

THE EISENHOWER-KHRUSHCHEV TALKS

The following is an excerpt from an article by A. William Loos, Executive Director of The Church Peace Union, which was published in the September 17 issue of the United Church Herald.

There is no certainty that any gains whatever will accrue from the Eisenhower-Khrushchev visits. There is, however, some possibility that at least small advances in the following areas may be made toward relaxing tensions—if not toward materially improving relations between the U. S. A. and the U.S.S.R.

1. War could come through miscalculation on Mr. Khrushchev's part and the crucial area continues to be Berlin. There is ample evidence to indicate that he is not being adequately informed about either the determination or the capabilities of this country. Conceivably during his visit he could be persuaded that the American people are in dead earnest about Berlin.

2. If Mr. Khrushchev is a victim of his own nation's propaganda machine, which may be partly true, he might think as many Russians give evidence of thinking in their oft-reiterated remark to visiting Americans: "We Soviet people want peace. Why do you Americans want war?" Might there be a way of demonstrating to the Soviet Premier that Americans are dedicated to peace, but never to peace at any price or to peace without justice?

3. The Department of State apparently has some hope that something may be done during the exchange of visits to break the deadlock and make some advance on the intricate but central issue of armaments limitation. One aspect of this issue would be a careful re-examination of the question of cessation or limitation of nuclear tests, aiming at another serious try to establish an effective international inspection system.

4. It is conceivable that Mr. Khrushchev's image of the United States might be altered in the direction of accuracy while he is in our country. The distorted image of America held by the Soviet leader includes many facets, such as housing, armaments, scientific training and prosperity.

5. Mr. Khrushchev is probably more liberal than any Soviet politician who might succeed him. It is possible that he might be encouraged to extend his experiments of allowing a little more diversity of opinion and action among the Soviet people and in the Communist-controlled countries. In this con-

nection, effort might be made to develop more cultural interchange between the U.S.S.R. and the United States, as Mr. Nixon insistently suggested on his trip.

6. Perhaps most important of all is that neither the United States nor the Soviet Union wishes a situation to occur that might bring them to a point of no return. A way of retreat, without loss of prestige, needs to be available for each side. There may be a way to keep an intolerable situation from developing, and such a way may be found through talks and increased contacts. At the very least the talks may provide an outlet for pent-up tensions and even open new approaches to problems such as Berlin that are constantly on the verge of, if not actually in, crisis.

We may not know soon whether any progress whatever will be made on these or other areas of discussion. Meanwhile, the American people need to be sharply reminded of several factors. The first is the serious hazard we face because of this venture into personal diplomacy, namely, that we may let ourselves imagine that as an outcome of the Eisenhower-Khrushchev talks everything is going to be all right in the world, and that therefore both our allies and we can relax our efforts. . . .

Secondly, we must realize that nothing has happened in planning the exchange of visits to indicate that there has been any major revision of American foreign policy. The foundation of our policy continues to be the security of the nation and its citizens, together with the preservation of the open society and the values therein cherished.

Thirdly, we must learn to avoid the naivete that can talk about a "peace scare" when the stock market fluctuates, even though that fluctuation is only a technical adjustment, long expected, for which the announcements of the Khrushchev visit may have been an immediate cause although more probably only an excuse. Finally, we need to recall that the high expectations for the summit meeting of 1955, when unfulfilled, resulted in a negative psychological backwash that sowed the seeds of mistrust in the diplomatic process itself.

On balance, we can conclude that the U. S. Government has recognized the risks inherent in the Khrushchev-Eisenhower visits but deemed them worth taking. If we believe, as the Christian must, that the future is still open, though not wide open, we should support an honest effort made to unearth new and perhaps valuable approaches. . . .