

Age and Failing Health Announced as Reasons For Asking Retirement

By Henry S. Bradsher

MOSCOW, Oct. 16 (Friday) (AP)—The 10-year era of Nikita Khrushchev ended in the Soviet Union today with an official announcement that he has resigned from his duties as Premier and Communist Party First Secretary.

The announcement through Tass said Khrushchev requested retirement "in view of his advanced age and deterioration of health." He is leaving the Party presidency also. He is 70 years old.

His jobs are being given to two lieutenants he has trusted. Leonid Brezhnev, 57, is taking the key post of Party secretary, and Alexei Kosygin, 60, is becoming Premier. Both men owe their jobs to Khrushchev.

[United Press International quoted reliable sources in Moscow as saying that Khrushchev's son-in-law, Alexei Adzhubei, has been fired as editor of the Soviet Government newspaper Izvestia.

[It was noted that the Tass announcements failed to pay tribute to Khrushchev's past services. Reuters said most Moscow observers were speculating that foreign-policy differences had caused the change in leadership.]

Red China Silent

[Red China's official news agency reported today the retirement of Khrushchev but had no immediate comment.]

Tass said Khrushchev's "release"—this was Tass's word—was granted this week. It said that the Party Central Committee took up his request for retirement on Wednesday. His release as First Secretary was agreed upon Wednesday and his retirement as Premier was voted Thursday. The Committee had been in session since Monday, informants said.

Tass said that Anastas I. Mikoyan, who took over the mostly figurehead job of president from Brezhnev earlier this year, presided at the Thursday meeting.

Leading Spokesman

What effect the changes will have on the Soviet Union's relations with the West, Commu-

Brezhnev long groomed for stepup in Soviet Communist Party. Page A14.

Alexei Kosygin, newly named Premier, is regarded as economics expert. Page A14.

Khrushchev changed East-West relations profoundly. Page A13.

nist China and the Communist bloc generally, remains to be shown.

In the eyes of Western diplomats, Brezhnev has seemed to act and speak in a responsible way within the context of Soviet policy.

Kosygin has been a leading spokesman on the Soviet side in the dispute with China.

Poor health, and conceivably an appraisal of poor results, were probably the fac-

tors behind Khrushchev's fall from power just three weeks before he had hoped to preside over a triumphant celebration of the 47th anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution.

Khrushchev's Ailments

Mikhail Suslov, another spokesman in the Kremlin's dispute with Communist China, delivered the key address when the Committee convened on Monday. Suslov has appeared at times to be lukewarm in his support of Khrushchev.

Khrushchev has been suffering from high blood pressure and a recurrent heart condition. Last year he said:

"I am already 69 and I have the right to say so. Everyone

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understands I cannot hold for all time the position I now have in the Party and the state."

This year, presumably with Khrushchev's approval, Brezhnev was moved from the largely ceremonial job of president to a position of more power in the Communist Party.

Khrushchev's removal, no matter who initiated it, began casting shadows a year ago.

On the personal side, Khrushchev spent so much time outside Moscow it was obvious he could not be in active control of the highly centralized Soviet government. If he wasn't touring abroad, he was making speeches in the countryside.

Gold in hand, the Soviet Union had to go to the United States and Canada for wheat to feed its people. This was despite Khrushchev's boasts that Communist agriculture rapidly was overtaking the capitalist kind.

The once-monolithic control of the Kremlin over the world Communist movement was crumbling. This was especially evident in its violent quarrel with Communist China.

Peking leaders denounced Khrushchev as a lackey of capitalism and a traitor to communism. This doubtless had its effect, although the attack could have delayed rather than hastened his departure.

Khrushchev also had failed in his avowed aim of driving the Western powers from Berlin and had been forced by President Kennedy to back down in the Caribbean and remove his missiles from Cuba.

The first clear indication that some major announcement was in the making came Thursday when the newspaper Izvestia canceled its evening edition and reported it would publish simultaneously with Pravda Friday morning.

On a misty autumn night, Moscow was quiet. A check of city streets showed no unusual activity.

Late Thursday afternoon a number of truckloads of troops with rifles were seen near the Kremlin, but that was not unusual because they frequently move through the city. After dark there was no sign of special police or army patrols.

But a large portrait of Khrushchev disappeared from a downtown building. It had

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been put atop the Moskva Hotel, facing a square on one side of the Kremlin, several days ago as part of the usual decorations for Revolution Day Nov. 7.

A smiling Khrushchev was accompanied by the slogan: "Peace to the Peoples."

Between 9 and 11 p. m. it disappeared. No other portraits of Soviet leaders were displayed downtown.

Khrushchev had not been mentioned publicly for two days, a very unusual thing for the buoyant Premier.

A Tass story about Kremlin talks Thursday with the visiting President of Cuba, Osvaldo Dorticos, said Dorticos met "the leaders of the CPSU (Communist Party of the Soviet Union) and the Soviet Government."

After the listing of Brezhnev, Kosygin and Mikoyan were the names of Nikolai Podgorny, Yuri Andropov and Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko. Podgorny and Andropov are secretaries of the party.

Every top party leader except Khrushchev attended a luncheon for Dorticos.

Khrushchev was at his Black Sea vacation home Tuesday where he met with French Cabinet Minister Gaston Palewski. Rumors started to fly when Palewski was hurried out of town while the talk was still on.

A more obvious sign to the average Soviet citizen that something was in the wind was Khrushchev's failure to follow his normal custom of telephoning returning cosmonauts to congratulate them. Although his week's orbiting of three men was the most spectacular Soviet space achievement yet, Khrushchev remained silent after their landing. He had been reported earlier as speaking to them Monday.

When Brezhnev stepped down from the presidency in July, it was already clear he was taking a step up as Khrushchev's heir-apparent. Brezhnev has, however, stayed clear of some of Khrushchev's policies. He largely has kept out of the running ideological debate with Peking, leaving himself clean for any possible attempt at reconciliation with the Chinese.