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THE PROMOTION OF GOLIKOV

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(Extract from the book, "The Soviet Army, edited by B.H. Liddell Hart) p. 1
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Introduction

In the latest list of Soviet military promotions, the most significant change would appear to be the elevation of Army General F.I. Golikov to the rank of Marshal of the Soviet Union. Golikov is Chief of the Main Political Administration of the Armed Forces, and if he continues to fill the job after his promotion, which seems to be a strong possibility,¹ the prestige and influence of the Political Administration will presumably increase in its never-ending struggle for extra leverage against those professional officers who may even now still be imbued with the ideals of Marshal Zhukov.

Never before in the Khrushchev era has the Main Political Administration been headed by a Marshal. F.F. Kuznetsov, who was the last Chief of the MPA under Stalin was a Colonel-General.² Kuznetsov was removed in the shake-up which followed Stalin's death. He was succeeded by another Colonel-General, A.S. Zheltov, but the latter in his turn was replaced in the purge which followed the ouster of Zhukov at the end of 1957. Zheltov was then followed in the MPA's top job (Pravda, January 10th, 1958) by Golikov, who at the time held the rank of Colonel-General.

According to Edward Stettinius Jr., who took part with Golikov in the lend-lease talks, the new Marshal is a "quiet, assured,

¹One reason for thinking so is that Golikov continued to head the MPA after his earlier promotion to Army General.

²Radio Liberty, Daily Information Bulletin, September 1, 1959.

firm and militarily skilled leader."³ The only set-back in his career (1956-57) coincided with the peak of Marshal Zhukov's influence, when Golikov was transferred from a key post as head of the Personnel Administration to command the Military Academy of the Armored Corps. But since 1958 his career has progressed steadily. He was promoted to Army General in 1959 (New York Times, May 24) and now at the age of about 60 (born 1900) he has attained the highest rank which the Red Army can offer. He may therefore be considered as a possible candidate for promotion to the post of Deputy Minister of Defence at some time during the next two or three years.

Parallel with the increasingly tight hold maintained by the Party over the armed forces as the numerical decline of the latter continues, the specific gravity of the Main Political Administration, with its huge propaganda machine and its hierarchy reaching down even to the smallest units,⁴ would appear to be markedly on the rise.

r.r.g.

³Biographic Directory of the USSR, Scarecrow Press, N.Y. 1958, p. 183.

⁴See J.M. Mackintosh, The Soviet Army, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1956, pp. 228-233.