MATERIAL INCENTIVES AND THE SOVIET MASSES—FACTORS BEHIND THE FAILURE OF KHRUSHCHEVISM

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I. INTRODUCTION: "KHRUSHCHEVISM"

MANY DOUBT the possibility of establishing "Khrushchevism" as a separate concept. Even the late Isaac Deutscher flatly states that "one cannot speak of a 'Khrushchev era' as one speaks of the Stalin era" [10, p. 121]. Alexander Werth, a British journalist and expert on Russian affairs, also asserts that the decade under Khrushchev should perhaps be called the Khrushchev phase rather than the Khrushchev epoch, for the reason that an "epoch" suggests "something complete, with clearly-defined limits and contours, and sharply-marked characteristics" [66, p. vi], not applicable to the Soviet Union under Khrushchev. Instead, he asserts, Khrushchev regime was "the most changeable, most empirical and sometimes most unpredictable," calling for an expression "the phase," which denotes "something much more fluid" [66, p. vi]. However, the present writer takes a somewhat different view from these observers above, as has been expounded elsewhere [26]. It is true that Khrushchev developed no sophisticated and unique theories or thought of Marxism comparable to Lenin's exposition on the Communist Party as the vanguard of revolution, his theory on imperialism, or Stalin's doctrine of socialism in one country. Khrushchevism is commonly characterized by de-Stalinization and the doctrine of "All People's State" [29] at home, and, internationally, by the declaration of the three principles, i.e., peaceful coexistence, the rejection of the "inevitability" of war, and the approval of various forms of transition to "socialism." None of these may represent "any great positive idea (or even policy) of its own" (Deutscher) [10, p. 121]. However, are they not also too big a deviation from or a revision of traditional Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism to be so dismissed? Dr. A. Sakharov, a Soviet physicist and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, is one of those who attach more importance to Khrushchevism. He says, the "bold" report of Nikita S. Khrushchev (advocating de-Stalinization) to the 20th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, and "a number of associated measures—the release of hundreds of thousands of political prisoners and their rehabilitation, steps towards a revival of the principles of peaceful co-existence and towards a revival of democracy—oblige us to value highly the historic role of Khrushchev" [50, p. 49]. One of the most prominent French experts on the Soviet Union, M. Tatu, again giving high credit to Khrushchev, states, "If Khrushchev were to be remembered in history for one single reason, the word 'destalinization' would suffice" [59, p. 141]. The concept of Khrushchevism, as controversial as has been seen above, will be

used in this article not in any strict sense, it may be almost interchangeable with such other terms as Khrushchev's scheme, line, or policy.

According to the view of the present writer, one of the characteristics of "Khrushchevism" lay in its unique method of nation-building; i.e., the principal means of achieving further industrialization (or, in the Marxist-Leninism jargon, "building a communism") of the Soviet Union under Khrushchev was sought (i) in extension of material incentives, (ii) to the Soviet masses, and (iii) for the purpose of raising their labor productivity. We may briefly make the point that: (a) Khrushchev's method was different from those of Lenin and Stalin in depending more heavily on "material incentives," rather than on "spiritual stimulus" and "physical coercion" respectively; (b) it was different from Stalin's in widening the beneficiary from the narrow circle of elite to the masses, although using "material incentives" all the same; and (c) it provided a sharp contrast to Brezhnev's in relying thoroughly upon "human labor" as the principal source of higher productivity, while the latter tried to shift emphasis to "science and technology." Let us examine these points in greater details.

All the three leaders of the Soviet Union, Lenin, Stalin, and Khrushchev looked upon "human labor" (*trud cheloveka*) as the core element in socialism-building. And yet, the means to be adopted by them in raising the productivity of human labor were slightly different in emphasis in the following way.

There is no doubt that Lenin never hesitated to resort to "material power" and even on "coercive power" [8, p. 2] [33, pp. 157–87] as a means to achieve a higher productivity of human labor. However, relatively speaking, Lenin had on his side a very dependable ally called the "normative power or spiritual force" in addition to these two levers. No other leader in the half-a-century long history of the Soviet Union was perhaps so successful in stimulating untiring energy and passion. Besides his charismatic personality [48, p. 54], his years happened, fortunately for Lenin, to be the early phase of a revolution. For, the "enthusiasm born out of the great revolution" still persisted in Lenin's era, ready to be kindled even to explode. Here works a simple rule of arithmetic: to the extent he could rely on the "spiritual stimulus" called revolutionary enthusiasm (such as idealism of building a communism, patriotism and heroism to the motherland, moral and discipline of revolutionary puritanism, etc.), he was able to dispense with reliance with "material interests."

Stalin too tried to make the best use of "spiritual stimulus." His method was characterized, in the words of Deutscher, by the "double appeal" [9, p. 327], i.e., by his overt appeal to "the nationalist sentiments" as well as "the Socialist sentiments" in the people. For instance, in an address made in February 1931, Stalin warned of a possible defeat of "Mother Russia" by the great powers unless industrialization proceeded at a quicker pace [53, pp. 38–39]. During the Great Patriotic War of 1941–45, he used every single slogan like *"Rodina"* ("homeland") and "Russia" that had any value at all in attaining people's support for the war efforts [51, p. 104]. However, in order to achieve not a rather passive goal of defending the country but positive goal of starting or continuing the efforts for building up the economy, "the fires of the Revolution had burnt low"

(Mehnert) [36, pp. 75–76], leaving for Stalin only the "material power" and "coercive power" [8, p. 2].

Stalin's use of "material incentive" was characterized by its selective application, i.e., it was applied not to the masses but to a small minority of the population. While Lenin's stage was for power takeover and initial economy building, Stalin's was to maintain and strengthen that power and start a full-fledged takeoff in industrialization. What was needed was not undemanding ordinary soldier of the labor force (*die Soldaten der Arbeit*) but the officer of the labor force (*der Offizier der Arbeit*) [36, p. 76], with far superior knowledge and technology. The extra effort of the elite expended to acquire new knowledge and skills had naturally to be remunerated materially—this was the background which led Stalin to make the well-known address "New Conditions—New Tasks in Economic Construction" on June 23, 1931. He argued in this address that "in order to create the needed cadre" of "hundreds of thousands, indeed millions, of skilled workers" the outmoded wage system had to be done away with and be replaced by a new "wage system which would reward the skills of workers appropriately," coupled with "prospects for promotions, incentives" and "improvements in supply of goods and housing conditions" [53, Vol. 13, pp. 58–59]. "Those who get the most of available values (such as deference, income and safety) are *elite,* and the rest *mass*" (italics in original text) [31, p. 13]. There are few instances where the words of H. D. Lasswell fit better than the Stalin era when the value of goods distributed in society had to be minimized in order to maximize the amount of investment for reproduction on an enlarged scale. How then were the masses spurred to work after having been deprived of material remuneration? It was nothing but the "physical coercion," which became a monopoly and the trump card, and even a synonym, of Stalinism.

When Khrushchev inherited the regime as the third generation Soviet leadership, the masses were thoroughly exhausted both spiritually and physically, having been urged to work to the limit by abstract slogans appealing to their socialist and nationalist sentiments or by "stick" including the forced labor camp, with hardly any material reward. Under such a condition, choices available to Khrushchev were quite limited; principally, he had to rely on "carrots." Khrushchev thus missed no opportunity to emphasize the need to "raise material interest" of general workers (see, for instance, his speech on January 17, 1961 [44, p. 580]), of sovkhozes [23, Vol. 4, pp. 433–34], and of kolkhozes [23, Vol. 5, p. 86], leading Khrushchevism to be labelled both at home and abroad as "*goulash* communism," "economism," revisionism, or ultimately even as "revival of capitalism."

Khrushchev's emphasis on material interest was characterized by extension of its application from the elite in the Stalin era to the general masses.[1] This may be a change in policy any political leadership must have adopted when industriali-

[1] Lloyd G. Reynolds and Cynthia H. Taft, for example, in *The Evolution of Wage Structure* (1956) detected "a tendency for substantial wage differentials to arise with the growth of modern industry," as well as "the subsequent tendency for differentials to shrink gradually as industrialism matures" [49, p. 373].

zation reaches a certain stage, and Khrushchev's policy change may simply be a case of intuitive good judgment in the post-Stalin era. A superb pilot of his age, A. Mikoyan (also being the number-two man as the first deputy premier), who is said to have originated Stalin criticism even before Khrushchev, stated as follows at the 20th Party Congress in 1956:

> In the period when we were attempting to industrialize a peasant country, such a gap [that is, gap between the wages of low paid categories of workers and employees and the wages of high paid categories] was natural, since it stimulated the rapid formation of cadres of highly skilled workers, which the country greatly lacked.
>
> Now, when we have a highly skilled and highly cultured working class, replenished each year by people completing seven- and ten-year schools, the gap, *although it must remain,* will be diminished. This situation arises from the new level of our development and signifies a step forward along the path to communism. (italics added) [67, Vol. 1, p. 45]

In December 1957, Khrushchev himself publicly stated, on the basis of the same understanding as Mikoyan's, that the new wage policy was an expression of the Soviet leadership's concern for the welfare of those "who had not benefited from earlier economic policies" [46, Dec. 25, 1957]. In order to distribute the total national product to a broader stratum of the population, albeit thinly, Khrushchev raised the minimum wage and minimum pension (particularly the pension of kolkhozes farmers, who had been the principal losers during the takeoff period). He also effected a tax cut for low income groups, and resorted to more use of public consumption fund system, which had been ignored by Stalin[2] but could definitely expect income equalizing effects. We must especially note, however, that these administrative measures adopted by Khrushchev were not aimed at weakening or abandonment of the policy of "material incentives." On the contrary, the opposite was the case. As Mikoyan made abundantly clear (in the above-quoted speech of 1956), wage differentials must "remain" (see italicized portion of the quotation). What was new in Khrushchevism was mainly in the change of the object of his strategy (from the elite to the masses) by bringing in en masse the greater part of the population hitherto mainly neglected.

Did Khrushchev's scheme of extending the application of material interests policy to the Soviet masses achieve the intended end? We already know the historical sequence which followed the institution of this policy: labor productivity stopped rising significantly in the latter half of Khrushchev era (the late 1950s and the early 1960s), the economy stagnated, and with the downfall of Khrushchev himself, such Khrushchevite scheme of material incentives finally crumbled. The

[2] Stalin in his last writing entitled "Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR" (1952) argued that, "in order to pave the way for a real transition to communism," it was necessary that "the real wages of the workers and employees should be at least doubled" "both by means of direct increases of wages and salaries" and "by further systematic reduction of prices for consumer goods" [54, Vol. 3 (XVI), 1946–53, pp. 269–72]. But this stand was later severely criticized by Khrushchev and Mikoyan (with Molotov standing as Stalin's scapegoat) as making serious mistake of considering the waves as the sole form of distribution and thereby neglecting completely another important form, that is the public consumption funds [69, Vol. 1, p. 88].

question to be asked naturally is: What were the reasons for the failure of Khrushchevism then? And to solve this problem may indeed be quite meaningful in view of the fact that East Europe, China, and other "Socialist" countries, or even the less developed countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, may follow a similar path of industrialization with corresponding labor policies.

If the writer may be allowed to present his conclusion at this stage, there are at least the following three factors which acted as the yoke in the successful execution of the Khrushchevite scheme of extensive use of material incentives in the Soviet Russia: (1) the national character of Russians who would not connect the improvement of his material life directly with labor morale; (2) the communist ideology, which primarily aims at an "egalitarian" society and preaches transition from a distribution of articles of consumption "according to work performed" to "according to need"; and (3) the requirement of the Soviet economy to shift emphasis "from quantity to quality" which revealed itself toward the end of the 1950s. The first two factors are the general ones, built in the Russian Soviet society itself as an a priori to be equally faced by the Soviet leadership at any time. On the contrary, the third was the "specific" factor which the specific timing or stage at the end of the 1950s onward procreated. Why was it that these three factors frustrated the execution of Khrushchevism? The rest of this paper will attempt an answer to this question.

II. THE MENTALITY OF THE RUSSIAN-SOVIET MASSES

It was quite appropriate and indeed inevitable that Khrushchev replaced Stalin's emphasis of the elite in bestowing material reward by expanding the beneficiary to the broad masses. But the problem was that Khrushchev in his formulation of the new scheme expected too much out of the masses that were amorphous or at least were not dependable. In other words, in Khrushchev's image of the Soviet masses there was an element of over-evaluation or wishful thinking. At the core of Khrushchev's scheme lay the solid assumption that man would work harder in accordance with the material incentives provided. This assumption may well have been a philosophy of life for Khrushchev himself. But was it an accurate projection of the reality to consider also that of the Soviet masses? The affirmative answer leaves some doubt. Let us take up this issue first.

A. *The Russian Value System*

The material interest of the Russians is conditioned by their unique national traits more or less distinguishable from those of certain parts of Western Europe. In brief, the great majority of the imperial Russian population, i.e., *muzhik* ("peasants")[3] (and not the minority, merchants in particular), were not so eager to increase the private ownership of material values as the citizens of countries in the modern West. Let us elaborate.

[3] For example, in 1917 four-fifths of the Russian Empire's population consisted of people, who although not necessarily engaged in farming, were officially classified as peasants [43, p. 141].

First of all, the kind of harsh environment in which they were compelled to endure so long was not prone to beget such a desire. Peasants under the Tsarist control can be likened to "*goods* that belonged to land, and sold with land" (Herzen: italics in the original text) [16, Vol. 7, p. 120], or to oxen and horses. They were granted neither the right nor freedom to harbor private wishes as human beings. They could not afford a thought to better the material conditions of living out of which independent and individual persons could be born. Mehnert, who is Russian-born, has the following to say regarding the "lack of endeavors after gains" (*der Mangel am Gewinnstreben*) [36, p. 70]: "Russians, except their small minority, have lived quite content with their peasant way of life. . . . They never wished to live like landowners. Such submissive attitude towards the destiny was feature, which could be also observed for other strata under Tsarism. The whole life was not motivated by the desire to own more and to live better" [36, p. 73].

Secondly, we must note the special features of the peasant village community, the *mir*. In this commune, the right to cultivate and utilize land did legally belong to individual members of the communes, but the right of ownership belonged to the commune as a whole. Periodic repartition of land plot (*peredely zemel'nye*) lowered the working morale, and served as obstacles to firm establishment of personal affection to land or the sense of ownership [5, pp. 328–29] [63, pp. 134–35] [43, pp. 158, 166] [62, pp. 182–84].[4] These practices of village community begot correspondingly different mentality from that of West European countries:

(i) Among them was born a kind of mentality that prompts no unnatural feelings about their material desires to be fulfilled collectively and communally. As is known well, this mentality was mistakenly interpreted by some inadvertent thinkers as uniquely Russian advantage enabling backward Russia to reach the goal of socialism without having to pass through the stage of Western bourgeois capitalism. This, at any rate, forms a sharp contrast with the bourgeois mentality of the modern West, which demands personal material (consumptive) desires to be fulfilled, as a principle, by individual means. V. Weidlé, another Russian-born scholar (at the University of Paris), elucidates these two attitudes in his *Russia: Absent and Present* (1961) [64] [65]. For instance, French or German visitors often criticize that Russians are inclined to purloin other people's goods. This does not necessarily mean, however, that the Russian are greedy but only indicates the lack of their habit to "distinguish his own property from other people's" [64, p. 211] [65, p. 154].

(ii) Furthermore, among Russians was born the idea that actual use of goods be all important, leaving the legal title to a secondary importance. Prof. Weidlé

[4] According to D. Mackenzie Wallace, who actually observed Russian village communes in person and wrote an easily readable, first class account of the actual state of affairs of the *mir*, in Russia the possession of a share of communal land is often "not a privilege but a burden" [62, p. 192]. However, M. Confino is said to have claimed that there was no easy answer regarding whether equal redistribution of land or almost inborn sense of equality among peasants with no desire for personal reward for labor lowered Russian peasants' productivity [42, p. 64].

says that among Russians to "lend" a thing often means to "give" it [64, p. 212] [65, p. 154]. Needless to say, such a mentality or practices of Russians is sharply distinguishable from the attitude of people of the Latin civilization [55, p. 180], where under the deep influence of Roman law "possession" (*possessio*) as actual control over an object is clearly discriminated from "ownership" (*dominium*) as the purely legal control [64, p. 212] [65, p. 154].[5]

Thirdly, we must note the peculiar place which material goods ("wealth") occupies in the Russian culture or Russian value system. H. D. Lasswell pointed out that "culture rank values in different ways, and every personality exposed to the pattern of a culture tends to take over the same rank order" [32, p. 33]. There definitely is a tendency for Russians to value more highly than "wealth" such other values as enlightenment, rectitude, and affection. The Russian common sense that fulfillment of the spiritual inner life is the correct way of life for man rather than material satisfaction runs through the literary works of the nineteenth-century Russian authors. One readily finds sympathetic eyes of Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, and Goncharov cast on "those who do not seek material gains" (Mehnert) [36, p. 73]. Even the greatest heretical writer of today's Soviet Union, Solzhenitsyn, does not constitute an exception to this Russian literary tradition. He lets one of the characters in the *First Circle* utter the following words:

> Suddenly Muza spoke up....: "Have you ever noticed what makes Russian literary heroes different from the heroes of Western novels? The heroes of Western literature are always after careers, money, fame. The Russians can get along without food and drink—it's justice and good they're after. Right?" [51, p. 249]

B. *The Still Unavaricious Contemporary Soviet Masses*

The natural question to follow would be: Did this national character of showing little interest in the improvement of material life not undergo a drastic change after the Soviet "Socialist" Revolution? Did the Soviet regime, advocating Marxist-Leninism, not assign the new positive role to play as the principal actor in the nation-building to the peasant and the proletariat, who had "nothing to lose but iron chains"? The "personal ownership" (*lichnaia sobstvennost'*) of consumer goods has not even once been denied but staunchly defended by the Constitutions ever since the age of Lenin.[6] Khrushchev in particular resolutely dismissed the "preaching of equality in the communal spirit of early Christianity,

[5] Herzen has the following to say from an entirely different standpoint: "In our country, ownership is vigorously defended as a catch but not as a right." It follows that "it is difficult to implant the conviction toward infallibility and justice of ownership right, ...while the lack of well-established legal notions and ambiguity of various rights did not permit further development of the idea of ownership right, not allowing it to be consolidated and to form a shape" [16, Vol. 7, pp. 120–21].

[6] Article 10 of the Constitution (Basic Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics provides: "The right of personal ownership on the part of citizens in the income and savings from their labor, in a dwelling house and subsidiary household economy, in household articles, and in articles of personal use and convenience, as well as the right to inherit (objects of) personal ownership of citizens, shall be protected by law" [30, p. 4].

being content with low living standard and asceticism," albeit "its high morale" [23, Vol. 6, p. 336], even to the extent of being accused of "revisionism" by his main critic, namely China.

However, in spite of these intentions and campaigns of the Soviet leaderships, particularly of Khrushchev, the old views on materials on the part of the peasantry seems to remain almost unchanged until this very day. ("We have piped unto you and ye have not danced!!") Lenin, in his often-quoted speech in 1921, shrewdly added a point by saying that "the difficulty lies in creating personal interest" after emphasizing the need "to build [communism] on the basis of peasants' personal interest" [34, Vol. 44, pp. 164–65]. The full significance of these words of Lenin can be felt. Let us examine the reports, upon which this judgment can be based and its reasons.

First of all, the traditional Russian value scale of placing seeking (or seekers) of spiritual things above seeking (or seekers) of material gains has never changed even in the days of the Soviet Union with advocacy of historical materialism.

For instance, let us take up Dudintsev's *Not by Bread Alone* (1956), in which two men are the principal characters, each embodying one of the two values of spirit and material. Diagrammatic presentation of the two somewhat artificial characters of Lopatkin vs Drozdov, together with Oblomov vs Stolz in I. A. Goncharov's *Oblomov* (1859), may not be so highly commendable literarily, but is quite convenient for students of political science. Drozdov with his uninhibitive declaration that "the principal value today is to produce as much goods as possible," is depicted as a negative symbol as "a producer of material values" [11, p. 40]. On the other hand, Lopatkin, who devotes himself to work with only potatoes to fill his empty stomach, is pictured by the author as the ideal working intelligentsia. Read the following lines of Lopatkin, where his philosophy of life (or that of the author) is shown in a straightforward way:

> I can get a job at a factory any time, earn 2,000 rubles and buy a heap of lard.... I may save up money in the bank....But I am not that kind of a person! I want none of these. I have other desires. I want no happiness that some movies try to show, that comes of food, rooms, beds, and fine broideries....Of course, I would not refuse them. But they cannot make me happy by themselves. But if I can pursue my work to the end, I will be happy even without a bed! [11, p. 40]

Which of the two types is favored by the author himself is apparent also from the growing affection of Drozdov's wife, Nadya, toward Lopatkin, as well as from the title of the novel itself, taken from the New Testament.

There is no way to assure that the value hierarchy of the author of this novel is an accurate reflection of the total citizenry of the Khrushchev era, even after admitting generally that literary works usually reflect the values of the society. Is it not quite conceivable that a writer, child of the age but at the same time also a forerunner of his own age, felt repulsed by the prevalent materialistic mode of thinking and presented his own antithesis? Even if it may be so, however, the fact (or is it an irony?) remains that the most popular novel of the time posed some serious doubts about the materialistic way of thinking, and

highly praised the superiority of spiritual values in the Khrushchev age in which materialism was officially advocated. Also, if this novel failed to capture at least part of the basic values of the Soviet citizenry, it would be hard to see why this novel "became an overnight sensation, unique in the Soviet postwar literary world."[7]

In order to verify the above assumption, one would have to inquire the actual state of affairs regarding the Soviet populace. Regrettably, the present writer has not been successful in collecting adequate data to answer this question in a satisfactory manner. However, while the writer has encountered no reports showing rising levels of Soviet citizens' material interests, he has often met reports indicating the opposite. One example of the latter is M. Mihajlov's *Moscow Summer*. This lecturer at the University of Zagreb visited the Soviet Union as an exchange scholar during Khrushchev's era and subsequently published his impressions of the USSR without mincing words, which led to a court case. He has the following to say:

> Khrushchev was appealing precisely to them when he spoke of raising the standard of living to a higher level. Yet it is a fact, no matter how paradoxical, that the common Russian people do not consider material poverty the greatest misfortune, even though their living standard is still very low (about 40 per cent lower than in Yugoslavia). [38, pp. 160–61]

In order to examine such a trend in the Khrushchev era, we may also take a report on the Brezhnev era and try to look back in time. For instance, G. Feifer, the then correspondent of the *Observer,* writes *Message from Moscow* (1971), relating tastes and trends of the Soviet citizens at the time of the Czech Incident in 1968. In it he says that the Soviet citizens were "still of frame of mind of *Russian* peasants" (italics original) and "to whom the notion of worldly success and riches is as far-fetched as a holiday in Nassau" [13, p. 103]. This reporter posed a question, asking if they were satisfied with their respective standard of living, and was surprised to find an average answer of Soviet workers very reserved as quoted below, and came to the conclusion that "it is true that most Russians do not want much in the way of material goods" [13, p. 102].

> Satisfied? Why not? I've got my wife, got my own room. A television set, table and chairs and a bed. How many tables do you need, after all? My son's in school, the daughter's got a good job, better than me. What more can I really use besides an extra half-litre (of vodka) now and then? Too many things just get in the way. [13, p. 102]

During the two-year stay in Moscow from 1973 to 1975, the present writer was also struck by modest level of material interests of the Soviet citizenry. Let us take up housing as an example. To own one's home is a dream of ordinary citizens and the greatest material incentive regardless of the kind of world (or social system) one is living in. And yet the level of desires with respect to

[7] See translators' postscript to the Japanese version of [11], *Pan nomi ni yoruni arazu* [Not by bread alone], trans. F. Yamamura and K. Kuno (Tokyo: Kōdan-sha, 1952), p. 443.

housing in the Soviet Union is surprisingly modest. A Russian typist working at the Japanese Embassy in Moscow only wishes to have a one- or two-room apartment so that she and her husband can live away from her parents. More spacious three- or four-room flat would cost them more, is more cumbersome to clean, and is entirely unnecessary for a man and his wife, she claims. But glancing at various bulletins, such as *Housing Exchange Bulletin* [4] and the housing column in the *Evening Moscow* on Wednesday, the present writer was able to confirm that her view was an overwhelming one. Here one sees a clear indication of Russian frugality, wishing for no more space than is necessary, even when some extra rooms may be obtained at a small additional charge.

III. IDEOLOGICAL YOKE

The Khrushchev's policy of enhancing material interests on the part of Russian masses did not succeed firstly due to the particular nature of the Russian character as discussed in the previous section. The present writer, however, is convinced that it is due not only to "old Russia" but also to "new Russia" in the following two aspects: (1) the restraining factors built in the Soviet system as an a priori; and (2) defects in Khrushchev's concrete policy measures. Let us elaborate.

The kind of material interest the Soviet leaderships, including that under Khrushchev, tried to promote (or to utilize, to be more accurate) is only the one that does not cause conflict or crash with the "socialist" ideology. In other words, no selfish or capitalistic material interest, i.e., the kind of material desires that can be satisfied with exploitation of others' labor, cannot be allowed. Nor the gains simply for sake of gains are permitted. The desires considered beyond "the reasonable satisfaction of his requirements" (Khalfina) [22, p. 49], including, for instance, the desire to have more than one housing units by a couple and their minor children are never allowed.[8] Khrushchev himself made it clear at the 21st Party Congress of the CPSU in 1959 (where his policy line of creating material and technological basis for communism through further enhancement of material interest was emphasized) that he encouraged only the "socialistic" material interest and not the "capitalistic" one:

> The spirit of individualism, self-interest, the thirst for profit, hostility, and competition—these are the essence of the ethics of bourgeois society. . . . Socialism affirms a different ethics.
>
> The sentiments of most Soviet people are subordinated to the lofty ideal of being useful to society, of creating more and more material and cultural benefits for society. It is this, and not the thirst for profit, as is the case under capitalism, that is the principal motive force behind the actions of Soviet people. The American

[8] For instance, Article 107 of the New Civil Code of Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic provides: "If a citizen or spouses living together and their minor children, on grounds permitted by law, acquire personal ownership in more than one house, the owner may, at his election, retain ownership in any one of such houses. The other house (houses) must be sold, given away or otherwise disposed of by the owner within one year" [20, p. 33].

> writer Jack London gave a vivid portrayal of the character of people of the bourgeois world seized by the "gold rush" fever and ready to go to the end of the world for gold, even if they have to crawl their way. Advanced Soviet people go to distant parts not for the sake of the "golden calf," nor for personal enrichment, but to build new factories and plants, plow up fields, erect new cities for all of society, for our children, for the future, for the triumph of communism. People of an individualistic bent, who have a bourgeois conception of the interests of the individual, cannot understand the new moral traits of the Soviet people. [68, p. 57]

However, is it ever possible to draw a clear line of demarcation between the "socialistic" material interest and the "capitalistic" one? What is the criterion by which a certain fulfillment of a wish be considered "reasonable"? As has been shown in my two papers on personal property and its future perspectives in the Soviet Union [27, pp. 115–42] [28, pp. 44–83], there exist no commonly accepted views even among the Soviet legal experts regarding the types of consumer goods to be entrusted in personal ownership of Soviet citizens in future, and on its limits [27, pp. 131–34] [28, pp. 70–73]. The Soviet regime until now has also closed the country culturally, so to speak, successfully shutting off almost all popular fashion from the eyes of the Soviet consumers. However, to the extent it will be forced to lift the cultural "iron curtain" under the pressure of its people, today's luxuries (for instance, automobiles) may well become necessities. This possibility has been noticed sharply by scholars in the Soviet Union itself in the era of Brezhnev and Kosygin. For instance, B. V. Rakitskii notes that in recent years in the Soviet Union a greater portion of workers' income go to the purchase of consumer products and services, invariably bringing forth a strong desire to possess as soon as possible such "things new" and "newest fashions and prestige items—for instance, sundry goods other than food, books & magazines, and to an extent finally automobiles,. . . as vacationeering at the Black Sea once was" [47, p. 64].

Despite such suspects and possibilities—and also because of them—Khrushchev, being ultimately responsible for the maintenance of the Soviet system, was obliged to stick to the crux of the state ideology and to carefully check any excesses in the policy of providing material incentives. His attitude toward automobiles may be cited as a case in point. Khrushchev steadfastly adhered to his personal view that private cars were luxuries, and negated at every opportunity "the private-property-minded and capitalistic direction of using of them" [46, Apr. 1, 1960], proposing in its stead to use them in "a socialistic method," i.e., to provide a public "rent-a-car garage network" [46, Apr. 2, 1960], so that only "one-tenth or one-fifteenth of the number of cars would be required when compared to the case where everyone had tried to secure his own personal car" [46, Apr. 1, 1960]. Thus, on one hand he was stimulating material interest, while on the other hand checking it so that it should not go beyond certain limits. Such a wilful policy can hardly be expected to succeed. Below are cited words spoken in the Brezhnev era, but they seem to explain briefly but quite clearly why the incentive policy *with limits* by the Soviet Socialist regime failed to have intended appeal to enhance labor morale of the Soviet masses:

If you work a lot harder you can get a bit more—but what for? It's never enough to make any difference. If you scrimp and save, you can put together a tiny bit of money—but again, what for? You can't invest, can't really get anywhere. So everybody works as little as possible and spends every kopeck. All this would change overnight if there were some incentive. [13, p. 101]

IV. FROM THE AGE OF "QUANTITY" TO THAT OF "QUALITY"

As the third factor behind the failure of Khrushchevism, we note the fact that, because Khrushchev could not rid himself of "productionism" or "production socialism" [6, p. 133] in the tradition of the Soviet system, his actual policy proved to be one-sided, not followed by production of consumer goods and services. Khrushchev did promise verbally to transfer emphasis of production from "iron and gun" to "meat, milk and butter" [35, pp. 49, 67, 211], and specifically tried to partially revise the characteristic policy of Stalin's industrialization strategy to place priority on productive goods ("group A") at the expense of agriculture and consumer goods ("group B"). However, due to the combined forces of his crude understanding of the matter, the strong force of the group within Kremlin advocating the "dogma of priorities on heavy industries,"[9] and the development of international events to favor this group [59, p. 166], he was not able to provide adequate consumer goods to the Soviet masses before he left the place of power (the growth rate of the "group B" exceeded that of the "group A" finally under Brezhnev and it happened only in years 1968–71) [40, p. 56].

Thus, Khrushchev's policy of extending the material reward to the masses was materialized in the pecuniary form, i.e., in wage rises and others (it is estimated that the wages in USSR increased by 60 to 80 per cent between 1955 and 1962) [18, pp. 367–68], without, however, providing consumer goods (or those of sufficient quality) to be purchased by more incomes now made available.[10] As examples of unbalanced development between income and consumption in the Khrushchev era, we should point out two phenomena: increasing inventories occupying warehouses and shop shelves; and rising savings in the national bank. According to M. Goldman, "inventories" rose faster than retail "sales" in every

[9] This includes arms race, space rivalry, and aid to underdeveloped countries to compete with the United States, as well as aids to East Europe and countries in the Third World to vie for the hegemony of international communism with China.

[10] We note that the organ of Central Committee of the CPSU, *Kommunist* (March, 1960), had warned: "When we are struggling for fulfilment of the plans, we must see behind them not the abstract man but the people living in the contemporary world, their growing demands and their changing interest and tastes....It is possible to accomplish the plan fully or even excessively at an enterprise, producing a good amount of goods, with continuing dissatisfactions of customers. For customers are not items in statistics but living human beings, and they look for not 'aggregate production' but the kind of goods and services that would respond to their needs, wishes, and tastes. Who would need how many cargoes of goods as a silent accusation against poor bureaucratic management to have planned production only to occupy shelves in warehouses and shops, not wanted by anybody, and as a vivid proof of insensitive formalists?" [52, p. 13].

year in the Khrushchev era (1955–63) except in 1957 and 1960. In 1963, for instance, retail "sales" grew by only 90 per cent while "inventories" increased by as much as 176 per cent (base year 1954) [18, p. 366]. As a result, the total excess or above-norm "inventories" in the Soviet Union amounted to as much as 3.9 billion rubles ($4.3 billion) by the middle of 1963, according to a Soviet journal *Money and Credit* (December 1963).[11] While savings of Soviet workers showed a fivefold increase within the thirteen years from 1940 to 1953, the year of Stalin's death, their savings increased by twelve times within the following six years (until 1958, when Khrushchev was at the height of his power), as is shown in Table I, calculated by Goldman on official Soviet data.[12]

TABLE I
TOTAL SAVINGS DEPOSITS IN THE SAVINGS-BANK
(Billion new rubles)

Year	Total Savings
1940	0.725
1945	—
1946	—
1948	—
1950	1.853
1951	2.192
1952	2.645
1953	3.865
1954	4.835
1955	5.367
1956	6.375
1957	8.058
1958	8.719
1959	10.056
1960	10.909
1961	11.671
1962	12.745
1963	13.992

Source: [18, p. 369].

Thus, according to the rough summary of Goldman, total commodity "sales" doubled, while "inventories" tripled and "savings" almost quadrupled during the 1954–64 decade, which can be taken as the Khrushchev era. What these figures would probably suggest is the following level of consumption: (i) the Soviet masses had crossed the subsistence level [18, p. 370], securing the minimum of food, shelter, and clothing, and already possessing certain consumer durables (such as clocks and watches, radios, sewing machines, and bicycles) [18, p. 373]; (ii) they could now afford to save some of their incomes voluntarily in order to

[11] Cited in [18, p. 366].

[12] Note that these figures represent only savings deposited in the Saving-Bank, leaving out other forms of private savings not covered in the official statistics or not published, such as secret savings and hoarded cash. Taking the latter into account, the amount of savings in the Soviet Union would far exceed Goldman's data.

purchase durable luxuries at some future time (such as automobiles and houses); and (iii) they failed to find goods appealing enough to spend the money at shops, and were thus forced to effect "involuntary saving" [21, pp. 174–75]. As is argued by Goldman in his "Reluctant Consumer and Economic Fluctuation in the Soviet Union," all this signifies the coming of the age when the nature of the market changes from the sellers' market to the buyers' [17, pp. 188–200] [18, p. 366]. The Soviet masses are now selective, refusing to buy goods of inferior quality or not to their tastes.

The change at the end of the 1950s has a historic significance in the Soviet Union, and can be characterized also as the change from the age of quantity to that of quality. And yet Khrushchev does seem to have failed to recognize this change sharply enough to respond in an appropriate manner. Here again Khrushchev's adherence to the negative attitude toward private automobiles can be cited as a case in point. Khrushchev maintained while in power that "we will make many cars but not now" [46, Oct. 8, 1959, and Apr. 2, 1960]. He failed to perceive, consciously or unconsciously, that after TV sets, washing machines, and bicycles must come private home and private car. (After Khrushchev has left, Premier Kosygin showed his willingness to respond to the desire for cars even by introducing capitals from the West—France and Italy [41, p. 95].)[13]

Lastly, we must say a word about the failure of the Khrushchev regime to attempt an improvement of the distribution system, i.e., the mechanism through which the Soviet consumers obtain consumer goods. Due to the ideological biases of placing less importance on commercial activities, assuming it as transfer of goods, only changing owners but producing no economic value added, the Soviet leadership tried to reduce the cost of intermediary as much as possible, the burden to be borne by consumers. According to Soviet sociologists, many workers in the Soviet Union have had to spend as much as 70 per cent of their leisure time on shopping and household chores [46, Jan. 23, 1966],[14] and the time allotment for shopping is 51 per cent for standing in line, 26 per cent for selecting goods, and the remaining 23 per cent in transit [19, p. 140].

Thus, one may conclude that Khrushchev's policy of arousing material incentives was bound to hit a dead end sooner or later due to the fact that it was not accompanied not only by greater production of consumer goods but also by improvement in the distribution system.

V. CONCLUSIONS—THE ELITE VERSUS THE MASSES

Since political leaders are, in a profound sense of the word, a "product of the

[13] Brezhnev also stated at the 23rd Party Congress that "we are not producing enough passenger cars" [70, Vol. 1, p. 59]. For passenger car production in the Soviet Union in recent years, see [3, pp. 218–43].

[14] *Izvestiia* (June 21, 1961) advised that Soviet women "should not waste free their time in shopping" created by shorter working hours. H. Balanskaia vividly portrayed the hardships of working women endure when standing in line to buy food in her sensational novel [2, p. 36].

environment" [56, p. 91] [57, p. 7] or the "function of the circumstance" [58, p. 71], it is only too natural that Khrushchev, once in a position to lead the country at the mass age, felt bound to face squarely with the populace. He intuitively realized that in order to "pull the carthorse, i.e., Russia," no "driver" of the detached type like Stalin would do [15, p. 94], but that he must be a leader of the representative type to feel, articulate and aggregate the interests of the masses, i.e., calling for the "qualitative change in leadership" [58, p. 81].[15] Based on such a basic perception of his role, his first task in coming up with concrete policy measures was to justify his own mass-oriented line through the prestige of Lenin. For instance, at the important plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU in November 1962, where the party was reorganized on a production basis and the party machine divided into two parts—one for industry and one for agriculture—Khrushchev said:

> Vladimir Il'ich Lenin well understood the masses and was with working people.... See how close he was to the masses. Peasant visitors and representatives of workers and soldiers were always at his place. He went out to the country to celebrate the opening of a new train station. He went to the people and peasants,...went to factories,....and wanted to know and feel the spirit of the workers....
>
> But where was Stalin?...Thereafter, he never visited a factory....He only stayed in the Kremlin and in his villa. The Kremlin was barred to visitors....He was afraid of people....What is life if it has no contact with the people? (Stormy and prolonged applause.)
>
> Why did Stalin behave himself that way? He never experienced the need to have contacts with the masses. He was detached from the peasants, from the workers.... He [Stalin] used to say that he would die some day.
>
> But we do not die, but continue to live and work....
>
> Here is the difference between Lenin and Stalin. We believe in Leninist cause and the ideals of Leninist road. (Stormy and prolonged applause.) [45, pp. 90–91]

Khrushchev thus literally went to the hinterland of Siberia, talked and shook hands with the people, constantly marching out for grass-roots support [12, p. 29]. His criticism against Stalinism at the 20th Party Congress, the biggest gamble in his entire political career, was just an articulation of his recognition of the latent desires of the masses. It was also exactly because he intuitively knew limits of persuasion and coercion in mobilizing the masses that he emphasized the material reward as a lever to raise productivity. In order to demonstrate his raison d'être as a political leader in the mass age he missed no opportunities to apply the decorative word "people" (*narod*) [12, p. 29], e.g., in the people's militia (*Druzhiny*), "all people's state," "party of the whole people," etc. He never realized, however, that it was like accessories ready to be stripped bare at any moment.

[15] G. Fischer also asserts that "the Soviet Union crossed the boundary between modernization and modernity, calling for a new type of leadership" in the middle of the 1950s, when Khrushchev rose to power [14, pp. 7–8]. Robert C. Tucker on the other hand warns against "explaining (political leaders) in terms of social, political and economic factors" alone and not to ignore the unique personality traits of the leaders [60, pp. 573–74] [61].

Khrushchev perceived the latent as well as apparent desires of the masses and spoke for them. Herein lay his uniqueness as a political leader, and one of the reasons for his success. However, in his zeal for identifying himself with the masses, he inadvertently came to neglect the eternal ABC of political dynamics (even in a mass age) that the elite *is* and *must be* detached from the masses. His excessive conviction in the effectiveness of material incentive was a case in point. Khrushchev's material incentives policy was based on the specific understanding of man that "man would work harder if provided with a greater material reward." This is nothing but an easy reflection of his own philosophy of life. Born of a poor coal miner, and believing that "honest toil is tiring, but it's also rewarding" [24, p. 147], he "began working when learned to walk" [46, Sept. 22, 1959], and ascended to the prime minister of the great Soviet State: the position to command almost half the world. This was the philosophy of such a man. But the mistake (and tragedy) of Khrushchev was that he failed to recognize a possible difference between his own philosophy of life and that of the masses and yet he built his political scheme upon this misunderstanding. For instance, Khrushchev's ethic of work, as expressed in such words as "I miss work myself" and "often I've been miserable about being deprived of the ability to work for the good of our society. Sometimes the idleness of my life is an unbearable moral anguish" [24, p. 147]—which is nothing but the ethic of elite, and did not necessarily represent that of the average Soviet masses, as has been emunerated in this paper. Despite his own upbringing, or because of it, he seemed to have overlooked this simple fact of life.

One naturally notes that in the Soviet type of politics failures in *economic policy* may not necessarily lead to the loss of power. Factors behind Khrushchev's downfall should not be sought in his "populist bias" (Fainsod) [12, p. 129] but rather, more accurately, in what may be the other side of the same coin, his failure in *power politics* by alienating the elite and eroding their privileges. Khrushchev in the 1961 revision of the party rules instituted a periodical rotation system in the party apparatus (*apparatchiki*), and further divided the party machine into two in December 1962 to be in charges of industry and agriculture respectively. Certainly, this was one definite response of Khrushchev to a search for raison d'être of the Communist Party in a highly industrialized society. Furthermore, its hidden intention must have been not to weaken but rather to strengthen the party by giving the right of control over economic matters [59, p. 249]. However, it was nothing but a gross insult for the party *apparatchiki*, who had been enjoying the full privilege of their status as the elite of elites in charge of political and ideological matters, to be downgraded to "sausage makers."[16] They let the mechanism of self-preservation function vigorously. "Change always encounters powerful countervailing pressures"—this "law of inertia" [39, pp. 66–68] [37, p. 98] [59, p. 432], as established by G. Mosca and R. Michels, was proven to function effectively even in the "socialist" Soviet

[16] Frankland, whose biography of Khrushchev is the best so far of its kind, says that he "reconstructed the Party literally in his own image" and "at last managed to turn the Party of Lenin and Stalin into a Party of sausage makers" [15, p. 153].

society. Thus the party *apparatchiki,* who were almost turned to be "a mere transmission belt" (Azrael, Tatu) [1, p. 145] [59, p. 432], beautifully succeeded in tramping Khrushchev as the backstage sponsors of the palace coup in October 1964 as Khrushchev was about to go over their heads in appealing to the masses.

What awaited today's pseudo-populist, who failed to achieve less than a full success in his "economic policy" as well as neglecting the iron law of power politics (i.e., "government is always government by the few, whether carried on in the name of the *few* or the *one* or the *many*" [italics in the original text] [32, p. 109] [7, pp. 542–51]) and going astray from the Soviet principle of "politics before all other things," was the forced life of a pensioner on the pretext[17] of "his advanced age and deterioration of his health" [46, Oct. 16, 1964]. It meant nothing but a political death ("unpersonalization") preceding a natural death by seven years.

[17] Regarding the fact that this "pretext" is deleted in the 1969 edition of the official *History of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union,* see [25, p. 62].

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