

Sergei Khrushchev: A Eulogy from His Close Student

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Sergey Khrushchev, son of former USSR premier, Nikita Khrushchev, who relocated to the United States after the USSR collapsed and became a professor of international relations at Brown University, died several days ago at the age of 84. Mr. Khrushchev died from a gunshot to his head. The Rhode Island police that came to his home in Cranston, following a call by his wife, ruled out foul play.

What was the cause of Sergey Khrushchev's untimely death?

The media in the US has been stating that Khrushchev died from a shot to his head. This was the claim made in the Los Angeles Times, the Washington Post, and the New York Times. But his wife, Valentina, claimed otherwise to the Russian media. RIA Novostoy [1] stated that Khrushchev's wife said that he died from old age. Which version is to be believed?

Khrushchev was a man of great humor and integrity. I was lucky to have taken his class on Post Soviet States at Brown University in Fall 2017. During the course and later, we became good friends. Khrushchev taught me many things. I visited his house on several occasions and kept in touch with him quite frequently.

Sergei loved his wife very much, and was loved by her. But he was also a stubborn and highly intelligent man, who did what he believed is right. It is fair to assume, that like his father, Nikita, he was a strict materialist who did not believe in God. He was not a huge fan of religion. His father's funeral, Nikita Khrushchev, was meant to go through a church, since that was the only way to the cemetery. But, instead, mourners climbed over the gate with the coffin.

It was quite interesting taking a course with Sergei Khrushchev at Brown University. His wealth of knowledge regarding the entire Soviet Union was immense. He knew exactly where gas pipelines began and ended. The various personalities of contemporary Ukrainian politics. And Cuba, as a place where tropical socialism was enacted.

Khrushchev's classes were known for his wry humor. For example, he once said that Ukrainian leader Yulia Tymoshenko is offering policies that simply cannot be put into practice. One day she may 'disappear' he said, matter of factly. The entire class went roaring with laughter. His sense of humor was not the kind we were used to, which made it all the more interesting.

Significantly, Khrushchev, did not take the path many other dissidents took. While many Soviet dissidents chose to badmouth the Soviet Union upon entering the United States, Sergey Khrushchev never did so. To us, American students, he explained how Communists were good people who wanted to create a better society and made some mistakes. He did

not fall for the anti-Soviet narrative, such an easy selling point in the west, and one to be welcomed by the US media and Central Intelligence Agency. Instead, he presented a complex and nuanced view, allowing us, if we were brave enough, to come to our own conclusions. He knew too much and saw too much to care what anyone thought of his view. Moreover, he was exceptionally intelligent. In his earlier career, he served as a ballistic missile specialist and scientist, and worked in Bushehr, Iran at one point.

Two other areas where Sergei Khrushchev presented a nuanced view were Israel and Iran. Having received a Zionist indoctrination in Israeli society, I had quite a few questions for Professor Khrushchev about his pro-Palestinian stance. But Khrushchev, in fact, was neither pro-Palestinian, nor pro-Israeli. He was simply a realist. He told me that Israel cannot afford to continuously making enemies in its neighborhood or it will face a grim future. It must make amends and make peace with its neighbors, he said. Khrushchev, was one of the few voices at Brown, who had the guts to criticize and make jokes regarding the Zionist establishment in the United States. He patiently answered my questions and despite my interruptions, answered my points lucidly and calmly. It was thanks to him that my eyes have been opened to the ugly realities of the Zionist regime. De-conditioning one from indoctrination is not an easy task. Khrushchev did it with me. Later, he commended me for my pro-Palestinian activism. He said I was very brave. Maybe in a 100 years I will appear in a sentence in a history book, he added wryly.

Another area regarding which Khrushchev spoke out was Iran. He explained how Iran was a rational actor, how most Iranians were educated and civilized, and how the US State Department was motivated by ignorance and by the Zionist lobby. I debated him many times in class, on this very issue. Each time, he would not mind my rude interruptions, and responded calmly, yet soberly. Lucidly.

Sergei Khrushchev loved the United States. It was his new home. But unlike Soviet emigres and other perverts, he did not see a need to hate the USSR or the post-Soviet space to love the US.

The US-backed coup in Kyiv, that appointed far-right Bandervitses in power in a lib-Nazi coalition, was not greeted by Sergey Khrushchev very favorably. I urged him to write on the issue but he was fearful. If I write about it, he confided in me, people will say that you are writing about it because of your father [of what he did]. As everyone knows, Nikita Khrushchev handed Crimea over to Ukraine as a prize of sorts, though of course, at the time of the gift ceremony, few expected the USSR would one day unravel. Still, on the basis of his own convictions, he went on to write scathing and powerful critiques on Al Jazeera [2]. I believe they will serve as a future record for generations to come.

When I told him, in an innocent dismay, typical to Americans which as an American I am too, that the CIA is supporting Privy Sector in Ukraine, he responded in an email, in his typical style: 'Joshua, calm down. CIA has been supporting them for the past 70 years. They even bothered to deny it.'

I told him, later on, that my intention was to write as much as possible so that a Third World War will not be provoked between the US and Russia. He told me, in his placid style, 'do the best you can.'

Sergei Khrushchev respected hugely his father. To such a degree, that due to my

appreciation for him, I dared only once to raise questions about mistakes his father may have made. He saw his legacy as setting the record straight. He published one book on his father, than a trilogy on his father's work. At the same time, here may be an opportunity for me to set the record straight. To my geopolitical judgment it appears that Nikita Khrushchev made a fatal mistake by denouncing Stalin. Eventually, the USSR, heavily intent on upgrading its missiles capacity, and due to the greed and corruption of its bureaucracy, it eventually collapsed. The singular decision to denounce Stalin probably was what led to the severing of ties between the Soviet Union and Maoist China. This in turn led to the US embrace of China. It may have prevented, a united- Maoist China-USSR front, that had within it, the potential power to bring down the United States. Indeed, Sergey Khrushchev greatly respected Henry Kissinger. But, Khrushchev believed that his father, Nikita, turned the USSR into a great power. He dedicated a significant part of his life to writing memoirs about his father that argue just that.

I was supposed to meet Sergey Khrushchev just about now, but the life of the materialist has ended. He was a loyal man, his dedication to his students, unquestionable.

At a visit to his home several years ago, when asked what he was reading recently, Khrushchev responded that he was reading a book on ancient Chinese history. With a smirk on his face, Khrushchev said how for the Chinese, historical lifespans run in thousands of years while America is a very young country. He seemed to admire their patience. On a side note, Sergey Khrushchev had honest respect, not tainted by grudges, towards Henry Kissinger whose move of splitting the Soviet-Sino alliance he saw as brilliant.

In a related note, Khrushchev believed that the unravelling of the USSR was not inevitable and that the Soviets could have reformed as the Chinese did, while keeping the super structure in tact. He believed that Putin was gradually turning Russia into a police state. It is not easy to come up with a new plan for Russia after the fight against corruption has been carried out, he explained. He urged the exploration of possibilities on how the Russian economy could be reformed and restructured.

Sergey Khrushchev essentially saw it as his life's mission to correct his father's name. His view, was that Nikita Khrushchev made the USSR a global power. This position is debatable. But, at the end of the day, the father is not the son, and the son is not the father. Sergey Khrushchev was a fascinating figure by his own right and by his own merit.

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