

Munich, 10 April 1963 (Non-Target Communist Area Analysis Department, Soviet Union: r.r.g.)

The Mayday slogans issued by the CPSU for 1963 attracted attention in the West primarily because of the promotion of Cuba to the full status of any other country "building socialism", such as North Korea or Poland, and also because of the deemphasis on the degree of urgency to be attached to the Berlin problem (Pravda, 8th April 1963).

But from the internal point of view, there is an interesting change in one of the more important domestic slogans. Last year the message to the trade unions read:

"Soviet trade unions! Do everything possible to develop the activeness of the working class and the intelligentsia in the struggle for building communism! Show unrelenting concern for raising the communist consciousness of the masses and for a further rise in the living standard and cultural level of workers and employees!" (Pravda, April 15th 1962)

This slogan was repeated in the same words for the October Revolution anniversary six months later (Pravda, October 14th 1962). But in the meantime economic forces at work within the country had made it so much empty verbiage. The mid-year statistical report showed no sign of any wage increase, prices for milk and meat products were raised by between 25 and 30% as of June 1st, and in the opinion of the Economic Survey for Europe 1962 the "average real wages hardly rose in the USSR", in strong contrast to such countries as West Germany, for example.

Consequently, it is ominous that the Mayday slogan for trade unions this year is much shorter:

"Long live the Soviet trade unions - the school of communism!"

This abbreviated version, with its omission of any mention of a rise in the standard of living, may be an indication that 1963 is intended by the CPSU to be another year of the wage pause, with its accompanying disinflationary policies, and the implication that the already wide gap in real wages between the workers in the West and their Soviet counterparts may be expected to increase still further.