

# SECRET

Report of Interrogation : No. 5856 of

9 November 1945  
I/O : Capt. HALLE

P/W : HILGER, Gustav  
Rank : Counsellor of Embassy  
Unit : Foreign Office  
Capt'd : 19 May 1945, Salzburg.

Veracity : Believed reliable.

Report : Answer to Periodic Intelligence Questionnaire; MIS Sep-Oct 1945.

Question USSR # 4: How have members of the Supreme Soviet been replaced since the last election (e.g. those killed in war?).

Answer # 4 : In his report of 1 Nov 45 about the "Constitution of the USSR", informant explained that the Supreme Soviet of the USSR with its two chambers, the Union Council and the Council of Nationalities, forms a body which consists of about 1500 delegates. It is impossible to determine how many of these actively participated in the war and how many became casualties. The Soviet government did not announce the names of casualties, except for a few prominent military leaders. Informant doubts that many members of the Supreme Soviet were actually drafted for active military service. It is more probably that most of them were used in their own professions, like the majority of the government employees whom informant knows personally and whose names frequently appeared in the Russian press during the war. This would prove that they were deferred from military service because of their indispensability.

But even if there should have been any losses among the members of the Supreme Soviet, their importance should not be overestimated. The elections which are to take place next spring will find replacements for these men. Besides, none of these men would have any considerable political influence. One must not forget that although the Supreme Soviet according to the Constitution is the highest government authority, it is really only a decorative forum, a kind of parliament, and must not be considered an instrument of practical policy.

The determining bodies of the USSR are the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, the Central Committee of the Communist Party with its 71 regular members and as many candidates, the Council of the People's Commissariat consisting of 40 men, and the 9 men board of the Politburo. The only really deciding authority is the Politburo, to which the most important of the people's commissars belong.

News items in the Soviet press about certain activities of the Party and the government, as well as items about the participants of special events, like parades, banquets for foreign guests, etc. are evidence that all persons who played a determining role in the Party and the government before the outbreak of the war, are still in the saddle. One of the few exceptions is the secretary of the Party's Committee in Moscow, head of the political administration of the Red Army and delegate to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, A.S. Shscherbakov, who died a natural death in May 1945.

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