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The Soviet State as Imperial Scavenger: “Catch Up and Surpass” in the Transnational Socialist Bloc, 1950–1960

AUSTIN JERSILD

THE BIGGEST PRIZE SOUGHT by the Soviet Union in its newly acquired postwar territory was the bomb itself—or initially the defense-related industries, research specialists, and scientists in the German zone deemed useful to achieving this goal.¹ The Soviets similarly made arrangements to benefit from uranium deposits in Jáchymov, Czechoslovakia, from the fall of 1945.² The effort to develop the bomb, however, was merely the most visible expression of the Soviet state at work in what would eventually become the socialist bloc. The Soviet technical and managerial elite routinely engaged in a similar search for useful forms of industrial development and technology throughout an alliance that eventually included even distant China. Moscow was at the center of a vast project of imperial scavenging that simultaneously shaped and was shaped by the transnational nature of exchange and collaboration in the socialist bloc. These exchanges within the socialist world shaped the evolution of the bloc in the 1950s, the Sino-Soviet relationship, and even the broader Cold War.³

The socialist bloc was explicitly an alternative to the nation-state, and featured forms of exchange and communication designed to promote the interests of its diverse members and contributors. Scholars of Central and Eastern Europe routinely emphasize the importance of borderlands, frontiers, migration, and other aspects of the transnational history of this region, but less attention has been devoted to the community that explicitly and perpetually proclaimed itself to be dedicated to “in-

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¹ Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945–1949* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995), 205–250; David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb: The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy, 1939–1956* (New Haven, Conn., 1994), 146–149, 178–180.

² Prokop Tomek, *Československý uran, 1945–1989: Těžba a prodej československého uranu v éře komunismu* (Prague, 1999), 3–16, 41; November 23, 1945, “Soglashenie,” Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv sotsial’no-politicheskoi istorii (Russian State Archive of Social-Political History), Moscow, f. 82, op. 2, d. 1358, ll. 176–178.

³ On the possibilities of the new international history of the Cold War, see Charles Gati, *Failed Illusions: Moscow, Washington, Budapest, and the 1956 Hungarian Revolt* (Washington, D.C., 2006); Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2002); Jeffrey A. Engel and Katherine Carté Engel, “Introduction: On Writing the Local within Diplomatic History—Trends, Historiography, Purpose,” in Jeffrey A. Engel, ed., *Local Consequences of the Global Cold War* (Washington, D.C., 2007), 1–30; Odd Arne Westad, “The New International History of the Cold War: Three (Possible) Paradigms,” *Diplomatic History* 24, no. 4 (Fall 2000): 551–565; James G. Hershberg, “Series Preface,” in Odd Arne Westad, ed., *Brothers in Arms: The Rise and Fall of the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1945–1963* (Washington, D.C., 1998), ix–xvi.

ternationalism.”⁴ The connections, debates, exchanges, and forms of collaboration within the bloc illustrate its transnational character. Central Europe and its vision for the future of the alliance had implications for the Sino-Soviet relationship. Czechoslovakia’s political reliability, advanced economy, and orientation to the West were especially useful to the Soviet Union, and the Czechoslovaks themselves were determined to see the bloc evolve in a direction conducive to the fulfillment of their goals. In the late 1950s, Central European diplomats and economic advisers watched China’s radical turn with alarm, and the Soviets reevaluated the potential gains for the economy likely to result from aligning with China.

Newly available archival materials from the former socialist world have enabled scholars of foreign policy to gain a better understanding of the capacity of the smaller states within the socialist alliance to influence and manipulate Soviet policy, as well as the transnational character of key episodes such as the “events” of 1956.⁵ The new scholarship, however, as Paweł Machcewicz suggests, remains generally confined to the questions and methods of traditional diplomatic history.⁶ In part this makes good

⁴ Tara Zahra, “Imagined Noncommunities: National Indifference as a Category of Analysis,” *Slavic Review* 69, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 93–119; Mitchell A. Orenstein, Stephen Bloom, and Nicole Lindstrom, eds., *Transnational Actors in Central and East European Transitions* (Pittsburgh, 2008). For diverse perspectives on international, transnational, and comparative history, see Deborah Cohen and Maura O’Connor, eds., *Comparison and History: Europe in Cross-National Perspective* (New York, 2004).

⁵ See Hope M. Harrison, *Driving the Soviets up the Wall: Soviet–East German Relations, 1953–1961* (Princeton, N.J., 2003); Ilya V. Gaiduk, *Confronting Vietnam: Soviet Policy toward the Indochina Conflict, 1954–1963* (Washington, D.C., 2003); Balázs Szalontai, *Kim Il Sung in the Khrushchev Era: Soviet-DPRK Relations and the Roots of North Korean Despotism, 1953–1964* (Washington, D.C., 2005); Odd Arne Westad, *Decisive Encounters: The Chinese Civil War, 1946–1950* (Stanford, Calif., 2003); Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (New York, 2005); László Borhi, *Hungary in the Cold War, 1945–1956: Between the United States and the Soviet Union* (Budapest, 2004); Sheldon Anderson, *A Cold War in the Soviet Bloc: Polish–East German Relations, 1945–1962* (Boulder, Colo., 2001). For efforts to clarify and sum up this research agenda, see I. V. Gaiduk, “K voprosu o sozdanii ‘novoi istorii’ kholodnoi voiny,” in A. O. Chubar’ian, ed., *Stalinskoe desiatiletie kholodnoi voiny: Fakty i gipotezy* (Moscow, 1999), 213–222; Gaiduk, “Kruglyi stol: O ‘novoi istorii’ kholodnoi voiny,” *ibid.*, 223–247; Tony Smith, “New Bottles for New Wine: A Pericentric Framework for the Study of the Cold War,” *Diplomatic History* 24, no. 4 (Fall 2000): 567–591; John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (New York, 2005), 119–155. On 1956, see János Tischler, “Poland and Hungary in 1956,” in Lee Congdon, Béla K. Király, and Károly Nagy, eds., *1956: The Hungarian Revolution and War for Independence*, trans. Paul Bódy, Andrew Gane, and Brian McLean (Boulder, Colo., 2006), 95–127; Zoltán Szász, “Romania and the 1956 Hungarian Revolution,” *ibid.*, 128–148; Johanna C. Granville, *The First Domino: International Decision Making during the Hungarian Crisis of 1956* (College Station, Tex., 2004), 36–61; Granville, “‘We Have Wines of All Kinds: Red, White, and Green’: Romanian Reactions to the Hungarian Uprising in 1956,” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 54, no. 2 (2008): 185–210; Granville, “Dej-a-Vu: Early Roots of Romania’s Independence,” *East European Quarterly* 42, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 365–404; Gati, *Failed Illusions*; Mark Kramer, “The Soviet Union and the 1956 Crises in Hungary and Poland: Reassessments and New Findings,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 33, no. 2 (April 1998): 163–214; Krzysztof Persak, “The Polish-Soviet Confrontation in 1956 and the Attempted Soviet Military Intervention in Poland,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 58, no. 8 (December 2006): 1285–1310.

⁶ See Paweł Machcewicz, *Rebellious Satellite: Poland, 1956*, trans. Maya Latynski (Washington, D.C., 2009), 1–8. The focus on high-level diplomatic exchange has been partially driven by the understandable excitement on the part of political scientists, diplomatic historians, and historians of international history and relations who finally are learning more about secret and even previously unknown meetings. In Sino-Soviet relations, for example, scholars have shared for diverse reading audiences transcripts of secret conversations between Anastas Mikoian and the Chinese leadership at Xibaipo in April 1949. See A. M. Ledovskii, *SSSR i Stalin v sud’bakh Kitaia: Dokumenty i svidetel’sтва uchastnika sobytii 1937–1952* (Moscow, 1999), 46–82; Peng Zhuowu, ed., *Mao Zedong yu Sidalin, Heluxiaofu jiaowanglu* (Beijing, 2004), 13–32; Dieter Heinzig, *The Soviet Union and Communist China, 1945–1950: The Arduous Road to the Alliance* (Armonk, N.Y., 2004), 137–158. The *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* [hereafter *CWIHP Bulletin*], which has translated into English an extraordinary number of doc-

sense, of course; the world of high politics was of great consequence in hierarchical socialist societies, and their political systems generally intersected. To quote John Lewis Gaddis, “we now know,” for example, that important Chinese leaders influenced Soviet calculations and were themselves part of the Soviet decision-making process in the precarious fall of 1956.⁷ Chinese officials maintained a running dialogue with their Central European counterparts about the significance and nature of 1956 through the middle 1960s.⁸ The depth, breadth, and character of socialist bloc exchange and interaction, however, is not evident in the new literature inspired by the post-Soviet archival revolution. There were more routine forms of interaction and collaboration among the broader multinational community of experts, advisers, managers, and administrators that created the world of socialist bloc exchange.

Almost fifty years ago, Zbigniew Brzezinski correctly anticipated the findings of recent archival research on Soviet interests, methods, and policies regarding the formation of the postwar Soviet bloc in Central and Eastern Europe.⁹ Social science theory about the nature of “totalitarianism” did not stand the test of time, but Brzezinski’s interest in the economic extraction of resources and capital, the role of the Friendship Societies, and the work of Soviet advisers, security officials, and ambassadors as they reshaped local militaries and ministries of the interior provided a useful foundation for a later generation of scholars.¹⁰ More recently available materials illustrate the direct and single-minded methods of the Soviet leadership in the region. The Soviets viewed the borderlands in a brutal and predatory way that suggested they were still at war.¹¹ They could not possibly suffer American expectations about information and exchange crucial to the workings of the market economy and the new institutions created at the Bretton Woods Conference in 1944. Joseph Stalin’s speech of February 9, 1946, suggests Russian historian Nina Bystrova, illustrated

uments from “the other side,” has transformed the teaching of the Cold War, international relations, and foreign policy in the United States.

⁷ Shen Zhihua, “Mao and the 1956 Soviet Military Intervention in Hungary,” in János M. Rainer and Katalin Somlai, eds., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution and the Soviet Bloc Countries: Reactions and Repercussions* (Budapest, 2007), 28–32; Persak, “The Polish-Soviet Confrontation in 1956,” 1297–1305; Chen Jian, *Mao’s China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2001), 145–162. The quote is from John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford, 1997).

⁸ April 2, 1963, “Záznam z rozhovoru s. velv. radou ZÚ MLR,” 003731/63, Národní archiv (National Archive), Prague [hereafter NA], Ústřední výbor komunistické strany Československa, 1945–1989, Antonín Novotný II, krabice 84, folder “Čína: Ruzné materiály, 1956–1967.” On moments of intersection between the Soviet Union and China as potential for research, see Mark Kramer, “The USSR Foreign Ministry’s Appraisal of Sino-Soviet Relations on the Eve of the Split, September 1959,” *CWIHP Bulletin* 6–7 (Winter 1995/1996): 180 fn. 4; Vladislav M. Zubok, “‘Look What Chaos in the Beautiful Socialist Camp!’ Deng Xiaoping and the Sino-Soviet Split, 1956–1963,” *CWIHP Bulletin* 10 (March 1998): 155; Pu Guoliang, *Zhongsu dalunzhan de qiyan* (Beijing, 2003), 34; Pu Guoliang, *Zouxiang bingdian: Zhongsu da lunzhan yu 1956–1965 nian de zhongsu guanxi* (Beijing, 1999), 23; Niu Dayong, “Sulian fei sidalinhua yundong yu zhongguo ‘wenhua da geming’ de qiyan,” in Li Danhui, ed., *Beijing yu Mosike: Cong lian-meng zouxiang duikang* (Guilin, 2002), 367–388.

⁹ Václav Kotyk, “Výzkum vztahů mezi socialistickými státy v ústavu pro mezinárodní politiku a ekonomii,” in Petr Drulák and Petr Kratochvíl et al., eds., *50 let českého výzkumu mezinárodních vztahů: Od ÚMPE k ÚMV* (Prague, 2007), 37.

¹⁰ Zbigniew K. Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict* (New York, 1960), 137–138.

¹¹ See Jan Gross, “War as Revolution,” in Norman Naimark and Leonid Gibianskii, eds., *The Establishment of Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe, 1944–1949* (Boulder, Colo., 1997), 20–22.

this realization that the socialist bloc would be forced to rely “on its own strengths.”¹² And this was well before the better-known refusal on the part of Stalin and Foreign Minister Viacheslav Molotov to allow the Czechoslovaks to participate in the Marshall Plan. “Where is this leading?” complained Molotov on July 2, 1947. “Today they can put pressure on Poland to produce more coal, even if this works to limit other areas of Polish industry, just for the benefit of certain European countries.”¹³ Moscow sought unfettered access to the resources of Russia’s historic borderland regions. Many contemporary Russians appear to be oblivious to this disturbing history of the socialist bloc, much to the chagrin of their neighbors both west and east.¹⁴

The Soviets’ “imperial scavenging” was especially designed to secure knowledge, expertise, technology, and forms of industrial organization that would aid their effort to compete with the powerful and affluent West. The notion of “empire” is misleading in this context, of course, as we are far removed from the history of a colonial metropole engaged in exploitive relationships with tribal, patrimonial, or feudal societies in a distant periphery.¹⁵ The notion also initially emerged from the politics and polemics of the Cold War itself, and was routinely raised by U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson.¹⁶ And at least within the Soviet Union, the more appropriate model was probably that of an “aggressively modernizing state” rather than a traditional colonial empire, as several scholars suggest.¹⁷ Like an empire, however, the socialist bloc was an attempt at forms of integration and cooperation that intentionally blurred the boundaries of the traditional nation-state. Some of the cooperative practices of its multiethnic Communist Party elite (in education, government service, summer vacationing and leisure, and medical treatment) might be usefully compared to those of the multiethnic and privileged nobility of the empire of the tsars.¹⁸ Soviet-era cultural practices and assumptions common in Central Asia, the

¹² Nina Bystrova, *SSSR i formirovanie voenno-blokovogo protivostoianiiia v Evrope (1945–1955 gg.)* (Moscow, 2007), 52–73, 80.

¹³ A. A. Danilov and A. V. Pyzhikov, *Rozhdenie sverkhderzhavy: SSSR v pervye poslevoennye gody* (Moscow, 2001), 46; Bystrova, *SSSR i formirovanie voenno-blokovogo protivostoianiiia v Evrope*, 143–148.

¹⁴ Danilov and Pyzhikov, *Rozhdenie sverkhderzhavy*, 14. For Russian justifications of postwar Soviet practices, see Iu. M. Galenovich, *Rossiiā–Kitai: Shest’ dogovorov* (Moscow, 2003), 137–174; Galenovich, *Rossiisko-kitaiskie otosheniia (konets XIX–nachalo XXI v.)* (Moscow, 2007), 85. For different Central European and Chinese views, see Karel Sommer, “Sovětská válečná kořist a Československo,” in Josef Krátoška et al., eds., *O sovětské imperialní politice v Československu v letech 1945–1968: Sborník příspěvků* (Olomouc, 1995), 9–23; Yang Yulin, “Lun sulian chubing dongbei de lishi houke,” in Xue Xiantian, ed., *Zhanhou zhongsu guanxi zouxiang (1945–1960)* (Beijing, 1997), 117–128.

¹⁵ Michael W. Doyle, *Empires* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1986), 128–135.

¹⁶ See Gordon H. Chang, *Friends and Enemies: The United States, China, and the Soviet Union, 1948–1972* (Stanford, Calif., 1990), 36, 51; Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York, 1969), 356.

¹⁷ Mark R. Beissinger, “Soviet Empire as ‘Family Resemblance,’” *Slavic Review* 65, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 296. See also Adeb Khalid, “Backwardness and the Quest for Civilization: Early Soviet Central Asia in Comparative Perspective,” *Slavic Review* 65, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 231–251; Adrienne Edgar, “Bolshevism, Patriarchy, and the Nation: The Soviet ‘Emancipation’ of Muslim Women in Pan-Islamic Perspective,” *Slavic Review* 65, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 252–272; Peter A. Blitstein, “Cultural Diversity and the Interwar Conjunction: Soviet Nationality Policy in Its Comparative Context,” *Slavic Review* 65, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 273–293.

¹⁸ For recent collections of new scholarship on Russia as an empire before 1917, see Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini, *Russia’s Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917* (Bloomington, Ind., 1997); Michael David-Fox, Peter Holquist, and Alexander Martin, eds., *Orientalism and Empire in Russia* (Bloomington, Ind., 2006); Nicholas B. Breyfogle, Abby Schrader, and Willard Sunderland, eds., *Peopling the Russian Periphery: Borderland Colonization in Eurasian History* (London, 2007).

Caucasus, and the Far East easily crossed the border to Mongolia, North Korea, and China. The “friendship of peoples” (*druzhba narodov*), a state-sponsored effort to foster multiethnic cohesion within the Soviet Union, combined respect for Russia’s traditional civilizing mission and supposedly “advanced” European culture with the cultivation and promotion of indigenous and non-Russian tradition. Exposure to the world of “socialism” was to allow for the healthy cultivation of a national tradition free from the distorting influence of aggressors from abroad and exploitive elites at home.¹⁹ Soviet experts in culture and education eagerly brought this vision to the Chinese in the 1950s.²⁰ The prospects for the socialist bloc, however, were flawed from the start because of the practices, fears, and needs of its “leading people.” “Imperial scavenging” was contradictory, suggesting a peculiar mix of power and desperation. In spite of its victory, the Soviet system and economy were weak, and bereft of vision, innovation, and productivity.

The expropriation of “war trophies” by the advancing Red Army set the tone for Moscow’s relationship to what became the “socialist camp.” Central Europeans tried in vain to convince the Soviets that this common practice was not in the long-term interests of the region or the relationship. Instead, Molotov reminded Czechoslovak president Edvard Beneš of the great loss of life in the war and the “laws of war” that everyone understands: the country that “drives the adversary out of the occupied territory has the right to dispose of the property captured in the battle.”²¹ To increase their haul in Czechoslovakia, the Red Army declared every German-owned factory in the country to be designed for military purposes, and helped themselves to historically Jewish-owned factories and enterprises that had recently been expropriated by the occupying Germans.²² During a meeting with a visiting Hungarian delegation in April 1946, Stalin quickly inquired about reserves in Hungary of bauxite, oil, and coal, as well as the state of steel production, shipbuilding, and aviation. “Comrade Stalin asked about the location of Hungarian property taken by the Germans,” reported the Hungarians.²³ Almost 90 percent of heavy industrial production in Hungary in 1945–1946 was sent to the Soviet Union.²⁴

The Soviets were similarly busy on the eastern frontier. In Northeast China (Manchuria), they sent engineers, military officials, and administrators to take advantage of the communication and transport connections of the Chinese Changchun Railway as they hurried to recover military equipment left by the defeated Japanese.²⁵ Entire factories were loaded on boxcars and shipped to the USSR. The Aviation Motor

¹⁹ See Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin, eds., *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford, 2001).

²⁰ A. Vinogradov, *V strane velikoi Iantszy: Ocherki* (Kurgan, 1959), 7.

²¹ March 21, 1945, “Zapis’ besedy,” V. M. Molotov and E. Beneš, in T. V. Volokitina, T. M. Islamov, G. P. Murashko, A. F. Noskova, and L. A. Pogovaia, eds., *Vostochnaia Evropa v dokumentakh rossiiskikh arkhivov, 1944–1953 gg.*, vol. 1: *1944–1948 gg.* (Moscow, 1997), 178.

²² Sommer, “Sovětská válečná kořist a Československo.” For a more optimistic view of Stalin’s early intentions, see I. I. Orlik, ed., *Tsentrāl’no-vostochnaia Evropa vo votoroi polovine XX veka*, vol. 1: *Stanovlenie “real’nogo sotsializma” 1945–1965* (Moscow, 2000), 37–38.

²³ April 10, 1946, “Zapis’ besedy,” I. V. Stalin with delegation from Hungary, in Volokitina et al., *Vostochnaia Evropa v dokumentakh rossiiskikh arkhivov*, 408–418.

²⁴ Zoltan D. Barany, *Soldiers and Politics in Eastern Europe, 1945–90: The Case of Hungary* (New York, 1993), 27.

²⁵ September 14, 1945, “Spravka,” Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv ekonomiki (Russian State Archive of the Economy), Moscow [hereafter RGAE], f. 1184, op. 31, d. 7138, l. 1.

Factory in Harbin filled some 90 train cars on its way to Novosibirsk. Other factories from Harbin ended up in Borzia, Komsomol'sk, and Raichikh. A synthetic methanol factory in Jilin occupied 1,500 Soviet rail cars on its way to Komsomol'sk; a rubber factory traveled in 250 cars to Khabarovsk. Munitions, paper, and communications factories headed to Voroshilov. In October 1945 alone, some 12,757 railroad cars returned to the USSR loaded with material from Northeast China.²⁶ The Soviets' model for the development of the Chinese Northeast was Primorskii krai and its towns such as Vladivostok and Sovgavan' in the Russian Far East, which not long before had been the site of great Soviet interest in resources, ports, and railways, all necessary to "strengthen the defense capabilities of the eastern border."²⁷ As Soviet and Chinese officials organized firms after 1949 designed to identify and excavate minerals, oil, and various resources from China, Mao Zedong jokingly referred to the obvious importance of this issue to Soviet officials.²⁸ The agreement of March 27, 1950, set up "joint stock companies" similar to those in Eastern and Central Europe, in this case designed to extract precious metals, minerals, and oil in Xinjiang, and to build and repair ships in Lüshun (Port Arthur) and Dalian.²⁹ The secret additions to the February 14, 1950, Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance with the Chinese affirmed these special privileges for the Soviets in Xinjiang and Manchuria, as well as higher pay and extraterritoriality for visiting Soviet advisers and experts.³⁰

The Soviets' primary concerns were security, the expropriation of resources, and the end of substantial ties to the West, and they gradually created institutions of bloc-wide communication and exchange to facilitate these goals. They were still fighting the last tragic war, and their primary fear was the rearmament and revival of Germany and Japan and their integration into American-led political and security structures.³¹ The "treaty system" (*dogovornaia sistema*) that emerged from November 1947 to July 1948 in Eastern and Central Europe was a series of alliances of "friendship, cooperation, and mutual aid" with these needs and goals in mind.³² The institutions of bloc communication and exchange included the information organi-

²⁶ October 14, 1945, "Spravka," RGAE, f. 1184, op. 31, d. 7138, l. 9.

²⁷ August 11, 1939, "Soobrazheniia Tuminskoi ekspeditsii Vamproekta NKVD," Zhigin, Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Primorskogo kraia (State Archive of Primorsk Region), Vladivostok, f. 25, op. 6, d. 19, l. 9.

²⁸ April 3, 1950, "Zapis' besedy," P. A. Shibaev and Mao Zedong, Arkhiv vneshnei politiki Rossiiskoi federatsii (Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation), Moscow [hereafter AVPRF], f. 0100, op. 43, p. 302, d. 10, l. 84.

²⁹ January 18, 1955, "Otnosheniia mezhdru SSSR i KNR s 1950 g.," N. Fedorenko and M. Kapitsa, AVPRF, f. 0100, op. 48, p. 397, d. 39, ll. 6–12.

³⁰ T. G. Zazerskaia, *Sovetskie spetsialisty i formirovanie voenno-promyshlennogo kompleksa Kitaia (1949–1960 gody)* (St. Petersburg, 2000), 5, 171–174; Shen Zhihua, *Sulian zhuanjia zai zhongguo (1948–1960)* (Beijing, 2003), 88–91; Sergei N. Goncharov, John W. Lewis, and Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partners: Stalin, Mao, and the Korean War* (Stanford, Calif., 1993), 125–126.

³¹ T. V. Volokitina, G. P. Murashko, A. F. Noskova, and T. A. Pokivailova, *Moskva i Vostochnaia Evropa: Stanovlenie politicheskikh rezhimov sovetского tipa (1949–1953): Ocherki istorii* (Moscow, 2002); A. F. Noskova, "Moskovskie sovetniki v stranakh Vostochnoi Evropy (1945–1953 gg.)," *Voprosy istorii* 1 (1998): 104–113; Naimark, *The Russians in Germany*; Norman M. Naimark, "Post-Soviet Russian Historiography on the Emergence of the Soviet Bloc," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 561–580.

³² Bystrova, *SSSR i formirovanie voenno-blokovogo protivostoianiiia v Evrope (1945–1955 gg.)*, 163; Jens Hacker, *Der Ostblock: Entstehung, Entwicklung und Struktur 1939–1980* (Baden-Baden, 1983), 439–461.

zation Sovinformbiuro (the Cominform), the press agency TASS, the media organization Radiokomitet, the trade organization International Books, and the All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, VOKS (Vsesoiuznoe obshchestvo kul'turnoi svyazi s zagranitsej), which included the "Friendship" Societies. Especially suspect countries, including Czechoslovakia before February 1948, faced "crude political pressure," which included the use of local surrogates to eliminate the political leaders of various non-communist parties, the reduction of communication with the West, and the subversion of the previously autonomous groups that made up civil society. The deportation of Germans was accompanied by attacks on numerous perceived enemies of the new regime. In the wake of the February 1948 communist coup, the security police conducted purges against the military and its officer corps, the church, and the universities.³³ The Ministry of the Interior compiled a list of some 130,000 "suspect people," which meant "former people" (i.e., former people of privilege) and "unfriendly people" who often had ties to the West.³⁴ Outsiders were similarly unwelcome in "Eurasia." Soviet and Chinese officials on numerous occasions discussed methods to eliminate outsiders and their activities from China (American "agents," Japanese businessmen, foreign missionaries, and "dark characters"), which was rapidly accomplished after the successful communist revolution of 1949.³⁵ Political persecution accompanied and facilitated the work of imperial scavenging.

STALIN'S DEATH IN MARCH 1953 did not alter the concerns of managers, technical elites, and party officials on the distant western and eastern frontiers of the bloc engaged in industrial, technical, and resource exchange. "Reform" was accompanied by a new willingness to listen to engineers and specialists from other parts of the bloc, and to end some of the more abusive practices of the Stalin era. Reformist managers and party officials also rethought the general character of the Soviet advising project. When Nikita Khrushchev went to China in October 1954, for example, his accompanying officials took measures to turn the Port Arthur naval base as well as the "joint stock companies" over to the Chinese.³⁶ "Reform," however, in this era meant new methods to improve and facilitate the traditional activities of the Soviet scavenger state in the socialist bloc.³⁷ Stalin-era autarky and isolation always included notions that scholars most often associate with the later Khrushchev era, including the effort to raise the standard of living, develop a better consumer economy, and

³³ L. Ia. Gibianskii, "Vvedenie," in Gibianskii, ed., *U istokov "sotsialisticheskogo sodruzhestva": SSSR i vostochnoevropejskie strany v 1944–1949 gg.* (Moscow, 1995), 8; Karel Kaplan and Pavel Paleček, *Komunistický režim a politické procesy v Československu* (Prague, 2001, 2008), 20–105; John Connelly, *Captive University: The Sovietization of East German, Czech, and Polish Higher Education, 1945–1956* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 2000); Benjamin Frommer, *National Cleansing: Retribution against Nazi Collaborators in Post-war Czechoslovakia* (Cambridge, 2005).

³⁴ Kaplan and Paleček, *Komunistický režim a politické procesy v Československu*, 24.

³⁵ December 1, 1949, "Zapis' besedy," N. V. Roshchin and Li Kenong, AVPRF, f. 0100, op. 42, p. 288, d. 19, ll. 96–100.

³⁶ January 18, 1955, "Otnosheniia mezhdru SSSR i KNR s 1950 g.," N. Fedorenko and M. Kapitsa, AVPRF, f. 0100, op. 48, p. 397, d. 39, ll. 6–12.

³⁷ On the ambiguities of the notion of a "thaw" in Soviet culture and society, see Stephen V. Bittner, *The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw: Experience and Memory in Moscow's Arbat* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2008), 1–18.

“catch up and surpass” the West, as several Russian scholars point out.³⁸ The catastrophic war interrupted the general Soviet effort to accomplish the “gradual transition from socialism to communism,” as the editors of the theoretical journal *Bolshevik* put it in 1945.³⁹ This vague notion, used routinely by the Central Committee under Stalin, suggested a new stage beyond the successful establishment of the foundations of socialism, declared by Stalin at the Seventeenth Party Congress in 1934.⁴⁰ Consumer development and increased standards of living were central to the notion of progress along the path to “communism.” It was only after 1953 and the death of Stalin, however, that his successors decided that “communism” could not possibly be achieved without a substantial reconciliation with the West, a rapprochement that would allow for easier access to Western technology, industry, and consumer goods.

Central and Eastern Europe served the Soviet state as a source of technology, education, advanced industrial practices, and access to the West. The traditional trading posture of a country such as Czechoslovakia, as Karel Kaplan explains, had been to “export to the East and import from the West.”⁴¹ Stalin-era officials subordinated local interests to the needs of the emerging bloc in their new trade agreements, but they were not about to curtail this potentially useful role for the Central Europeans. The early discussions in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (Sovet ekonomicheskoi vzaimopomoshchi, or SEV), for example, clearly envisioned an important role in this regard for the Czechoslovaks and the East Germans, but also for the Hungarians and the Poles. American efforts to limit trade with the bloc only increased the significance of this region.⁴² With less access to the outside world, Central European expertise, knowhow, and industrial development became even more important to Moscow.

Soviet ministries typically included a Department of External Relations (Otdel vneshnikh snoshenii, OVS), which directed affairs in the “external” (not foreign, or *zagranichnyi*) areas of the socialist “camp,” which were coordinated by a bureaucracy called GUES (Glavnoe upravlenie po vneshnim ekonomicheskim sviaziam Soveta ministrov, the Main Administration of External Economic Ties of the Soviet of Ministers).⁴³ The language of the socialist exchanges (“external” rather than “foreign” space, “party work” rather than “diplomacy,” “friendships” among socialists rather than “international relations” among capitalist states) is suggestive of the blurred and ambiguous boundaries of socialist space.⁴⁴ The terms in use in the borderlands of Russia’s contiguous empire before the revolution were similarly ambiguous and

³⁸ A. V. Pyzhikov, “Sovetskoe poslevoennoe obshchestvo i predposylki khrushchevskikh reform,” *Voprosy istorii* 2 (2002): 40; Danilov and Pyzhikov, *Rozhdenie sverkhderzhavy*, 149. See also János Kornai, *The Socialist System: The Political Economy of Communism* (Princeton, N.J., 1992), 53; Alan M. Ball, *Imagining America: Influence and Images in Twentieth-Century Russia* (Lanham, Md., 2003), 158.

³⁹ Cited in A. V. Pyzhikov, *Politicheskie preobrazovaniia v SSSR (50–60-e gody)* (Moscow, 1999), 58.

⁴⁰ July 25, 1952, “Proekt,” Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishii istorii (Russian State Archive of Contemporary History), Moscow [hereafter RGANI], f. 2, r. 6204, op. 1, d. 20, l. 74; David L. Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917–1941* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2003), 119.

⁴¹ Karel Kaplan, *Československo v RVHP 1949–1956* (Prague, 1995), 29.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 45–56. On America’s often frustrated effort to curtail trade with the bloc, see Frank Cain, *Economic Statecraft during the Cold War: European Responses to the US Trade Embargo* (London, 2007). In English-language scholarship, SEV is sometimes called CMEA or Comecon.

⁴³ December 15, 1963, S. I. Stepanenko, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 5, d. 181, l. 73; July 1, 1955, P. Dem’ianenko to A. N. Lavrishchev, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 210, l. 59.

⁴⁴ For example, see December 8, 1959, “Zapis’ besedy,” S. V. Chervonenko and Deng Xiaoping, AVPRF, f. 0100, op. 51, p. 435, d. 25, l. 105.

complex.⁴⁵ Lower-level officials from diverse ministries (including the ministries of Metallurgy, Education, Machine-Building, and Communications) and institutions (including the Academy of Sciences, the Union of Composers, and the Union of Film Directors) were engaged in this sensitive matter of the cross-cultural construction of socialism. To handle the exchange of advisers (“experts”), equipment, and blueprints between themselves and the diverse peoples of the bloc, the Soviets created a series of scientific-technical commissions. The commissions for Czechoslovakia and Poland, for example, were created on December 11, 1947, and were part of the larger Administration of Scientific-Technical Collaboration (*Upravlenie po delam nauchno-tekhnicheskogo sotrudnichestva*, UNTS), which included commissions for all the countries of the socialist bloc (the eventual commission for China also included Mongolia). The scientific-technical commissions facilitated the collaboration of engineers and specialists, the transfer of resources, the joint development of enterprises, and collaborative educational projects. Each commission was jointly administered by Soviets and officials from the local country. Continuing with the practices developed on their frontiers in the wake of the war, Soviet administrators were quick to identify strategic resources such as oil and gas deposits, iron ore pockets, and precious metals.⁴⁶

The Soviets were explicit and frank about the benefits to be brought to their economy as a result of socialist bloc “proletarian internationalism.” Comparative underdevelopment in the USSR formed the background for the practices of imperial scavenging in this curious system known as “socialism.” Theorists throughout the bloc relentlessly called it something else. They associated “imperialism” with the West and especially the Americans, and they distinguished their exchanges from the forms of exploitation found in capitalist countries and the history of imperialism.⁴⁷ In China, for example, Soviet communists arrived as a “new type” of people, a “faithful and reliable friend” different from the colonizing Westerners of the past.⁴⁸ The logic behind the transnational construction of this new “internationalist” community, a contrast to the more familiar model of the nation-state, was perpetually useful to the Soviets: ostensibly “imperial” moments in Soviet-Chinese relations, for example, turned out to be “progressive,” as their ultimate purpose was the support of international socialism against the global imperialism of the United States. Similar episodes preceded the formation of the bloc. The restoration of Soviet control over the Chinese Eastern Railway, explained Soviet diplomat Lev M. Karakhan in October 1924, was an example of “the return of Soviet property that had been torn away

⁴⁵ For a discussion about “internal” and “external” subjects on the steppe in the eighteenth century, see John LeDonne, “Building an Infrastructure of Empire in Russia’s Eastern Theater, 1650s–1840s,” *Cahiers du monde russe* 47, no. 3 (July–September 2006): 589.

⁴⁶ September 22, 1951, A. Gromov to V. A. Romanov, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 183, l. 8.

⁴⁷ N. I. Ivanov, *Ekonomicheskoe sotrudnichestvo i vzaimopomoshch’ sotsialisticheskikh stran* (Moscow, 1959); Konrad Il’gen, *Druzhiba v deistvii: Ekonomicheskaiia pomoshch’ Sovetskogo soiuzs sotsialisticheskim gosudarstvom i ekonomicheskim slaborazvitym stranam*, trans. G. V. Kychakovaia and S. A. Khaletskaiia (Moscow, 1962).

⁴⁸ “Fulao zhongshen sulian lichang,” *Xinmin wanbao*, October 5, 1958, 1; April 24, 1950, “Stenogramma,” Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv rossiiskoi federatsii (State Archive of the Russian Federation), Moscow, f. 5283, op. 21, d. 127, l. 11.

by the imperialists, who tried to use it against the workers and peasants of the USSR.”⁴⁹

The “new type” of people supposedly different from the “imperialists” proved to be persistently interested in Western technology. Soviet specialists in areas such as industrial auto design and construction especially valued trips to the German Democratic Republic for the purpose of procuring not just experience but also copies of blueprints and other information.⁵⁰ The Ministry of Metallurgy sent its officials to Czechoslovakia to study the numerous components involved in the production of aluminum casings and their transport, storage, and safety. Ministry officials took for granted the reality of superior Czechoslovak expertise and experience in this area, and demanded careful work and reporting practices from their experts during their stay there.⁵¹ Ministry of Trade officials carefully listed and described any American-made accounting equipment they came across in Bulgaria.⁵² While V. V. Gushchinn, a machine-tool engineer from a factory in Gor’kii, was critical of the standards of organization, management, and cleanliness at the Kolarovgradskii Machine-Tool Construction Factory in Bulgaria, he was excited to find equipment whose design was “entirely original and very simple, and can be successfully adopted in all of our factories.”⁵³ Eastern and especially Central Europe were closer to the West, simultaneously valued and feared by the Soviets for precisely that reason.

Managers and economic administrators demanded change and more flexibility in order to pursue more efficiently their agenda of imitation, reproduction, and theft of technological innovation. They spoke openly and adamantly about their dilemmas in gaining access to the most modern methods in order to improve their efficiency and productivity. “Reformist” administrators now openly admitted that much Soviet equipment “looks to be from around 1886,” and they urged a greater reliance on Eastern and Central European expertise.⁵⁴ They began to take seriously the many suggestions from East Germans, Bulgarians, Hungarians, and Czechoslovaks about the problems of scientific isolation, bureaucratic obstacles, outdated Soviet technology, and the inefficiencies and absurdities of bloc forms of exchange. East German scholars even found it easier to order Soviet books from West Germany and Denmark than from the cumbersome International Books.⁵⁵ Soviets aware of the need for change were listening. In September 1956, a Ministry of Communications engineer named Basaev frankly expressed his views about the comparative virtues of machinery, technology, and industrial development in the GDR and throughout Central Europe. In the wake of the Twentieth Party Congress, industrial managers were now discussing and addressing what had long been obvious throughout the bloc. Comrade Erigin, also with experience in Eastern and Central Europe, suggested a “fundamental rethinking” of the “role of the advising apparatus” in the people’s

⁴⁹ D. B. Slavinskii, *Sovetskii soiuz i Kitai: Istoriia diplomaticheskikh otnoshenii, 1917–1937 gg.* (Moscow, 2003), 88. See also Alexander Lukin, *The Bear Watches the Dragon: Russia’s Perceptions of China and the Evolution of Russian-Chinese Relations since the Eighteenth Century* (Armonk, N.Y., 2003), 75–97.

⁵⁰ February 16, 1954, V. I. Loskutov, RGAE, f. 8115, op. 3, d. 993, ll. 76–77.

⁵¹ September 17, 1951, “Zadanie,” RGAE, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 183, l. 9.

⁵² May 18, 1960, “Otchet,” M. I. Birinberg, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 717, l. 225.

⁵³ December 22, 1959, “Otchet,” V. V. Gushchinn, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 717, l. 62.

⁵⁴ June 14, 1955, Udarov to P. I. Parshin, RGAE, f. 8123, op. 3, d. 1170, l. 100.

⁵⁵ September 3, 1955, “O nekotorykh nedostatkakh,” S. Rumiantsev, RGANI, f. 5, r. 5136, op. 28, d. 286, ll. 174–182.



FIGURE 1: The cover of *Suzhong youhao* [Sino-Soviet Friendship], no. 1 (1959). The journal was collaboratively produced by the Soviets and the Chinese in the era of the “Great Friendship.”

democracies. “We cannot say,” he concluded, “that the Soviet Union occupies the leading place in many areas of the economy.”⁵⁶ The original “fraternal” equation was now reversed, as sensitive Soviets suggested what the Central Europeans had long been saying to themselves: engineers from the USSR should go to places such as Czechoslovakia for training and to improve their qualifications and knowledge.⁵⁷

Small peoples historically under pressure from the territorial encroachment of larger empires were adept at making the best of difficult situations, and the Central Europeans in particular jumped at the opportunity to take the lead in the evolution of the bloc. They were quick to remind the Soviets of what they had to offer. The Czechoslovak pavilion at the Brussels World’s Fair of 1958 illustrates this outcome of the ambitions, needs, and changing direction of the socialist world. The Czechoslovaks proudly proclaimed their readiness to engage with the practices and forms of exchange common to the West. Exhibit organizers in Brussels noted that the event attracted some thirty million people, all eager to overcome the divisions of the Cold War and “join East and West.”⁵⁸ In planning discussions in 1955, Czechoslovak exhibit organizers visualized their small country as a “bridge” and a “crossroads” (*křižovatka*) in East-West exchange. They were located in the “heart of Europe,” in tune with the two worlds divided by the Cold War. The Czechoslovaks thus reserved for themselves a special role in the mediation of East-West conflict, and emphasized that the proper orientation of the socialist world was to the West, through Central Europe. This was of course a longstanding theme and notion in Central European history.⁵⁹ A professor named Štech, who was among a group of educators and professionals who were invited to the planning discussion in January 1955, wanted viewers to understand that Czechoslovaks were not some “exotic people” and that Czechoslovakia had “existed on the map since the 16th or 17th century.”⁶⁰ Even Czechoslovak Central Committee officials lauded the special possibilities offered by the Central Europeans to the rest of the socialist bloc, the “first link” in economic exchange with the West. Czechoslovakia’s high standard of living and “quality of consumer goods” made it the country able to show “the best results in the economic competition with the capitalist states.” Czechoslovak prosperity was a useful weapon in the competitive Cold War, especially important in view of America’s recent “demagogic claims” about “people’s capitalism,” a reference to the United States Information Agency propaganda program.⁶¹ The Central Europeans took the lead in pushing for the transformation of the bloc and facilitating its greater access to the rest of the world, particularly the West.

Central European voices were prominent at the Twenty-First Party Congress in Moscow in January 1959, and through that year as several Soviet leaders and then

⁵⁶ September 10, 1956, “Stenogramma,” RGAE, f. 3527, op. 13, d. 2577, ll. 198–200.

⁵⁷ September 27, 1955, “Otchet,” Iu. S. Muntian, RGAE, f. 8123, op. 3, d. 1198, l. 49.

⁵⁸ “La C.E.C.A. à l’exposition 1958,” *La Cité Bruxelles*, December 11, 1956, NA, Československá obchodní komora (Kancelář generálního komisaře EXPO 58), krabice 41, folder S. A. Auxiliare de la Presse, December 56; Exhibition Programme 58 (September 12, 1958), NA, ČSOK, krabice 15, Folder Propagace “Official Programme.”

⁵⁹ Lonnie R. Johnson, *Central Europe: Enemies, Neighbors, Friends*, 2nd ed. (New York, 2002), 12.

⁶⁰ January 5, 1955, “Koncept porady,” in *Expo 58: Zápisy z porad: Příběh československé účasti na Světové výstavě v Bruselu* (Prague, 2008), 21.

⁶¹ “Informační zpráva,” Köhler and Hendrych, in *Expo 58: Scénář: Příběh československé účasti na Světové výstavě v Bruselu* (Prague, 2008), 7–8.



FIGURE 2: The restaurant at the Czechoslovak Pavilion at the Brussels World's Fair, 1958. National Archive (Národní archiv), Prague, Czech Republic, Československá obchodní komora (Kancelář gen. komisaře EXPO 58), uncatalogued as of spring 2009. Reproduced with the permission of the National Archive.

Khrushchev himself toured the U.S. in September. Party congresses were big events in the socialist world, as plans were formulated and tasks defined, with an eye toward the future. At the congress, “everyone frequently discussed the possibilities of global competition and the competition between capitalism and socialism. How would it develop?” offered a contributor to *Rudé právo*, the Czechoslovak party newspaper.⁶² The Soviet Union itself was on display within the socialist world, subject to the scrutiny of the “fraternal” parties who visited Moscow for conferences, meetings, and party congresses, and who were busy trying to advertise its wonders and successes to their diverse populations.⁶³ All of socialist history, the writings of Lenin, and the “basic economic task of the USSR,” suggested Czechoslovak journalist G. Apetauer in *Rudé právo*, were about the imminent “surpassing” of America in the competitive struggle over standards of living.⁶⁴ Motorcycles, cars, cameras, and other consumer goods would soon be transformed from “luxury items to goods of mass consumption.”⁶⁵ In 1956, Czechoslovak theoretician J. Sobotka had emphasized the impor-

⁶² “XXI. Sjezd KSSS ozařuje naši cestu k socialismu,” *Rudé právo*, no. 31 (February 1, 1959): 1.

⁶³ “Moskva před XXI. Sjezdem KSSS,” *Rudé právo*, no. 25 (January 26, 1959): 1; “Sjezd budovatelů komunismu,” *Rudé právo*, no. 26 (January 27, 1959): 1.

⁶⁴ G. Apetauer, “Základní ekonomický úkol SSSR,” *Rudé právo*, no. 21 (January 22, 1959): 3.

⁶⁵ “Směrnice X. sjezdu Komunistické strany Československa pro sestavení státního plánu rozvoje národního hospodářství ČSR na rok 1955,” *Nová mysl: Theoretický a politický časopis ÚV KSČ* 7 (July

tant role to be played by the Central and Eastern Europeans in this effort; he referred explicitly to the need to “catch up and surpass” (*dohnat a předejnat*).⁶⁶ The promise of socialism was increasingly defined with reference to the challenge of America, and the Central Europeans were already in the running in this competition with the more advanced West. The Americans were impressed by Czechoslovak scientific work, the Poles often held international research conferences, Hungarian astronomers were frequently invited to the West, and Romania was host to a fine scholarly collection of Western research journals.⁶⁷

The Soviets needed the Central Europeans, who made their strategic compromise with the scavengers from the East. For some time the proud Chinese appeared unwilling to compromise, especially after the tumultuous year of 1956 in the bloc. Mao concluded that his own party knew more about the making of revolution and the construction of socialism, and his compatriots had been observing standards of Soviet technical knowhow and expertise throughout the decade. Numerous Chinese leaders began to make suggestions to their socialist “friends” about the dangers inherent in the “indiscriminate imitation” of a foreign culture and society, and the importance of constructing socialism “with Chinese characteristics.”⁶⁸ Many Chinese had had experience in Europe and America before the revolution, of course, and even Communist Party members posed frank questions about the decision to “lean to one side” in the Cold War.⁶⁹ “A majority of the intelligentsia in China openly referred to the Soviet Union as imperialist,” Politburo member Peng Zhen explained to Soviet ambassador A. S. Paniushkin on January 6, 1953.⁷⁰ The frontiers of the bloc again intersected, as Central Europeans including the Czechoslovaks carefully watched for signs of an emerging Chinese challenge to the strategic equilibrium that had left the scavenging Soviets at the “head” of the bloc.

In China itself, Central European diplomats were often better informed than the Soviets, and were in closer communication with other members of the international community. Czechoslovaks, for example, provided detailed commentary about their exposure to Chinese mass criticism sessions at factories, attacks on bloc practices and the experts, extreme forms of egalitarianism, unproductive ideological campaigns, and criticisms of the Soviet Union from officials in the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁷¹ They effectively posed broader and disturbing questions about the nature

1954): 894; Zbyněk Vokrouhlický, “Rozvoj vztahů mezi východem a západem—naléhavý úkol při upevňování míru a mezinárodní důvěry,” *Mezinárodní otázky* 4 (Prague, 1956): 14, 34.

⁶⁶ J. Sobotka, “Význam XX. Sjezdu pro odvrácení nové války a nastolení trvalého míru,” *Mezinárodní otázky* 2 (Prague, 1956): 13–14, 28.

⁶⁷ Vokrouhlický, “Rozvoj vztahů mezi východem a západem,” 30–35.

⁶⁸ Li Danhui, “Mao Zedong dui su renshi yu zhongsu guanxi de yanbian,” in Li Danhui, *Beijing yu Mosike*, 320–321; May 25, 1956, “Zapis’ besedy,” P. F. Iudin and Zhou Enlai, AVPRF, f. 0100, op. 49, p. 410, d. 9, l. 121; October 15, 1957, “Informatsiia,” N. Pridybailo, AVPRF, f. 0100, op. 44, p. 176, d. 17, l. 28. We would never “mechanically transmit Chinese experience” to Vietnam, Zhou Enlai chided Pavel Iudin in 1957. See June 14, 1957, “Zapis’ besedy,” P. Iudin and Zhou Enlai, AVPRF, f. 0100, op. 50, p. 423, d. 5, l. 32.

⁶⁹ March 4, 1952, “Zapis’ besedy,” N. V. Roshchin and Guo Moruo, AVPRF, f. 0100, op. 45, p. 343, d. 12, l. 15.

⁷⁰ February 2, 1953, “Zapis’ besedy,” A. S. Paniushkin and Peng Zhen, AVPRF, f. 0100, op. 46, p. 362, d. 12, l. 18. See also Shu Guang Zhang, *Economic Cold War: America’s Embargo against China and the Sino-Soviet Alliance, 1949–1963* (Washington, D.C., 2003), 115–123.

⁷¹ December 13, 1957, “Kampaň za nápravu stylu práce v závodech,” Ján Bušniak, 022.105/57, Archiv

and direction of Chinese politics, and worried about the party's willingness to mobilize the population for narrowly defined political goals. Some Soviet officials understood this and even relied on Czechoslovak and other Central European officials for help and information about events in China.⁷² Czechoslovak officials were frightened and alarmed by what these Chinese developments might mean for the very nature, practices, and orientation of the bloc.

CHINA'S FRUSTRATION WITH SOVIET LEADERSHIP of the bloc was only half of the story of the Sino-Soviet split. The excellent new scholarship on the relationship and struggle tends to be Sino-centric, ignoring the internal history of Moscow's socialist world, which also contributed to the split.⁷³ Practices and attitudes inherent to the Soviet

Ministerstva zahraničních věcí České republiky (Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic), Prague [hereafter MZV], Teritoriální odbory—Tajné [hereafter TO—T], 1955–1959, ČLR, krabice 6, obal 3; October 14, 1959, "Závěry XXI. Sjezdu KSS pro práci KS Číny a jejich projednání," 027.671/59, MZV, TO—T, 1955–1959, ČLR, krabice 1, obal 1. For Chinese criticism of bloc practices, see "Gongren jieji shehuizhuyi jiaoyu xuezhе cunke," *Gongren ribao*, January 29, 1958, 3; "Guanyu kaizhan fanlangfei, fanbaoshou yundong de bianzhi," *Gongren ribao*, March 4, 1958, 1; "Quanmin de jieri quanmin de shengli!" *Xinmin wanbao*, October 1, 1958, 3. The Chinese embassy terminated the supply of its internal research reports (*neibu cankao*) to the Soviet embassy in late November 1958. See Lorenz M. Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World* (Princeton, N.J., 2008), 109. ⁷² November 21, 1959, "Záznam z rozhovoru," J. Melničák, 0495/59, MZV, TO—T, 1955–1959, ČLR, krabice 2, obal 9.

⁷³ Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split*; Thomas J. Christensen, *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947–1958* (Princeton, N.J., 1996); Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*; Chen Jian and Yang Kuisong, "Chinese Politics and the Collapse of the Sino-Soviet Alliance," in Westad, *Brothers in Arms*, 246–294; Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, 3 vols. (New York, 1974–1997). For greater detail on the dilemmas and tensions of the Sino-Soviet relationship at a broader social level, from university curriculum development to rail transport to geological excavation to the production of documentary film, see Zazerskaia, *Sovetskie spetsialisty i formirovanie voenno-promyshlennogo kompleksa Kitaia*; Shen Zhihua, *Sulian zhuanjia zai zhongguo*; Douglas A. Stiffler, "Building Socialism at Chinese People's University: Chinese Cadres and Soviet Experts in the People's Republic of China, 1949–57" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, San Diego, 2002); Stiffler, "Creating 'New China's First New-Style Regular University,' 1949–50," in Jeremy Brown and Paul G. Pickowicz, eds., *Dilemmas of Victory: The Early Years of the People's Republic of China* (Cambridge, Mass., 2007), 288–308; Christian A. Hess, "Big Brother Is Watching: Local Sino-Soviet Relations and the Building of New Dalian, 1945–55," *ibid.*, 160–183; William C. Kirby, "China's Internationalization in the Early People's Republic: Dreams of a Socialist World Economy," *China Quarterly* 188, no. 4 (2006): 870–890; Tina Mai Chen, "Internationalism and Cultural Experience: Soviet Films and Popular Chinese Understandings of the Future in the 1950s," *Cultural Critique* 58 (Fall 2004): 82–114; Julian Chang, "The Mechanics of State Propaganda: The People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union in the 1950s," in Timothy Creek and Tony Saich, eds., *New Perspectives on State Socialism* (Armonk, N.Y., 1997), 76–124. For summaries of the exchanges from Russian archives, see September 10, 1955, "Programma," RGAE, f. 3527, op. 13, d. 2522, ll. 221–223; January 25, 1957, N. D. Psurtsev and I. V. Klovok, RGAE, f. 3527, op. 13, d. 2603, ll. 1–16; December 9, 1955, P. Afanas'ev, RGAE, f. 3527, op. 13, d. 2537, ll. 88–93. On the November 1957 conference of communist parties in Moscow, see Zhihua Shen and Yafeng Xia, "Hidden Currents during the Honeymoon: Mao, Khrushchev, and the 1957 Moscow Conference," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 11, no. 4 (Fall 2009): 74–117. For earlier studies, see Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, Mass., 1996), 210–235; David Wolff, "'One Finger's Worth of Historical Events': New Russian and Chinese Evidence on the Sino-Soviet Alliance and Split, 1948–1959," Cold War International History Project Working Paper No. 30 (Washington, D.C., 2000); Alexander Pantsov, "Stalin, Khrushchev and Modernization of the People's Republic of China in the 1950s," in *Russia and China: Traditional Values and Modernization* (Taipei, 2001), 152–176; Hua-yu Li, "The Political Stalinization of China: The Establishment of One-Party Constitutionalism, 1948–1954," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 3, no. 2 (2001): 28–47; Mineo Nakajima, "Foreign Relations from the Korean War to the Bandung Line,"

scavenger state—the extraction of resources, the acquisition of technology, and the development of managerial experience and industrial expertise—were in play on this distant frontier of the “empire” as well. By 1960, the Soviets were rethinking the political gains to be had from the February 1950 treaty they had signed with the Chinese. Initially they had perceived the potential gains of the “friendship” to be vast, ironically in part because of China’s historical exposure to European colonialism. As in Eastern and Central Europe, Soviet experts and officials eagerly surveyed Chinese industrial and technological practices for their possible adoption in the USSR. Soviet telegraph engineer S. Martsenitsen confided that one of the primary professional benefits of working at the Central Telegraph Office in Beijing was the opportunity to be exposed to Western scholarship and technology. “I compiled a list of literature that interested us so we can have it sent to the Soviet Union,” he reported. “I brought home nine albums of material about American and German equipment, and I made photocopies of material . . . These new developments interest us very much.”⁷⁴

Over time, however, the Soviets were losing interest. The very manner in which lower-level veterans of the Sino-Soviet exchange tried to ignore the increasingly explosive rhetoric of the split and keep the “friendship” alive illustrates their awareness of the demands and expectations of the traditional scavenger state in the frontier areas of the bloc. They had been doing this, after all, since 1945, working alternately with first the Guomindang and then the Chinese Communist Party.⁷⁵ Soviets who were in favor of maintaining the relationship argued that indeed China still had something that could meet the needs of the USSR in its effort to “catch up” to the Americans. China still offered something valuable to scavenge. For example, the scientific secretary of the Soviet part of the scientific-technical commission for China, F. Kleimenov, routinely provided lists of examples of Chinese contributions to the Soviet economy (coal stoves, paper, magnetics, coal, chemicals, hydro-turbines, food preservation, cotton, bridge construction, corn seedlings, ceramics, radio commu-

in Roderick MacFarquhar and John K. Fairbank, eds., *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 14: *The People's Republic*, pt. 1: *The Emergence of Revolutionary China, 1949–1965* (Cambridge, 1987), 259–289; Allen S. Whiting, “The Sino-Soviet Split,” *ibid.*, 478–538; Steven M. Goldstein, “Nationalism and Internationalism: Sino-Soviet Relations,” in Thomas W. Robinson and David Shambaugh, eds., *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice* (Oxford, 1994), 224–265. On Sino-Soviet relations and the Korean War, see Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partners*; “New Russian Documents on the Korean War,” intro. and trans. Kathryn Weathersby, *CWIHP Bulletin* 6–7 (Winter 1995/1996): 30–93.

⁷⁴ September 10, 1956, “Stenogramma,” RGAE, f. 3527, op. 13, d. 2577, l. 196.

⁷⁵ Chinese historians from the mainland especially emphasize the traditional imperial aims of the Soviet Union in China after 1945. See Xue Xiantian, “Zhanhou dongbei wenti yu zhongsu guanxi zouxiang,” in Li Danhui, *Beijing yu Mosike*, 5; Xue Xiantian, “Zhanhou dongbei wenti yu zhongsu guanxi zouxiang,” in Xue Xiantian, *Zhanhou zhongsu guanxi zouxiang*, 2; Yang Yulin, “Lun sulian chubing dongbei de lishi houke,” *ibid.*, 121; Pu Guoliang, *Zhongsu dalunzhan de qi yuan*, 111–121; Li Jie, “Cong jiemeng dao polie: zhongsu lunzhan de qi yuan,” in Li Danhui, *Beijing yu Mosike*, 439; Shen Zhihua, *Sulian zhuanjia zai zhongguo*, 23–35; Niu Jun, *From Yan'an to the World: The Origin and Development of Chinese Communist Foreign Policy*, ed. and trans. Steven I. Levine (Norwalk, Conn., 2005), 202. See also Heinzig, *The Soviet Union and Communist China*, 51–57; Simei Qing, *From Allies to Enemies: Visions of Modernity, Identity, and U.S.-China Diplomacy, 1945–1960* (Cambridge, Mass., 2007), 71; Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War*, 28; Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, *Racing the Enemy: Stalin, Truman, and the Surrender of Japan* (Cambridge, Mass., 2005), 300; Goncharov, Lewis, and Xue Litai, *Uncertain Partners*, 219.

nications).⁷⁶ Diverse Chinese contributions deserved the attention of the bureaucracy because they were “of interest to the factories of the fatherland.”⁷⁷ China, too, he argued, demanded the attention that was increasingly reserved for the European side of the bloc and the capitalist world beyond. This was a common refrain for Soviets who were sympathetic to the Chinese and worried about the viability of the alliance in the later 1950s.⁷⁸ They argued for the uniqueness and importance of contributions from China that could not be found or developed in Europe.⁷⁹ Chinese supportive of the exchange, by contrast, such as Han Guang from the Chinese side of the scientific-technical commission, emphasized Soviet contributions that in time would allow for the development of indigenous industries.⁸⁰ He spoke to a Chinese audience increasingly concerned about excessive reliance on a foreign country. Sixty percent of new indigenous Chinese machine production, similarly offered commission official Qiang Zueming, was based on technical documentation provided by the Soviets.⁸¹ Such officials were highly invested in the exchange; they emphasized its contribution to both sides and the fulfillment of its presumably original purpose.

Such voices were not in the majority, however. Critics, too, spoke the language of Soviet-style technology transfer and bloc exchange, but argued that the Chinese contribution and Chinese potential fell short. After forestry specialist N. A. Kononov surveyed the Chinese logging industry in the fall of 1959, he concluded: “I didn’t see any logging practices in the PRC [People’s Republic of China] that we might adopt in the Soviet Union.”⁸² The potential areas of useful collaboration identified by visiting Soviets (microscopes, seeds, sheep breeds, ceramics, academic exchange, cartography, weather forecasting, termite control, fishing) were not always seen as important enough to sway the broader agenda of the Soviet scavenger state.⁸³ Sometimes Soviet advisers judged the potential to be real (cobalt, nickel, platinum, and chromium in Gansu and Yunnan provinces), but the problems of identification, excavation, and production made it likely that the USSR would supply rather than acquire these minerals in the near future.⁸⁴ The matter remained one of promise and potential rather than specific gains for the Soviets. Diesel fuel engine expert M. N. Karpov sought results from a series of experiments on the production of diesel engines, but “as I understand it,” he reported, the experiments had failed to take place.⁸⁵ Coal industry experts and academics were still holding conferences, seminars, and discussions with the Chinese in 1960 to talk about the likely future benefits

⁷⁶ April 1960, “Primery,” F. Kleimenov, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 5, d. 59, ll. 33–47; April 1960, “Spravka,” F. Kleimenov, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 5, d. 59, ll. 49–52.

⁷⁷ April 1960, “Primery,” F. Kleimenov, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 5, d. 59, l. 47.

⁷⁸ December 7, 1957, N. Busygin to N. T. Stepanov, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 983, ll. 85–96; September 22, 1959, N. Siluianov and A. Polozhenkov, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 1003, ll. 26–46.

⁷⁹ January 21, 1960, M. I. Agoshkov to A. G. Polozhenkov, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 1063, l. 18.

⁸⁰ October 31, 1959, N. Siluianov and F. Kleimenov, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 1003, ll. 2–4.

⁸¹ September 22, 1959, N. Siluianov and A. Polozhenkov, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 1003, l. 34.

⁸² October 18, 1959, “Otchet,” N. A. Kononov, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 1098, l. 62.

⁸³ December 8, 1958, G. F. Mukhin; April 14, 1959, V. Iushin; November 28, 1959, P. A. Il’in; February 23, 1960, M. N. Stoianov and N. I. Chistiakov; December 6, 1959, A. Sh. Tatevian; April 22, 1960, A. I. Samoilov, all RGAE, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 1098, ll. 70, 73, 86, 117, 150–164; June 14, 1961, V. Ivanov, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 5, d. 66, l. 46; March 4, 1960, P. Moiseev to D. Pronin, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 5, d. 67, l. 4.

⁸⁴ January 21, 1960, M. I. Agoshkov to A. G. Polozhenkov, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 1063, ll. 5–6.

⁸⁵ January 9, 1960, M. N. Karpov to General Consul, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 1103, l. 1.

of their collaboration.⁸⁶ Enthusiastic advisers who argued for the importance of what China had to offer the Soviet Union often failed to understand that “Eurasian” technology (Chinese coal-burning stoves, for example) did not represent an ideal future for the numerous more Western-oriented officials in the Soviet bureaucracy.⁸⁷ In any event, the voices of enthusiasm were dwarfed by the tensions and now financial disputes that plagued the “friendship.”

Even more frustrating for the Soviets was their inability to keep adequate track of technological developments that they had previously identified as important to their own needs, or that they suspected had evolved beyond their control in the course of the decade. For example, numerous bloc countries, several ministers, and a wide variety of high officials were involved in setting up Chinese telecommunications networks and the postal system.⁸⁸ Leading CCP officials Zhou Enlai, Chen Yun, and Liu Shaoqi directly oversaw the collaborative project to construct Beijing Central Telegraph.⁸⁹ Such huge advising projects reflected the interests of China’s leaders in national unity and integration, and the new orientation toward the bloc and away from the West and Japan. By 1958, Soviet officials and their counterparts in the bloc had established telegraph connections between Moscow and Ulan-Bator, Ulan-Bator and Beijing, Moscow and Beijing, Warsaw and Beijing, and Ulan-Bator and Vladivostok.⁹⁰ A year earlier, Ministry of Communications officials from Moscow and Beijing had completed the construction of twenty-four-hour radio and telephone lines from Moscow to Beijing and from Moscow to Shanghai.⁹¹ Yet later in the decade, even this apparent success story was quickly suspect for visiting Soviets from the Ministry of Communications, who were dismayed to discover that they had not been informed about Chinese progress in the construction of a national electro-communications network. At the Shanghai Telegraph Bureau, communications specialists M. I. Stoianov and N. I. Chistiakov found markedly smaller and less clumsy telegraphs than in the Soviet Union, and at Beijing Central Telegraph they discovered single-wave radio equipment imported from Siemens, the West German company. They immediately requested “full technical documentation” from Liu Jingcheng of the Ministry of Communications.⁹²

From the standpoint of previous Soviet practices and assumptions about technology transfer and the needs and agenda of the socialist bloc, the exchange with China was pointless. China was now viewed by many officials as an extraordinary and unsuccessful diversion for the bloc, whose attention was best reserved for Eastern and Central Europe. The East in the bloc (China, but also North Korea and Vietnam) was proving to be a disappointment, or worse, a drain on financial and natural resources. Central European officials themselves were well aware of these expenditures.⁹³ They, rather than the Chinese, would help the Soviet Union compete with

⁸⁶ 1960, “Kratkii otchet,” A. S. Stugarev et al., RGAE, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 1063, ll. 87–101.

⁸⁷ February 1960, “Tema no. 12-04,” I. M. Lemni-Makedon, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 1103, l. 12.

⁸⁸ December 9, 1955, RGAE, f. 3527, op. 13, d. 2537, ll. 88–93; September 10, 1955, “Programma,” RGAE, f. 3527, op. 13, d. 2522, ll. 221–223.

⁸⁹ July 29, 1956, S. Martsenitsen, RGAE, f. 3527, op. 13, d. 2577, l. 70.

⁹⁰ January 4, 1959, M. A. Studilin, RGAE, f. 3527, op. 13, d. 2783, l. 25. On railroad construction, see “Youyi zhilu,” *Dagong bao*, January 4, 1956, 1.

⁹¹ April 15, 1957, RGAE, f. 3527, op. 13, d. 2578, l. 79.

⁹² 1960, M. I. Stoianov and N. I. Chistiakov, RGAE, f. 3527, op. 13, d. 2798, ll. 5–6.

⁹³ 1957, “Zkušnosti z návštěvy korejské lidové armády,” Vojenský ústřední archiv (Central Military

America. The Hungarians at the Tungsram galvanized metal factory, for example, which was partly American-owned before the war, were aware of metal-production practices in America and could produce platinum that was “qualitatively [and] significantly better” than anything “prepared in the fatherland’s industry.”⁹⁴ The Hungarian method was “analogous” to that of the Americans, A. A. Zakharov, the chair of the Soviet part of the scientific-technical commission for Hungary, wrote to UNTS commander S. I. Stepanenko.⁹⁵ Close collaboration with Hungary in machine construction, argued a Soviet official named Zherebtsov in 1962, would in time produce “an economic effect in the economy of the Soviet Union.”⁹⁶ Research practices in the gas industry in Czechoslovakia were vastly superior to those in the USSR, claimed Soviet officials in 1961, and were of “rich interest” to them.⁹⁷ The most efficient method of pressurizing oxygen for metallurgical work within the bloc was developed at the Klement Gottwald Metallurgical Factory in Prague, based on blueprints originally obtained from Stacey Dresser Engineering in America.⁹⁸

The Soviets looked to Prague for automobile and tractor production as well as film production and candy making, to Budapest for electronic computing devices, to Dresden for materials-testing equipment, and to Warsaw for factories, technology, and workers in the coke and coal industry.⁹⁹ In 1961, Soviet officials in the gas industry bluntly demanded the full technical documentation for a new Czechoslovak device that measured the quantity of water in natural gas so that they could reproduce it.¹⁰⁰ The Soviets relied on Eastern and Central Europe to fulfill new projects and exchanges contracted with India and other parts of the developing world, and to facilitate progress in oil production in Grozny.¹⁰¹ Most important, they relied on Eastern and especially Central Europe to help them “catch up and surpass” America. In the wake of the “kitchen debate,” the Ministry of Mass Consumption (Ministerstvo tovarov shirokogo potrebleniia) sent its specialists to a factory in Pravice, Czechoslovakia, to study the production of new wooden floors for use in the kitchen. The floors had “become more significant in the USA and Europe,” wrote A. Vasenko, a Soviet consumer goods specialist in Czechoslovakia, to ministry official G. G. Gotsiridze, and were currently being produced in some seven American factories.¹⁰² They did not exist in the Soviet Union.

Archive), Prague, Ministerstvo národní obrany, krabice 115, 14/8/1; Charles K. Armstrong, “‘Fraternal Socialism’: The International Reconstruction of North Korea, 1953–62,” *Cold War History* 5, no. 2 (May 2005): 161–187.

⁹⁴ August 15, 1963, A. Gladkov, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 5, d. 184, l. 63; Borhi, *Hungary in the Cold War*, 149–150.

⁹⁵ August 1, 1963, A. A. Zakharov to S. I. Stepanenko, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 5, d. 184, l. 69.

⁹⁶ March 22, 1962, Zherebtsov, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 5, d. 184, l. 33.

⁹⁷ 1961, A. Uskov and S. I. Stepanenko to K. N. Rudnev, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 383, l. 35.

⁹⁸ March 12, 1953, “Vyžádání sovětské technické pomoci,” 4.100/53, MZV, Teritoriální odbory—Obyčejně 1945–1959, SSSR, krabice 27, obal 11.

⁹⁹ April 29, 1963, N. Smetnev to N. Tarasov, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 5, d. 185, l. 13; August 1955, “Protokol,” RGAE, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 203, l. 118; August 17, 1961, V. Zaitsev to K. N. Rudnev, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 383, l. 45; August 29, 1963, “Zaiavka no. 53,” and 1963, “Tekhnicheskoe obosnovanie,” I. Komlev, both RGAE, f. 9493, op. 5, d. 184, ll. 84, 117; September 1964, “Vorprogramin des Kongresses über Materialprüfung,” RGAE, f. 9493, op. 5, d. 184, ll. 153–159; June 29, 1962, S. Orudzhev to I. V. Arkhipov, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 5, d. 185, l. 23.

¹⁰⁰ July 15, 1961, S. I. Stepanenko to K. N. Rudnev, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 383, l. 304.

¹⁰¹ March 1962, A. Babukov, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 5, d. 185, l. 49.

¹⁰² 1961, A. Vasenko to G. G. Gotsiridze, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 5, d. 185, l. 105.

The Soviets also stepped beyond Central Europe to court the Americans directly, anticipating Khrushchev's unusual trip to the U.S. in September 1959. Exhibits, cultural exchanges, and tentative economic and technological relationships with Western Europe and America were one facet of the diverse reforms enacted in foreign affairs by Stalin's successors, and an example of the regime's effort to respond to the concerns of its managerial and industrial elite. That interest amounted to a revival of the longstanding interest of Russia's revolutionaries in American technology, Ford cars, and the industrial efficiency methods of Winslow Taylor. It was Anastas Mikoian, then commissar of trade, who declared in 1930: "In the scale of its economy, in the methods of production (mass production, standardization, and so forth), America is the most appropriate for us."¹⁰³ Future commissar of industry Sergo Ordzhonikidze told Soviet students in 1928 that he intended to "send hundreds and thousands of our young engineers to America so that they can learn for themselves what to do and how to work."¹⁰⁴ America's primary lure, of course, was its technological expertise, equipment, and factory organization. The new overtures were consistent with the practices and goals of the traditional Soviet scavenging state within the bloc. During Mikoian's own visit to the U.S. in January 1959, part of the preparatory exploration for Khrushchev's upcoming trip in September, he reminded Americans of this earlier history and of Lenin's admiration for American productivity.¹⁰⁵

The new political climate after the death of Stalin encouraged the Soviets to study the technology of ultrasound and radioactive isotopes in the United States, food processing in France, and hydro-machine construction in Italy.¹⁰⁶ They began courting visitors from firms and educational institutes in America. An American delegation of representatives from the Ford Motor Company, Bendix Aviation Corporation, and Westinghouse Electric toured numerous factories, universities, and technical institutes in December 1955. Economic exchange that highlighted the contrasts between the Soviet Union and the West remained difficult for the regime to address. Nevin L. Bean of the Ford Motor Company told his hosts that the level of mechanization at the Molotov Automobile Factory in Gor'kii reminded him of the state of American car production in 1935. Predictably, the official version of this exchange published by TASS did not mention this comment.¹⁰⁷ The Soviet opening to the West that had so frustrated a Chairman Mao proud of the new strength of the "east wind" was also evident at this level of economic, industrial, and educational exchange. The socialist bloc led by the Soviet Union had less use for the practices, skills, and resources of Mao's China. There was less there to imitate, copy, reproduce, or even steal.

Instead it was the Central and Eastern European economies and cultures that remained central to the Soviet effort to gain access to the world of the West. The

¹⁰³ Ball, *Imagining America*, 24–30, quote from 24. See also Kurt S. Schultz, "Building the 'Soviet Detroit': The Construction of the Nizhnii-Novgorod Automobile Factory, 1927–1932," in Christopher Read, ed., *The Stalin Years: A Reader* (New York, 2003), 70–83.

¹⁰⁴ Ball, *Imagining America*, 120.

¹⁰⁵ "Prebyvanie A.I. Mikoiana v SShA," *Moskovskaia pravda* 7 (January 9, 1959): 4; L. Velichanskii and V. Paramonov, "Prebyvanie A.I. Mikoiana v SShA," *Moskovskaia pravda* 9 (January 11, 1959): 3.

¹⁰⁶ 1955, V. P. Lukin; October 29, 1955, P. Selekhov and B. Blinov; October 4, 1955, N. Arofikin and I. Anisov, all RGAE, f. 8123, op. 3, d. 1169, ll. 13, 19, 34.

¹⁰⁷ 1955, "Kratkii obzor," M. Perelivchenko, RGAE, f. 8123, op. 3, d. 1154, ll. 13–16.

purpose of SEV was to work with this part of the bloc in order to ensure Soviet access to the latest innovations in industry, technology, and trade. China never fully participated in SEV, and after the Sino-Soviet split, the organization underwent significant transformation and rejuvenation. A new Permanent Commission for the Coordination of Scientific and Technical Research (*Postoiannaia komissiiia po koordinatsii nauchno-tekhnikeskogo isledovaniia*), designed to oversee the numerous other institutions previously engaged in the matter, was formed in 1961 and first met from July 31 to August 2, 1962. A series of new commissions (for banking, railways, and metals) were formed to coordinate diverse forms of exchange in the bloc.¹⁰⁸ The goal, wrote SEV official I. Ruzhichka on October 18, 1962, to D. Gvishian, the chair of the Permanent Commission, was to become familiar with both the “leading scientific research among the member countries of SEV” and “the accomplishments of global science and technology on the most important problems.”¹⁰⁹ For this objective, the Central Europeans had long been useful, as when Poles went to Italy and France in 1957 to learn about European techniques of oil production.¹¹⁰ In time, of course, they would never look back, which the Soviets also understood and feared at this early date. With resignation, engineer A. P. Nikanorov described the Bulgarian rejection of Soviet machine-tool equipment for clothing in March 1960 in favor of available Italian and Swiss varieties. This, too, however, was acceptable, as long as the finished product and the plans were shared with the Soviets.¹¹¹

The socialist bloc would conduct its business without the Chinese, the makers of the largest socialist revolution of the twentieth century. The Eastern and Central Europeans had a special role to play in the Soviet Union’s important relationship to the West, which China had proven incapable of fulfilling. SEV turned its attention and administrative pressure to demanding that Eastern and Central Europeans help the USSR in its desperate quest. This was not always easy. Czechoslovak, Polish, Bulgarian, and East German attendees at a metallurgy and precious metals conference in late June 1960 asked the SEV Permanent Commission if its recommendations were to be “obligatory” for the other countries of the bloc. The Poles wanted to process their precious metals within their country. After more discussion and several “explanations,” the group accepted the suggestions from SEV.¹¹² Throughout the decade, the Romanians carefully manipulated the Sino-Soviet relationship to provide themselves with the space to sell their oil, once dear to the Nazis, on the global market. Until the end of the communist era, officials in Moscow struggled to oversee trade among the Eastern and Central Europeans, eliminate “parallelism” in technical exchange, enforce their political concerns upon the bloc, and ensure that each relationship fulfilled the needs of the “central planning organs, committees, and other institutions of the USSR.”¹¹³ Eventually the oil subsidy emerged, as Randall Stone explains, and served as a form of repayment to the Central Europeans for their

¹⁰⁸ July 1962, “Orienturovochnyi spisok,” RGAE, f. 9493, op. 5, d. 183, ll. 89–91; June 28, 1962, D. Novikov to D. M. Gvishiani, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 5, d. 183, l. 148; Włodzimierz Brus, “1957 to 1965,” in M. C. Kaser, general ed., *The Economic History of Eastern Europe, 1919–1975*, vol. 3: *Institutional Change within a Planned Economy* (New York, 1982), 114–116.

¹⁰⁹ October 18, 1962, I. Ruzhichka to D. Gvishian, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 5, d. 183, l. 122.

¹¹⁰ 1957, “Otchet,” RGAE, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 21, l. 93.

¹¹¹ March 2, 1960, “Otchet,” A. P. Nikanorov, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 717, l. 59.

¹¹² July 2, 1960, “Otchet,” I. S. Stepanov et al., RGAE, f. 9493, op. 1, d. 717, l. 374.

¹¹³ Quote from September 27, 1962, A. Goregliad, RGAE, f. 9493, op. 5, d. 183, l. 138. See also

important work.¹¹⁴ The logic of imperial scavenging pushed the Soviets west rather than east, and away from the vast Eurasian alliance originally envisioned by Stalin and Mao. The path to a competitive engagement with the Americans went through Prague rather than Beijing.

THE DIVERSE TRANSNATIONAL EXCHANGES of the vast contiguous space that made up the socialist bloc in the 1950s shaped the evolution of the bloc, the Sino-Soviet relationship, and even the Cold War more generally. Moscow was at the center of this world, and the Soviet state functioned as an imperial scavenger in its borderland regions. An aggressive Soviet managerial and administrative elite surveyed the countries of the bloc for forms of knowledge, industrial technology, and machinery that would help them in their effort to address their own backwardness and their grand plans of competition with distant America. The Soviet state as imperial scavenger was simultaneously threatening and desperate, or perhaps threatening as a product of its desperation. Such ambiguity characterizes the study of the general problem of the USSR as an “empire” in the twentieth century, as well as the exploration of the nature and intentions of Soviet foreign policy in the early decades of the Cold War.

The break with China was in part a consequence of these practices and attitudes. The sudden decision to withdraw the advisers in July 1960 was prompted by Soviet security concerns over Chinese efforts to court Soviet military advisers, but a broader set of issues endemic to Soviet bloc practices and expectations form the background to the deterioration of the relationship.¹¹⁵ Viewing the rich archival materials of socialist bloc exchange through a wider lens offers greater nuance and depth to the study of the Cold War, and can complement the traditional methods and interests of diplomatic history and the study of foreign policy. The high-level polemical and ideological language most accessible to scholars was limited to the familiar issues, such as the Stalin question and the policy of “peaceful coexistence,” that shaped the public dimensions of the split. The Twenty-Second Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in October 1961 affirmed the Soviet model of development, and declared that “communism” would be achieved by 1980.¹¹⁶ Stalin’s body was removed from the Lenin-Stalin Mausoleum on October 30, 1961.¹¹⁷ Soviet ideologist Mikhail A. Suslov would not compromise on Stalin, consumer competition, or the

September 29, 1962, N. Ptichkin to S. I. Stepanenko; September 25, 1962, D. Pronin to A. N. Zademidko; August 24, 1962, V. Novikov, all RGAE, f. 9493, op. 5, d. 183, ll. 12, 41–42, 137.

¹¹⁴ Randall W. Stone, *Satellites and Commissars: Strategy and Conflict in the Politics of Soviet-Bloc Trade* (Princeton, N.J., 1996); see also Michael Marrese and Jan Vanous, *Soviet Subsidization of Trade with Eastern Europe: A Soviet Perspective* (Berkeley, Calif., 1983). For a different interpretation of the politics and perceptions of socialist bloc trade and resource exchange after the quadrupling of the price of oil in the 1970s, see Dina R. Spechler and Martin C. Spechler, “The Economic Burden of the Soviet Empire: Estimates and Reestimates,” in Rajan Menon and Daniel N. Nelson, eds., *Limits to Soviet Power* (Lexington, Mass., 1989), 27–48; Spechler and Spechler, “A Reassessment of the Burden of Eastern Europe on the USSR,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 61, no. 9 (November 2009): 1645–1657.

¹¹⁵ See October 8, 1960, “Zapis’ besedy,” S. V. Chervonenko and Chang Tubing, AVPRF, f. 0100, op. 53, p. 454, d. 9, l. 35.

¹¹⁶ Danilov and Pyzhikov, *Rozhdenie sverkhderzhavy*, 147.

¹¹⁷ Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *Khrushchev’s Cold War: The Inside Story of an American Adversary* (New York, 2006), 410.

Chinese. The “essence” of imperialism remained the same, he argued, but the nature of competition with the West had changed since Lenin. Each country in the bloc was in a position to make its special contribution to the expansion of industrial and agricultural development, “and thereby catch up to the more economically advanced countries in the level of production per person and living standards.” Instead China had lost its way, and now posed a “threat to the unity of the international communist movement.”¹¹⁸ Zhou Enlai and his delegation to the Party Congress laid a wreath at Stalin’s grave on October 21 before making a hasty exit.¹¹⁹ The new transcripts of previously unknown meetings and exchanges have added further depth and detail to this history, but these disputes themselves were evident in party publications and newspapers such as *Pravda* and *Renmin ribao* in the early 1960s.¹²⁰ The study of the complex world of transnational socialist bloc exchange contributes to our understanding of Soviet foreign policy and the international history of the Cold War.

The transnational and internal history of intra-bloc relations even forms part of the background to the alliance’s changing relationship to America. Distant America, if only an abstraction (imperialist and threatening, yet productive, efficient, affluent, and culturally intriguing), was the object to be “caught” and “surpassed” in Prague, Moscow, and Beijing. The “reform”-era vision of socialism included the theft and use of advanced American technology and industrial practices, which by definition meant interaction with the terms and assumptions of that historically very different world. As the two “blocs” became in fact something else, more economically interrelated rather than distant and autarkic, cultural figures (advisers, enlighteners, and pedagogues, who also traveled the bloc) insisted that cultural differences and distinctions between the two worlds in fact endured. Global trends such as the “consumer revolution,” eventually promoted by the American state as its officials gradually came to understand the uses of consumerism as a Cold War strategy, intersected with indigenous ideological discussions about the role and nature of “socialist consumption” on the path to “communism.”¹²¹ The prospect of greater global exchange meant cultural and ideological restrictions at home: theoreticians now produced a mountain of material about the nature of socialist consumption, culture, exchange, and daily life, and their contrast to “capitalist” culture and consumption.¹²² “Ideology” meant a collection of ideas used by the paternalistic and thoroughly bankrupt state to police the boundaries of the bloc from cultural infiltration,

¹¹⁸ January 18, 1961, “Doklad,” M. A. Suslov, RGANI, f. 2, r. 6289, op. 1, d. 510, ll. 2–11.

¹¹⁹ Fursenko and Naftali, *Khrushchev’s Cold War*, 410; Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split*, 207.

¹²⁰ Note early works on Sino-Soviet relations such as Donald S. Zagoria, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956–1961* (Princeton, N.J., 1962); and Chu-Yuan Cheng, *Economic Relations between Peking and Moscow, 1949–63* (New York, 1964).

¹²¹ There was a “road to the kitchen debate,” so to speak, in American foreign policy. See “There Was Looking, No Buying at Fair,” *Washington Post*, September 26, 1959; and Isabel A. McGovern, “Poles at Poznan Fair See U.S. Frozen Food,” *New York Herald Tribune*, July 15, 1957, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C., Record Group 306, Records Relating to Trade Fairs, 1958–1966, 306/250/67/20/07/Box 2, Folder: Poland and Romania. On consumerism and popular culture in the two Germanys, see Mark Landsman, *Dictatorship and Demand: The Politics of Consumerism in East Germany* (Cambridge, Mass., 2005); Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley, Calif., 2000). On the “kitchen debate,” see Susan E. Reid, “Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and the De-Stalinization of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev,” *Slavic Review* 61, no. 2 (Summer 2002): 211–252.

¹²² I. T. Khachatrians, *Voprosy ekonomiki stroitel’nogo proizvodstva v zhilishchnom stroitel’stve* (Minsk, 1959).

and the perceived necessity of doing this increased rather than decreased under Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev.¹²³

Has the end of “empire” in Russia’s present meant the demise of traditional imperial scavenging? Let us hope so. Russia’s new elite have created quite a global impression since the collapse of the Soviet Union, with their callous disregard for the needs of Russian society, conspicuous consumption and materialism, preference to invest abroad, and ability to manipulate Russia’s weak legal system and the chaotic process of “transition” to accumulate vast amounts of wealth in a short period of time.¹²⁴ These trends are frequently exaggerated by a Western press long comfortable with negative portrayals of Soviet and Russian society, as many contemporary commentators point out.¹²⁵ Clearly a different set of opportunities and incentives have emerged that have in turn created new behaviors and activities. Warsaw, Prague, Budapest, and Sofia, former capitals of the socialist world, are now places where Russians spend and invest money accumulated in the process of the “privatization” of Russia’s assets and resources through the 1990s. The West remains a place of opportunity and profit for Russia’s elite. The study of the present again demands of scholars a transnational perspective, as the legal and financial protections of the global capitalist system that have recently been extended to the formerly socialist world of Eastern and Central Europe now serve, among other things, to protect and legitimize wealth in flight from Russia. These are the tragic consequences of the inability of Russia’s current rulers to diversify the economy and develop the foundation for a diverse middle class based on skills and resources distant from the control of the natural resources of the country, a matter again of great concern to the peoples of the borderland regions of historic Russia.

¹²³ “Povysit’ rol’ istoricheskoi nauki v ideologicheskoi rabote,” *Istoriia SSSR* 4 (July–August 1963): 3–9.

¹²⁴ B. Kheifets, “Ofshornye finansovye seti rossiiskogo biznesa,” *Voprosy ekonomiki* 1 (January 2009): 52–67.

¹²⁵ See G. Khanin, “Tri perioda postsovetskoi ekonomiki Rossii: Razrushenie, vosstanovlenie, sozidanie,” *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia* 10 (October 2007): 83–90.

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