

# Politburo<sup>©</sup>

A game of politics and purges  
in a totalitarian regime



for 5-10 players (playing time 15 minutes)

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Nova Suecia Games

<http://www.novasuecia.se>

Version 1.1

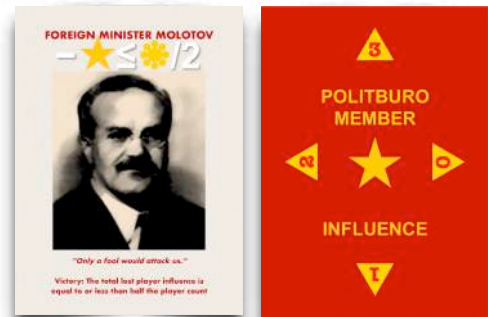
## Introduction

Our mother land needs you! The economy is bleeding and internal and external enemies are threatening us. The general secretary has stated that without an end to economic backwardness, the advanced countries will crush us. As members of the politburo, it is your responsibility to agree on a five-year plan and together drive its execution. The general secretary trusts you to set aside your personal objective and stand united - deviants will be purged!

## Setup

- Randomly take one each of the 10 politburo member cards and discard the rest. Silently read the victory condition and place the card face down with number 3 (influence level) pointing at yourself.
- Randomly assign a player to take the 1 general secretary card and the 3 execution cards the first turn. The general secretary leads the turn through the phases Plan, Execute and (if required) Purge.
- Place the rule card on the table and the 3 ministry cards Defence, Finance and Security next to it with the number 0 (ministry level) pointing to it.
- Both influence levels and ministry levels are changed by rotating or flipping the card accordingly.

### Minister face up and face down



### General secretary Ministry



## Objective

The game is played in as many rounds as there are players. Each player has a unique objective related to ministry levels (high = repressing and low = reforming) or influence levels (the higher, the better). Ties between equal levels are not broken, e.g. if all ministries end up on the same level, they are all both highest and lowest.

## Plan

The general secretary proposes one of the three ministries for the five-year-plan. On the count to three, all other members simultaneously signal their approval with a thumb up. A majority result takes the plan to the execution phase. (The general secretary has a casting vote in a tie.) Otherwise, the general secretary proposes another ministry. If two of the ministries are rejected, the third is automatically approved.

## Execute

The general secretary appoints three players to execute the plan and shuffles and deals execution cards to them. Each player secretly tucks in the card beneath the general secretary card face down with the selected execution ("repress" or "reform") pointing up. The general again shuffles the cards and presents the result.

A unanimous "repress" adds 2 to the ministry level and a unanimous "reform" subtracts 2, after which the turn ends. Otherwise, the general secretary replaces none, one or several members and repeats the execution. If a third execution is needed, he deals execution cards according to seats (card 1 to the left player etc.). If that fails too, the level changes only 1 according to the majority and a purge follows. Do not reveal the cards yet!



## Purge

The general secretary asks the three members participating in the last execution to purge. On the count to three, they simultaneously point to the one they suspect not voting with the majority (the "deviant"). Then the execution cards are revealed.

- If both non-deviants point out the deviant, the deviant loses 1 influence.
- If not, the member or members failing to point out the deviant lose 1 influence.

## End of game

The game ends when all players have played the general secretary once. If more than one player fulfills the victory condition, the player/s with the highest influence win. If no player does so, there is no winner.

## End game example (8 players):

Defence +1, Finance +1, Justice -1;

Bulganin, Kaganovich, Kirov and Zhdanov have lost 1 influence each.

- Bulganin attains his objective since Repress (2)  $\geq$  Reform (1) while Khrushchev fails for the same reason.
- Both Voroshilov and Kaganovich attain their objectives since no other ministries have higher levels than Defence (+1) and Finance (+1).
- Kirov attains his objective since no other ministry have a lower level than Justice (-1).
- Both Molotov and Zhdanov attain their objectives since the total lost influence (4) is equal to half of the players (4).
- Voroshilov and Molotov still have 3 influence and share the victory.

## Credits

Game design:	Nicholas Hjelmberg
Artwork:	Nicholas Hjelmberg
Production:	The Game Crafter
Game testers:	Magnus Anderlund, Samuel Hägg, Kristoffer Johansson, Stefan Malmquist, Henrik Strinning
Special thanks:	My wife Su-San Oh for having to listen to my endless historical and game-technical considerations