

What The Russians Have Done To NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV

by Jess Gorkin

EDITOR OF PARADE

Do you remember a man named Khrushchev? MOSCOW
For 11 years he was ruler of Soviet Russia and one of the most powerful men on earth. Then, without warning, on Oct. 15, 1964, a Kremlin coup stripped him of his power. The Khrushchev era of bombast and banter was finished, finished without reason or explanation other than the *Pravda* newspaper accusations of "bragging" and "hair-brained scheming." Later, however, official explanations suggested he had asked to be retired for health reasons.

Today the Soviet Union has transformed Nikita Khrushchev into a non-person. At 73, he is one of the living dead, unpublicized and unmentionable.

I remember first studying Khrushchev and his antics 12 years ago at Moscow's Central Airport. He and other members of the Soviet Presidium awaited the arrival of Walter Ulbricht, Communist leader from East Germany. Khrushchev was in good humor that day, playing to the full his role as irrepressible exhibi-

tionist. For a few moments he behaved like a baggy-pants comic, then he acted the serious statesman, then he changed into the excitable peasant, hands waving, who later shocked the world by pounding his shoe on the table at a United Nations meeting in New York City.

Like myself, people everywhere soon became aware of the quixotic behavior pattern of this flamboyant personality who stirred the world with his jokes, his gibes, and his folksy proverbs. But today, all that is memory. The Soviet Union has obliterated all reminders of its burly, wart-nosed, ex-premier and Communist Party chief, who was succeeded by Aleksei Kosygin and Leonid Brezhnev.

The name Khrushchev is never mentioned in publications which once praised him. His face is deleted or blurred out of all movies of the past. Soviet textbooks ignore him. Students are allowed to quote from his long speeches at party meetings, but they cannot identify the author of



Above: Khrushchev, ex-boss of the Kremlin, takes leisurely stroll after breakfast accompanied by his dog. He carries transistor radio and camera. Below: he tosses stick for dog to retrieve from river flowing past his country home.



the quote.

Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev, the poor coal-miner's son who came out of nowhere to rule a nation of more than 200 million people, has been banished to nowhere.

The nowhere of his old age is more comfortable than the nowhere of his youth. But spiritually it is death.

The photos on these pages are the first to show him in the compound, 15 miles southwest of Moscow, where he and his wife, Nina, now reside. The compound is surrounded by a high fence. A guard-house protects the entrance. Women gatekeepers who work around the clock permit only previously announced visitors to enter. He also has an apartment in Moscow but seldom uses it. The apartment is used by his unmarried daughter Lena, 28, who is taking a postgraduate course at the Institute of World Economy and International Relations.

Khrushchev is living out his old age in a four-bedroom dacha (country house)—one of ten in the compound—which stands on a seven-acre plot. At the dacha, the old framehouse built in the 1930's, he and wife Nina occupy separate bedrooms. Another bedroom is used chiefly by Lena when she comes to the country. The fourth bedroom, still called the nursery, was used until last fall by two grandsons—one, the child of daughter Rada and son-in-law Alexei Adzhubei, the former *Izvestia* editor who now has a lesser job on a magazine; the other, the child of son, Sergei.

Nikita and his wife are attended by two maids, two cooks, a gardener, two chauffeurs, all paid for by the state. As a pensioner, he receives 550 rubles (\$600) a month. The doctor who once catered to his every need is still available for consultation, and Khrushchev can command a Zil, a state-owned car, or if he wishes, he may attend the Bolshoi theater and use the same box as he did when in power. He enjoys an occasional opera, but the ballet bores him.

But it is not creature comforts he needs. He misses people and the heady wine of power. His dacha is no Gettys-

burg, where the high and mighty come to seek out his counsel as an elder statesman as is true in the case of ex-President Eisenhower.

Khrushchev lives a sad and relatively lonely life. He sees few people outside of his immediate family. Old comrades, including his protégés, avoid him like a plague. It's understandable. After all, they joined forces to oust him from power. Occasionally an old friend will make an appointment to chat, but his many ex-colleagues, even though they live nearby, stay away from this political leper.

The result is that Khrushchev spends much of his time taking long walks, a small transistor radio nestled comfortably in his left shoulder holster. In old age, to help fill his time, he has taken up photography. His wife, Nina, likes to joke about the novelty of seeing him at the other end of the camera. He especially likes to photograph his grandchildren, his dog, the birds in the garden, and the little white church across the Istra River, which runs along one side of the compound. He does his own dark-room work, has developed into a fair amateur photographer.

Once in awhile he strolls outside the gates of the compound to kibitz with residents of a nearby village, Petrovodalniye, who may be fishing along the banks of the Istra. Khrushchev himself does not fish, nor does he hunt for game as he did in the old days. His constant companion on these trips is Arbat, a German shepherd dog named after a street in Moscow.

Khrushchev's precipitous descent from the power pinnacle in 1964 traumatized him badly. For six months he moped about the house, an abject figure. He lost 32 pounds and his sense of humor. His downfall was so psychologically painful to him that today his wife, under no circumstances, will permit the subject to be broached in his presence.

Like most old men, Khrushchev is reduced to the remembrance of things past. He loves to babble on about his boyhood, his days of struggle, triumph,



Khrushchev's wife, Nina, serves Nikita, daughter Lena and other family members. She has two cooks but sometimes enjoys preparing dishes herself. Scenes similar to one above will appear in NBC documentary next Tuesday, July 11, from 10 to 11 p.m. (New York time).

and glory.

A source of joy is his five grandsons, three daughters—one by his first wife—and his son. Usually the family gathers at the dacha on Sundays, but daughter Lena is the most frequent visitor. Sometimes daughter Rada or son Sergei visit during the week but that is rare. They usually take their children with them on Sundays. Khrushchev's two oldest grandsons, Nikita, 15, and Alexei, 12, prefer to coax him into a game of chess rather than listen to the same old stories. Usually they beat him, whereupon the onetime kingpin of the Kremlin retires to the large living room, and he amuses himself with yesteryear gifts from other kingpins—a radio from Egypt's Nasser, a replica of the Taj Mahal from India's Nehru, a collection of pottery from Britain's Harold Macmillan, hunting trophies from Germany and Poland. Mr. Khrushchev is also most fond of a Czechoslovakian jukebox which stands in his sitting room, but somehow seems out of place there.

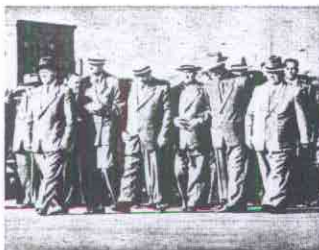
Khrushchev's favorite American, and he doesn't mind admitting this to anyone who will listen, is the late President John F. Kennedy. The American who irritated him most was Norris Poulson, a former mayor of Los Angeles, of whom Khrushchev said, "Intelligence does not shine from his eyes." When Khrushchev describes how Poulson greeted him at the Los Angeles airport in 1959 and criticized him at a civic dinner, the old man scowls and his bullneck reddens.

Significantly enough, Khrushchev regards the Cuban crisis of 1962 as his proudest accomplishment. Although he was deeply humiliated when the U.S. forced him to withdraw Soviet missiles from Cuba, he exacted a commitment from Kennedy not to invade Communist Cuba. That commitment is honored by the U.S. today. In discussing the Cuban crisis Khrushchev naturally emphasizes his achievement and soft-pedals his defeat.

He likes also to recall how during this crisis he slept on the couch in his Kremlin office, in his clothes. He says he once heard about a top British official, known for his correct dress, who had been caught by surprise while asleep in bed during the 1956 Suez crisis, had rushed around in his shorts until the emergency was over. Khrushchev will explain with a chortle that he had no intention of being caught with his pants down.

The 73-year-old Nikita has no illusions about returning to office. For the crafty, old peasant well understands the politics of power. He understood it as a rising commissar who was ordered by the sadistic dictator, Josef Stalin, to dance the *Gopak* before top officials. The *Gopak* is the Ukrainian dance which involves squatting on the heels and kicking out the legs, an ordeal for the pudgy Khrushchev. But he managed to perform it, sweat running down his grinning face, and it earned him the nickname, the "Dancing Commissar." Afterward, he explained to then President member

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At Moscow airport in 1955, (l. to r.): Molotov, Suslov, Kaganovich, Malenkov, Peruvkhin, Khrushchev. Of this group, only Suslov remains as Presidium member today.



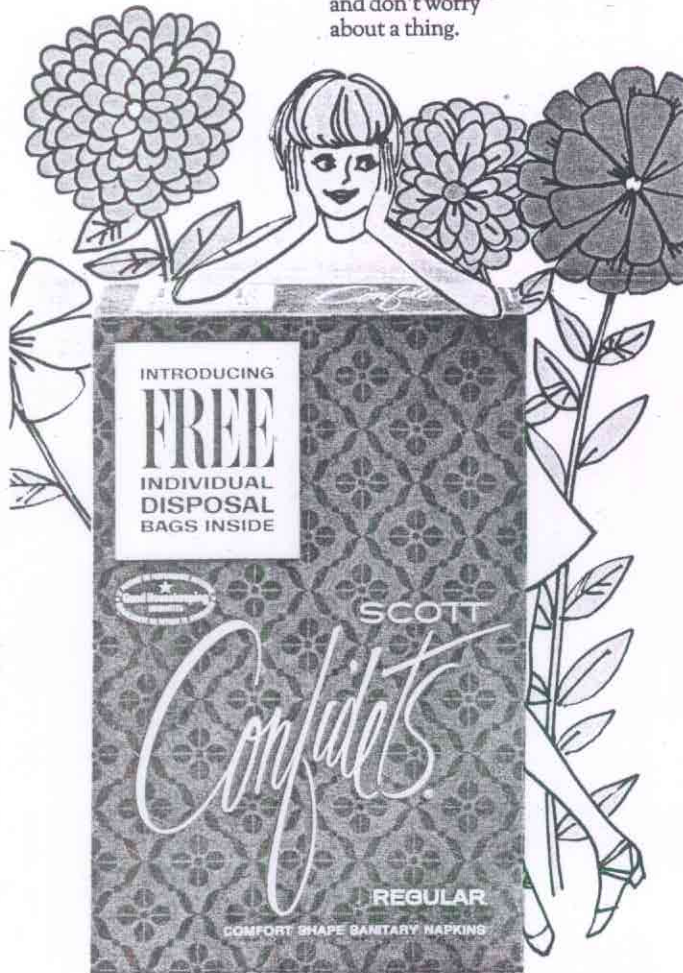
The ebullient Khrushchev tells me humorous story at Finnish embassy reception in Moscow in 1955. He misses the glory and an audience for his gibing and joking.

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KHRUSHCHEV
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Anastas Mikoyan, an old Bolshevik buddy who helped plan his downfall in 1964: "When Stalin says dance, a wise man dances."

Khrushchev also understood power after he stepped into Stalin's shoes. Khrushchev did not eliminate his rivals, in the Stalin manner, by executing them. He consigned them instead to oblivion. His former traveling partner, ex-Premier Nikolai Bulganin, whom Khrushchev demoted in 1958, now lives in a Moscow apartment on a small pension. Ex-Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov lives in the same apartment he occupied before he was nudged aside during Nikita's days.

Now that the purger has become the purged, he knows the same oblivion for himself, but he enjoys far more luxury than either Bulganin or Molotov or others he demoted. His subordinates, who became his successors, also had their little laugh at his expense. Mindful of Khrushchev's sensitivity over his girth, they banished him to the dacha that formerly had been occupied by his minister of finance, Sergei Zveryev, who



Khrushchev's country home, nestled among tall trees and flowers, stands on 7-acre plot. His estate is maintained by the government.



Khrushchev also has modern apartment in Moscow but seldom uses it. Most of books from his personal library are housed there.

topped the scales at 308 pounds and was known as Russia's "Fattest Minister."

For the gregarious Khrushchev, life in limbo has been torment. Even his neighbors in the compound, all lesser lights in the Soviet hierarchy, keep aloof from him. This was especially true when he first moved there. They felt awkward over what to say to the man who once towered over them. At most, they may engage briefly in small talk about the weather or local agriculture.

Though Nikita is miserable away from the crowds, and he sorely misses the exhilaration of high office, he has resigned himself to the total blank he draws in Soviet newspapers, textbooks, and films. Still, he was hurt when his name was not even mentioned in the recent obituary of his former defense minister, Marshal Rodion Malinovsky.

His big moment is election day when he can again appear, however fleetingly, on the world stage. His neighbors vote in the country, where their dachas are located, but Khrushchev's Moscow apartment entitles him to cast his ballot in the city. He knows the photographers will be waiting at his polling place. For a moment the old glint will return to his eyes as the crowd surges around him and the flashbulbs burst. But the pictures, which are featured around the world, are never seen in the Soviet Union.

Except for an occasional 30-minute drive to Moscow, the man who had been Russia's most peripatetic premier, who had spent more than two years while in power out of the country, now seldom leaves his dacha. (His wife, Nina, visits Moscow more frequently to shop and see friends.) And he doesn't venture beyond a 25-mile radius. Khrushchev is free to travel anywhere in Russia, but he can no longer take along an entourage. Moreover, he would have to submit to the indignities of staying in ordinary accommodations. It's simpler to remain at home.

In any event, he has reason to be ruffled about traveling. He was out of the country in 1957, when the subordinates he left behind in the Kremlin made their first attempt to oust him. He stormed back, threw out his opponents, and emerged more powerful.

They were more careful the next time. Once again, they waited until he left Moscow. Indeed, Nina was also away visiting in Prague, Czechoslovakia, with the wife of the man who succeeded Khrushchev as First Secretary of the Communist Party, Leonid Brezhnev.

Khrushchev was vacationing at his favorite Black Sea resort. One of his last official acts was to talk on the phone to two cosmonauts who were whirling overhead. He promised to see them at a reception in Moscow two days later. He never kept the appointment; he, too, had been brought down to earth.

The man who sat at the vortex of world events less than three years ago still likes to keep informed. He reads the Russian newspapers eagerly and gleans over the new names he doesn't recognize. He also studies the Russian classics, (his favorites: Chekhov novels) that he never before had time to read.

On a typical day, Khrushchev will rise around 6:30 a.m., gulp down a glass of fruit juice or chew on an apple, and begin to read the morning newspaper. He then eats a breakfast of cereal, yogurt, tea, and toast. If the weather permits, he will later take a leisurely, reflective stroll. Usually he is accompanied by his dog.

On a strict diet, he eats a light lunch around 2:00 p.m. of soup, salad, and fruit. His doctor forbids fried foods and alcohol, except for an occasional sip of wine.

Last year, Khrushchev spent three weeks in the hospital with inflammation of the gallbladder. Otherwise, he is in good health, but the doctor checks him over every fortnight.

The old man never naps during the day, but he settles down with a book after lunch. In the evenings, he may watch television or run a film on his own 16-mm. projector if his engineer son, Sergei, is around to operate it. He likes documentaries, particularly about the 1917-18 Revolution. Sometimes he will join lustily in the old revolutionary songs. There is a club on the compound which includes a cinema and he could go there for his movies, but he prefers to see them at home.

Invariably, in the course of an evening he will comment that the young people are not brought up properly and should be more revolutionary. Still an old Bolshevik, his fall from power has not budged him in the least from his stubborn conviction that communism is still the best way to the moon, the planets, and paradise on earth.

For the retired boss of the Kremlin, life has lost its zest if not its meaning. He spends more time browsing among his memories—memories that are fast fading from the Soviet mind. But he is no dotting dreamer. Ever the realist, he responds without hesitation to a hasty street-corner question from a correspondent who asks how he lives now: "I am a pensioner."

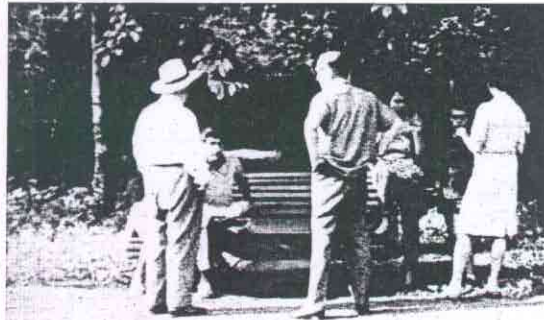
KHRUSHCHEV IN EXILE — HIS OPINIONS AND REVELATIONS TODAY

An NBC News special program, will be shown in color and black and white, next Tuesday, July 11, from 10 to 11 p.m. (New York time).

This telecast was produced by Lucy Jarvis, producer of the prize-winning LOUVRE, and other well-known TV specials, including WHO SHALL LIVE? and BRAVO PICASSO.



Premier turns photographer. Wearing glasses, Nikita Khrushchev patiently focuses on favorite subjects such as his grandchildren, his dog, the birds.



Because of his rural seclusion, Khrushchev enjoys Sunday visits with family, looks forward to chess, telling stories and playing with his grandchildren.



He no longer runs for office but one of Khrushchev's favorite days is election day when he goes to Moscow and votes, is surrounded by large crowds.