

Khrushchev's fall

Autor(en): **Luchsinger, Fred**

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KHRUSHCHEV'S FALL

By Fred Luchsinger

This article appeared as an editorial in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* the day after the news of Khrushchev's replacement had become known.

POWER'S nemesis is at work in Moscow. Overnight Khrushchev has disappeared, the man who in the eyes of the world had for years been the symbol of terrifying, almost unlimited power and who, to become that symbol, had sent one after the other of his rivals and opponents—Beria, Malenkov, Bulganin, Kagonovich, Molotov, Pervukhin, Shepilov, Voroshilov, Zhuklov; Koslov and others—into oblivion.

Just who and what brought him to fall is still a subject of speculation at this time of writing, speculation which undoubtedly will be fed in the new constellations that are emerging in Moscow, and by what the new masters, and those who may replace them, will do or not do. As a rule the world must reconstruct the events in the innermost circles of Soviet power from the visible consequences, or else from the manner in which the history of a ruler is told by his successors. Those who believed that in the past few years the Kremlin had become more transparent, the risk in intercourse with Communist totalitarianism smaller, Communist power itself more predictable, must now accept a lesson. No one foresaw or predicted the change; suddenly the ground has been pulled from under the most careful calculations, and once again the unpredictability of the Soviets as a partner in world politics has been confirmed.

Two years of relative quiet, accompanied by—much heralded—gestures of relaxation, as well as by symptoms of hardening or of uncertainty, which many liked to overlook, had since the abortive Cuban adventure sufficed to make Khrushchev appear, contrary to all evidence of earlier years, as a sort of guarantor of coexistence and of a successive normalisation of relations between the democratic West and the Communist Soviet Union, or even, according to Bryan Magee, a British author, as a man "beginning to behave like a politician in a free society." Whether Khrushchev was really entitled to these expectations is without significance now; he no longer determines Soviet policy, and even if he or some of his followers should once again come to the surface—nothing at present hints at such a possibility, which however one should prudently not exclude a priori—in the internal power struggles that are likely to take place, the bases for a continuation of his policy would now be so precarious as to prevent any solid system of coexistence from being built on it.

The totalitarian Soviet regime has prematurely been described as capable of political continuity and constructive international collaboration. Equally premature are the predictions made today that Soviet policy will move along the lines laid down in the past few years. Who can tell? De-Stalinisation was followed by great upheavals in foreign policy, from the uprising in the Soviet Zone of Germany to the Hungarian revolution, the launching of the Soviet space program, the offensive in the developing countries, the Berlin crisis, the wrecking of the summit conference and to the audacious thrust in Cuba.

If there is one element that emerges with certainty from the present change, it is that Krushchlev has come to grief over political resistance to him in his own country. For this reason the expectation that Moscow's outward-oriented policy will remain untouched by the as yet not fully evident scope of the internal crisis is hopeful rather than well founded. Nor do the assurances now being issued by Soviet diplomacy make any change in this—they are a mere smokescreen to hide what is actually going on in Moscow, an understandable maneuver which however allows no certain conclusions in a situation that has become thoroughly unstable. In any event the non-Soviet Communists at this time of writing do not seem to be sure of the continuity of Soviet foreign policy. The comments issued by Italian, Austrian and even Hungarian Communist leaders sound like exorcisms of the danger of a departure of Soviet policy from the principal of "relaxation."

One sign of the close relations existing between the developments in Moscow and Soviet foreign policy for the rest is visible far and wide: the mushroom cloud of the first Chinese atomic explosion. Whatever the relative importance of domestic and foreign-policy motives—failure of agrarian and industrial policy, tensions in the relations with the military on the one hand, threatening collapse of the international unity of Communism as a result of the conflict with Peking on the other—the assumption seems justified that Khrushchev's failure with regard to China and his other non-Soviet following has decisively influenced the recent developments. This situation undoubtedly contains a potential radicalisation of Soviet policy, greatly underestimated in recent months. Possibly Soviet-Chinese relations are now beyond any ideological or political repair, being of the nature of an insoluble power conflict. But that does not exclude attempts to bring about a reapproachment which would hardly encourage the Soviets to relax their policy toward the West.

Such a development is as little foreseeable as any other. The characteristic of the crisis into which the Soviet Union and with it international politics has now entered is its very unpredictability. A movement has started in the Kremlin which, having hit as its

first victim the politician in whom one had come to see a representative of so-called liberalisation, can hardly be classified under the heading of "liberalisation." A movement which, if one recalls the protracted crisis that followed Stalin's death and considers the present constellation in Moscow, is not being determined by one strong man, but by several possible future strong men, may well be generated by power struggles apt to swallow quite a few things in their whirl. That it will weaken the Soviet Union by increasing its internal difficulties would be an incomplete speculation, for no less possible is the risk of turnabouts in Soviet foreign policy to divert the attention from internal difficulties—a risk which calls for much vigilance on the part of the West.

NEWS OF THE COLONY

Auckland Swiss Club

SWISS FILMS

Two film Shows were held recently, first "Ueli de Knecht" at the Kosy Theatre in Blockhouse Bay, which was a terrific success and enjoyed by everyone. Even though the film lasted for a full two hours, no one appeared tired. Personally, I could have watched for another hour, it was so entertaining, never a dull moment and full of human factors confronting everyday-life and hidden passions. The story written by Jeramias Gotthelf 100 years ago, still has the same actuality today and I can recommend everyone to go and see it, when it is being screened in their district

The second show, however, was very disappointing and we sincerely hope to get better films in the future

After the second show, "Wuerst and Mutschili" were served, also coffee and cakes and then some beautiful coloured slides were shown by Mr Moulin, who stays temporarily in Auckland, of his travels of the Far East. A real pity that time was running out as his slides were of exceptional quality and very interesting.

—H.B.M.

Christchurch Swiss Club

On Sunday the 8th November, many Swiss from Christchurch attended a small party given by the Ambassador to Australia and New Zealand and his wife, in Warners Hotel, Christchurch.

Mr O. Muller, president of the Swiss Club, introduced the Ambassador and his wife to those who attended. Mr and Mrs Gygax mingled with everyone and chatted. Everything was very friendly.

Supper consisted of cold chicken, steak, sandwiches and toothpick specialties. The evening ended at about 6.45 p.m. —Mrs J. F.