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“HE WHO LIVES IN A GLASS HOUSE SHOULD NOT
THROW STONES”: NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV’S
PROVERBIAL SPEECHES AT THE UNITED NATIONS

Abstract: Premier Nikita Khrushchev’s two visits to the United States in 1959 – 1960 were a historical event due to the fact that it was the first time that the Soviet leader arrived in America. People from all over the world focused on his personality as well as his behavior and manner of speaking. Khrushchev’s fondness for the simple peasant phrase was one of his most striking features that was frequently demonstrated in unofficial talks as well as in different formal settings. Considering the fact that little is known about the use of pithy folk sayings by the Russian politician at the United Nations, the paper aims to examine Khrushchev’s proverbial rhetoric in this official environment.

Keywords: Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviet Union, the United Nations, proverb, proverbial expression, proverbial speech, rhetoric.

Although every language has its thesaurus of proverbs, the employment of these succinct words of wisdom by individuals can be highly varied. Whereas some people use them on a regular basis in different situations, others try to avoid the utilization of adages in certain settings or prefer not to apply them at all, considering them as vulgar sayings inappropriate for educated intellectuals.¹ Internationally acknowledged paremiologist Wolfgang Mieder questioned the assumption that proverbs are more applicable for common parlance of everyday communication than for any formal environment. In a number of celebrated books and seminal articles, the scholar provided much evidence that some well-known erudite public figures were masterful employers of proverbs in their political speeches as well as in their writings.² As pointed out by Mieder (2012b), “even debates in the United Nations are often interspersed with proverbs which can become verbal weapons that are difficult to argue against” (p. 31). It must be stressed, however, that very little research has

been done on the proverbial rhetoric of individual politicians at the United Nations.³

There is some scholarship on the use of proverbs by such Soviet/Russian leaders as Vladimir Ilich Lenin, Joseph Stalin, Nikita Khrushchev, and Mikhail Gorbachev.⁴ While Nikita Khrushchev's inclination towards the employment of proverbs and proverbial expressions has been noticed and paid some attention to⁵, there is merely a very short study that refers to his use of a variety of proverbial texts, but there are no textual examples, and the proverbial matters have not been scrutinized yet. Thus, this gap in the research needs to be filled, and the present article focuses on the peculiarities of Nikita Khrushchev's proverbial speeches at the sessions of the UN General Assembly in 1959 – 1960.⁶

A few comments about the terminology used in this paper are in order. First, while debate exists regarding a precise definition of a proverb (Whiting, 1932; Taylor, 1931; Gallacher, 1959; Mieder, 2012a), for the purpose of this article, a proverb is defined as “a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorizable form and which is handed down from generation to generation” (Mieder, 2012a, p. 3). Second, in his landmark study, Grigorii L'vovich Permyakov, the greatest Russian paremiologist, underlined the importance to distinguish between two concepts: the Russian *poslovitsy* (proverbs) and *pogovorki* (proverbial phrases/expressions). The scholar pinpointed that “for the most part, the term *pogovorki* is used to refer to allegoric sayings expressing ‘an incomplete statement’, whereas *poslovitsy* refers to allegoric sentences formulating ‘a complete statement’” (Permyakov, 1979, p. 9). Finally, such a proverbial subgenre as proverbial comparisons should be mentioned. According to Mieder (2012a), proverbial comparisons are “fragmentary and for the most part metaphorical phrases that must be integrated into a sentence” (p. 13) and are based on a verbal comparison with “like” or “as”.

Being born in a peasant family, Nikita Khrushchev (1894 – 1971) was frequently exposed to a plethora of “folk nuggets of wisdom” that were always popular among Russian common people. According to Taubman (2003), “Khrushchev's speech was as pungent as the earth, filled with tangy proverbs” (p. 28),

when he communicated with peasants. That is why these pithy sayings became quite certainly part of Nikita Khrushchev's political rhetoric at the time when he held the position of Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR (1958 – 1964), and he has certainly left a considerable legacy of proverbial wit and wisdom in his speeches at the United Nations.

On September 18, 1959, the Soviet leader delivered a speech that was replete with quite a number of various adages. For instance, in his comment on the problem of joining Taiwan to the Chinese People's Republic, the medieval proverb "the sooner, the better" (DAP, p. 552)⁷/ "чем раньше это будет сделано, тем лучше" in the slightly different wording: "the sooner it is done, the better" was used as the speaker's advice not to delay the annexation:

After all, China is not Taiwan. Taiwan is only a small island, a province, that is. A small part of a great state, China. China is the Chinese People's Republic, which has ten years now been developing rapidly, which has a stable government recognized by the entire Chinese people, and legislative bodies elected by the entire people of China. China is a great state whose capital is Peking. Sooner or later Taiwan, as an inalienable part of the sovereign Chinese State, will be united with the whole of People's China, that is, the authority of the Government of the People's Republic of China will be extended to this island. And the sooner it is done, the better. (*Khrushchev in America*, 1960, p. 71)

Ведь Китай – это совсем не Тайвань – это всего лишь небольшой остров, провинция, то есть небольшая часть великого государства – Китая. Китай – это Китайская Народная Республика, которая вот уже 10 лет развивается быстрыми темпами, которая имеет свое прочное, признанное всем китайским народом правительство, имеет избранные всем народом Китая законодательные органы. Китай – это великое государство, столицей которого является Пекин. Рано или поздно Тайвань, как неотъемлемая часть суверенного китайского государства, будет объединен со всем народным Китаем, то есть на этот остров будет

распространена власть правительства Китайской Народной Республики. И чем раньше это будет сделано, тем лучше. (Khrushchev, 1961, p. 147)

In the same speech, Khrushchev made a general statement, alluding to the sixteenth-century proverb “deeds, not words” (DAP, p. 141), employed in its variant: “by deeds, and not just words”/ “не только словами, но и делами” to underscore the significance of the efforts undertaken by the USSR to deal with the problem of disarmament:

All peoples need peace. Following the conclusions of the Second World War, the Soviet Union submitted concrete disarmament proposals to the United Nations. We proposed the complete prohibition of atomic weapons, a substantial reduction of armed forces and armaments, and a steep cut in arms expenditures. We urged the dismantling of military bases on foreign territory and the withdrawal of armed forces from foreign territories.

We have proved our desire to solve the disarmament problem by deeds, and not just words. Time and again the Soviet Union has taken the initiative and undertaken concrete steps towards ending the arms race and getting down with all speed to practical disarmament measures. Immediately after the end of the war, our country carried out an extensive demobilization of its armed forces. The Soviet Union has given up all the military bases it had after the Second World War on the territory of other states. (*Khrushchev in America*, 1960, p. 79)

Мир нужен всем народам. Когда закончилась Вторая мировая война, Советский Союз выступил в Организации Объединенных Наций с конкретными предложениями по разоружению. Мы предложили полностью запретить атомное оружие, существенно сократить вооруженные силы и вооружения, резко сократить расходы на вооружение. Мы выступили за ликвидацию иностранных военных баз на чужих территориях и за отвод вооруженных сил государств с иностранных территорий.

Свое стремление к решению проблемы разоружения мы доказали не только словами, но и делами. Не раз Советский Союз проявлял инициативу и предпринимал конкретные шаги, направленные на то, чтобы положить конец гонке вооружений и как можно скорее приступить к осуществлению практических мер по разоружению. Сразу же после окончания войны в нашей стране была проведена широкая демобилизация вооруженных сил. Советский Союз полностью ликвидировал свои военные базы, которыми он располагал после Второй мировой войны на территории других государств. (Khrushchev, 1961, p. 156)

The next example is a telling one and centers around three instances of the application of proverbial language:

The distinguishing characteristic of a properly functioning international organ is that questions ought to be settled there not by a formal count of votes but by a reasonable and patient quest for a just solution acceptable to all. After all, one cannot expect countries against whose will an unjust decision is taken to agree to carry it out. It leaves a bitter taste in the mouth. Recall how many such instances there have been in the history of the United Nations! Therefore, the United Nations should pass only such decisions as all will vote for, seeing in them an expression of the common will and the common interest. Such decisions would be recognized as the only correct and the only possible ones both by our generations and by future historians.

Naturally, a group of states which at a given moment commands a majority can put through the decision it wants. But this is a Pyrrhic victory. Such "victories" injure the United Nations, they disrupt it.

It should also be borne in mind that in the voting of one question or another the majority in the United Nations is a variable quantity. It could change against those who today so often bank on the voting machine. As the Russian saying goes, "You reap what you sow." And so, the wisest and most far-sighted policy is one of seeking

jointly for mutually acceptable decisions stemming exclusively from concern for safeguarding world peace and noninterference in the internal affairs of other nations. (*Khrushchev in America*, 1960, pp. 85 – 86)

Особенность правильно действующего международного органа заключается в том, что здесь вопросы должны решаться не формальным подсчетом голосов, а путем разумных и терпеливых поисков справедливого решения, приемлемого для всех. Ведь нельзя себе представить, что государства, вопреки воле которых принимается несправедливое решение, согласились бы его выполнять. У них останется от этого горький осадок. Вспомните, сколько было таких случаев в истории Организации Объединенных Наций! Поэтому в ООН надо принимать только такие решения, за которые будут голосовать все, видя в них выражение общей воли, общих интересов. Такие решения были бы признаны как единственно правильные и единственно возможные нашим поколением и историками в будущем.

Конечно, группа государств, которая в данный момент располагает большинством, может добиться принятия выгодного ей решения. Но это будет «Пиррова победа». Такие «победы» наносят ущерб Организации Объединенных Наций, они разрушают ее.

Надо иметь также в виду, что большинство при голосовании тех или иных вопросов в ООН – это переменная величина, и она может измениться не в пользу тех, кто сейчас столь часто делает ставку на механизм голосования. Как говорят в русской пословице, «что посеешь, то и пожнешь». Таким образом, самая разумная и дальновидная политика – это политика совместных поисков взаимоприемлемых решений, продиктованных исключительно заботой об обеспечении мира во всем мире и невмешательстве во внутренние дела других государств. (*Khrushchev*, 1961, pp. 164 – 165)

Khrushchev utilized the varied proverbial expression “to leave a bitter taste in the mouth” (the standard form of the phrase is “to leave a bad/nasty taste in the mouth” (ТТЕМ, p. 355)⁸/ “оставлять горький осадок”) and the classical phrase “Pyrrhic victory”/ “Пиррова победа” (GDRPE, p. 506)⁹. The latter alludes to the event in Roman history and “the exclamation of Pyrrhus after the battle of Asculum in 279 BC when he defeated the Romans at too high a cost, ‘One more such victory and we are lost.’” (ТТЕМ, p. 413). Most likely, the purpose of using the proverbial phrases by the Soviet leader was to express his disagreement with the way of how decisions were made at the United Nations. In addition, the employment of the biblical proverb “You reap what you sow” (Gal. 6:7; DAP, p. 554) served as a prophetic statement, figuratively saying that the existing procedure of voting could be the origin of some problems in the future: the consequences of the actions undertaken by a group of countries from the so-called “capitalist camp”¹⁰ would depend entirely on the actions themselves. It is particularly noteworthy that Nikita Khrushchev referred to this biblical proverb as a Russian adage. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the proverb “You reap what you sow”/ “Что посеешь, то и пожнешь” obviously was quite current throughout Russia as the biblical loan proverb, having been registered in Ivan Snegiryov’s “Russian Proverbs and Parables” in 1848 (see Snegiryov [1999]), as well as later, in 1861, in the famous dictionary of Russian proverbs compiled by Vladimir Dal’ (1993). It is interesting to notice that, in his fascinating book *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era*, Taubman (2003) mentioned that Nikita Khrushchev’s mother was very religious, and “he even claimed, in a speech given in France in March 1960, to have been a ‘model pupil’ in religion” (p. 27). In that case, it is highly likely that the Soviet leader could be well aware of the biblical origin of the proverb “You reap what you sow”/ “Что посеешь, то и пожнешь”. However, the speaker called it a Russian adage, thus proving the fact that this pithy bit of biblical wisdom has certainly become a bona fide proverb in the “atheistic” Soviet Union, the Russian-speaking country.

In another passage of the same speech, Nikita Khrushchev used one more biblical proverbial text, namely, “the bottomless pit” (НБПМФП, p. 1799)¹¹ as part of the colorful proverbial com-

parison “as into a bottomless pit”/ “как в бездонную бочку” (GDRC, p. 63)¹² to claim that it was not worth spending enormous valuable human resources on the arms race. The application of this saying definitely gave him an opportunity to communicate this complicated matter in a vivid and easy recognizable image:

It is well known, moreover, that the arms race is already a heavy burden on the peoples. It is causing rising prices on consumer goods, depressing real wages, harmfully affecting the economy of many states, disrupting international trade. Never before have so many states, such masses of people, been drawn into war preparations as present. If we consider, in addition to the military, the number of people directly or indirectly connected with the production of arms and involved in various forms of military research, we shall find that over 100 million people – and, moreover, the most capable and energetic workers, scientists, engineers – have been taken from their peaceful pursuits. A vast fund of human energy, knowledge, ingenuity and skill is being spilled as into a bottomless pit, consumed by the growing armaments. (*Khrushchev in America*, 1960, p. 78)

Кроме того, ведь это же хорошо известно, что гонка вооружений уже сейчас тяжелым бременем ложится на плечи народов. Она влечет за собой рост цен на предметы народного потребления, сокращение реальной заработной платы, пагубно влияет на экономику многих государств, расстраивает международную торговлю. История не знает, чтобы в военные приготовления вовлекалось такое число государств, такая масса людей, как в наши дни. Если к военнослужащим прибавить и тех, кто прямо или косвенно связан с производством вооружений и вовлечен в различные военные исследования, то окажется, что от мирного труда оторвано более 100 миллионов человек, причем наиболее энергичных и работоспособных людей труда, людей науки и техники. Огромное количество человеческой энергии, знаний, изо-

бретательности, мастерства падает, как в бездонную бочку, поглощается растущими вооружениями.
(Khrushchev, 1961, pp. 154 – 155)

In another speech delivered on September 23, 1960, Khrushchev argued against Henry Lodge's allegation that the Soviet proposals concerning the disarmament problem were obscure and unrealistic:

The experience of the work in the Ten Nation Committee showed that there arose difficulties in the negotiations in the Committee on practical problems of disarmament as a result of the unwillingness of the Western powers to solve the disarmament problem. The proposals of the Soviet Union submitted for consideration by the Ten Nation Committee are widely known and have been appreciated by world public opinion as clear and realistic. It is necessary to emphasize that they took into account some wishes and proposals of the Western powers. Nevertheless Mr. Lodge, the US representative in the United Nations Disarmament Commission, alleged that the Soviet Union was proposing buying a pig in a poke. In this case one may wonder whether Mr. Lodge, like the hero of oriental fairy tales, has not put himself into a poke which prevents him from seeing what is well seen and understood by all. (*Khrushchev in New York*, 1960, pp. 43 – 44)

Как показал опыт работы Комитета десяти государств, при переговорах в этом комитете по проблемам разоружения возникли трудности в результате нежелания западных держав решать проблему разоружения. Предложения Советского Союза, внесенные на рассмотрение Комитета десяти, широко известны, и они были оценены международной общественностью как совершенно ясные и вполне реальные. Надо подчеркнуть, что в них были учтены некоторые пожелания и предложения западных держав. Между тем представитель США в ООН по разоружению господин Лодж заявил, будто бы Советский Союз предлагает «купить кота в мешке». В таком случае сле-

дует спросить, не загнал ли господин Лодж сам себя, подобно герою восточных сказок в мешок, который мешает ему видеть то, что хорошо видят и понимают все? (Khrushchev, 1961, p. 319)

The Soviet leader cited the proverbial expression “to buy a pig in a poke” (MPPS, p. 489)¹³/ “купить кота в мешке” (GDRPE, p. 322) which originated with the French phrase “acheter chat en poche” (ERPD, p. 811)¹⁴ and means to gain something without being aware of its qualities or real value. Speculating on the situation, the speaker asked the sarcastic rhetorical question whether Mr. Lodge, the US representative in the United Nations Disarmament Commission, was himself like someone who had been put in a sack and was not able to see what was around him. In other words, Khrushchev implicitly criticized the US official for his “political blindness” because of his reluctance to recognize the value of the initiative taken by the Soviet Union.

In order to try to disarm his opponent, a representative of the USA, in the debate on the question of democracy in the capitalist and socialist countries (October 1, 1960), Premier Nikita Khrushchev applied the popular proverb “People who live in glass houses shouldn’t throw stones” (DAP, p. 253) with but a small change: “He who lives in a glass house should not throw stones.” The Russian variant “Чья бы корова мычала, а твоя молчала” (GDRP, p. 438)¹⁵, that is “Better let others’ cows bellow and your’s keep still” (CREDRPS, p. 363)¹⁶ with its earliest registration in the “Collection of 4291 Old Russian Proverbs” (as cited in Snegiryov, 1999) is still well known today and advises to “judge well yourself before you criticize” (CREDRPS, p. 363):

In America Negroes are lynched and hanged only because they are black. All the world knows this. This is the subject of books, of press reports. Turn to your history, representative of the United States! We bow our heads to Abraham Lincoln, the great American who raised the banner of the struggle for the liberation of the Negroes. He was an American and he fought against other Americans for the equality of peoples, for justice. But racial discrimination exists in the United States even today.

To this day in a number of localities in the United States Negro children cannot attend schools together with whites. Is this not a shame for a civilized society? And the United States representative designs to smear the truly democratic regime of the People's Republic of China, which is building socialism. In our country we have a saying in such cases which runs somewhat like this: "He who lives in a glass house should not throw stones. (*Khrushchev in New York*, 1960, pp. 123 – 124)

В Америке личуют и вешают негров только за то, что они черные. Это же знает весь мир. Об этом пишут книги, об этом сообщают в печати. Обратитесь к своей истории, представитель Соединенных Штатов! Мы преклоняемся перед Авраамом Линкольном, великим американцем, который поднял знамя борьбы за освобождение негров. Он был американец и воевал против других американцев за равенство между народами, за справедливость. Но и сейчас расовая дискриминация существует в Соединенных Штатах. До сих пор в ряде мест в Соединенных Штатах дети негров не могут учиться в школах вместе с белыми. Разве это не позор для цивилизованного общества? А представитель США берет на себя смелость клеветать на действительно демократический режим Китайской Народной Республики, которая строит социализм. У нас говорят в таких случаях: «Чья бы корова мычала, а твоя молчала». (*Khrushchev*, 1961, p. 403)

In yet another speech conducted on October 3, 1960, Nikita Khrushchev severely criticized Dag Hammarskjöld, the U.N. Secretary-General, for being pro-American as well as for his insufficient efforts towards the decolonization of Africa. He included the nineteenth-century proverb "It is the last straw that breaks the camel's back" (ТТЕМ, p. 392) / "Чаша терпения переполнилась" (GDRP, p. 731) in its significantly varied form: "the last straw that has exhausted our patience"/ "последняя капля, которая переполнила чашу терпения," that is "the limit of controllable vexation" (ТТЕМ, p. 392). The speaker did it in

order to add some expressiveness and colloquial color to his negative evaluation of Hammarskjöld's activities in the Congo:

Mr. Hammarskjöld has never been objective toward socialist countries; he has always defended the interests of the United States of America and other countries of monopoly capital. The developments in the Congo, where he played a most unseemly role, were but the last straw that has exhausted our patience. Indeed, had the composition of the Secretariat and the Security Council been different, no particular tense developments would have taken place in the Congo. The colonialists would not have dared to seize power again; and had they done so, the United Nations forces not only would have expelled them but would have created conditions for the normal functioning of the Parliament and government lawfully elected by the Congolese people. (*Khrushchev in New York*, 1960, p. 131)

Господин Хаммаршельд всегда был необъективен к социалистическим странам: он всегда защищал интересы Соединенных Штатов Америки и других стран монополистического капитала. События в Конго, где он сыграл просто скверную роль, – это лишь последняя капля, которая переполнила чашу терпения.

В самом деле, если бы был другой состав секретариата и Совета Безопасности, то никаких особо напряженных событий в Конго не произошло бы. Колонизаторы не решились бы вновь захватить власть, а если бы они это и сделали, то войска Организации Объединенных Наций не только выдворили бы их, но и создали условия для нормальной работы законно избранного конголезским народом парламента и правительства. (*Khrushchev*, 1961, p. 415)

On a number of occasions, the Soviet leader alluded to proverbial expressions in a playful manner that added much humor to his statements. The following instance (October 11, 1960) is one of them:

Among the speakers here were Mr. Greene, for Canada, and the United States representative – since his name is hard to pronounce I shan't do it in order not to get my tongue twisted. I think everyone will guess whom I mean without any mistake. They said that Khrushchev, you see, was also planning to leave. Yes, I am planning to leave for Moscow on Thursday, October 13, at midnight. But if you really want disarmament I will not only put off my departure for Moscow, but will confer here until a disarmament agreement is reached. (*Khrushchev in New York*, 1960, p. 195)

Здесь выступали господин Грин, представляющий Канаду, и представитель Соединенных Штатов – его фамилию произносить очень трудно, поэтому я не буду ее выговаривать, чтобы язык не сломать. Думаю, что никто не ошибется и догадается, о ком я говорю. Так вот, они говорили, что Хрущев, дескать, тоже собирается уезжать. Да, я собираюсь уехать в Москву в четверг, в 12 часов ночи, 13 октября. Но если вы действительно хотите разоружения, то я не только отложу свой отъезд в Москву, но буду заседать здесь до тех пор, пока не будет достигнуто соглашение о разоружении. (*Khrushchev*, 1961, p. 472)

The proverbial phrase “to get your tongue round it” (ТТЕМ, p. 127) / “язык ломаешь” (GDRPE, p. 770) with but its small change: “to get my tongue twisted” was employed by Khrushchev to ironically explain why he could not articulate the name of the U.S. Representative to the United Nations James J. Wadsworth. Even though the English sounds [w] and [θ] could be quite a challenge for a Russian speaker to pronounce, it is plausible to consider the possibility that the Soviet Premier did not enounce the last name deliberately in order to prompt the listeners' attention to his speech in such an original way.

Nikita Khrushchev appeared to be inclined to underscore his rhetoric with proverbial wisdom to strengthen his points and arguments. The following passage from his speech delivered on October 13, 1960, is a convincing illustration of it:

Before speaking on the question of the aggressive actions of the USA, for which the Chairman has given me the floor, I should like to say a few words as a reply. I, too am not deprived of that right, and I should like to make use of it. I want to say briefly and confirm the fact that the gentleman representing the Philippines is not a hopeless case; he does possess a rational kernel which may take root in his mind. He will come to understand things correctly and judge them correctly. But some time is probably needed for this. We have a saying, "Each vegetable ripens in its time." This gentleman is probably in the ripening stage right now. He will ripen, I think, and come to understand problems correctly. (*Khrushchev in New York*, 1960, p. 224)

Прежде чем начать свое выступление по вопросу об агрессивных действиях США, по которому мне предоставил слово господин председатель, я хотел бы сказать несколько слов в порядке ответа. Я тоже не лишен такого права и хочу им воспользоваться. Хочу кратко сказать и подтвердить, что господин, представляющий Филиппины, все-таки не безнадежный человек, и у него есть здоровое зерно, которое может укрепиться в его сознании. Он будет понимать вещи правильно и иметь правильное суждение о них. Но для этого, видимо, нужно время. У нас есть такая пословица: «Каждому овощу – свое время». Так и этот господин, видимо, находится в процессе созревания. Думаю, что он созреет и правильно будет понимать вопросы. (*Khrushchev*, 1961, p. 493)

It should be noticed that the Russian proverb "Каждому овощу – своё время" (GDRP, p. 616)/ "Each vegetable ripens in its time" (the Latin conceptual corresponding proverb is "Everything has its time" [CREDRPS, p. 68]) can be used in many ways. According to Rosenthal (1952), this adage can be employed "to show contempt for a small country delegate whom the Soviet leader has branded a Western lackey, or to indicate patience and prudence on the part of the Russian speaker" (p.14). It is likely that in this particular situation, the Soviet leader chose the proverb to emphasize the point that the representative of the

Philippines might change his opinion on some vexing issues after a while. Moreover, it seems that Khrushchev made allowance for the man's "current inability" to be more understanding in viewing the current state of political affairs.

With a second occurrence in his speeches at the United Nations, the proverb "People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones"/ "Чья бы корова мычала, а твоя молчала" can be considered a favorite leitmotif for Nikita Khrushchev:

The representative of the United States said that Khrushchev was wrong when he declared that the U-2 incident was the reason for the collapse of the conference of the heads of the four powers. He said that even prior to the conference the newspapers *Pravda* and *Izvestia* had come out sharply against the United States. He added that these were newspapers which did not express public opinion. Well, I should like to tell you that you are throwing stones even though you live in a glass house. In our country the press represents the people, while your press represents a handful of capitalists. He who has money in the United States can own newspapers. If the editor writes contrary to the wishes of the monopolists, he is fired, sent to the devil. And the United States representative is well aware of this. (*Khrushchev in New York*, 1960, pp. 230 – 231)

Представитель США сказал, что Хрущев не прав, заявляя, что инцидент с «У-2» послужил причиной срыва совещания глав четырех государств, что мол, еще до совещания газеты «Правда» и «Известия» выступали в резком тоне против Соединенных Штатов Америки. При этом он сказал, что это газеты, которые не выражают общественного мнения. Ну, знаете, я бы сказал вам, что чья бы корова мычала, а ваша молчала. У нас пресса представляет народ, а ваша пресса – кучку капиталистов. В Соединенных Штатах те, кто имеет деньги, те и владеют газетами. Если редактор будет писать не то, что хочет монополист, он его к чертовой бабушке со службы выгонит. Это хорошо знает представитель США. (*Khrushchev*, 1961, p. 505)

Once again the Soviet leader used this particular proverb, though in a varied form: “You are throwing stones even though you live in a glass house,” trying to disarm the USA representative in his argument about the problem of the mass media in the Soviet Union. In addition, Khrushchev applied the proverbial phrase “to send somebody to the devil” (ERPD, p. 287) / “к чёртовой бабушке” (GDPE, p. 23) to describe American monopolists’ cruel attitude towards people who would not obey their orders.

The Table below shows the number of proverbial texts employed by Nikita Khrushchev in his six speeches delivered at the United Nations:

Speech	Number of Proverbs	Number of Proverbial Expressions	Number of Proverbial Comparisons	Total Number of Proverbial Texts
1. September 18, 1959	3	6	2	11
2. September 23, 1960	0	8	0	8
3. October 1, 1960	1	4	1	6
4. October 3, 1960	1	1	0	2
5. October 11, 1960	0	5	0	5
6. October 13, 1960	2	3	0	5
Total Number	7	27	3	37

Thus, as can be seen in the Table, the Russian politician’s predilection for proverbial rhetoric is obvious. The provided data and the foregoing analyzed excerpts from Premier Nikita Khrushchev’s speeches at the United Nations convincingly prove the fact that the Soviet leader integrated the ready-made bits of folk wisdom in his official presentations on numerous occasions: in his six speeches, he incorporated 37 proverbial texts (7 proverbs, 27 proverbial expressions, and 3 proverbial comparisons). Eleven proverbial texts were utilized in Nikita Khrushchev’s first speech delivered on September 18, 1959, when he was so excited about his first visit to America and the opportunity to “speak

from the lofty tribune of the United Nations" (*Khrushchev in America*, 1960, p. 68) on behalf of the people of the Soviet Union. Among the most frequently used sayings were "People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones" and "to send somebody to the devil." The contextualized proverbial references employed in his oral presentations were argumentative, didactic, explanatory, and highly emotional in nature. There is a good possibility that it was Nikita Khrushchev's colorful proverbial language (in addition to his spontaneity, simplicity, and sense of humor) that helped him gain considerable popularity among many Americans during his visits to the USA in the period of the Cold War.

Notes:

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¹ For an intriguing article on Lord Chesterfield who stated that "a man of fashion never has recourse to proverbs and vulgar aphorisms," while utilizing a variety of adages in his instructive letters to his illegitimate son Philip Stanhope, see Mieder (2000).

² For the use of proverbs in the political rhetoric of American public figures (Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, Franklin Roosevelt, Martin Luther King, Barack Obama), see Mieder (2001; 2005; 2008; 2009; 2010; 2013).

³ For more information on the proverbial speeches of individual politicians at the United Nations, see, for instance, Rosenthal (1952), Raymond (1981), Mieder (2011).

⁴ For the discussion of the employment of proverbial texts by Soviet/Russian leaders, see Wein (1963), Zhigulev (1970), Morozova (1979), Meščerskij (1981), Mokienko (1997), McKenna (2002), McKenna (2003), Reznikov (2005).

⁵ For example, in his article in *The New York Times* (September 13, 1959), Horace Reynolds (2006) wrote that "'One cannot live without proverbs' is one of several Russian sayings that praise the proverb. As all the world knows, Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev is a devoted subscriber to this adage" (p. 28). This is in line with Kevin McKenna's (2000) view that this Soviet leader "showed a thorough appreciation for the usage and rhetorical effect of Russian proverbs and proverbial expressions" (p. 218).

⁶ Nikita Sergejevich Khrushchev, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, was on his first visit to the United States, September 15 – 27, 1959. During his stay in New York, September 19 to October 13, 1960, he was

Chairman of the Soviet delegation to the Fifteenth Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

⁷ See W. Mieder, S. A. Kingsbury, & K. B. Harder. *A Dictionary of American Proverbs*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992. (= DAP)

⁸ See P. R. Wilkinson. *Thesaurus of Traditional English Metaphors*. London: George Routledge, 1993. (= TTEM)

⁹ See V. M. Mokienko & T. G. Nikitina. *Bol'shoy slovar' russkikh pogovorok* [Great Dictionary of Russian Proverbial Expressions]. Moskva: OLMA Media Grupp, 2008. (=GDRPE)

¹⁰ It relates to the countries of the so-called Western Block (the USA with NATO and others) in the period of the Cold War (1947 – 1991), the time of a sustained state of political and military tension between the aforementioned powers and the powers in the Eastern Block (the USSR and its allies in the Warsaw Pact).

¹¹ See B. E. Stevenson. *The Home Book of Proverbs, Maxims and Familiar Phrases*. New York: Macmillan, 1948. (= HBPMFP)

¹² See V. M. Mokienko & T. G. Nikitina. *Bol'shoy slovar' russkikh narodnykh sravneniy* [Great Dictionary of Russian Comparisons]. Moskva: OLMA Media Grupp, 2008.

(= GDRC)

¹³ See B. J. Whiting. *Modern Proverbs and Proverbial Sayings*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989. (= MPPS)

¹⁴ See A. V. Kunin. *Anglo-russkiy frazeologicheskiy slovar'* [English-Russian Phraseological Dictionary]. Moskva: Gosudarstvennoye izdatel'stvo inostrannykh i natsional'nykh slovarey, 1956. (= ERPD)

¹⁵ See V. M. Mokienko & T. G. Nikitina. *Bol'shoy slovar' russkikh poslovits* [Great Dictionary of Russian Proverbs]. Moskva: OLMA Media Grupp, 2010. (= GDRP)

¹⁶ See P. Mertvago. *The Comparative Russian-English Dictionary of Russian Proverbs & Sayings*. New York: Hippocrene Books, 1995. (= CREDRPS). It is necessary to make the point that the context itself can change the standard meaning of the proverb. For example, Wolfgang Mieder (2012b) provided an interesting illustration of the employment of the proverb “People who live in glass houses shouldn’t throw stones” in Edward Thomas’s poem “I Built Myself a House of Glass” with a different, contextualized figurative meaning that alluded to a man’s loneliness (p. 76).

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