MEMORANDUM
RM-3506-ISA
MARCH 1963

THE KREMLIN'S HORIZON
Nathan Leites

PREPARED FOR:
THE OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF DEFENSE/INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

The RAND Corporation
SANTA MONICA • CALIFORNIA
MEMORANDUM
RM-3506-ISA
MARCH 1963

THE KREMLIN'S HORIZON
Nathan Leites

This research is sponsored by the Department of Defense, under ARPA Contract SD-79, monitored by the Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs). Views or conclusions contained in the Memorandum should not be interpreted as representing the official opinion or policy of the Department of Defense.
PREFACE

The points to be developed below concerning Soviet leaders' feelings and attitudes towards their Western counterparts are derived from an analysis of the utterances of Khrushchev and other Soviet leaders from 1957 through the spring of 1962. The author consulted Pravda, Kommunist, the verbatim records of the Party congresses of 1959 and 1961, and the volumes in which Khrushchev's public statements on foreign affairs are collected.

Several qualifications need to be made at the outset. First, the Memorandum deals with Soviet statements that have already been subjected to close scrutiny by many specialists; hence some things said below have already been said. The material, however, is organized in what may fairly be called a novel manner.

Second, how much can be inferred -- and how? -- about the Soviet leaders' genuine feelings and calculations from their public declarations? This is a question which is being increasingly debated and to which no satisfactory set of general answers seems yet to have been given. It may be reasonable, however, to develop guesses even on such dubious grounds as those furnished by public declarations on condition that such guesses be checked against more reliable indicators: actual conduct and attitudes expressed in less public contexts.

A word on the Cuban crisis of October 1962: though most of the Kremlin's predispositions pertinent to an understanding of this affair will be treated elsewhere,
it may be appropriate to indicate here which interpretation seems the least implausible. At some point earlier in 1962, it may be surmised, the Soviet leaders may have brought themselves to admit that they had committed a major mistake in the allocation of funds to various weapon carriers. They had procured too few nuclear-weapon carriers capable of reaching the United States from Soviet bases. Secondly, they may have perceived a strange and wonderful chance to compensate themselves for this mistake -- in Cuba. Even if the chance of achieving the objective was not very high, could not the enemy's response be kept within limits that would entail risks acceptable to Moscow? Of course, Moscow would have to decide in advance not to be stubborn or inflexible in case of unfavorable developments.

Whether or not these considerations actually obtained in Soviet calculations, they are compatible with the orientations discussed below. Moreover, the likelihood that Moscow was prepared to retreat without fuss from the start of the Cuba operation is enhanced by what we already know of Soviet Communist thought. Bolshevik doctrine stresses the legitimacy of retreat when one is threatened with defeat (that is, when the risks of not retreating are unacceptable), and recommends the acceptance of the need to retreat without despair or self-recrimination. After all, history moves in ebbs and flows, and today's retreat prepares the way for tomorrow's advance.*

*See Nathan Leites, A Study of Bolshevism, Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., 1953, Chap. XIX.
The author is indebted for criticisms and suggestions to Bernard Brodie, Alexander George, Fred Iklé, and Myron Rush.

This Memorandum is part of a larger study which will document more fully some of the points made here.
SUMMARY

While the aggressiveness of Soviet Russia during its early years was motivated to a significant extent by its fear of being set upon and destroyed by the Western capitalist nations, this particular factor behind the Soviet drive has probably lessened, among other reasons, simply because the time for this untoward event is fast running out.

Even so, there is the fear that as the West moves from senility to death, as it must according to Bolshevik ideology, it may lash out in one last desperate attempt to destroy socialism. Though Soviet leaders express this fear, they presumably find it increasingly hard to detect in their enemies any symptoms of impending decay. It is of special significance that there seem to be no Soviet scenarios for the expected downfall of their major opponents.

But if the enemy has not manifestly fallen into a fatal illness, he does appear less powerful to the present Soviet leaders than he did to their predecessors. For that very reason, if paradoxically so, he appears the more dangerous, for he may succumb to some great and disastrous delusion or may lose his self-control. Obviously he is to be feared.

Yet Soviet thought is not all of a piece. Despite Russian claims to pre-eminence, the Kremlin is uneasy. Contemporary Bolshevik leaders, particularly those of lower-class origin and little education, are beset by feelings of inadequacy vis-à-vis the West, feelings which they strenuously combat.
It is possible that the intensity of the Soviet drive during the early years may have been due in part to the belief that what seemed necessary for survival and profitable for the Kremlin was also thought to be in the interests of all mankind. Today these values are not always mutually reinforcing in their impact on Soviet policy. It may be that Soviet leaders are beginning to relax.
CONTENTS

PREFACE ................................................................. iii
SUMMARY ............................................................... vii
ABBREVIATIONS ....................................................... xi

Section
I. IS SURVIVAL UNCERTAIN? ...................................... 1
II. STILL InferIOR? .................................................. 17
III. ARE THE SOVIETS RELAXING? ............................... 35
ABBREVIATIONS

K 57 N. S. Khrushchev, Za prochnyi mir i mirnoe sosushchestvovanie (For a Stable Peace and Peaceful Coexistence), Moscow, 1958.

K 58 N. S. Khrushchev, K pobede v mirnom soevnovanii s kapitalizmom (Towards Victory in Peaceful Competition with Capitalism), Moscow, 1959.


K 60 I, II N. S. Khrushchev, O vneshnei politike Sovetskogo Soiuza (On the Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union), Vols. 1, 2, Moscow, 1961.

21st Congress Vneocherednoi XXI S'ezd Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza, stenograficheskii otchet (Extraordinary XXI Congress of the CPSU, stenographic report), Vols. 1, 2, Moscow, 1959.

22nd Congress XXII S'ezd Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza, stenograficheskii otchet (XXII Congress of the CPSU, stenographic report), Vols. 1, 2, 3, Moscow, 1962.

Materials Materialy XXII S'ezda KPSS (Materials relating to the XXII Congress of the CPSU), Moscow, 1961.


Where a quotation is given without attribution, the words are Khrushchev's.
I. IS SURVIVAL UNCERTAIN?

The aggressiveness of the older Bolsheviks was probably motivated to a significant extent by fear of annihilation: for them total victory may have appeared as the only guarantee against an always imminent extinction.\(^1\)

Presumably the sharp increase in Soviet resources which has occurred since the war has weakened this particular factor behind the Soviet drive, and while the Kremlin's permanent inferiority in intercontinental nuclear capability has no doubt operated in favor of the earlier attitude, it may not have entirely neutralized other and favorable changes.

It became possible for the 21st Congress to promulgate the dogma that "there is now in the world no force which could destroy the socialist system in the Soviet Union": "socialism has been victorious not only completely, but also definitively,"\(^2\) or even "fully, definitively and irreversibly."\(^3\) Attempting to annihilate it, an enemy will provoke his own destruction; he will call down upon himself a "crushing blow"; he will be "smashed." And this not for the first time either. Where is Hitler today? Khrushchev is fond of asking, and is wont to answer: "He has long ago rotted in the earth."\(^4\)

---

1 See Study, Chap. XVII.
4 K 57, p. 18.
It may be that the men in the Kremlin draw reassurance from what they think they observe about their opponents but what they are careful not to mention in public: the enemy's social system may presumably be acting as a brake as much to his destructive as to his productive forces. If the Western interventionists had trebled their military investment in 1918-1920, if Berlin and London had made common cause in 1941, if Washington had executed a first strike at various moments in the nuclear age, for instance in late October 1962, if any of these had occurred, the Soviet regime, so runs the estimate of the Kremlin, would have perished. But none of them did.

*   *   *

Still, the older fear of annihilation has perhaps not quite abated.

"How many times," Khrushchev recalls in 1958, "did the imperialists undertake furious assaults on the Soviet Union!"\(^5\) "Forty years will have passed since the great October socialist revolution," he observes, and "during all this time the imperialists have not for one moment interrupted their efforts to destroy the world of socialism."\(^6\)

Their basic hostility is undiminished. "The ruling groups of the Western countries want to annihilate us," states Khrushchev flatly in 1958.\(^7\) He speaks of

---
\(^5\) Speech of April 4, 1958, K 58, p. 204.
\(^7\) To a Western journalist, January 31, 1958, K 58, p. 65.
"politicians" who "harbor the...aim of extirpating socialism everywhere in the world."\textsuperscript{8} "The imperialists have never abandoned hopes for destroying the first socialist government in the world, and after that also the whole socialist camp."\textsuperscript{9} In fact, "the mind of the members of the ruling groups in the imperialist camp... works in one direction only: how to erase from the face of the earth the socialist governments and how to annihilate communism."\textsuperscript{10} "Are the aggressive circles in the Western countries not putting up obstacles against an agreement on disarmament," he asks in 1960, "because they hope to accumulate forces and to try once more to conduct a policy 'from the position of strength,' with the help of which they aspire to liquidate the socialist governments?\textsuperscript{11} What might happen if the Soviet Union did not have a veto in the UN? "Imagine," he says to the General Assembly, "that representatives of member states of the UN then conceive such an 'ideal' thought: let us decide to liquidate the socialist system in the Soviet Union."\textsuperscript{12} As the Party program of 1961 has it, "the imperialist countries...do not want to reconcile themselves to the existence of the socialist world system and openly announce their...plans to liquidate the Soviet

\textsuperscript{8}Speech of May 24, 1958, K 58, p. 315.  
\textsuperscript{9}To a Western journalist, June 11, 1958, K 58, p. 373.  
\textsuperscript{10}Speech of July 2, 1958, K 58, p. 384.  
\textsuperscript{11}Speech of April 25, 1960, K 60 I, p. 421.  
\textsuperscript{12}Speech of October 7, 1960, K 60 II, p. 430.
Union and the other socialist countries through war."

"World reaction," Khrushchev adds at the 22nd Congress, "more and more orients itself toward inflicting a blow on the socialist governments from without, so as to re-establish by war the dominance of capitalism in the whole world." The enemy, however, may have to content himself with "slowing down the development of the countries of socialism." "The disruptive activities of the old world will continue," he predicts in 1962, "until the question 'who-whom' [who will liquidate whom?] will have been solved, until the red flag of communism will have definitively affirmed itself across the whole globe."

The objective of such disruption, he explains that spring, is total: "We know...how our enemies...wait for a possibility of wiping socialism from the face of the earth.... One must remember that our enemies have taken every opportunity to strangle us, and will continue to do so. That one must always remember, Comrades!" "All this forces us...to be especially vigilant." "We are obliged to observe the very greatest vigilance," to "be vigilant, always ready to repel an attack."

* * *

13 Materials, p. 403.
14 Ibid., p. 12.
15 Ibid.
16 Speech of April 19, 1962, Pravda, April 21, 1962.
18 K 58, p. 11.
19 K 59 I, p. 345.
Will the enemy's yearning to destroy us be translated into action? As has often been pointed out, one answer of rising importance in the Kremlin is: it won't.

The arms race, it is said, is carried on in the West for the buck and not for the bang. Or it is designed to slow up the Party's advance towards "communism" by forcing it to divert resources to unproductive uses. There prevails, in fact, a situation approaching stable deterrence.

For one thing, "a part of the bourgeoisie sees the real danger of thermonuclear war."20 They know that "in the fire of war all their possessions will burn up, including the profits acquired in the arms race."21 "The most far-seeing representatives of the ruling classes in the capitalist countries," notes an observer, "see that a new war is not going to be, to use the expression of V. I. Lenin, an 'extremely profitable affair,' as the first and the second World War were."22

More than that, though some people in the West "affirm that disarmament threatens severe consequences for the economies of the capitalist countries, ...the least that can be said about such affirmations is that they are completely unproved." "In fact," reminisces Khrushchev, "I had occasion to talk with many representatives of American business circles...who are confident that the industry of the United States is fully capable of handling

---

22 Arzumanyan, Kommunist, March 1962, p. 29.
the task of transferring the whole economy to peaceful production."\(^{23}\)

Above all, there is Soviet might. But might will deter the enemy only to the extent that he is reasonable. How reasonable is he? How reasonable will he remain?

From the Kremlin's point of view a variety of factors seem to create a "disposition" to "recklessness" among "some of our probable enemies."\(^{24}\) One of them is that the enemy is now in his declining years and is moving towards his fall. (I shall discuss below what contemporary Bolshevik leaders may mean by this, and how much they may believe in it.) The enemy is represented in many Soviet statements as the aging man who disregards the decline of his powers and follows only his undiminished desires. Sensing that a sober view of things would make him painfully aware of his hopeless position, the enemy deliberately discards calculation. Furthermore he is so blinded by his own hostile feelings that he becomes incapable of correct perception. His dismay at the deterioration of his own position makes him rage and rave like one possessed. Fear may cause an enemy to neglect pressing dangers from other quarters. It may drive him to desperate shifts, suicidal acts, even murder. Like the man afflicted with a fatal and galloping illness, he may be willing to hazard the most dreadful kind of surgery. The horror of impending death may be reduced by dragging others down with himself. And then comes the end itself, "the

\(^{23}\) Speech of January 14, 1960, K 60 I, p. 31.
\(^{24}\) K 60 I, p. 38.
death convulsions." At that moment, according to Malinovskii at the 22nd Congress, "capitalism threatens mankind with fearful disasters."\(^{25}\)

* * *

But what, precisely, do the Soviets mean when they speak of this "old age" and this "mortal illness" that drive the enemy into being dangerously unreasonable?

If one were to raise this question for the Bolshevik leadership succeeding Stalin in 1953, it would perhaps not be too difficult to answer. But 1962 is more puzzling. The older answers are still abundantly reproduced by academicians, but little voiced at the top. The path that leads to their enemies' liquidation may not be entirely clear to the Soviet leaders themselves.

In 1953 those in power remembered the war of 1914-1918, and had been in positions of influence in the thirties when most non-communists agreed with all communists that "capitalism" was in deep trouble. But today it is exceedingly rare to find Bolshevik leaders predicting that another Great Depression is going to befall the enemy in the not too remote future, that the "nature" of "capitalism" entails "economic crises" of great and increasing severity.

In 1953 a trend towards the "pauperization" of the "masses," in an "absolute" or "relative" sense, probably appeared evident, as well as its consequence, a steady "sharpening of the class struggle." Today, these themes are seldom alluded to in the public utterances of Bolshevik leaders, and it seems improbable that they

would want to hide a persistence of such beliefs. To be
sure, Khrushchev may quote figures to show that strikes
are spreading in the West. He may say that under
"capitalism" "the material progress of society does not
only not liquidate social differences, but on the con-
trary increases social inequality, sharpens contradic-
tions between the exploited ones and the exploiters."26
But by now such infrequent affirmations are beginning to sound
like echoes out of the past.

In 1953 the American "hegemony" in the West already
tended to counteract the traditional communist belief
that "contradictions" within the enemy camp would lead to
wars resulting in major losses to that camp as a whole.
But two World Wars, and one of them sufficiently recent,
were still enough to sustain the Bolsheviks' conviction
that they could rely on the enemy to continue destroying
himself. Today, this belief, too, has been reduced to
minor status (why? if it is still plausible). Khrushchev
occasionally refers to "the further sharpening of the
struggle between capitalist countries for" -- a classical
triad -- "foreign markets, sources of raw materials and
spheres of capital investments."27

But the sudden public appearance of this idea followed by its protracted
disappearance only serves to remind the analyst that
times have changed. The fact that Western Europe is
today gaining in power and influence within the Western
economy at the expense of the United States does not lead

26 K 58, p. 148.
27 K 58, p. 55.
the Bolsheviks, even when they stress this point, to prophesy another war for the "redistribution" of the enemies' world.

As to war between the Soviet Union and the West, it now carries too great risk for its forecast to serve as a basis from which to derive the enemy's downfall.

In the past, when it appeared that capitalism was not about to collapse of its own weight, Bolsheviks used to talk about the "stabilization of capitalism," always carefully qualified with the word "temporary." Today this line has been discontinued. Instead they sometimes speak of the "general crisis of capitalism," a formula in which they rescue the word "crisis" at the expense of its meaning by referring to the new environment in which the West has to live rather than to developments within it. First, there is the expansion of the "socialist camp" and the enemy's shrinking domain. To make their point they contrast 1917 and the present, but fail to mention the fact that almost all advances for the "socialists" were made in the course or aftermath of war (a conjunction which may now be discouraging). Second is the progress of this "camp" towards "socialism" and "communism," and third, the West's loss of its colonies and "semi-colonies." According to classical belief this third development should lead to an economic catastrophe for "imperialism," either now or when "neo-colonialism" will have gone the way of its crude predecessor. Despite all doctrinal support, such a gratifying prospect is little mentioned.

In one important respect the underdeveloped areas have taken the place of the West in the Bolshevik view
of the world. The road that was supposed to have led the Communist Party of the United Kingdom to power in London is thought now, a quarter of a century later, to be the highroad to power in Cairo. Meanwhile, Communists may have learned to be more reticent in publicly disclosing the several "stages" into which such a process is divided. One remains accustomed to delays and setbacks -- but then there are also windfalls, as in Cuba.

There may be thus no difficulty in sketching out how the enemy -- deprived of his "hinterland" and facing an adverse camp "overtaking" him in "economy and culture" -- will be strictly confined to Western Europe and North America.

But where to go from there? From Lenin to Khrushchev it has been asserted that once the enemy's major centers have been defeated, his minor centers are unlikely to put up any last-ditch resistance. But to what extent is it sensible or even plausible to cast the entire West in the role of Luxemburg, or even Brussels, suing for peace after Bonn and Paris have been conquered?

Thus Bolshevik leaders may, for the first time in the history of their Party, be somewhat at a loss in filling in, be it in the broadest of strokes, the schema leading to their enemy's liquidation.

However, what about Khrushchev's perhaps most frequently employed and most strident theme, namely, that as the East out-performs the West, the common man in the West will choose the "system" responsible for the East's superiority?

That this is in fact Khrushchev's major argument, only underlines a point suggested above. Having abandoned
their past contention that the West is not viable, Bolshevik leaders now maintain only that it is less efficient. While there are huge unused capacities for producing steel in the United States, all material resources are employed in the Soviet Union. While there are always millions of unemployed in America, there are none under "socialism." "Socialist" economies grow about three times as fast as capitalist economies. The older system is thus doomed.

In presenting this argument, it may be noted, Soviet leaders imply that the average human being is coolly shopping for as many of the good things of life as he can possibly get. He informs himself of the comparative yields of the several products offered on the market of social systems, and chooses the one with the highest pay-off.

This might be more convincing than it perhaps is to Khrushchev were he an American. As it is, the conception of human nature implied in his key argument -- to which he has had to resort as previous and more congenial demonstrations became too implausible -- is at variance with views strongly held by the Bolsheviks.

When Bolshevism arose at the beginning of the century, it was customary to regard the proletariat as apathetic or, as Lassalle put it, characterized by a "cursed lack of demands." Marx took it for granted that the proletariat would come in time to recognize what was good for it, would develop "class consciousness." Lenin maintained that it was incapable of doing so, and that it needed the spur of "professional revolutionaries," recruited also from the "intelligentsia." Bolsheviks
felt and probably still feel that ordinary human beings will behave in radically new ways only if an "intolerable" situation forces them into it, a service that "capitalism" was once supposed to perform but didn't.

In view of all this it appears possible that in the minds of Bolshevik leaders the enemy's "old age" is presently manifested chiefly by his lessened economic growth and the decline of his share in world production; and that his "final agony" and "death" are unaccountably not preceded by any detectable symptoms, current or imminent.

A belief hard to substantiate, however, is not necessarily one that is losing its hold on men's minds. Indeed, the act of adhering to a belief may become more fervent, at least for a time, as it becomes less plausible. Several factors may be converging in the sixties to sustain the Bolshevik leaders' belief in the enemy's decline and death, even in the absence of ready evidence.

First, it is a belief which need not call for costly or risky action, and does not do so in the Kremlin's present view.

Second, as long as it is enunciated in abstract or metaphoric terms, it remains plausible to those who have for decades believed in "capitalism" as a system "rent" by "insoluble contradictions," latent, if not manifest, and bound to become manifest in time. For those who believe that every "social order" buries its predecessor in due time, "coexistence" can be only temporary.

Third, to doubt the grave state of the enemy's health is to doubt the central tenet of one's faith:
the universal coming of communism (though adherence to that
tenet may be weakening; see below). Given the present tech-
nology of weapons, the spread of communism by the Soviet
army, on the model of 1940-1945, appears too risky; and
the seizure of power by a local communist party in a
situation less than critical may still seem a "blanquist
adventure" doomed to fail. The enemy has to be near
natural death for violence to be effective. And it isn't
really murder, only euthanasia for the benefit of the
survivors.

In the fourth place, the enemy's death derives its
plausibility from the record of one's own growth: com-
pare 1962 with 1917, then extrapolate to 2007.

Thus, older Bolshevik leaders, who remember the era
when the symptoms of the enemy's "fatal illness" were
readily perceived, may still hold for awhile to their old
diagnosis. But unless new evidence appears to confirm
it, their successors are less likely to do so.

*   *   *

To come back to the Kremlin's possible concern about
Western lack of realism and Western deficiency in control
over feelings, Russian uneasiness may be related to the
fact that contemporary Bolshevik leaders are taking a
less favorable view of their opponent's stature than did
their predecessors.

But while this loss in stature makes the enemy ap-
pear more dangerous, it also makes him seem weaker.

28 See above, pp. 6-7.
29 See Study, Chap. XVI.
How dedicated are Western leaders to the interests of their "class"? "Rockefeller," surmises Khrushchev, "clearly wants to ride into the White House on the cold war horse in order to experience the comforts of the presidential chair.... He wants to build his personal welfare and career at the expense of a terrible danger... to all mankind." 30

And how intelligent are enemy leaders? "I observed him," Khrushchev is fond of recalling about Eisenhower after the breakdown of the "summit" in 1960 (and this context may make one wonder to what extent he is expressing pique), "in 1955 at the Geneva Conference, and I was ashamed for the President. ...Dulles was sitting to the right of the President. When the President had to speak, Dulles wrote him a note. For the sake of propriety, the President might at least have turned away and acquainted himself with the note, but he took it, read it, and put it away. Then, when he had to speak again, he took the next note, which had again been prepared by Dulles." Khrushchev professes not only contemptuous pity, but also fear. While he is convinced that his opponent "won't harm children" -- hence the offer made to Eisenhower of a job as a director of a Soviet children's home "if he wants to work here" -- "it is dangerous for such a person to lead a government because he may make such a mess that you can't sort things out afterwards." 31 "I should like to tell the

31 Press conference of June 3, 1960, K 60 II, p. 22,
representative of the U.S.A. this story," Khrushchev begins a few months later in the General Assembly. "Two passengers rode in a train. This was in Russia during the revolution of 1905. The passengers conversed. This was a third class car, and opposite them there were sitting people who listened to their conversation. One said to the other: but the Tsar is a durak (fool).

The gendarme who was sitting in the other half of the car heard this, came by and asked: who says the Tsar is a durak?

The passenger answered: I said it, Mr. Gendarme.

The gendarme became indignant: How do you dare to say that our Tsar is a durak?

I beg your pardon, answered the passenger, I said that the German Tsar is a durak.

The gendarme then cried out: I know our Tsar -- if there is a durak, then it is our Tsar!"

"I do not want," Khrushchev concludes with rare restraint, "to add anything to this story."\(^{32}\) What a boon to have a durak as one's counterpart -- at least for some years -- and what a worry!

But still, a boon.

"I am saying this because I know him,"\(^{33}\) declares Khrushchev in giving his low opinion of the enemy's leader. The new estimate, Khrushchev hints, is one of the happy results of being more active than his predecessor, who observed and travelled less. The dogmatiki

\(^{32}\) October 13, 1960, K 60 II, pp. 506-507.

\(^{33}\) Press conference of June 3, 1960, K 60 II, p. 22.
and sektanty of today -- in Peking, in the anti-Party group, in Albania and elsewhere -- are surely viewed by Khrushchev as nearer to Stalin than to himself in this respect. They have not had the opportunity or the capacity to revise traditional estimates in the light of fresh experience. As a result they "overestimate, exaggerate, the possibilities of imperialism."³⁴ Possibly Khrushchev holds that these would-be revolutionaries, charging him with a rightest deviation, err in fact by idealizing the enemy, thereby becoming a mere "appendage,"³⁵ a tail to the capitalist dog.

Or is that one's own fate when one is taken in by the enemy's simulation of stupidity? Did Eisenhower not manage to "deceive" Khrushchev at Camp David? Who was the real durak there? Such are Bolshevik doubts.

* * *

On balance it would seem from the above considerations that Bolshevik fears of annihilation have declined, which in turn presumably lessens the urgency of total victory as the only alternative to national extinction.

³⁴ Inozentsev, Pravda, January 17, 1962.
³⁵ See Study, Chap. XII.
II. STILL INFERIOR?

The Soviet Union, the people, I myself -- we are not lowly any more, nor are we now inferior to the West and its rulers: such is a theme of Khrushchev's, pronounced with seeming passion. When Khrushchev speaks in this vein, one may surmise that thoughts of such problems as his agricultural difficulties or his ICBM limitations are not absent from his mind. Such distressing discrepancies between aspiration and performance call for compensation by claims of -- at least -- equality with the West.

Look how we have risen! Are we ashamed of ourselves? No, we are filled with pride; it is the enemies who are contemptible. Now it is we who are big, and getting bigger, while some enemies are already nothing, and all others are on the way to becoming just that. So far from being beggars, as the enemy thinks, we have achieved comfortable autarky. We don't need their pitance. We are not savages, not animals, as landowners and factory bosses used to think. We create in orderly fashion rather than wildly destroy. It is for the sake of construction that we eliminate the noxious; it is the enemy who is an animal. Not clumsy and stupid, we are skillful and intelligent. Now we are not uneducated any more, but highly cultured.

Considering all these achievements, are we really illegitimate? Not at all. "Don't be frightened by our country," Khrushchev tells the French, "but rather become imbued with the consciousness of the fact that we
are a legitimate child. We have been born by history.

It is rather the enemy who is tainted by illegitimacy. Whenever the United States commits what the Soviets regard as an evil deed and then proceeds to deny its guilt, Khrushchev is likely to compare it to an unwed mother who claims, despite the presence of numerous children, that she is still a virgin. "But what can be done about it? The girl gives birth, and the fact of birth has been registered!"

We are not small children any more; if not already adults, at least hefty adolescents. "You are older than we as to age," Khrushchev addresses the "imperialists," "but socialism is now, as it were, a child whose muscles have developed to such an extent that he is ready to compete with capitalism."

No more lowly, we have all become princes. "Some have announced" abroad, Khrushchev discloses, "that Gagarin is a direct descendant of the ducal family of the Gagarins." "What a sign of the times!" he comments: "Now the remnants of the former Russian upper classes are not above taking advantage of the glory of a working man." But in truth the Soviet Union is "the tsardom of the working people" while "tsarist Russia does not exist any more." Khrushchev has become increasingly

36 K 60 I, p. 312.
37 K 60 II, p. 507.
38 Speech of December 9, 1961.
given to speak of "His Highness the People"41 and "His Highness the Working Class of the Soviet Union."42

*   *   *

But the enemy refuses to acknowledge these changes, enormous though they be. Though "times are now different," "the imperialists' attitude has remained the old one": "they try to approach the Soviet Union with the old yardstick"; they "maintain the attitude towards us they had earlier when they called Russia a country of bast-shoes."43

Does this show that we have not really raised ourselves to a much higher level? Of course not. What it does show is the enemy's blindness due to his senility. Because "the imperialists look at us in the same fashion as they looked at Russia a hundred or fifty years ago," "we are telling them -- you, gentlemen, haven't noticed us...."44 "It is necessary finally to understand," says Khrushchev, "that the Soviet country has now become different, the world has changed, and the relationship of forces and of arms has become different."45 "Even those who make noise here," exclaims Khrushchev to an unruly audience of journalists abroad, "should understand with whom they are dealing. I am the representative of

42 For instance, Speech of August 11, 1961, Pravda, August 12, 1961.
44 Ibid.
the great Soviet people, under whose leadership...."46
"Gentlemen," he tells the West, "those times when you attacked the Crimea already belong to the past!"47

But though that moment be a hundred years removed in physical time, is it not much less distant within Khrushchev's soul? The "imperialists" are the father who denies that his son has grown up. "Such views on contemporary Albania," says Khrushchev during a visit to that country about Western conceptions of its backwardness, "are hopelessly out of date." But, "thus it often happens with unintelligent old people when they imagine a person as he was as a child. However, in the meantime this person has grown up."48 "Some political figures in the West," he notes, "would like to have the negotiations [on Berlin] center around the consolidation or 'improvement' of the occupation regime in West Berlin." Khrushchev appears amazed: "Strange people! One might believe that they are in a state of lethargic sleep and that they still consider the Soviet Union as the kind of power it was during the first years of the Soviet regime." However, "it is already long ago that we have exchanged childish shorts for paternal pants."49

Demonstrably erroneous that it is, and even though it may indicate the enemy's deterioration, his persistent

---

46 K 60 I, p. 561.
48 K 59 I, p. 364
49 Speech of December 9, 1961.
belief in his superiority remains impressive, depressing, infuriating. "When I was in the United States of America," recalls Khrushchev, "I told American businessmen more than once: How self-confident you are! How highly you think of yourself and how you underestimate others!"\textsuperscript{50}

How the enemy takes it for granted that all is permitted to him, and to him only! "The United States of America," notes Khrushchev after the U-2 incident and the American refusal to apologize for it, "committed an aggressive act, but they are not accustomed to anybody making observations to them about anything, demanding an answer of them."\textsuperscript{51} In fact, "I remember conversations in Paris with a delegation from the International Women's Congress which had recently been held in Copenhagen. Some delegates, while condemning the aggressive actions of the American government, asked at the same time: perhaps one ought to have agreed to the holding of the summit meeting even without receiving apologies from the American government. One of the delegates said: 'To express an apology is terrible for the American government.' As if any other government might proffer apologies, but as if this were difficult for the American government and as if I ought to understand its position. 'Arrogance is strongly developed among them,' one delegate said. I answered: This is true, but it is precisely that arrogance which needs to be brought down."\textsuperscript{52} A year later, this matter seems to

\begin{footnotes}
\item[50] K 59 II, p. 342.
\item[51] K 60 I, p. 603.
\item[52] K 60 I, pp. 625-626.
\end{footnotes}
have lost little of its intensity. "In 1960 in Paris," Khrushchev recalls, "Mr. Macmillan tried to persuade me to sit down at the negotiating table with Eisenhower, who had committed an unworthy act towards our country. Macmillan said: 'Do understand, Mr. Khrushchev, this is a great country, it can't apologize.' I answered: 'Allow me, we too are a great country, we require an apology....'"

How natural it is for the enemy to forbid my doing something which he allows himself without any compunction! On October 26, 1962, Khrushchev suggests to President Kennedy that Turkey equals Cuba; his supplication goes unheard. Accusing the West of proposing a test ban that would permit foreign personnel to enter the Soviet Union, but would not allow for any Soviet control of the West, Khrushchev then exclaims -- with a show of feeling, even though he may be lying: "These proposals of the Western powers show how much contempt they have for our government and our people!" "Imagine," says the foreign ministry of Moscow to the one in Bonn, "that Frankfurt-am-Main had been divided for whatever reasons, and that another state order had been formed on one part of the territory of the city, that...an occupation regime hostile to the Federal Republic were to exist there. Would the Federal Republic be a passive onlooker to this, or would it use all possibilities in order to find some...solution which secured its interests in due fashion? The answer is evident. No, the Federal Republic would not tolerate this." Now "why do the governments of the Western powers

54 K 59 I, p. 122.
and the Federal Republic want to refuse the German Democratic Republic what they certainly would not refuse themselves?"\(^{55}\) "Here there are present journalists from the bourgeois countries," Khrushchev observes at a meeting in Moscow. "They will of course now write that Khrushchev calls for world revolution, for world communism, and that therefore peaceful coexistence is impossible, and so forth. Write what you wish, gentlemen. But you desire the victory of world capitalism. Then why do you want to deprive me of the right to propagandize for world communism? Where is the equality of conditions here?\(^{56}\)

But there can be no equality of conditions, as the West is the father or teacher who takes it for granted that he enjoys rights superior to those of the child. "They want to treat us like a boy," declares Khrushchev about the West's attitude to the Soviet Union in the matter of the peace treaty with Eastern Germany. "'Sit still,' they say, 'put your hands on the desk, don't dare take a pen to sign a peace treaty.'" However, "when you wanted a peace treaty with Japan, you disregarded us and signed it. Now that we are telling you a peace treaty must be signed with Germany, we are told: 'Don't you dare, or you will have your ears boxed.'\(^{57}\)

Probably Khrushchev is saying what he knows to be untrue: he must know that the West is not trying to prevent him from seizing his pen for the purpose mentioned. But this does not preclude his enlisting


feelings to support the lie. When he insists that "We, too, are human beings," "We too are a strong government," "This too is an insult," "We must mutually spare our self-esteem," and, finally, "We shall sign the treaty because we are just as strong as you" -- when Khrushchev says all this, he may be speaking, despite all the pretense, as the oppressed child, the oppressed man of the common people, the citizen of a nation that (among other and opposite reactions) has been despised and has even despised itself.

Khrushchev and other Bolshevik leaders just cannot forget this past contempt, nor do they perhaps feel, deep down, that it is entirely past: very little provocation is needed to arouse a sharp sense of being treated as an inferior.

Though the Soviets readily admit that they inherited a backward country from Tsarist Russia, they treat earlier Western views of Russian outlandishness as an expression of its everlasting contempt. "For decades bourgeois propaganda presented...the Soviet people, in so many words, as a 'race of uneducated peasants.'" 58 "There was a time when people abroad, but also some within the country, spoke about us with disdain." 59 This was "illiterate Russia about whom some talked with contempt, considering her a barbarous country." 60

60 Ibid.
The West, the Russian upper classes and -- who knows? -- some among the Party intelligentsia, predicted, or at least felt, that Russians, and particularly Russian workers and peasants, would never rise from their low state. "How many self-important 'theoreticians' were there not," Khrushchev recalls, "who predicted that bast-shoe Russia was not capable of becoming a tremendous industrial power." 61 "For many decades the bourgeois aristocracy [sic] said with contempt that the working people...would not be able to make the heights of science, of technology, of culture their own, would not be capable of leading the government and the society." 62 Having failed to overthrow the young Soviet power, "the leaders of the capitalist world began to calculate in the following way: ...let us give these stubborn workers and illiterate peasants time...to direct affairs by themselves. They will not be able to manage successfully the complicated business of directing a country...they will suffocate, they will not endure all the economic and political difficulties which will assail them." 63

In fact, we were laughed at, mocked: "When Vladimir Il'ich announced [in 1917] that the Communist Party was ready to assume the direction of the country," Khrushchev recalls at the 22nd Congress, "the bourgeois press of Russia mocked us and laughed at us. This is what the monarchist paper Novoe vremia then wrote: 'Let us assume

63 K 59 I, p. 163.
for a moment that the Communists will be victorious. Who will then govern us? Perhaps cooks? Or firemen? Grooms, coachmen? Or perhaps nursemaids will run to attend the Council of Ministers in intervals between the washing of swaddling clothes? What is this? Who are these leaders of government? Grooms, nursemaids, coachmen -- these are, according to the idea of Communists, apparently called to rule the country. Will it be thus? No!"  

To mock people is to "lower their human dignity," an offense apt to rankle a long time.

When Khrushchev announces that he is going to show how he and his audience have ceased being objects of contempt, we may actually find him insisting again on how they were and perhaps -- in his feeling, if not his conscious thought -- still are. "The United States of America," he begins with glee in 1961, "is at present really going through an extremely painful period of their development when a big reappraisal of values is taking place. You should put yourself in their place, though it is of course difficult for you to do that, as it is for me. That is for actors who quickly and convincingly transform themselves now into kings, and then into proletarians. Well, imagine yourself a king or some prince: he is accustomed to riches, accustomed to people bowing before him; nobody has the right to look into his eyes, one must bow one's head and look only at his trousers or shoes. American imperialism...like such a king or

---

64 Materials, p. 119.
prince, is accustomed to everybody bowing before it and fearing it. Suddenly the Soviet Union appeared. Our little ruble was at first rather weak, but then it got stronger, more virile and became dearer than the dollar.... We created a powerful industry, a developed agriculture, raised the level of science and culture." One would now expect to hear how painful it is for the United States to adapt to these developments. However, Khrushchev pursues in the opposite vein: "But the imperialists look at us in the same fashion as they looked at Russia a hundred or fifty years ago.... We are telling the imperialists -- you, gentlemen, haven't noticed us, and we add to this, as the Ukrainians say...." At this point Khrushchev returns to the contrary theme, which he intended to develop in the first place, for the Ukrainians ask: "How is it that your eyes are popping out in astonishment?"

But then he goes back immediately to his preoccupation with continued Western contempt. "In this [sic] there is a loss of the sense of reality on the part of the imperialists...." And now again, for the conclusion, back to the initial point: "...and [sic] at present there is going on [among the imperialists] an extremely painful rethinking of many phenomena." 66

The discomfort of being contemned by the enemy may be mitigated by emphasizing how wrong were the enemy's forecasts, which he had derived from his low estimate of the Party and of Russia, and how disastrous were the actions based on them. They mocked us? Now we mock them!

The parent who refuses to perceive that his child has grown up, still threatens beatings; the child announces that he will hit back, and use his superior strength. "We are telling the imperialists," declares Khrushchev: "Understand that you have now placed yourself into the position of some aged parents, a father or a mother. Their little son has already made the change from short to long trousers, and their daughter is already wearing curls; these children already want to be treated as adults, but the parents still want to twitch their braids or pull their ears. To some extent this is the attitude taken towards us. They still want to teach us: 'You musn't do that.' 'Don't you dare.' 'If you do that, you'll get a box on the ears.' To such threats we can answer: 'We won't box your ears, but rather give you a beating on some other spot!'" 67 "The imperialists," Khrushchev repeats at the 22nd Congress, "don't like the fact that socialist countries grow and develop. They would like to limit us, to teach us like children how we should live in the world.... They can not bring themselves to accept the fact that we are now so much grown up that not only are we not learning any more, but that we can even teach others a lot.... They are displeased, they threaten us with a switch. But if they come at us with a switch, then we shall use a hoe." 68

Even when wisely abstaining from seizing a switch, the enemy adopts a "high-handed attitude," 69 engages in

69 K 59 I, p. 487.
"rude behavior," thus "manifesting disrespect." "In the capitalist world," observes Khrushchev, "one reckons as follows: those who are rich are also clever, and those who are poor are also stupid. But the monopolists of the United States of America are really rich and strong and hence they are not accustomed to talk to anybody on a footing of equality. They are accustomed to assassinate the ones and to buy off the others...."

Take even one of the few Americans who became respectable, the farmer Roswell Garst. On his first visit "he conducted himself with the haughty grandeur of the American. He said, 'I shall teach the Russians.'"

Such an attitude may be all the more displeasing as it evokes a hidden disposition to submit (which in its turn exacerbates the opposite reaction). Having alleged that "the imperialists look at us in the same fashion as they looked at Russia a hundred or fifty years ago," Khrushchev asks: "And what shall we do in that situation?" Here is what first comes to his mind: "Run towards them and say 'What is your pleasure?'"

All the more intense the demand: "Don't wound our self-esteem!" Treat us as equals! "When President Kennedy talked with me in Vienna, he insisted: 'But we

---

70 Ibid.
71 K 59 I, p. 401.
74 See Study, Chap. XVIII.
76 K 59 II, p. 112.
are a great country.' And I answered him: 'True, but, Mr. President, the Soviet Union is also a great country.'

* * *

But perhaps the enemy is already unable to deny this. Perhaps we have crowned our achievements by forcing him to treat us with respect -- a complacent, even exultant, mood of Bolshevik leaders that alternates or mingles with the bitterness already described. "The time when people abroad ridiculed our plans has vanished into the past," proclaims Khrushchev. "Those in the capitalist countries who affirm that the working people are incapable of directing the government are dying out." "When I stood in the Washington airport, about to leave America," Khrushchev recalls shortly after that moment, "a salute... was rendered in honor of our Fatherland.... After the first volley I thought: this is for Karl Marx! the second for Friedrich Engels! the third for Vladimir Il'ich Lenin! the fourth for His Highness the working class, the working people!... And thus there was fired volley after volley in honor of our Fatherland, of its people. Not too bad, comrades, not too bad! You know, if it were not for the big successes achieved by our country...they would not hear such volleys.... We, the Soviet people, lifted, as one says, mother Russia from backwardness to such a height, glorified her greatness." "His Highness the working class...of all socialist

---

78 K 59 I, p. 294.
79 K 58, p. 395.
80 K 59 II, p. 333.
countries," he repeats later, "has created governments with which the imperialists have to count; they have to assume an attitude of respect towards the peoples of the socialist countries, towards their interests."

81 Earlier the enemy managed or pretended not to "notice" us; now he is anxiously attentive to us. "Yesterday our country elected deputies for its supreme organ of power," observes Pravda. "One might think that this is an internal affair of the Soviet people. But our country has by now already acquired such a weight, it exercises such an influence on the course of history that the most important events in its life acquire significance for the whole world. The speech of N. S. Khrushchev [of March 16, 1962]...is being commented upon and discussed, studied and analyzed." 82

82 March 19, 1962.

More than that, the enemy is now respectful, even afraid of us. "Recently," Adzhubei tells the 22nd Congress, "Soviet journalists, and I among them, had occasion to converse with President Kennedy. Only think, Comrades, the President of the United States, of such a rich and, I would say, a still arrogant power, was calculating with pencil in hand when we would surpass them. Suppose somebody had told American Presidents of the 'twenties' that already in the 'sixties' their successors would calculate the balance of economic competition with the Soviet Union and be worried that Russia--of which they then took no account in calculations concerning the world scene--might equal and overtake the United States. Surely they would, with contempt, have
called somebody predicting such a thing at least a dreamer. But for Kennedy this is already no dream but a worry, and what a worry!"  

There remains the irritating fact that the West is, as Adzhubei notes, "still arrogant." In order to subdue the fear of being despised by the certainty of being admired, it is necessary to think of the world at large rather than about that tiny fraction of its several billions, the Western upper classes. "Vladimir Il'ich Lenin," recalls Iudin at the 21st Congress, "answering the reproaches of enemies that our country is uncultured and backward, said: 'Wait, gentlemen, leave us a little time, and then we shall see who is backward and who advanced.' This time has now come, and all honest people in the world recognize our Soviet country as the most advanced and the most cultured."  

Today "the whole world" looks "with wonder" at the Soviet Union, is "astonished" by it. More than that, young Adzhubei sees "all of mankind," "enthusiastic," "render a tribute of love and respect" to it, while young Shelepdin evokes the excitement of some Russian intellectuals in the 1840's: "There now has been realized the great prophecy of our geniuslike countryman Belinskii who, many years ago, wrote that he envied his grandchildren and great-grandchildren who were fated a hundred years later to see Russia at the

---

head of the cultivated world, dispensing laws, science and art and receiving the reverent tribute of respect from the whole of enlightened humanity.\textsuperscript{87} So much respect do we receive: the counteroffensive against outer and inner disrespect is being conducted vigorously.

\*

Thus, while the self-esteem of contemporary Bolshevik leaders is enhanced by their achievements, it is rendered more precarious when persons of lower class origin and little education, such as Khrushchev, have increased influence; Khrushchev's successors may be less touchy. At the same time the enhanced discrepancy between the alleged Western contempt and the actual status of the Soviet Union makes the attitude imputed to the West even more painful. These are factors strengthening the Soviet wish to "give the imperialists hell," but it is of course far from certain that such feelings will influence policy in direct and massive fashion. They did not in the Cuban crisis, though that affair must have exacerbated them.

While the Kremlin might not have decided to send missiles to the island if that move had not appeared useful on military grounds, it probably also served the purpose of reducing other kinds of inequality between Moscow and Washington: what the Americans had always taken for granted they could do in Turkey, the Soviets were, finally, going to practice in Cuba.

And then Washington denied Moscow that particular equality. After so many imaginary slights, this was a

\textsuperscript{87}21st Congress, Vol. 2, p. 255.
real one, and the Soviet leaders must have responded with much of the feelings described above.

But they believe that acting on feelings -- particularly in crisis -- threatens catastrophe. To that they preferred removing the tarpaulin for along-side inspectors.
III. ARE THE SOVIETS RELAXING?

Despite the Cuban affair, it cannot be excluded that they are, to some limited extent.

"All relationships," Nikita Sergeevich tells an American television audience, "however tense with conflict they may be, lose their sharpness with time." After all, "however stormy the ocean may be, earlier or later it enters into its confines. There is always a stillness after the storm." 88

He isn't the slightest bit sincere? Perfectly possible. But one chooses one's way of lying from among many possibilities, and the choice may express more of one's feelings than one admits to oneself. Of course, when Khrushchev declares to the Supreme Soviet that nobody lost over Cuba, that reasonableness triumphed, and that the Soviet government attained all its objectives, there is no reason to believe that he is speaking his mind in any sense of this term. But the same may not quite be the case when he chooses an image such as the one just quoted.

"We announce," declares the aging Khrushchev on Stalin's unmentioned birthday shortly after the regime became forty years old, "that we are at present just as courageous and young as we were courageous and young in the days when we went forward to victory in the Great October, just as much as in the days when we fought on the fronts of the Civil War and of the Great Fatherland..."

---

88 October 9, 1960, K 60 II, p. 447.
war." In fact, "We have preserved the great revolutionary elan" 89 — a contention which would have been more convincing if it had been left to one's opponent to make.

The "great elan" of earlier Bolsheviks was one in which all action served three values, without a conflict being conceivable. It was ethically good (though Bolsheviks were then chary of explicit references to that dimension); 90 it was necessary for survival; 91 it was profitable in terms of power. 92 For the human condition to be splendidly transformed, the power of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) had to be brought to a maximum; but this was equally required to reduce the chance of being annihilated.

The last five years, the era of Khrushchev, may have seen this strong combination of beliefs disintegrate.

First, the fear of being annihilated has declined. Hegemony over the world may not be felt any more as quite so essential to bare survival.

Second, until the middle fifties, the conversion of the world to communism may have appeared as entailing, in a first and not too brief phase, Moscow's hegemony over the world: the good agreeably required the agreeable. Now the Bolshevik leadership may have lost belief in such a happy coincidence. Probably in 1962 Khrushchev did not particularly like the Czechoslovak leader Novotny to liquidate his rival Barak, and even less Castro.

---

89 K 57, p. 342.
90 See Study, Chap. III.
91 See Study, Chap. VII.
92 See Study, Chap. III.
to eliminate the Communist Escalante, but he viewed it as expedient, if not as inevitable, to tolerate such acts. How much then will he hope to exercise control over a communist Washington? It seems likely that Khrushchev has more or less relinquished what may have been Stalin's belief that Moscow was going to become another Rome. In addition, the disappearance of "capitalism" in its major centers may now seem much less probable; it might have to be assured at the prohibitive cost of war.

Now the good -- converting the unbelievers or applauding their self-conversion -- stands rather alone, half-abandoned by the necessary, the probable, the not too expensive and the selfishly gratifying. From all we know about Bolsheviks that is not a comfortable position for the good to be in.

When, towards the end of 1962, Khrushchev for the first time renders public a detailed portrait of "dogmatism" -- Peking -- he views as its core the assertion that war between the two camps is a necessary condition for the destruction of the enemy; and he goes to great lengths in denying this. Behind his insistence on the enemy's disappearance by other means, there may be a feeling which Khrushchev himself might not dare to face: if the conversion of the West to communism did in fact require war, this would be too high a price for the Soviet Union to pay. Having recalled that there are "imperialist forces which reason this way: if we must die, then let us die, as the saying goes, to music, even though it be the music of exploding atomic bombs," Khrushchev pursues: "We...have no mind to die, be it
to music or without music.... Why should we ask to be invited at the devil's, why should we, as the saying goes, speed on to the other world? After all, nobody has yet returned from there and reported that conditions are better there than on earth." Thereupon he recounts a recent conversation with a woman worker in Moscow. He asked about her living conditions, and they turned out to be quite satisfactory. "So, life is possible," he proposed at the end, and she assented: "It is possible, Comrade Khrushchev. All of us have only one worry, one great wish -- that there should be no war." "This woman," Khrushchev adds, "expressed the mood of the working people," and understandably so. "In forty-five years we have traversed an enormous distance, and now our stride has become even longer -- what previously took us five years, now requires but months." This being the case, "do we have something for which to care? Of course we do!"93
