

= Nikolai Podgorny =

Nikolai Viktorovich Podgorny ( Russian : ?????? ? ? ?? ? ?????????? ?????? ? ????? ; IPA : [ n??k??laj ?v?ikt?r?v??t? p?d?gorn?j ] , Ukrainian : ?????? ?????????????? ?????????? ; 18 February [ O.S. 5 February ] 1903 ? 11 January 1983 ) was a Soviet statesman during the Cold War . He served as First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine from 1957 to 1963 and as Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet from 1965 to 1977 . He was replaced as Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet in 1977 by General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev . That same year he lost his seat in the Political Bureau ( Politburo ) and was forced to resign from active politics .

Podgorny was born in the city of Karlovka in 1903 to a Ukrainian working @-@ class family . He graduated in from a local worker 's school in 1926 , and in 1931 from the Kiev Technological Institute of Food Industry . He became a member of the All @-@ Union Communist Party ( bolsheviks ) in 1930 . Like his friend and ally Andrei Kirilenko , Podgorny climbed up the Soviet hierarchy through the industrial ladder ( delivering the production goals set by the bureaucrats in charge of the centrally planned economy ) . By 1953 he had become Second Secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine . After Anastas Mikoyan 's resignation , Podgorny was voted into office as Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet . After Premier Alexei Kosygin 's fall from favour Podgorny became the second most powerful figure in the Soviet Union until his removal as head of state in 1977 .

= = Early life = =

Podgorny was born on 18 February [ O.S. 5 February ] 1903 in Karlovka , Russian Empire , to a Ukrainian working @-@ class family . Podgorny started work at the age of 17 as a student at the mechanical workshops in Karlovka . After the Russian Revolution Podgorny became one of the founders of the Karlovka Komsomol . He served as a Secretary of the Komsomol from 1921 to 1923 . In 1926 Podgorny graduated from a local workers ' school , and then from the Kiev Technological Institute of Food Industry in 1931 . In 1930 , Podgorny became a member of the All @-@ Union Communist Party ( bolsheviks ) . Following his graduation Podgorny started working in the sugar industry . He was promoted to deputy chief engineer of Vinnytsia in 1937 and was promoted in 1939 as the chief engineer of the Kamenetz @-@ Podolsk Oblast sugar trusts . By the end of 1939 Podgorny had become Deputy People 's Commissar for Food Industry of the Ukrainian SSR . The next year Podgorny was appointed Deputy People 's Commissar for Food Industry of the Soviet Union .

= = Ukraine and national politics ( 1942 ? 1963 ) = =

Podgorny became the Director of the Moscow Technological Institute of Food Industry in 1942 , during the Great Patriotic War ( World War II ) . After the liberation of Ukraine from the hands of Nazi Germany , Podgorny reestablished Soviet control over Ukraine on the orders of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic ( Ukrainian SSR ) and the Soviet Government . In the post @-@ war years Podgorny regained his old office of Deputy People 's Commissar for Food Industry of the Ukrainian SSR , but was later appointed in 1946 as a Permanent Representative to the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR . In April 1950 he was made First Secretary of the Kharkiv Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine ( CPU ) . In 1953 Podgorny was elevated to Second Secretary of the Central Committee ( CC ) of the CPU . From 1957 to 1963 he was First Secretary of the CC of the CPU . In this role , Podgorny worked on reorganising and modernising the Ukrainian economy , which had been destroyed during the war years . He worked to increase the rate of industrial and agricultural production and to improve people 's welfare . He paid particular attention to improving party organisation and educating new cadres .

In 1960 Podgorny became a member of the Politburo ( Political Bureau ) and by 1963 had risen to prominence within the Soviet hierarchy as a member of the Secretariat of the Communist Party of

the Soviet Union ( CPSU ) . As a protégé and close companion of Nikita Khrushchev , he travelled with him to United Nations headquarters in 1960 . He acted as a Soviet emissary to Czechoslovakia , East Germany , Canada , and Yugoslavia . Podgorny 's beliefs were strongly influenced by Khrushchev , and under Leonid Brezhnev 's rule , Podgorny was one of the most liberal members within the Soviet leadership , even more liberal than Premier Alexei Kosygin .

Podgorny briefly fell out of Khrushchev 's favor in 1961 when he blamed bad corn yields in the Ukrainian SSR on " bad weather " . Khrushchev claimed the crops had been " stolen " and " pilfered " . However , in 1962 , Podgorny reported to Khrushchev that agricultural output had again increased : Under Podgorny 's leadership , the Ukrainian SSR had doubled Ukraine 's supply of grain to the state from the previous year . Because of his handling of agriculture , First World commentators saw Podgorny as one of Khrushchev 's many potential heirs . According to historian Ilya Zemtsov , the author of *Chernenko : The Last Bolshevik : The Soviet Union on the Eve of Perestroika* , Brezhnev began starting a conspiracy against Khrushchev when he found out that he had chosen Podgorny , and not himself , as his potential successor . The coup evidently took Podgorny by surprise , seeing that he left Moscow on 10 October , two days before the coup was initiated .

= = Head of state ( 1965 ? 1977 ) = =

= = = Appointment and the collective leadership = = =

During the 1964 ouster to remove Khrushchev as First Secretary and Premier , Podgorny and Brezhnev appealed to the Central Committee , blaming Khrushchev for economic failures and accusing him of voluntarism and immodest behavior . Influenced by Brezhnev and his allies , Politburo members voted to remove Khrushchev from office . In the aftermath of Khrushchev 's removal , a collective leadership was formed , headed by Brezhnev as First Secretary , Alexei Kosygin as head of government , and Anastas Mikoyan as head of state . Before becoming head of state , Podgorny served as the party 's Second Secretary , and was therefore in charge of the Party 's Organisational Division . In this capacity , Podgorny threatened Brezhnev 's position as First Secretary because the Organisational Division , if Podgorny chose so , could easily be turned into his own power base within the party . Brezhnev allied himself with Alexander Shelepin , the KGB chairman , to oppose both Podgorny and Kosygin .

Podgorny 's position was constantly threatened by Brezhnev and his allies . In an article in *Ekonomicheskaya Gazeta* from February 1965 , the newspaper criticised the Kharkiv Party organisation which Podgorny had previously headed , but also its management of the economy . By indirectly criticising Podgorny , the article raised doubts about his qualifications as a leading member of the Soviet leadership . Podgorny launched a counterattack in his 1965 speech in Baku , Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic , where he criticised the Soviet leadership 's heavy industrial policy . This , as it turned out , would be a move he would regret for life . Instead of offending just Brezhnev and Shelepin , he offended the whole conservative wing of the leadership . To make matters even worse for Podgorny , Mikhail Suslov , who had kept outside of the conflict , sided with Brezhnev , and called his views " revisionist " . Later in 1965 , Podgorny lost his seat in the Secretariat , and on 9 December 1965 he replaced Mikoyan as Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet . His removal from the Secretariat also signalled the end of his wish to assume the First Secretaryship .

The majority of Politburo members under Brezhnev were conservative communists . Even so , Podgorny remained one of the most liberal @-@ minded members in the Era of Stagnation . Other liberal @-@ minded Politburo members included Kosygin and Andrei Kirilenko . Factionalism within the Soviet leadership in the 1960s led Podgorny to become more active ; he held several speeches in Moscow and went on numerous state visits at the expense of Brezhnev and Kosygin 's popularity . There was speculation in Soviet society that Podgorny was trying to replace Kosygin as Premier , or even Brezhnev as General Secretary , due to his increasing presence in the late 1960s . The 24th

Party Congress , while reaffirming Brezhnev 's and Kosygin 's respective positions , made it clear that Podgorny had become a major player in Soviet politics . The collective leadership was eventually left powerless in the late 1970s when Brezhnev had close to full control over the Politburo .

= = = Diplomatic protocol = = =

In 1967 , just before the outbreak of the Six @-@ Day War , Podgorny delivered an intelligence report to Egyptian Vice President Anwar Sadat which claimed , falsely , that Israeli troops were massing along the Syrian border . That same year , he engaged in a dialogue with Pope Paul VI as part of the pontiff 's ostpolitik ; the result was greater openness for the Roman Catholic Church in Eastern Europe . In 1971 Podgorny went on two state visits , the first to the People 's Republic of China ( PRC ) and the second to North Vietnam ; Kosygin went on a visit to Canada while Brezhnev visited Yugoslavia . Podgorny frequently paid visits to North Vietnam during the Vietnam War to discuss Soviet @-@ Vietnamese foreign relations . In 1973 , Podgorny visited Finland and Mohammed Daoud Khan 's Afghanistan .

Brezhnev conspired to oust Podgorny as early as 1970 . The reason was simple : Brezhnev was third , while Podgorny was first in the ranking of Soviet diplomatic protocol . Since September 1970 Brezhnev tried to form an opposition in the Politburo to oust Podgorny . According to Time , " There was some speculation in Moscow " that if Brezhnev didn 't succeed in removing Podgorny he would establish a Council of State modelled after institutions found in , for example , East Germany ( Staatsrat ) , People 's Republic of Bulgaria and the Socialist Republic of Romania . The post of Chairman of the Council of State would give Brezhnev the top state and party job in the USSR . Brezhnev 's backers were unable , and didn 't even try , to remove Podgorny from the head of state post at the 1970 Central Committee plenum . Brezhnev could count on only five votes , while another seven Politburo members were opposed to granting Brezhnev more power ; removing Podgorny would in fact mean the end of the collective leadership .

While Brezhnev was plotting , Podgorny 's position within the Politburo grew stronger . Podgorny had been able to win support from the hardline communists due to Brezhnev 's liberal @-@ minded policy regarding Yugoslavia , military disarmament deals with the First World , and forcing East Germany into a concession with West Germany in the Berlin negotiations .

= = = Later tenure = = =

In the Politburo Podgorny could count on the support of Gennady Voronov and Petro Shelest . Podgorny was constantly in conflict with Kosygin over policy issues in the Politburo . When Podgorny and Kosygin actually agreed on something Brezhnev would find himself in the minority , and forced to follow their decisions . However , Podgorny was pleased about his position within the leadership , and even more pleased by the extension of powers given to the Supreme Soviet . As head of state , Podgorny saw little threat to his position , even if a Central Committee resolution from 1971 had called for the expansion of Party activities in the Soviets .

With Brezhnev 's position consolidated in the early 1970s , he used Podgorny to weaken Kosygin 's position as Chairman of the Council of Ministers by giving the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet some executive powers . With the help from Brezhnev Podgorny managed to make the Council of Ministers subordinate to the Presidium . However , these changes threatened Brezhnev , and Brezhnev would later order Konstantin Chernenko to take a look at the 1936 Soviet Constitution to find a way to weaken Podgorny 's position . As it turned out there were none , Podgorny 's position as head of state meant that he could in fact block any measures taken by Brezhnev to circumscribe his powers . Chernenko did come up with a solution , to make it law that the Party leader would also become the leader of the Government apparatus . The 1977 Soviet Constitution was drafted to weaken the position of Podgorny by making it law that the Party leader was in fact also leader of the Government . The draft which dealt with the leading role of the Party , and its clear supremacy , in Soviet society was approved by the Soviet leadership . The approval of the 1977 Soviet Constitution

is considered Podgorny 's death knell .

= = = Removal = = =

Podgorny 's removal from office in 1977 has become the most notable example of power transfer in the late Brezhnev Era . According to Robert Vincent Daniels , Podgorny was before his removal the second most powerful man in the Soviet Union , behind Brezhnev but ahead of Premier Kosygin . The post of Chairman of the Presidium had acquired more powers during his tenure , and had changed from a largely honorary office to the second most important office in the USSR . Though there were some Sovietologists who foresaw Podgorny 's fall , the decision to remove Podgorny from the Politburo took the world by surprise . On 24 May 1977 , a unanimous vote was taken by the Central Committee after Grigory Romanov proposed removing Podgorny from the Politburo . The vote seemed to have taken Podgorny by surprise , and immediately after the vote , he got up from his politburo seat to instead sit with the ordinary members . The Central Committee had however only voted him off the Politburo , and Podgorny still retained the position of Chairman of the Presidium . After his removal from the Politburo Podgorny 's name disappeared from Soviet media . The Soviet media told the Soviet people that he had retired due to his stance against détente and producing more consumer goods . Podgorny finally lost his Chairmanship of the Presidium on 16 June 1977 .

Due to his advanced age , Brezhnev was regarded as too old to carry out some of the functions of head of state . The Supreme Soviet , on Brezhnev 's orders , established the new post of First Deputy Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet , an office equivalent to the post of Vice President . Vasili Kuznetsov , at the age of 76 , was unanimously approved by the Supreme Soviet as First Deputy Chairman of the Presidium .

= = Retirement , death and recognition = =

Podgorny 's life after his resignation is not well documented . The last mention of him in any major Soviet media was his meeting with Urho Kekkonen , the President of Finland . There was never any explanation given , nor a denunciation of him , by the Soviet authorities . Podgorny retained his seat in the Supreme Soviet after his downfall . He was seen at the 61st anniversary reception of the October Revolution at the Grand Palace of the Kremlin in November 1978 by Tokichiro Uomoto , the Japanese Ambassador to the Soviet Union . Podgorny spoke to Brezhnev , Kosygin , and then to Andrei Gromyko , all of whom looked embarrassed by the presence of Podgorny , according to Uomoto . Soon after this incident , Podgorny lost his seat in the Supreme Soviet . In Tretyakov Gallery , Podgorny was removed from the 1977 painting of the Soviet leaders at the Red Square by Dmitriy Nalbandyan in which Podgorny stood between Brezhnev and Kosygin . Podgorny died of cancer on 12 January 1983 , and was buried in Moscow at the Novodevichy cemetery .

As with many other high @-@ standing Soviet officials , Podgorny was honoured with several awards . He was awarded five Orders of Lenin , one Order of the Red Banner and several medals , as well as being awarded several foreign state prizes by the People 's Republic of Bulgaria , the Mongolian People 's Republic , the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic , and Finland .