

Khrushchev Death Noted Only Briefly

By Robert G. Kaiser
Washington Post Foreign Service

MOSCOW, Sept. 13 (Monday)—After nearly 48 hours of silence, the Soviet government announced in Pravda that Nikita S. Khrushchev is dead.

The announcement came in a terse, unheadlined statement on the front page of this morning's paper. It said simply that the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party "reports with sorrow"

that "pensioner" Khrushchev died Saturday "after a severe and long illness."

Khrushchev is to be buried today in Moscow's Novodevichy Cemetery, according to friends of the former premier's family. These same sources said tonight that funeral orations will be delivered this morning at the hospital for Kremlin officials in a Moscow suburb where Khrushchev died after a "massive heart attack" on Saturday morning.

Two fresh graves here dug in the Novodevichy Cemetery Sunday, though it could not be ascertained whether one of them was intended for Khrushchev's remains. The graves are in a remote corner of the cemetery, a section occupied by the graves of high government officials, military officers and prominent citizens who have died in the last two years.

See KHRUSHCHEV, A9, Col. 1

KHRUSHCHEV, From A1

Novodevichy Cemetery, which adjoins an ancient monastery located beside the Moscow River about two miles from the Kremlin, is an honored burial ground, but it is far from the highest honors bestowed on the foremost Soviet citizens. They are buried in the Kremlin wall.

The curt announcement in

Pravda and the probable site of Khrushchev's grave suggest that the new Soviet leaders, who deposed Khrushchev in 1964, have decided to treat him in death as they did in life—with studied disdain.

This attitude has meant that Soviet citizens all but lost track of the man who was once their flamboyant and domineering leader since he fell from power seven years ago. Yesterday in Moscow it seemed that most ordinary citizens still had no idea that Khrushchev was dead.

"A worker digging one of the fresh graves in Novodevichy Cemetery was approached by a Russian who whispered something to him.

"Khrushchev?" the gravedigger said in a loud and surprised voice. His reaction suggested that if he was digging a grave for Khrushchev he certainly didn't know it.

Reporters seeking reaction from the man on the street generally found that their questions were the first news people had heard that Khrushchev was dead.

The news had been broadcast into the Soviet Union by short wave from abroad, but only a small minority of Russians are thought to listen regularly to foreign broadcasts.

The informal word of mouth system by which Russians keep themselves informed doesn't work as well on weekends as on weekdays, when people are concentrated in factories and offices, some Muscovites say.

The big story in yesterday's Moscow papers was about a central committee decision on further development of the chemical fiber and raw material industry in the next five-year plan. The papers also reported on the end of the mission of Luna 18, noting that all contact with the spacecraft was lost Saturday.

The two graves dug yesterday in the Novodevichy Cemetery are in a section that has fewer trees and less attractive landscaping than older parts of the cemetery.

The most distinguished Russians buried in Novodevichy — Checkhov, Gogol, Stalin's first wife—are in a different section, separated by a high wall.

On a pleasant Sunday like yesterday Novodevichy is crowded with sightseers.

Mrs. Stalin's grave seemed to attract the most attention, but hundreds of people seemed intrigued to wander along the narrow paths between the graves reading the names on every one.

The text in Pravda said:

"The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. report with sorrow that on Sept. 11, 1971, after a severe and long illness, the former first secretary of the Central Committee and chairman of the Council of Minister, pensioner Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev died in his 78th year."

Yugoslavs Note Loss Of 'Friend'

From News Dispatches

The death of Nikita Khrushchev was mourned in Yugoslavia yesterday as the loss of "a friend." In Albania, the former Soviet premier was denounced as a corruptor of Communism. But elsewhere in Communist countries his passing was barely noted.

The Yugoslav press hailed Khrushchev as "the man under whom Stalinist ice started to crack." In a special article, the Belgrade daily "Politika" recapitulated all the key points of the 1955 "Belgrade Declaration" in which the Soviet Union under Khrushchev recognized the right of other Communist countries to pursue their own roads to socialism.

"Borba," the organ of the Socialist Alliance of Working People, published a front page editorial in which Khrushchev was portrayed as "a friend."

The prominent treatment given to Khrushchev's death preceded by just 10 days a visit by Soviet Communist Party chief Leonid Brezhnev, his first since 1966.

Pro-China Albania took its own course by announcing the death and accusing Khrushchev of having "introduced capitalism" into the Soviet Union.

Other exceptions to absolute official silence occurred in Hungary and Poland where official media simply reported the fact of Khrushchev's death, in both cases quoting from Western news sources.

Outside Eastern Europe, the Communist regime in Cuba had issued no word of the death up to eight hours after the first news was dispatched from Moscow.

An official Havana radio station, which broadcasts news continuously, made no mention of the death. The official newspaper "Granma" was not published over the weekend.

China, whose relations with Moscow deteriorated sharply during Khrushchev's tenure, maintained silence, as did the governments of North Korea and North Vietnam.

The Communist Party of Italy sent condolences to Khrushchev's widow and said the former leader was "a sincere friend of our people."