

Behind Soviet Ouster of 4 Is People's Striving for Change

By A. B. MAGIL

LET'S take another look at that big explosion in the Soviet Union that blew four top figures out of the leadership. First, there is what didn't happen. No head-chopping.

The predicted trial of Malenkov, the summary execution of Molotov and all the other horrors headlined by the soothsayers of the commercial press have not materialized.

Instead, Malenkov, by profession an electrical engineer, has been made manager of a hydroelectric plant in East Kazakhstan, and Molotov, Kaganovich and Shepilov are also slated to get new if modest jobs.

Second, there has been no crisis in the Soviet Communist Party and government, no shattering power struggle. So calm was everything after the explosion of July 4 that only a few days later party chief Khrushchev and Premier Bulganin left on a state visit to Czechoslovakia.

THERE IS every evidence that the ouster, though as much a surprise to the Soviet public as to people in other countries, once the reasons for it became known through the resolution of the party Central Committee, had the massive support of the Soviet people.

This was because the struggle between individuals at the top was in essence only the reflection of the struggle for change which the millions down below have been waging—change already achieved as well as still to come. The Central Committee resolution speaks of the four ousted men as "sectarian and dogmatic," charges that they "are shackled by old notions and methods," "failed to see the new conditions, the new situation."

Even so hard-bitten an anti-Sovieteer as Harry Schwartz of the New York Times rejects the idea that "the Soviet people played no part in the fight. On the contrary, the evidence suggests that the pressure of the Soviet people was very much on the minds of all the actual contestants." (Times, July 14.)

The pressure of the Soviet people has been in the direction of a foreign policy that leaves no stone unturned to achieve peaceful coexistence, and of domestic policies that mean higher living standards, more democracy, less bureaucracy, more rights for the national republics, correction of the abuses and crimes of the last phase of the Stalin era.

The four ex-leaders were accused of directly or indirectly placing roadblocks in the path of all such developments.

IT IS believed that the key issue which finally brought the struggle in the party presidium to a head was the industrial reorganization program. This program was announced by Nikita Khrushchev on March 30. It is a bold plan—made possible and necessary by the gigantic growth of Soviet industry—to decentralize the operative management of industry, hitherto concentrated in Moscow, and shift it to the point of production in regional economic administrative areas.

Wrapped up in this issue are such questions as cutting down bureaucracy, widening democracy through greater local control over industry, extension of the rights of the national republics, and more efficient industrial development to produce higher living standards.

The commercial press gives the impression that this was something Khrushchev fished out of his hat in opposition to most of his colleagues in the leadership. Actually the beginnings of decentralization go back to the period preceding the 20th Congress of the Soviet party (February 1956). The plan itself was under discussion for months and was announced only after being endorsed by the party Central Committee of 133 members.

On May 10 it was enacted into law by the Supreme Soviet.

WHAT THE press largely covered up was that between March 30 and the action of the Supreme Soviet there took place a remarkable public discussion such as would be impossible in a capitalist country.

"According to preliminary figures," said Khrushchev in his report to the Supreme Soviet, "more than 514,000 meetings were held between March 30 and May 4 at industrial enterprises and construction sites, in scientific bodies and institutes, collective farms, machine and tractor stations and state farms, in army units and in educational establishments.

"The meetings were attended by 40,820,000 people, of whom more than 2,300,000 spoke and made remarks and suggestions for improving management in industry and construction. . . . Over 68,000 people submitted proposals, observations and amendments through the central and local press."

Khrushchev's report—as yet available in English only in a pamphlet published in Britain—shows that many changes were made in the original proposals as a result of this public discussion. Further changes were added in the course of debate in the Supreme Soviet.

IMAGINE General Motors submitting plans for its type of decentralization for public discussion by

its workers! Of course, when GM moves plants out of Michigan, it's not the workers who are better off—and certainly not those thrown out of jobs.

It seems to me that Khrushchev was fully justified in saying that the nationwide discussion around the industrial decentralization program "was another striking demonstration of Soviet democracy."

Yet it would have been even more striking if the millions who participated had had the opportunity of knowing the views of those who opposed the plan. This is more than a question of giving the opposition its day in the court. There is much to be said for the Leninist practice of mass discussion of all contending views within the framework of socialist ideology, of enlisting the people from the outset in the struggle for that which is right through the direct clash with that which is wrong.

THERE will be more changes in the Soviet Union. The process is irreversible because the Soviet people, who in a few months will be celebrating the 40th anniversary of their great socialist revolution, will not go back or stand still. They are moving toward the fulfillment of all that socialism implies.

There is no conflict between these strivings and the needs and aspirations of most Americans. On the contrary, our own personal and national interests require that we break through the powerful obstructions big business and its representatives have erected toward coexisting with the Soviet Union in a world free of the threat of H-bomb warfare.

McCarthyites Shift Senate Probe to Labor and Strikes

The McCarthyite bloc in the Senate Rackets Committee has been victorious in its drive to shift major attention towards "investigating" political action by labor and strikes, especially of the auto union.

Chairman John McClellan announced last week, after a sharp struggle in the committee in which Senator Karl Mundt was spokesman for the campaign initiated by the late Wisconsin Senator, that the field of 11 topics chosen for investigation are included "political action," "secondary boycotts" and "organization picketing."

Those topics will cover the demand for a probe of the Kohler, (Wisconsin), strike and boycott of its products conducted by the United Auto Workers union and of the UAW's effective political action in Michigan on the claim that union funds were used in violation of Taft-Hartley. The committee's investigators are already gathering material for the two probes.

Reuther Says: Expose Trusts

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indignation and struggle.

Reuther pointed out that the UAW initiated the demand, now all labor's demand; for a government investigation of the relation between prices, profits and wages, to fix the responsibility for higher prices. He cited much evidence in steel, automobile, oil and other fields showing that not wage increases but profiteering and deliberate rigging of prices by monopolistic corporations, were responsible.

The current hearings of the subcommittee, which is headed by Sen. Estes Kefauver, aim mainly to determine the effect of "administered prices" in key fields, like steel, auto, meat packing, paper manufacture and oil. The premise for the hearings, as stated in Kefauver's opening statement, was that the increasing monopolization trend also brings a "new" type of inflation, with prices deliberately raised without regard for market conditions or other factors. He observed that prices are rising today despite the fact that the fields affected, like steel or auto, are working well below their capacity and the demand for their products is well below their supply.

THE ISSUE commanding the

Kefauver Committee's attention, was highlighted last week in a report of the Senate Anti-Trust Committee. The report consists of data, showing that in the seven years 1947-1954, the 50 biggest companies increased their share of the total value added by manufacturing from 17 percent to 23 percent. This is based on the value of final manufactured products minus the value of the material that entered the plants.

The anti-monopoly report evoked immediate attacks from the United States Chamber of Commerce. A stronger "argument" however came in the second quarter corporation profit figures that are now being released and which show that the companies on the Kefauver target list are chalking up new all-time profits records. Simultaneously government figures show average wages are below the purchasing value of a year ago.

NOT ONLY LABOR but America's millions of "little business" people and farmers are interested in the anti-monopoly exposure getting under way. Former Senator Herbert Lehman, in a recent speech before a business college