchev"

Marshall Georgy Zhukov

Faction: Military

Beloved by both the army and the populace, Georgy Zhukov is the greatest hero of the Soviet Union for his role in winning the Second World War. When the Germans invaded the Soviet Union, he organized the defense of Leningrad and was shortly thereafter appointed commander in chief of the western front. He successfully defended Moscow and organized the massive counteroffensive that drove the German army out of Russia. In recognition of his achievements, Zhukov was named deputy commissar of defense and first deputy commander in chief of Soviet armed forces in August 1942. He became the chief member of Joseph Stalin's personal supreme headquarters and figured prominently in the planning or execution of almost every major engagement in the war, including the famous siege of Stalingrad, the Battle of Kursk, and the retaking of Ukraine. In April 1945, he personally commanded the final assault on Berlin and then continued to serve as the commander of the peacetime Soviet occupation force, while also serving as the Soviet representative on the Allied Control Commission for Germany. Upon Zhukov's return to Moscow in 1946, however, his extraordinary popularity caused Stalin to see him as a threat. Stalin assigned him to a series of relatively obscure regional commands. However, since Stalin's death, the new political leaders of the USSR have named him deputy minister of defense in an attempt to secure the support of the Army, making him the de facto leader of the Soviet military, despite Nikolay Bulganin being the nominal minister of defense.

Zhukov is first and foremost a military man. His priority is to maintain the strength and influence of the Red Army. As a proponent of a strong national defense, he will insist upon ensuring that the military has no shortage of resources. Additionally, Zhukov seeks to make the military more autonomous of the civilian government, as well as remove political commissars from it. Such drastic reforms may be difficult, however, and any military-wide moves will likely require Zhukov to oust Bulganin and become minister of defense.¹¹

Leonid Brezhnev

Faction: Anti-reform

On the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939, Brezhnev was selected for the newly created post of Secretary for the Defense Industry in his region, responsible for overseeing the transition of local plants for possible war production. In 1941, following the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, he volunteered for military service and served in the role of a political officer. By war's end, he was a major general and chief of the Political Department of the Fourth Ukrainian Front. He saw limited military combat service in the Black Sea, Caucasus, and Ukraine regions. Following the war, he became party head of the Zaporizhzhia region in Ukraine (1946-1947) and then held the same post in the Dnipropetrovsk region. His primary task was to oversee the economic reconstruction of the war-torn lands. Brezhnev made his record as a loyal party administrator who provided steady leadership and fulfilled the responsibilities assigned to him, steadily rising in the Communist Party apparatus to higher positions. At age forty-three,

¹¹ Britannica, "Georgy Zhukov"

Brezhnev was selected as first secretary of the Moldavian Republic Communist Party and worked there from 1950 to 1952. He then rose to national party positions in late 1952, with his election to the Communist Party Central Committee, the Party Secretariat, and (as a candidate member) the Communist Party Presidium. Scholars often interpret this advancement as part of Joseph Stalin's preparations to purge the older party leadership in favor of new and younger subordinates. Brezhnev, in his mid-forties, apparently was being groomed for new leadership responsibilities, but Stalin's death proved a significant setback to his career.

Policy-wise, Brezhnev opposes any reform, as a firm supporter of Stalin's policies. Furthermore, he seeks political and economic stability, even at the expense of potential economic growth.¹²

Marshall Nikolai Bulganin

Faction: Military

Described by Time magazine as "a bureaucrat in marshal's uniform"¹³, Bulganin began his career in the secret police. He was soon after made manager of Moscow's leading electrical-equipment factory, where he earned a reputation as an outstanding administrator. His talent set him on a rising track to the upper levels of Soviet government, including serving as chairman of the Soviet Union's state bank (1938–41), deputy premier of the Soviet Union (1938–41), and a full member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (1939). During the war, Bulganin was a member of Stalin's wartime cabinet, the State Defense Committee. After the war, he succeeded Stalin as minister of the Armed Forces, rising to the rank of Marshall. Since his death, Bulganin has assumed the role of Minister of Defense.

Policy-wise, Bulganin seeks to maintain his power as leader of the armed forces as well as expand his personal influence in government. He knows, though, that while the military may officially answer to him, the hearts and minds of the common soldier lie with Zhukov, a fact that may not only disrupt his plans but also pose a future threat to his power.¹⁴

Lavrentiy Beria

Faction: NKVD

Lavrentiy Beria is one of the cruelest leaders in a regime known for its brutality. He first reached a position of power by working his way up the law enforcement organization in the Soviet republic of Georgia. In 1938, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin summoned him to Moscow to work as the deputy to the chief of the Soviet secret police (NKVD). Within months, the chief had disappeared, and Beria had replaced him. A cruel and sadistic man, Beria's controlling nature made him an extremely effective if ruthless administrator. As one colleague remembered, an order from Beria was a matter of life and death. It was no surprise then that Stalin made Beria head of the Soviet atomic bomb program on August 7, 1945, the day after the U.S. dropped the

¹² EBSCO, "Leonid Brezhnev"

¹³ Time, "Foreign News: New Premier: Bulganin"

¹⁴ Britannica, "Nikita Aleksandrovich Bulganin"

atomic bomb on Hiroshima. His years in the secret police as well as his firsthand experience purging political rivals made him a deeply suspicious and paranoid man, and even distrustful of his own intelligence organization.¹⁵ As head of the NKVD, Beria supervised purges of the police bureaucracy itself and administered the vast network of labour camps set up throughout the country. Currently, Beria is the Minister of Internal Affairs, making him the head of all soviet intelligence and the second most powerful man in the USSR and the second most likely heir to Stalin after Malenkov.

Beria serves only one man: himself. He is willing to do anything to achieve power, whether by offering reform or purging anyone who strays from the party line. A ruthless, immoral opportunist, ideology does not matter to him. The only thing that does is his dream of replacing Stalin as the undisputed dictator of the Soviet Union.¹⁶

Sergei Kruglov

Faction: NKVD

On December 29, 1945, Kruglov replaced Lavrentiy Beria as the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs (later renamed the Minister of Internal Affairs) and head of the NKVD, a move widely considered to be Stalin's attempt to limit Beria's influence. He remained in this position until after Stalin's death in March 1953, when the Soviet security services were reorganized again. As a part of this reorganization, Beria resumed his role as Minister of Internal Affairs, demoting Kruglov to Deputy, a significant blow.

Policy-wise, Kruglov is Beria's chief rival in the intelligence community and seeks to regain his position as Minister of Internal Affairs.¹⁷

Ivan Serov

Faction: NKVD

Ruthless. Efficient. Professional. These are all words that have been used to describe Ivan Serov. He began his career in the Communist Party with the Red Army, where he was quickly drafted into the NKVD as a political commissar and intelligence operative. Serov is supposed to have held a leading post in this body and to have taken a hand in preparing the "Yezhov Purge" of the Party and government apparatus. Later, when Yezhov became People's Commissar of Internal Affairs (1936), and the purge got under way, Serov was appointed chief of a special section within the Main Administration of State Security of the NKVD, with responsibility for providing support and services to the "Special Secret Political Branch for State Security." After the Soviet occupation of eastern Poland and its subsequent incorporation into the Ukrainian and Belorussian republics, Serov is described as having played a major role in the mass liquidation and deportation of Polish officers and men taken prisoner by the Russians. His next assignment consisted of the "Sovietization" of the three Baltic states (1940-41), followed by similar

¹⁵ PBS, "Russian Officials"

¹⁶ Britannica, "Lavrentiy Beria"

¹⁷ Wikipedia, "Sergey Kruglov"

atrocities among the German settlers on the Volga. Serov's activities during World War II are far from clear, with accounts hiding more than they reveal. At some point during the war, Serov may have received a high post within an NKVD organization with counter-intelligence and security functions in the Armed Forces. During the critical period in 1944 and 1945, when Poland was transformed into a Soviet puppet and physical buffer zone, Serov is reliably reported to have directed Soviet intelligence and counter-intelligence activities in Poland, giving him a strong influence in the country. In June of 1945, he was moved to East Germany for the same role, expanding his network across Eastern Europe. Currently, little is known about the exact position Serov holds, other than that he remains part of the NKVD and will undoubtedly continue pulling strings in the shadows.

Policy-wise, Serov is a staunch conservative who opposes reform and views the younger generation as weaklings who risk straying away from the virtues of communism. A spy in the truest sense of the word, he holds great influence in the NKVD and across Eastern Europe, with a dense web of contacts, spies, and intelligence operatives.¹⁸

Lazar Kaganovich

Faction: Anti-reform

As a young Jewish shoemaker, Kaganovich became involved in the Bolshevik wing of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party in 1911 and in 1920 was made head of the Soviet government of Tashkent. His success in consolidating Soviet rule in Turkestan brought him to the attention of Stalin, who put him in charge of supervising the local party organizations and, in 1924, managing party patronage. His patronage work helped Stalin to defeat his political rivals, and his high administrative competence led Kaganovich to rise quickly in the party administration. In 1930 he became a full member of the Politburo, forming one of the core members of Stalin's "post-Purge" Politburo. Kaganovich is one of the most influential men in the Soviet economy, being Minister of Transportation, Heavy Industry, Fuel Industry, and Petroleum Industry.

Policy-wise, Kaganovich fiercely opposes any concessions to the peasantry or the relaxation of Stalin's iron grip over the country. Given his numerous ministerial positions, Kaganovich seeks to continue the Soviet Economy's emphasis on heavy industry, at the expense of consumer goods. He also supports the further collectivization of agriculture.¹⁹

Anastas Mikoyan

Faction: pro-reform

In the power struggle that followed Lenin's death in 1924, Mikoyan supported Stalin, whom he had first met in 1919. As People's Commissar for External and Internal Trade from 1926, he imported ideas from the West, such as the manufacture of canned goods.^[6] In 1935, he was elected to the Politburo and was one of the first Soviet leaders to pay goodwill trips to the

¹⁸ Central Intelligence Agency, "Biography of Ivan Aleksandrovich Serov"

¹⁹ Britannica, "Lazar Moiseyevich Kaganovich"

United States to boost economic cooperation. During the Great Purges, Mikoyan was one of the few Soviet politicians to favor leniency towards those persecuted, a fact that led Stalin to distrust him. After the war, Stalin considered launching a new purge against Mikoyan, Molotov, and several other Party leaders. Consequently, Mikoyan gradually began to fall out of favor and was harshly attacked by Stalin at the Central Committee plenum after the 19th Party Congress in October 1952. Stalin's plans never came to fruition, however, as he died before he could put them into motion.

Policy-wise, Mikoyan strongly supports a “de-Stalinization” of soviet politics, hoping to end the political persecution and mass purges that have historically gripped the country. Mikoyan recognizes the need to reform the economic structure of the nation, including the opening of the USSR to foreign trade and goods.²⁰

Bogdan Kobulov

Faction: NKVD

After joining the secret police in 1922, he held only minor posts until 1931, when Lavrentiy Beria recruited him for the Secret Political Department of the KGB. Since then, he's served as Beria's right-hand man. In December 1938, after Beria took control of the NKVD, he transferred Kobulov to Moscow as head of the newly created Investigative Directorate of the NKVD. He was in charge of major investigations, including the mass executions of thousands of Polish prisoners in the Katyn woods in 1940. He was also in charge of the case against Beria's predecessor, Nikolai Yezhov. From 1939, he was a candidate member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. After 1945, he was transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Trade, but was brought back to the security organs within the Department of Internal Affairs after Stalin's death in March 1953.

Policy-wise, Kobulov is fiercely loyal to his patron, Beria, and recognizes that his fate is likely tied to the other man's, for better or for worse.²¹

Marshall Aleksandr Vasilevsky

Faction: Military

By mid-1937, Stalin's Great Purge eliminated a significant number of senior military commanders, vacating many positions on the General Staff. In desperate need of replacements, Vasilevsky was appointed to the General Staff in October 1937 to be “responsible for operational training of senior officers,” beginning his rise. During World War Two, he coordinated counteroffensives against the Nazi invaders outside Moscow twice (1941 and 1942) and Leningrad. He was also an architect of the 1943 Stalingrad offensive that began pushing the German Army out of the USSR. After the war, Vasilevsky served on the Central Committee and was one of the most prominent figures in the Soviet Military.

²⁰ Wikipedia, “Anastas Mikoyan”

²¹ Wikipedia, “Bogdan Kobulov”

Policy-wise, Vasilevsky wants to maintain the military's prestige and influence in Soviet political life.²²

Marshall Kliment Voroshilov

Faction: Military

A Bolshevik dating all the way back to 1903, Voroshilov participated in the Russian civil war following the Bolshevik takeover in Russia, and distinguished himself as an able commander. While defending Tsaritsyn (now Stalingrad) during the summer of 1919, he became closely associated with Stalin, who was then the political commissar in that region. In 1925 Stalin made him people's commissar for defense, and in 1926 he became a member of the key Central Committee. In 1935 he was made a marshal in the Red Army. Held responsible for the initial Soviet defeats in World War II, Voroshilov was removed from his post as defense commissar. He was nevertheless appointed to the committee for state defense (June 1941), which assumed all the powers of government after the Germans invaded the Soviet Union, was made commander of the northwest armies (July 10, 1941), and was charged with the defense of Leningrad. Despite his determined efforts, Voroshilov failed to prevent the Germans from blockading Leningrad. Although stripped of his command in September 1941, he continued to serve in lesser positions throughout the war. From 1945–47, acting as Stalin's representative, he supervised the establishment of the communist regime in Hungary. After the war, Voroshilov, as an expert on military affairs, continued to sit on the Politburo, but his role and responsibility gradually diminished, and by 1953 may have fallen into Stalin's disfavour.

Policy-wise, Voroshilov seeks to restore his name as a military commander and strengthen both his personal power and the power of the military as a whole.²³

²² War History Online, "Alexander Mikhailovich Vasilevsky"

²³ Britannica, "Kliment Yefrimovich Voroshilov"

Questions for the Committee to Address

1. Who Will Be the Next General Secretary?

With Stalin's death, the USSR now lacks a head of state during one of the most important and dangerous moments in its history. Many candidates are eager to fill the power vacuum, and the looming power struggle could lead to violence and bloodshed not seen since the Russian Civil War. Don't worry, however; this issue is not expected to be solved immediately, but rather is an overarching issue that is intended to loom over the committee, influencing the other decisions delegates make.

2. What to Do With the Economy?

The USSR has emerged from the Great Patriotic War as the world's second biggest economy and an industrial titan. This has been in large part due to Stalin's abandonment of Lenin's Quasi-Capitalist policies in favor of forced industrialization¹ as well as the industrial demands of war. Two issues could derail the USSR's rapid growth, however. The first pertains to Soviet industry. Currently, the economy is focused on heavy industry, such as the production of machinery, military equipment, and steel.⁶ This is at the expense of consumer goods. While during the war this was seen as a necessary sacrifice, now that peace has been achieved, the Soviet citizenry has begun growing. This has been made worse by the fact that the Western powers have begun churning out their own consumer goods, leading their citizens' quality of life to improve much faster than the citizens in Eastern Europe. However, leaning too heavily towards consumer goods would weaken the military, and could prove dangerous should war break out with NATO.

Additionally, the USSR has had a long history of recurrent famines, in large part due to the policy of collectivized agriculture, or the practice of small, privately owned farms being nationalized and combined together to create larger ones.¹ With a rapidly growing population and an increasingly industrialized economy, the food supply is beginning to strain. Agricultural reform may alleviate this issue, but many see the abandonment of collectivization as a betrayal of the communist economic system.

3. How Should the Soviet Union Reckon with the Legacy of Stalin?

Stalin's reign was marked by frequent nationwide purges and mass paranoia, a culture that was upheld by an extensive and brutal secret police state.¹ Now that Stalin is gone, some hope that the nation can move away from this culture of fear. Others, however, want to use fear as a tool to secure their own power, and seek to enact their own purges to reshape the nation in their image.

Power Structure



The diagram above is the approximate power structure of the Central Committee, the ruling body of the Soviet Union, and the roles of its members following Stalin's death. Please note that due to the USSR's habit of institutional reorganization, frequent use of ad-hoc committees, and high turnover in leadership, this structure has been somewhat simplified.

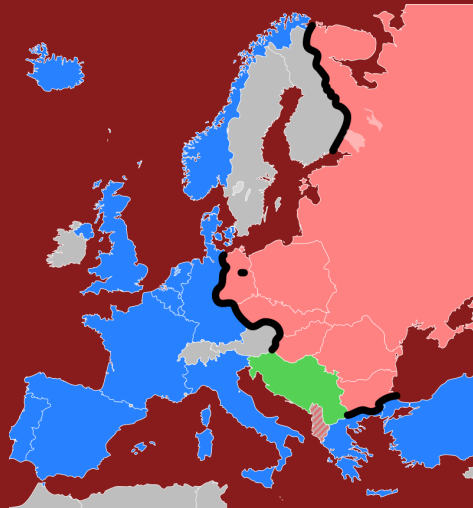
Additionally, while the NKVD was technically replaced by the MGD and MVD in 1946, we have decided to continue referring to both organizations as the NKVD and act as if they were a single body to prevent confusion and because the two repeatedly merged and resplit over time.

If a minister is purged or killed through any other means, their deputy will assume the position along with all the powers the position holds (for example, if the Minister for Internal Affairs is purged, the deputy minister for internal affairs takes his title).

Maps

Europe 1953

NATO is pictured in blue; the USSR and its puppet states are pictured in red



USSR Internal Map



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