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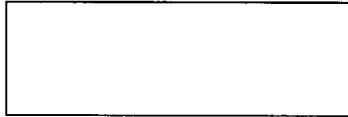
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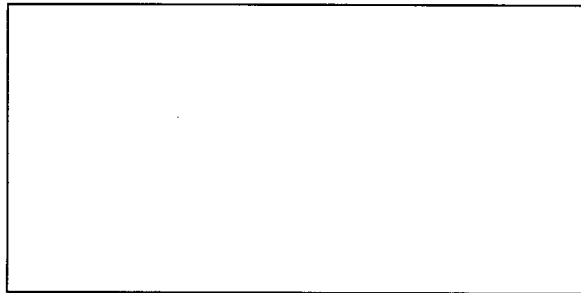
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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE STAFF STUDY

SOVIET POSITIONS ON THE "TRANSITION TO COMMUNISM"  
--PRIOR TO THE CHINESE COMMUNE PROGRAM /  
(Reference Title: ESAU IV-59)



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CURRENT INTELLIGENCE STAFF STUDY

Soviet Positions on the "Transition to Communism"  
--Prior to the Chinese Commune Program

This is a working paper. It traces Soviet positions, prior to the Chinese initiatives of 1958, on the concept of the "transition to Communism." It may be read alongside ESAU I-59--which traces the Soviet experiment with communes in the period 1918-33 and subsequent Soviet attitudes toward the commune concept--as a background for some of the positions taken by the Russians and Chinese in 1958 and 1959.

The ESAU group has been engaged in an intensive study of the Chinese commune program. Portions of this study, approaching the commune program primarily from a Chinese rather than a Soviet direction, have appeared as ESAU-II and ESAU-III: these papers were concerned with the origins of the program, the conception of the commune, and the party's early experimentation with it. Several additional chapters, approaching the program from both directions, are in process, and when they are completed the ESAU group will compose portions of the various papers in one comprehensive account of the commune program.

This paper has not been coordinated outside OCI. The ESAU group would welcome either written or oral comment, addressed to Donald Zagoria, the responsible analyst, or to W. P. Southard, the acting coordinator of the ESAU Project. Both are in .

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SOVIET POSITIONS ON THE "TRANSITION TO COMMUNISM"  
--PRIOR TO THE CHINESE COMMUNE PROGRAM

The Concept of "Transition". . . . . Page 1

Following Marx and Lenin, Soviet dogma has distinguished two stages of Communism--the first and lower, socialism; the second and higher, full Communism. The Soviet Union also has designated intermediate stages in "building socialism" and "building Communism." The first stage in building socialism is that of building the "foundations," proclaimed when the state has virtually completed the socialization of its economy, has substantially mechanized agriculture, and has made substantial progress in industrialization. The USSR reached this point in 1932. The next stage is that of achieving socialism "in the main," or ensuring the "victory" of socialism--proclaimed when collectivization of agriculture has been completed and the collective farm system consolidated, when the state has reached a fairly high industrial level, and when antagonistic classes have been abolished. The USSR reached this point in 1936.

The third stage is that of the "completion of the building of socialism and ~~the beginning of~~ the gradual transition from socialism to Communism"--a stage featured by a massive increase in industrial capacity, technology, and productivity. The USSR entered this stage in 1938 and was still in it in 1957 when Khrushchev announced the imminence of a "higher" stage. While this stage has since been defined as that of "expanded Communist building," Moscow does not claim to have entirely completed its "socialist building." This curious position reflects Moscow's need, on one hand, to insist on the gradual character of the transition--in order to conceal the discrepancy between Communist ideals and Soviet practice; and, on the other, the concurrent need to assert that the USSR advances steadily by stages toward full Communism--in order to secure acceptance of the USSR as the most advanced member of the bloc.

The Features of a Communist Society. . . . . Page 3

Soviet theorists have not been encouraged by Soviet leaders to try to define precisely the shape of a future Communist society. From time to time, however, Soviet

spokesmen have reaffirmed some of the criteria of such a society. These criteria have indicated the lines along which "socialist" societies should move and on which their progress should be judged. In a Communist society there will be a new Communist man, highly educated and highly motivated; there will be one form of Communist property superior to the two existing forms of state and cooperative property (although this form cannot be defined); there will be no important distinction between mental and physical labor or between town and country; high production will ensure material abundance, permitting distribution according to need; production of goods for the market, the exchange of commodities for money, and money itself, will disappear; and the state--its organizational techniques and coercive powers no longer needed--will disappear.

As of early 1958 the pragmatic Khrushchev had not seemed much interested in this set of propositions; parts of his economic program--particularly agricultural--could be viewed as running counter to orthodox doctrine, and Soviet theorists had to work hard to rationalize and defend parts of his program. Khrushchev's ideological vulnerability was struck in 1958 when the Chinese began to advance their own views on the "transition"--views which may have seemed to many Communists to be seeking a solution to ideological problems too long evaded. The Chinese asserted that some characteristics of the new Communist man had appeared in China; they expressly claimed to have discovered in the commune the basic unit of a future Communist society; they offered specific programs for eliminating differences between mental and physical labor and between town and country; they moved toward the abolition of all private property; and they instituted a system of partial "free supply."

The Key Prerequisite: the "Material-Production Base . . . . . Page 7

Soviet theorists have treated the development of a huge "material-production base"--i.e., a modern, automated industry, particularly heavy industry, capable of immense production and ensuring "absolute abundance"--as the most important prerequisite for effecting the transition to a Communist society. In other words, Soviet leaders from Lenin to Khrushchev have increasingly taken the position that, whatever the shape of the future Communist society, the principal task of the Soviet state

for the foreseeable future is to increase economic production. Stalin in 1939 first stated the link between outstripping the West economically and achieving Communism. Khrushchev in 1956 treated the building of Communism as largely a practical economic task, and he related the prospect of Communism to the prospect of overtaking the West in per capita production. In the same period, Soviet discussions related the achievement of the material base to a "new scientific, technical, and industrial revolution" which would "far exceed in importance" the industrial revolution of the past. The Chinese had to redefine Soviet dogma on the material base when in 1958 they sought to justify their shortcut to Communism despite a low level of industrial development.

Distribution and Incentives during the "Transition" . Page 10

Another important element of Soviet doctrine on the transition to Communism has had to do with the distribution of goods and the provision of incentives for work. Lenin held that the principle of distribution according to need could operate only in the stage of full Communism, and in the meantime material incentives must be provided in order to raise productivity. Stalin insisted, as has Khrushchev, on the need for a highly differentiated scale of material rewards for labor. Dogma has committed the Russians to be moving closer to distribution according to need as they move closer to Communism, but Soviet theorists have differed as to when and how distribution according to need would or could be implemented. As of 1958, little was being heard of the "free-supply" school among Soviet economists, and Khrushchev in particular had showed himself to be convinced of the need to emphasize material incentives indefinitely. The Chinese introduction of a mixed system of wages and "free supply" in the communes in 1958 took liberties with Soviet doctrine and ran counter to Khrushchev's policies.

The Pace of the "Transition to Communism". . . . . Page 13

Along with their reluctance to define precisely the shape of a future Communist society and their emphasis on the point that the Soviet state must above all increase its production to reach Communism, Soviet leaders had insisted that the period of "transition" would be long and

the process gradual. In 1938 the Soviet party hit on the formula that (a) the completion of the building of socialism, and (b) the beginning of the gradual transition to Communism would occur simultaneously. The gradualist approach was justified ideologically by Stalin's concept of a "gradual leap" in the development of socialist societies. The concept was interpreted, as Stalin intended, to mean that the best way to build Communism was to strengthen in all respects the existing Soviet order. The Soviet party adhered to the gradualist approach after Stalin's death. At the party congress in 1956, Khrushchev derided "dreamers" who wished to draw up a timetable for the transition. Khrushchev made a temporary break with the tradition in November 1957, declaring that conditions had been prepared for "transition to a higher stage in the building of Communism" and that Communism was "no longer a remote goal." These assertions were not followed up, however, until the Chinese ideological initiatives had been made public. As of September 1958, two days before the Chinese party's resolution on the communes was published, the Soviet party press was still declaring that Communism in the USSR was "very distant."

The Universality" of the Soviet Model. . . . . Page 19

The USSR, insisting on the universal applicability of Soviet "experience," has wished to hold within narrow limits any variations from the Soviet model. Some of Khrushchev's statements and actions in 1955-56, centering on the rapprochement with Yugoslavia, tended to undermine this position and to encourage those in other Communist parties who believed in "separate paths" to socialism. In mid-1956, Khrushchev and his spokesmen began to return to a hard line. For example, Khrushchev said that all paths to socialism were but tributaries of the Russian mainstream, and Mikoyan, speaking in Peiping, said flatly that variations from the Soviet model could be only in those features "not most important." Soviet theorists in 1956-57 also began to affirm a number of "laws" of development for all socialist states. In November 1957, at the Moscow conference of Communist parties, Khrushchev took a very hard line on the need for orthodoxy, and the 12 parties reaffirmed the "basic laws" of socialist development. Soviet spokesmen shortly thereafter reaffirmed their high evaluation of the existing artel and their low

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regard for the commune even in the advanced USSR, as an organizational form in the countryside.

Soviet Evaluations of Progress in the Bloc. . . . . Page 23

Soviet ideological formulas have made significant assessments of the relative rates of progress of bloc states toward socialism and Communism. In 1956, when China became the first bloc member (after the USSR) to complete collectivization, which is the "most difficult task" of the socialist revolution, the Soviet Union indicated that China ranked second only to the USSR among countries building socialism. On several occasions in 1956-57, Soviet formulas credited the Chinese with being at a more advanced stage of socialist building than any of the Eastern European or Asian satellites. Yet Moscow still did not credit China or any Satellite with having laid the "foundations" of socialism. In China's case, this was due to its lag in industrialization. While Soviet journals occasionally noted this problem, it was not until autumn 1958, after the Chinese had revealed their commune program and had claimed that Communism was not far distant in China, that Soviet formulas dropped the Chinese from their favored position among builders of socialism.

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### The Concept of "Transition"

Following the formulations of Marx and Lenin, Soviet dogma has distinguished two stages of Communism--the first and lower stage, socialism; and the second and higher stage, full Communism. The concept of the "transition to Communism" applies to the passage from the first stage into the second.

Soviet spokesmen have rather consistently employed certain formulations to distinguish various intermediate stages in "building socialism" and "building Communism." The terminology is tedious but is a necessary tool in any effort to understand the serious problems presented to the Soviet party in 1958 when the Chinese Communists began outlining their own positions on the "transition to Communism."

The first stage in building socialism is said by the Soviet Union to be that of building the "foundations" (fundament) of socialism. This has been done when the state has virtually completed the socialization of its economy (including the collectivization of agriculture), has substantially mechanized agriculture, and has made substantial progress in industrialization, especially with respect to heavy industry. The USSR announced in 1932, after the First Five-Year Plan had been completed and collectivization of agriculture almost completed, that it had built the "foundations of socialism."

The next stage in the building of socialism, completed by the USSR in 1936, is that of achieving socialism "in the main," or ensuring the "victory" of socialism. This achievement is proclaimed when the collectivization of agriculture has been completed and the collective farm system consolidated --the "most difficult task" of the socialist revolution. The concept also entails the achievement of a fairly high level of industrialization and the abolition of antagonistic classes. The concept of "victory" appears to mean, as some Soviet spokesmen have interpreted it, that Lenin's question of "Who beats whom?" has been decided in favor of socialism over capitalism. The "victory" does not, however, mean that the "building of socialism" has been completed.

The third stage is declared by the Soviet Union to be that of the "completion of the building of socialism and the beginning of the gradual transition from socialism to Communism." The principal feature of this stage is a massive

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increase in industrial capacity, technology, and productivity. This stage, entered by the USSR in 1938 at the beginning of the Third Five-Year Plan, continued through the third, fourth and fifth Five Year Plans and was in effect in 1956 when the sixth (abortive) Five Year Plan was announced.

The USSR was still in the above stage as of November 1957, when Khrushchev announced that conditions were ripe for a "higher" stage in the building of Communism. A year later, in the presentation of Khrushchev's Seven-Year-Plan Theses (November 1958), this stage was formally designated as that of "expanded Communist building."

The USSR thus has related the stages of "socialist building" and "Communist building" to specific plan periods. This is consistent with the Soviet party's view that these stages are dependent primarily on the rate of economic advance.

It should be noted that the Soviet Union, despite its long-standing claim to have "built socialism" and its recent claim to have entered the stage of "expanded Communist building," does not claim to have entirely completed the task of "socialist building." This curious position can be formally justified by the continued adherence to the concept adopted in 1938 (see above) that the completion of "socialist building" in the USSR is concurrent with the beginning of the "gradual transition to Communism."

The Soviet insistence on the gradual character of the transition is necessary to the Soviet leaders to conceal the glaring discrepancy between Communist ideals and Soviet practice. On the other hand, the assertion that the USSR advances steadily by stages toward the ultimate goal is necessary to secure acceptance of the USSR as the most advanced member of the bloc. Moscow must have it both ways in order to maintain its leadership of the bloc.

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The Features of a Communist Society:

Soviet theorists have never been encouraged by Soviet leaders to try to define precisely the shape of a future Communist society. Marx himself was principally concerned with an analysis of capitalist society and how the development of capitalism would inevitably lead to the socialist revolution. Lenin wrote in State and Revolution that:

the political difference between the first, or lower, and the higher phase of Communism will in time, no doubt, be tremendous, but it would be ridiculous to emphasize it now, under capitalism, and only, perhaps, some isolated anarchist could invest it with primary importance.

Stalin and later Khrushchev were vigorously to reject as Utopianism any attempts to outline in detail the future Communist society. As recently as June 1959, in a speech to a central committee plenum, Khrushchev discussed with heavy sarcasm attempts by lecturers to discuss in detail the forthcoming society. He told the plenum it would be more worthwhile to work on such problems as improving faulty components manufactured in Soviet factories. He continued:

...what will be the thoughts of people about a hundred years after the victory of Communism? This is indeed a fine subject for a lecture, and please don't think I am against good lectures, but we can wait for such lectures and reports for another 50 or 80 years. (Laughter, applause)

Communist dogma has, however, outlined some of the features of a future Communist society. These have generally reflected the remarks of Stalin in December 1927 in reply to a question by an American labor delegation which sought to determine the characteristics of a fully Communist society:

Briefly, the anatomy of Communist society may be described as follows: It is a society in which: a) there will be no private ownership of the instruments and means of production, but social, collective ownership; b) there will be no classes or state power, but there will be working people in industry and agriculture who manage economic affairs

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as a free association of working people; c) the national economy, organized according to plan, will be based on the highest level of technology, both in industry and agriculture; d) there will be no antithesis between town and country, between industry and agriculture; e) products will be distributed according to the principle of the old French Communists: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs"; f) science and art will enjoy conditions sufficiently favorable for them to attain full flowering; and g) the individual, freed from concern about his daily bread and from the necessity of adapting himself to the 'powers that be', will become really free.

More recently, the third edition of the Political Economy textbook, issued in 1958, has identified the following characteristics of a Communist society: there will be an "abundance of material wealth"; the level of development of the productive forces of society will be high enough to provide this abundance; there will no longer be state and co-operative property, but one form of Communist property; commodity production, commodity circulation, and, consequently, money will disappear; only nonessential distinctions between mental and physical labor and between town and country will remain; boundaries between workers, peasants and intellectuals will be finally effaced; labor will be transformed in the eyes of the whole of society from a mere means of life into a prime need of life; all members of society will be cultured and highly educated, having the opportunity freely to choose their occupations; science, art and culture will be developed on a "scale hitherto unknown;" the high level of development of the productive forces will make possible distribution according to "need."

Until the fall of 1958, after the Chinese had outlined their own views on the transition to Communism, Khrushchev did not seem to be much interested in these propositions as a set. For example, he told the Bulgarian party congress as late as June 1958 that theory is gray, whereas the "tree of life is green." When Soviet journals began in early 1958 to discuss the precise form that agricultural organization would take under Communism, they concluded that only "life itself" would determine that form.

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Moreover, Khrushchev's practical economic program--particularly his agricultural program--could be viewed in several crucial respects as running counter to some of the classical propositions, particularly as these propositions were interpreted during the Stalinist era. For example, in early 1958 he strengthened the existing cooperative farms at the expense of the state-owned machine-tractor stations, despite the fact that the latter are a "higher" form of property. He further claimed that the existing artel type of cooperatives--always considered a mere transitional form--has vast unused potentialities for developing agricultural production. He rejected the hitherto prevailing view that state farms were necessarily a "higher" form of agricultural organization than the cooperatives, arguing that the cooperatives could gradually be raised to a "higher" form and that it was meaningless to speculate on which was "higher." He made important concessions to the peasantry, including the abolition of compulsory deliveries from the peasant's private plots. His theorists indicated that "commodity turnover" (the production of goods for market) could remain throughout the period of transition to Communism, despite the classical view that it should gradually disappear. He sponsored a policy for re-vamping the system of remuneration in the collective farms which will mean a wider introduction of monetary wages as opposed to distribution in kind--the latter being the "Communist" form of distribution.

Throughout the period of Khrushchev's ascendancy--until the fall of 1958--Soviet theorists were prudent enough to relate the "transition to Communism" as closely as possible to Khrushchev's economic reforms. For example, a meeting of academicians in June 1958 on problems of "Communist construction" was primarily concerned with rationalizing Khrushchev's policies ideologically. The main speaker observed that the correct theoretical line could be found abundantly in Khrushchev's practice:

Marxism is intimately related to practice and is continually enriched thereby. As pointed out by N. S. Khrushchev, problems of the practice of Communist construction are both practical and theoretical in nature. They are posed and resolved in the course of the correct struggle of the people...the policy of the party is creative Marxism. (underlining supplied)

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Khrushchev's impatience with theory, and such features of his practice as have been cited, left him open to the charge --made publicly by the Yugoslavs and privately by bloc Communists in 1958--that he is merely a "practicist," a term of opprobrium for those who neglect theory. This has been a real weakness, in terms of Soviet leadership of the bloc, and this weakness was hit hard in 1958 when the Chinese began to advance their own views on the "transition."

The Chinese views may have seemed to many bloc Communists either to be much closer to classical theory than were Khrushchev's, or to be original contributions to theory--in either case, to be seeking a solution to ideological problems too long evaded. The Chinese asserted that some characteristics of the new Communist man had already appeared in China. Moreover, the Chinese expressly claimed to have discovered in the commune the basic unit of the future Communist society, a unit for which the Russians were still groping. Similarly, the Chinese had established peasant labor armies, an action in accord with the Communist Manifesto of 1848, which viewed the establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture, as a proper way of eliminating the differences between town and country. The manifesto had also called for the "equal liability of all to labor," another dictum that the Chinese seemed to be putting into practice in their program of party and state bureaucrats doing manual labor and army officers serving in the ranks. Further, by moving toward the abolition of all private property, the Chinese seemed to be moving closer to the classical goal than was the Soviet Union, which still tolerated private garden plots, privately owned cows, and privately owned implements of production. Again, by instituting a system of partial "free supply" in the communes, the Chinese seemed to be moving closer to the ultimate Marxist goal of distribution according to "need," a concept which the USSR--until the fall of 1958--had largely ignored.

Most of the classical works which the Chinese cited as justification for their views on the "transition" had been ignored in Soviet discussions of the problem because Moscow had chosen to emphasize the need for greater economic production. Moreover, close examination of many of these classical Communist works would have proved embarrassing to the pragmatic Soviet leadership.

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The Key Prerequisite: the "Material-Production Base"

Soviet theorists have treated the development of a huge "material-production base" as the most important prerequisite for effecting the transition to a Communist society, as well as for judging the degree of progress toward that ultimate goal. The "material-production base" means a modern, automated industry--particularly heavy industry--based on advanced science and technology, and capable of immense production, including an "absolute abundance" of consumer goods.

The problem of the "base" was not stressed by Marx, because he believed that the socialist revolution would take place in advanced capitalist countries. In Lenin's seminal work, "State and Revolution" (1917), the first attempt to adapt Marxist doctrine on the transition to Communism to the relatively backward conditions of Tsarist Russia, Lenin stressed that the higher stage of Communism could be achieved only after a "gigantic development" of the productive forces of society.

Lenin's stress on industry and technology as prerequisite for full Communism--epitomized by his formula that Communism was "Soviet power plus electrification of the whole country"--was strengthened and detailed in the Stalin era. In 1935, Stalin told an audience of Stakhanovites in effect that they would have to rise to the level of engineers or technical specialists in order to eliminate the distinction between mental and manual labor and thus move into full Communism. He also told them that, in order to reach Communism, labor productivity would have to reach a level in which there would be an "absolute abundance of articles of consumption."

At the 18th party congress in 1939, Stalin first stated the link between outstripping the West economically and achieving Communism, a connection that has remained in Soviet doctrine. Stalin told the congress in terms Khrushchev was to repeat almost 20 years later:

Only if we outstrip the principal capitalist countries economically can we reckon our country as being fully saturated with consumer goods, as having an abundance of products, and as being able to make the transition from the first phase of Communism to its second phase.

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Stalin set almost the same time limit on this task of outstripping the advanced capitalist countries as Khrushchev was to do--"in the next 10 or 15 years."

In the years immediately after World War II, Stalin's emphasis on surpassing the West economically was rendered more precisely as the task of outstripping the advanced capitalist countries in per capita production. This task was generally given as "the most important" of the prerequisites for Communism.

At an economists' conference in 1950 on the problems connected with the transition, the necessity to create a powerful "material-productive base" for Communism was underlined. The economists said that the material base for Communism would mean mechanization, automation, the widespread application of chemical processes in industry, electrification of the entire country, and the widespread use of atomic energy in industry. These prerequisites were all subsequently incorporated into Soviet dogma.

Stalin's death did not change this interconnection in Soviet doctrine between industrialization and Communism. The first edition of the textbook Political Economy, issued one year after his death, declared that Communism demanded "above all" an enormous increase in productive forces and the creation of a production base capable of ensuring an abundance of material goods.

The revised edition of the textbook, issued in 1955, stressed even more the industrial and technological prerequisites for Communism by adding a new subsection on "The Basic Economic Task of the USSR." This task was the same one as posed by Stalin: to overtake and outstrip the advanced capitalist countries in per capita production.

The textbook wrote that a condition indispensable to the transition was the complete transformation of industry, transport, and agriculture to a new and higher technical basis associated with electrification. This would mean a single, high-voltage network connecting the numerous power stations in the USSR. Electrification was inseparably linked with the allround mechanization of all labor operations. Mechanization would be the prerequisite for going over to automation and, "in the last analysis, to the creation of an automatic system of machinery in all

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branches of production." At the same time, a great "revolutionary transformation" in the "material-production base" would take place with the wide application of atomic power in production. The use of atomic energy would signify the approach of a "new scientific, technical, and industrial revolution which will by far exceed in importance the industrial revolution of the past."

At the 20th party congress in 1956, Khrushchev left little doubt that he considered the building of Communism largely a practical economic task. Emphasis on the economic tasks facing the party as the key to Communism permeated his report. In criticizing "incorrigible braggarts" who were too optimistic about the tasks of Communist construction, Khrushchev said it was impossible to "close one's eyes to the fact" that the USSR had not yet outstripped the highly developed capitalist countries, that the level of output was not sufficient to ensure a prosperous life, and that there were still many shortcomings in economic work. He said several times that the party's organizational and ideological work should be directed to "accomplishing the practical tasks of Communist construction." Again, he said that at the present stage "the economic aspect of Marxist theory--questions of practical economics--comes to the fore."

Peiping had to redefine this point of Soviet dogma when in 1958 it sought to justify its distinctive shortcut to socialism and Communist not on the basis of modern industrial development but by presenting the commune as an instrument for extensive development of rural industry and large-scale agricultural production and construction.

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Distribution and Incentives during the "Transition"

Another important element of Soviet doctrine on the transition to Communism--an element put into question by Peiping in the fall of 1958--has had to do with the distribution of goods and with incentives for work. As of the autumn of 1958, Soviet theorists held that for the foreseeable future, during the transition, the principle of distribution must be according to work, because to increase productivity, reliance must be placed primarily on the provision of material incentives.

Lenin said that in the lower stage of Communism i.e., socialism, society is not yet capable of eliminating the injustice resulting from distribution of goods according to work performed. Thus, although exploitation of man by man has been eliminated because the means of production are socially owned, unjust differences in wealth persist. These differences are a "defect," but an unavoidable one during the socialist stage, because people are not yet psychologically prepared to work for the good of society without material incentives. "If we are not to fall into utopianism," wrote Lenin, "we cannot imagine that, having overthrown capitalism, people will at once learn to work for society..." Only in the higher phase of Communism would it be possible to implement the famous Marxist proposition of distribution according to "need."

Only from 1917 to 1921, because of the disruption caused the economy by the civil war, did the USSR deviate from the principle of material incentive and adopt an emergency policy of equalization of consumption. A system of rigidly centralized supply in kind was introduced in industry. Rations to industrial workers were issued on the basis of the arduousness of the work and of the importance of the enterprise. Agricultural produce was requisitioned from the peasantry, and trade was prohibited. The distribution system practiced during War Communism has always been treated by the Russians as a temporary aberration forced on them by adverse circumstances, particularly the shortage of food and industrial goods. In an obvious allusion to the distribution system in effect in the Chinese communes, Khrushchev in his 21st party congress speech pointedly emphasized that the "equal distribution" practiced during the period of War Communism was necessary to prevent mass famine, but that such distribution could "not constitute a normal economic system."

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Since the late 1920s, Moscow has waged a steady battle against premature "levelling" (uravnilovka). Stalin insisted, as has Khrushchev, on the need for a highly differentiated scale of material rewards for labor--rewards designed to encourage skill and efficiency.

Dogma has committed the Russians to be moving closer--in theory at least--toward the final Communist goal of distribution according to "need," but this dogma has posed theoretical problems. At the 1950 economists' conference on the transition to Communism, there was a clear indication of differences among Soviet economists on how and when the Communist principle of distribution according to "need" would or could be implemented. The conferees were divided between an optimistic school, which foresaw an early adoption of free-supply (bezplatnosty) of some essential goods and services, and a pessimistic school, which viewed such a free-supply system as impracticable for a long period, if not forever. The main rapporteur charged that free supply of various important products would "undermine the stimulating role of the socialist principle of distribution," the entire system of commodity exchange between town and country, and the cost-accounting base of Soviet industry. The gradual transition to distribution according to "need," in his view, would take place not via a free supply system, but rather through raising the real wages of low-income groups. Other Soviet economists thought that a free-supply system could be introduced in certain areas of consumption as soon as abundance was achieved in one or another product. They believed that it was both possible and expedient to combine methods of payment during the transition to Communism: part of the goods and services could be distributed free and the other part for money. If more than half of the goods and services for public consumption were to be distributed freely, this would mean that the country had entered the Communist phase.

Little was heard from this "free-supply" school of Soviet economists in the years after the conference. The Soviet leadership apparently discouraged any such radical reflections.

Khrushchev in particular has been convinced of the necessity for material incentives in order to raise production. Stress on such incentives, particularly in the weak agricultural

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sector, has been a hallmark of his policy speeches since 1953. Typical of his line on this subject was a speech one month after the purge of the "antiparty group," whose members were condemned for not realizing the importance of such incentives:

The principle of material incentives for collective farmers and all agricultural workers in increasing the output of agricultural produce was grossly violated. I will quote the following example: Soon after the end of the war, I went to the village where I was born to see my cousin. She had an orchard. I told her, 'You have wonderful apple trees.' She replied, 'I will cut them down in the autumn.' I asked her why. 'Heavy taxes have to be paid,' she said, 'so it is not profitable to have an orchard.' I mentioned this talk to Stalin and reported that the collective farmers were cutting down orchards, to which he replied that I was a Narodnik,\* that I had a Narodnik attitude, and that I was losing the proletarian touch.

Khrushchev went on to give still another example of the need for incentives, concluding that without them, "You will not go far." He criticized "hardheads" and ideological workers living in the "thrall of bookish notions, dogmas, and formulas" who were incapable of understanding this truth.

The sudden Chinese introduction of a mixed system of wages and "free-supply" in the communes in the fall of 1958 thus ran into Soviet objections on two grounds. In the Soviet view, it put the cart before the horse--i.e., it tried to solve the distribution problem before it solved the production problem. Distribution according to "need" had to await a much higher level of Communist society. Moreover, Khrushchev was convinced and committed to a policy based on the premise that production could not be significantly increased without continued material incentives.

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\*The Narodniks were 19th century Russian populists who idealized the Russian peasantry and frequently lived among them to learn their attitudes.

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The Pace of the "Transition to Communism"

As noted above, the shape of a future Communist society had not been precisely defined by Soviet theorists, and Soviet leaders had seemed to believe that it would be a very long time before it could be given a meaningful definition. Soviet leaders from the start had evaded the theoretical problem by emphasizing that, whatever the shape of the future, the Soviet state must above all increase its economic production. As a corollary, they had insisted that the period of transition would be long and the process of transition gradual.

Lenin wrote in State and Revolution (1917) that it was impossible to foretell how much time the transition would require. In 1936, when Stalin announced that socialism had been achieved "in the main," he said vaguely that the higher phase of Communism would be realized "in the future."

In 1938, the History of the CPSU (Short Course), known to have been personally edited by Stalin, made the post facto announcement that the 1936 constitution "confirmed the worldwide historical fact that the USSR had entered into a new stage of development, the stage of completing the construction of socialist society and the stage of gradual transition to a Communist society." The new stage was formally proclaimed at the 18th Party Congress in 1939 and associated more precisely with the beginning of the third Five Year Plan period in 1938.

The key formulation in the Short Course was subsequently repeated many times in standard Soviet references both before and after World War II. It clearly implied that there would be no sharp dividing line between socialism and Communism. The two processes--the completion of socialism and the gradual transition to Communism, (at least in the latter's early stage) would go on simultaneously. To put it another way, despite the fact that socialism had been "victorious," that the Leninist question of "who beats whom" had been decided in favor of socialism, and that Soviet society had "entered" the gradual transition to Communism, the building of socialism had not yet been completed.

The postwar Political Economy textbook wrote, "The completion of the socialist stage of development means at the same time the implementation of a gradual transition to Communism." Thus, as of the fall of 1958, the USSR, after 41 years, still was not claiming to have entirely completed the process of socialist construction.

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The need for a "philosophical" justification for a gradualist approach to Communism was reflected by Stalin's essay in 1950 on linguistics. Although not primarily addressed to the problem of the transition to Communism, the essay had major implications for it. In the course of his attempt to resolve controversy over the development of language, Stalin spelled out a theory of development for "socialist" societies that had the effect of sanctifying the concept of "gradualness" and "evolution" in the development of those societies.

Prior to 1950, Marxist theory had rested on the assumption that any transition from quantitative to qualitative changes of development implied a breach of continuity and took place by means of a leap. Stalin's opus on linguistics differentiated between leaps which occur suddenly (vzryv--literally an "explosion" or violent upheaval) and leaps that take place gradually. Further, he said that only in antagonistic forms of society did the transition from one stage of development to a higher stage take place by means of an "explosion"; in Soviet or socialist society, those "leaps" occur by way of a gradual accumulation of elements of the new quality and a dying-away of the old ones. Stalin railed against "comrades who have an infatuation for explosions" and contended that such explosions were inapplicable not only to the history of the development of languages but also to other social phenomena. Stalin's reasons for the stress on gradualism were evident in his fulminations against "textualists and Talmudists in our party" who evidently took the Communist ideal too seriously and "began to demand, after the victory of the socialist revolution in our country, that the Communist party should take steps to bring about the speedy withering away of our state, to dissolve state institutions, to give up a permanent army."

Stalin's article was in effect a clear warning to all Soviet theoreticians writing on the transition to Communism to put special emphasis on the "gradual" nature of that transition.

The effect Stalin's article had on Soviet theory regarding the transition to Communism can be gleaned from the following analysis of it in Bolshevik, No. 16, 1951.

The practical task of building Communism in our country consists in strengthening the base and superstructure of the socialist society and thus creating the material and spiritual premises for the victory of Communism.

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To strengthen the base means to strengthen and multiply socialist communal property...to develop Soviet trade, strengthen the monetary system of the USSR; and increase the efficacy of the planned economy...

Strengthening the superstructure means further development and dissemination of the political, legal, artistic, and philosophical opinions prevailing in our country, strengthening the might and improving the organization of the socialist state, its army and intelligence services...

Only by these means can the development of socialist production and the creation of the material-technical base of Communism and the development of Communist consciousness among the working people--which is essential for the transition to Communism--be speeded up.

J. V. Stalin's study of the Marxist theory of base and superstructure...shows what enormous importance the strengthening and further development of the socialist base and its superstructure has for the transition to the higher phase of Communism.

Stalin's analysis was being interpreted, as was probably intended, to mean that the way to build Communism was to strengthen in all respects the existing socialist society.

Stalin's "Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR" two years later again emphasized the gradualist approach to Communism. Taking to task an errant Soviet economist named Yaroshenko, Stalin ridiculed the idea that all that was needed to create Communism was a "rational organization of the productive forces." It was necessary to prepare a "genuine, not a declarative transition to Communism," said Stalin. Yaroshenko's views were "the height of confusion," for they did not take into account the many substantial problems which would have to be surmounted before achieving Communism. "The business of transition from socialism to Communism," Stalin declared, "is not at all as simple as Comrade Yaroshenko imagines."

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Stalin proceeded to set forth several basic preliminary conditions for "preparing" the transition to Communism and insisted that it would be necessary to attain "all" those preliminary conditions. These conditions, stated by Stalin as three, were: 1) to ensure the constant growth of all social production; 2) to elevate collective farm property to the level of public or state property; and 3) to secure a "cultural advance" which would guarantee members of society the all-round development of their physical and mental abilities, would allow a reduction of the workday to six hours and then to five, would permit a radical improvement of housing conditions, and finally would entail an increase in the real wages of workers by a minimum of 100 percent.

Stalin's death did not change the gradualist concept he had given the party on the question of the transition to Communism. The first edition of Political Economy in 1954 cautioned that the transition could not be regarded as a "sudden act," but one which would proceed gradually by way of an "all-inclusive development" of the socialist base.

At the 20th party congress in 1956, Khrushchev followed in Stalin's footsteps by railing against "hotheads" and "dreamers" who, assuming incorrectly that socialism had already been completed, wished to draw up a detailed timetable for achieving Communism. Such views were "utopian," he declared, and the party had corrected the "dreamers and authors of these extravagant projects who disregarded reality..." Some "persons," he said, had understood the thesis of the gradual transition to Communism as "an appeal for more immediate realization of the principles of Communist society at the present stage."

Khrushchev did not intend to use the 20th party congress-- as he later did use the 21st party congress after the Chinese ideological initiative--as the signal for a widespread general discussion of the prospects for building Communism. His concluding metaphor was revealing:

The Soviet country is forging ahead sharply. To speak figuratively, we have climbed to such summits, to such heights, that we can see the wide vistas leading to the ultimate goal, a Communist society.

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The goal was visible, but not very close. Throughout the balance of 1956 and all of 1957, not one article dealing exclusively or even largely with the transition to Communism appeared in Kommunist, the party's theoretical journal.

There was one temporary break with the tradition--by Khrushchev himself--prior to the Chinese initiative in 1958. This was in November 1957, when he told an assembly of world Communist leaders, gathered to mark the 40th anniversary of the revolution, that the USSR had reached a point in its development when "favorable conditions and all the material and moral requisites for the transition to a higher stage in the building of Communism" had been brought about. He said that for the USSR, "Communism is no longer a remote goal." The Theses issued in connection with the anniversary added that Communism was "the immediate practical aim" of the Soviet people.

It is important to note that Khrushchev did not proclaim a new and higher stage, but said only that conditions had been prepared for such a stage. There was little follow-up press, journal, or radio comment on the "new stage" portion of Khrushchev's speech. The Kommunist editorial on the meeting did not even repeat it. The October Revolution slogans issued in 1957 before the meeting and the May Day 1958 slogans following it contained no new formulations dealing with Communist construction. In Khrushchev's March 1958 election speech, one of his last major addresses before the Chinese "commune" announcement, he did not even repeat, let alone expand, his November 1957 formulation. He contended himself with remarking that "during the next few years our country will take a further giant step toward the great aim of building a Communist society."

Furthermore, the "new stage" formula was not used at the June 1958 academic conference on problems of building Communism. It was evident from the manner in which the conference was conceived and conducted that its primary purpose was to justify ideologically Khrushchev's controversial economic reforms, particularly the MTS reform of early 1958.

The third and most recent edition of the textbook Political Economy, sent for typesetting in July 1958 and containing a 21-page section on the transition, also did not see fit to mention the "new stage." On 9 September 1958, two days before

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the Chinese commune resolution was published, Kommunist went to press with an article that said flatly that Communism in the USSR was still far off:

There must be a final disappearance of class distinctions, of substantial distinctions between mental and physical labor, between the town and the village, while the consciousness of all the toilers must rise to the level of their Communist vanguard. But this is a matter for the very distant future.

Thus, despite the euphoria of Khrushchev at the 40th anniversary celebrations in Moscow, the Soviet gradualist tradition on the transition was dominant up to the very day that the Chinese Communist party in effect challenged this concept by announcing that Communism was not far distant in China.

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The "Universality" of the Soviet Model

A further aspect of Soviet dogma pertinent to the Sino-Soviet differences on the "transition" which emerged in 1958 is Moscow's insistence on the universal applicability of Soviet "experience" to other bloc countries. In other words, the USSR wishes to hold within narrow limits any variations from the Soviet model.

In 1948, Tito was expelled from the Cominform, in part for "underestimating the experiences of the CPSU in matters relating to the development of socialism," and Gomulka was removed as Polish party chief, in part for minimizing Soviet experience and speaking of a "Polish road to socialism." Then and for some years thereafter, Soviet spokesmen discussing socialist construction in the bloc countries gave overwhelming stress to the theme of the universality of Soviet experience and the inadmissibility of separate paths to socialism. Typical of the Stalinist line during and after the purge of nationalist leaders in Eastern Europe in 1948-49 is the following article in Soviet State and Law, November 1949:

The concept of an independent path toward socialism, having special characteristics distinguishing it in principle from the path taken by the USSR...is founded on complete obliviousness of the fact that...socialism cannot be built in isolation from the experience of the Communist parties, especially the CPSU.....The very assertion of the possibility of building socialism in a country's own special way...is a pure incarnation of nationalism, the mortal enemy of socialism.

Khrushchev began to undermine this position in 1955. In the Soviet effort to effect a rapprochement with Yugoslavia, Moscow subscribed to a joint declaration which called, among other things, for "noninterference in internal affairs for any reason...inasmuch as questions of internal organization, differences in social systems, and in concrete forms of development of socialism are exclusively the affair of the independent countries."

The high point in concessions to national diversities came at the Soviet 20th party congress in 1956. Khrushchev praised diversities throughout the bloc as "creative Marxism

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in action," noted much that was "unique" in Chinese contributions, and observed that "it is quite probable that the forms of transition to socialism will become more and more varied."

The party congress was shortly followed by the dissolution of the Cominform, at which time it was announced that the new international situation required from the various Communist parties a "particularly careful appraisal of the peculiarities and national conditions of their countries." Moscow acquiesced still further in the concept of diverse roads when, in June 1956, a joint Soviet-Yugoslav party declaration recognized a "multiplicity of forms of socialist development" and condemned "any tendency toward imposing opinions on the paths and forms of socialist development."

Following the Poznan riots in Poland in late June 1956, and Soviet recognition of the centrifugal forces developing in the world Communist movement after Khrushchev's secret speech to the 20th Congress, Khrushchev and his spokesmen began to return to a hard line on the question of the applicability of Soviet experience. Khrushchev, for example, declared that all paths to socialism were but tributaries of the Russian mainstream. Moscow publicly retained the concept of "different paths to socialism," but put its emphasis on the errors of those who exaggerated "national peculiarities." Indeed, Bulganin in one speech referred to "so-called 'national peculiarities.'" At the same time, Soviet journals began to refute "revisionist" arguments that Lenin never intended the Russian revolution to serve as the prototype for all revolutions.

As a Soviet delegate to the Chinese party congress in September 1956, Mikoyan stated the Soviet position flatly. Conceding that each country has its "distinctive features," he quoted Lenin as emphasizing that "these features can relate only to what is not most important." Mikoyan praised the Chinese for "major contributions"--contributions which, at that time, were not so major as to challenge Soviet doctrine in its "most important" aspects.

During the autumn of 1956, Soviet theorists were reaffirming the "laws" of development for all socialist states. The "laws" were codified in a resolution of the Soviet party central committee in March 1957. As has been the case since in formulations of "laws," the formulations were sufficiently

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imprecise to permit considerable variation in practice, but the intention was clear--to inform other bloc parties that they should follow the Soviet model as closely as possible.

The high point in Soviet insistence on orthodoxy came at the Moscow conference of Communist parties in November 1957. Khrushchev insisted that the "high road to socialism" had already been established by the USSR, and that only opponents of Communism would want Communists to go looking for "some kind of completely new, artificial road to socialism..." The 12-party declaration reaffirmed the "basic laws" of socialist development. The Anniversary Theses stated:

The October Revolution has paved the way to socialism and has revealed those common features and laws which are applicable to all countries advancing towards socialism.... Thoroughly alien to Marxism-Leninism are the views of those who, while stressing the national peculiarities of each country advancing towards socialism, forget the general basic fundamental principles of the socialist revolution.

These strictures were published two months after the Chinese party had made a basic decision leading to the communes--the decision to organize a huge peasant labor army for agricultural production and construction. The decision represented a radical departure from Soviet experience, and the concept resembled one associated with Trotsky in the 1920s.

Moscow had emphasized the universality of Soviet experience in agricultural organization. The postwar Political Economy textbooks and other Soviet doctrinal writings had insisted that the experience of building collective farms in the USSR had demonstrated the superiority of the agricultural artel to all other form of agricultural organization, including the commune. (The commune was the "highest" of three types of Soviet collective farms.) After Khrushchev's MTS reform in early 1958, Soviet journals suggested that the present artel type of collective might remain throughout most of the period of transition to Communism, despite the hitherto prevailing notion that the artel would one day be transformed to a higher form such as the commune. These journals stressed the still vast, unused potential of the artels for increasing agricultural productivity, insisted that the egalitarian commune was still unpractical in the conditions of the Soviet

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countryside, and even suggested that the commune might never be a suitable form for Soviet agriculture. The launching of the Chinese commune program in 1958 thus ran counter to the general proposition of the "universality" of Soviet experience and to the specific injunction that communes could not be formed in the near future, if at all.

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### Soviet Evaluations of Progress in the Bloc

There is one final aspect of Soviet doctrine relevant to an understanding of the problems presented by Chinese ideological assertions in 1958. This relates to Soviet assumption of the right to make the authoritative interpretation of doctrinal matters, a right reflected in the definition of the Soviet "leading role" and in the definition of "proletarian internationalism," and is said to derive from the fact that the USSR was the first socialist state and thus has the greatest "experience." The relevant issue here is that Moscow chooses to assess, and wishes to secure acceptance of its assessments of, the relative rates of progress of bloc states toward socialism and Communism.

Until 1958 there had never been any doubt as to who was first on the road to Communism, but there was room for doubt as to who was second. The record suggests that from 1956--when China became the first bloc country outside the USSR to complete collectivization--until 1958, the USSR ranked the Chinese second on the ladder of countries engaged in the building of socialism. As will be noted later, this honorific was abruptly dropped in the fall of 1958.

China completed collectivization in 1956, and party Secretary General Teng Hsiao-ping announced to the Chinese eighth party congress in September that the Chinese Communist party (CCP) had "fundamentally realized the tasks of the socialist revolution." Moscow was quick to acknowledge the CCP's rapid completion of collectivization, a task which it has always viewed as "the most difficult" of the socialist revolution. The official Soviet theoretical organ Kommunist declared that a "decisive success" had been won in the socialist transformation of China's economy, that the "most difficult" historical process had been completed, and, further, that the question of "who beats whom" had been decided in favor of socialism. Moscow had not yet credited any other satellite with having resolved Lenin's question in socialism's favor, a resolution which--in Soviet terminology--is sometimes equated with the "victory" of socialism.\*

To symbolize this major triumph in Chinese "socialist building," Moscow in 1956 began quietly to elevate China

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\*Bulgaria, the next bloc country to announce the victory of socialism, did not do so until its Seventh Party Congress in June 1958.

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on the ladder of bloc countries building socialism. The subtle distinction in China's favor was best illustrated in the carefully worded May Day and October Revolution slogans. Until 1956, China had been relegated in these slogans to a position below that of the other bloc countries. As late as October 1955, for example, China was still "struggling for...construction of the foundations of socialism," while other bloc countries were "struggling for the construction of socialism." The Political Economy textbook issued in September 1955 made the same distinction to China's disadvantage. It discussed the economic system of the European people's democracies in one section and said that they were all "building socialism." In a separate section on the Chinese economy, the textbook said that China was still building the "foundations" of socialism and was still completing the tasks of the "democratic revolution," tasks which had already been completed in the European bloc.

In the May Day slogans of 1956, China for the first time was put on a par with, if not ahead of, the satellites. China was said to be "successfully realizing a socialist transformation," while the satellites, still greeted collectively, were still "struggling for...the construction of socialism." In October 1956, after the Chinese party congress, China was elevated in a manner strongly suggesting that Moscow wished Peiping to be regarded as second in the bloc. The Chinese were now said to be "successfully building socialism," while the satellites, this time greeted separately, were still "struggling." In May 1957, China was moved up yet another notch on the ideological scale: it was now the "builder of socialism"; the other satellites were elevated to be "building socialism." This subtle semantic distinction was made consistently in the May 1957, October 1957, and May 1958 Soviet slogans. (See Table)

The ambiguous formulation "builder of socialism" was probably not meant to imply that socialist construction had been completed in China, or even that the "foundations" of socialism had been laid, but rather that China had advanced farther in building socialism than the rest of the bloc, apart from the USSR. This same formulation--"builder"--has been applied since the 21st party congress to the Soviet Union as the "builder of Communism," a formulation clearly meant to imply that the USSR has reached a higher level in building Communism than prior to its entry into its newest stage--of "expanded" Communist construction.

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In essence, possibly as a sop to China's growing demand for more prestige within the bloc but particularly as a recognition of China's completion of collectivization, Moscow by early 1958 had elevated the CCP to a position second only to its own in progress toward the ultimate goal. This was done despite the considerations that China was still considerably behind some other bloc countries (e.g., Czechoslovakia) in industrialization, and that socialist industrialization had always been described as "a very important prerequisite" for building socialism.

The disparity between China's rapid and unique success in collectivization and its still backward industry presented a difficult ideological problem to Moscow. The USSR placed China, in the slogans, at a higher level of socialist building than other satellites, whereas Soviet journals occasionally underlined the considerable tasks ahead for building up China's industrial base.

In October 1958, however, after the publication of the commune resolution and the advancement of the radical Chinese ideological claims, Moscow abruptly dropped the Chinese from their favored position in the slogans and relegated them to a position of parity with all other bloc countries. In this connection, some Soviet publications since the fall of 1958 have implied that Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia are now to be regarded as being far ahead of China in socialist construction.

The implications of this Soviet shifting, and of Khrushchev's announcement at the 21st party congress that the socialist countries will "more or less simultaneously" make the transition to Communism, will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

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SOVIET SLOGANS ON SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION

	<u>China</u>	<u>Satellites</u>
May 1954	(no reference to building of socialism)	(no reference to building of socialism)
Oct 1954	successfully struggling for...construction of the foundations of socialism	successfully struggling for...construction of a socialist society
May 1955	successfully struggling for...construction of the foundations of socialism	successfully struggling for...construction of socialism
Oct 1955	successfully struggling for...construction of the foundations of socialism	struggling for...the construction of socialism
May 1956	<u>successfully realizing a socialist transformation</u>	<u>struggling for...the construction of socialism</u>
Oct 1956	<u>successfully building socialism</u>	<u>struggling for...the construction of socialism</u>
May 1957	<u>builder of socialism</u>	<u>building socialism</u>
Oct 1957	<u>builder of socialism</u>	<u>building socialism</u>
May 1958	<u>builder of socialism</u>	<u>building socialism</u>
Oct 1958	<u>building socialism</u>	<u>building socialism</u>

In October 1956 the CPSU introduced the practice of greeting each bloc country in a separate slogan. Prior to that time, a single slogan had been used to greet the people's democracies collectively.

The satellites have consistently been described in identical language in their respective slogans, except for (1) North

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Vietnam (not promoted from "building a new life" to "building socialism" until October 1958) and (2) Hungary in the May 1957 slogan that came after the Hungarian rebellion.

In Soviet slogans since October 1957, only China has been differentiated as to status; China comes first, followed by the other Communist countries in Russian alphabetical order.

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