

FAILURE OF STATE SOCIALISM TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS OF THE REVOLUTION

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The most nefarious union that can happen is the union of socialism with autocratic rule. That is, the people's struggle for freedom and material well-being through dictatorship and the concentration of all political and social powers in the state. May the future protect us from the preferences of the authoritarian rule; let it protect us from the dire consequences of sectarian socialism or state socialism and its corruptions.

Proudhon

The socialist revolution in the Marxist view ends with a socialist system that should be transformed into communism at the end. That is the end of history or -in the words of Marx and Engels- the beginning of the real history of humankind. Engels, after a long explanation of socialism, described it as: “*The leap of humanity from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom.*”⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ **Anti-Dühring, Part III: Socialism.**

Socialism necessitates the existence of general societal planning; overcoming the anarchy of production. This inevitably requires the existence of a central authority that strictly controls the entire societal activity and is able to impose its conception without regarding the desires of individuals; i.e., a state apparatus. The supposed transition to a communist system (socialism without a state and the production and distribution of wealth is done according to the principle of: from each according to his ability to each according to his needs) does not refer to the central mechanism by which economic activity will be planned. The need of the people to exchange their products and services requires the existence of a market for exchange, especially if we talk about a global community without armies or national conflicts. A huge society in which a system of exchange other than the market cannot be created; either as a central “non-market” (under state control) or as a free market. However, the conception of a “market” without exchange values plus the disappearance of the state is completely imaginary. In such a system, the individual or even cooperative investment can only be permitted under the supervision of a central authority and within the framework of a plan. As for prices of the products, it is assumed that they are not determined according to the cost of their production, because they are not exchange values. Consequently, they are determined by the state or some central authority, which is not necessarily repressive. Concerning the principle “to each according to his needs,” we do not imagine the possibility of its achieving unless the needs of each individual are predetermined, that is, being a ration determined by an authority. Moreover, we think that a person can identify his needs by himself and obtain them, can be achieved in Paradise alone. The human needs are unlimited and increasing, otherwise there would not have been any advancement in technology.

Marx and Engels did not define the form of workers' authority that they called the dictatorship of the proletariat, described as “*the organized proletariat as the ruling class*.” There are references to the

Paris Commune as a model for that dictatorship, but the commune had destroyed the state apparatus, contrary to the Marxist thesis that has not changed. Of course, there was no plan to ensure that the prospective workers' state would not be like that of Stalin.

We will present this issue considering the Soviet Union as a model.

The course of the Russian Revolution gave rise to a social class system and a bureaucratic mode of production that demonstrated to be less advanced than capitalism and ultimately collapsed by virtue of its internal contradictions beside Western pressures.

Before the revolution, Russia witnessed a major industrial advancement accompanied by tangible backwardness of agriculture. Besides, there was an educational and scientific progress, represented in the proliferation of schools, even in the countryside, respectful universities and valuable scientific research. While the majority of the population still lived in the countryside (82% in 1917), the number of workers in large industry did not exceed three million workers, most of whom were ordinary manual workers, with workers-peasant traditions, and they were linked to the countryside to one degree or another. That is, they did not constitute a mature or consolidated working class, even as a class “in itself”; at the socioeconomic level, but a class on the way of formation.

It also had major civilized cities, as centers of advanced industry, where highly cultural intelligentsia was living. The latter inspired liberalist and socialist theories, in addition to the role of its members as skilled technocrats necessary for modern industry and scientific research. So, both agriculture and industry belonged to different historical eras; the intelligentsia and some industrial workers belonged to the modern time, while the rest of the population lived in the early modern period.

As a result of this situation, the ambitions and dreams of the different classes varied. In the countryside, peasants looked for bourgeois reform, while the urban industrial workers and radical intellectuals looked for socialism. Because the class of the large landowners was stronger than the bourgeoisie, the latter was unable to wage an effective struggle against the existing system, which was in a faltering transitional stage from feudalism to capitalism. Ironically, the working class was politically stronger than capitalism. It was not Russian capitalism that guided the process of capitalist transformation, but the feudal state played a fundamental role in establishing advanced industry in cooperation with foreign investors, driving the capitalist growth at a rate exceeding the rate of growth of the domestic capitalism itself. Thus the rate of growth of the working class exceeded the rate of that of domestic capitalism.

However, because agriculture was not capitalized yet, but was in a transition to capitalism, and even industry in cities was still limited for the whole of Russian economy, the idea of the socialist transformation that workers and Marxists demanded was not possible according to the Marxian theory, which asserted that this transformation necessitates an advanced capitalist economy; i.e., in western Europe.

The tsarist state was markedly centralized, surrounded by a large number of external enmities which prompted it to build a strong and modern army. That required disseminating education to form sufficient administrative and technical cadres with a high degree of efficiency (the same as what happened in the era of Muhammad Ali in Egypt). This exhausted the economic surplus, contributing to impeding its economic growth.

The Russian Workers' Party had split into two factions (then two parties): the Bolsheviks (left wing) and Mensheviks (a conservative wing similar to the Socialist parties in Europe). Besides, other small socialist groups were present. Unskilled workers formed the rank and file of the Bolsheviks, while skilled and educated workers formed that of the Mensheviks. Other opposition parties had also

been found, the most important of which were the Cadet Party; the bourgeois liberal party and the Socialist Revolutionary Party, which was essentially a peasant party.

These were, in short, the social-political conditions of Russia before the revolution.

This uneven and combined development of Russian economics and culture was reflected in the political level; savage Russia, as called in Europe, was more mature than the latter in the sphere of class struggle. In Lenin's famous expression, Russia was the weakest link in the imperialist chain; consequently this less advanced country was closest to the socialist revolution than Europe. This was a dilemma for the Marxists, which will consolidate and explode during the revolution of 1917. The class of large landowners was disintegrating, while the bourgeoisie was not able to lead an accomplished bourgeois revolution. That situation is reminiscent of France just before its revolution from a certain point: weakness of the bourgeoisie, while the revolution was brewing. In Russia this situation gave the fiercely rebellious peasants and workers the opportunity to overthrow the large landowners without enabling the bourgeoisie to rule. At this point the situation differed from that of France on the eve of its revolution. Russia was experiencing a very strong workers' movement having a well-organized political party, and the peasants also had their large and radical party (one million members in 1917), while Russian capitalism was -relatively- much weaker than French capitalism.

The aforementioned dilemma of Russia consolidated during and after its revolution. The pre-revolution situation had -according to Marxian theory- only the potential of a bourgeois revolution, which was taken for granted by Russian Marxists.⁽²⁾ Thus the role of

⁽²⁾ The idea of a socialist revolution in Russia was brought up by Marx in a much earlier period, before the great transformations that the Russian countryside witnessed and led to the disintegration of the village communities. Marx wrote in his letter from to editor of the *Otecestvenniye Zapisky*: "*If Russia continues to pursue the path she has followed since 1861, she will lose the finest chance ever offered by history to a nation, in order to undergo all the fatal vicissitudes of the capitalist regime.*"

peasants in the revolution must be essential, not merely an addition to the role of the workers. Lenin translated this in the slogan of “Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Peasantry,” without this slogan specifying which of them would have the superior authority,⁽³⁾ which he changed later, insisting and affirming that the workers must be the leading power.

To overcome this dilemma, Trotsky proposed the theory of the Permanent Revolution: a bourgeois revolution led by the workers and supported by the peasantry, which establishes the dictatorship of the proletariat backed by the peasants. Since the workers will rule, they will -after accomplishing the tasks of the bourgeois revolution- build socialism without the need for a new revolution.⁽⁴⁾ Thus, the revolution will be proletarian-peasant at the same time, in terms of its political content; bourgeois with socialist aspirations. This theory holds a clear problem: the proletariat in power fulfills the tasks of the bourgeois revolution then builds socialism. How can socialism be built before the forces of production develop to the maximum extent possible under the capitalist system? Can the capitalist system grow under the rule of proletariat, not capitalists? What can be inferred from this plan is that the workers carry out a socialist revolution that accomplishes the historical tasks of the bourgeoisie instead of the latter, in the pathway of building socialism.

The role of the proletariat in the case of Russia, according to Marxist theoretical ideas, is the additional element of a bourgeois revolution in the first place, as it was in the French Revolution. However, to lead a bourgeois revolution and take over power, not temporarily (this is always possible in history), but permanently, governs and establishes socialism, means one thing: violating the theory of the relationship between the forces and relations of

⁽³⁾ The Revolutionary Democratic Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Peasantry, April, 1905 - Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution, July, 1905.

⁽⁴⁾ He presented this theory in his book "Results and prospects" issued in 1906 and then dedicated to it a book entitled "The Permanent Revolution" in 1928.

production, which is fundamental in Marxism. Certainly, there are Marxist explanations of this theory, trying to justify it by ideas such as the Permanent Revolution and the New Democracy (Mao)... But all we can find is dwelling on the subject, with extensive elaboration without real engagement with the issue at hand. The conclusion being that socialism can be built in a backward country provided getting aid by developed countries.⁽⁵⁾

In the Russian revolution, the peasants were -by far- the most numerous, the most powerful in terms of their role in the economic system and the most present in the army. So they imposed their program: distributing the land to the peasants (against the original Bolshevik program: confiscation of all the land), as well as the Bolshevik slogan: peace and an immediate ending of the war. The first matter led to dangerous conflicts later.

At last, the workers could establish their authority in the cities; the dominant classes were quickly liquidated, lost the land and factories alongside the state instrument itself. A workers-peasant power was established, which Lenin had previously called the Democratic Dictatorship. In reality the official power was concentrated in the Petrograd Soviet; the strongest soviet. The peasant soviets were weak and absent in small and dispersed peasant communities, to the point that on June 3, 1917 the All-Russian Congress of Soviets of Workers and Soldiers deputies was launched in Petrograd and a central executive committee was elected without inviting the soviets of peasants' deputies. However, in December 1917 a meeting of the Soviets of peasants was held and the overwhelming majority of delegates voted in favor of October Revolution, declaring their union with the soviets of soldiers and workers.

As an extension of the dilemma of the Russian revolution, the post-revolution situation of the workers was weak enough to fail to

⁽⁵⁾ Trotsky proposed an example of such explanations in his book: Results and prospects, chapter 7.

efficiently manage the country. After allocating lands to the peasants, the latter became economically more stronger than the proletariat, as their industries were not able to balance with the huge agriculture. Moreover, in the Civil War and the wars of intervention, Russia witnessed massive devastation, especially in the cities. Many workers were killed and most of the rest fled to the countryside to seek food and guaranteed work in land. The few that remained in the cities showed failure to manage the economy, by virtue of lacking experience. The proletariat lacked the ability to manage what was supposed to be its economy. While all that changed in the countryside was the right to own land for the benefit of the peasants. This new situation led to a higher standard of their living and their control of most of the national production, including food and could now control the working class economically in reality. Thus the stronger peasant component imposed itself on the revolution as a whole, even in the major cities.

Those changes had several consequences: First, the Labor base of the Labor party became limited, while the party's cadres found themselves in power, not only responsible for managing their own economy, but had also to work to rebuild the working class that had corroded in the civil war and the war of intervention. Secondly: The Bolshevik Party while holding the state power found itself in a state of war with the developed world (14 countries participated in the conquest of Russia), without having a coherent social support at home. Thirdly: the Bolsheviks (according to their theory of the social revolution in the weak link of the imperialist chain) looked for a proletarian revolution in Europe to help them, but their calculations were mistaken, as the workers' revolutions in Europe failed. Fourthly: What made matters worse was the necessity of the Bolsheviks in 1921 to grant a new concession to the peasants, by following the liberal "New Economic Policy," which led to the

growth of the “kulaks”; the rich peasants, who Stalin later resorted to confiscate their lands by force and killed millions of them.⁽⁶⁾

In these circumstances, the social structure of the Soviet Union began to be formed.

The social transformations achieved by the revolution led to an increase in the standard of living of the peasants, the absence of rent and the lack of agricultural surplus. The peasants consumed almost all their production, so that they could no longer save at their will. Moreover, the industry deteriorated drastically; its production became not sufficient enough to rebuild the country or provide the army supplies, rather, it was not enough to exchange for food for city dwellers, resulting in famine.

The revolutionary proletariat was unable to control the countryside. The presence of the Bolshevik Party was very weak among the peasants and in their soviets, prompting the Bolshevik government to give the worker five votes to one vote for each peasant in the soviet elections, to maintain the official status of workers and to achieve the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This was a strange historical precedent, expressing the dilemma of the revolution that had bourgeois potential with socialist aspirations. Likewise, the workers themselves were unable to impose their authority, even within the cities, because they were simply lacking the efficiency, thus the workers' authority actually did not last more than a few weeks or months in the large cities. Actually, destruction of the old system was relatively easy, but the process of

⁽⁶⁾ This policy liberated domestic trade, encouraged foreign capital to work in the Soviet Union and established the right to private property that was previously abolished by the Bolshevik government. It also abolished the policy of forcibly seizing crops and replaced it by a tax on agricultural production, in addition to abolishing forced labor. This policy resulted in private sector recovery; artisan workshops, trade and agriculture and led to a significant improvement in the conditions of the economy as a whole.

building a new system was the Russian dilemma while it was being consolidated. Hence, everything began to change, especially after failure of the dream of extending the revolution to the entire imperialist chain. However, the revolution was victorious in the war of intervention and the civil war, and the Bolsheviks could crush the right and left opposition completely. At last the party's political authority became omnipotent in the cities.

Because of this dilemma, everything began to change. The revolution gradually declined during the period from 17-1928. Each step was taken under pressure from the economic and military conditions that the Bolsheviks and their allies exploited in their favor. The Bolshevik party completely dominated, thanks to the balance between the workers and peasants. Even the party used this balance deliberately even since before the rise of Stalin, which means that the objective conditions were a favorable climate for the forces of “evil” in the heart of new political power and the new deep state. The party of the proletariat -supposedly- had become based on a small proletariat; rather, it had to recreate the proletariat in order to operate the industry. In order to strengthen its corroded base, it appealed to the help of the old administrators and the Tsar's officers; the deep tsarist state, with the utmost use of violence to transform the peasants into workers and compel them to work. This step was the first sign of failure of the socialist revolution and the beginning of the counter-revolution.

The emergence of “villains” inside and at the head of the new state power had old seeds: the party that looked to itself as the bearer of the consciousness of the proletariat, carrying Truth and the pioneer of socialism. It now considers its absolute power the most necessary guarantee for the stability of the revolutionary regime that would build socialism. Therefore, the Bolshevik party, using the social and political contradictions, had been hitting here and there, supporting its absolute power and gradually centralizing it in the hands of a single leader. To achieve this goal, it practiced all forms of “evil,” from killing opponents, stripping all rights of

workers and peasants and using methods and men of czarism, claiming that it had made great sacrifices for the sake of the Great Principles.

That is how the state was re-established in Russia with iron and fire against the will of the population. This was supported by the ignorance of the workers, the greed and the narrow mind of the peasants and of course the aspirations of the new leaders of the party. In fact, the Russians never ruled themselves neither during nor after the revolution. The workers' soviets were concentrated in major cities and the peasants' soviets were also in the larger villages and towns, most of which were formed after the October Revolution by the government. The power was effectively transferred from the Tsar's hands to the Kerensky government, to the Bolsheviks, initially supported by workers, soldiers and peasants. Then it ended up in the hands of a few Bolshevik party leaders.

Notwithstanding all the circumstances, we cannot find any objective justification for the new rulers to: suppress the peasants by armed gangs formed of workers, abolish the trade union authority, suppress the workers-peasant left, the monopoly of political power, the brutal liquidation of the other revolutionary parties and then selecting the bossy Stalin as a leader. Last of all, the plots performed to liquidate the most revolutionary elements of the Bolshevik party itself. However, the greed of the few for power, the narrow mind of the Russian people as a whole and their liability to submit in exchange for a piece of land, constituted the deep foundation of Stalinism.

The idea of organizing a revolution, while relying on the support of another possible revolution is an absolutely utopian one. The Russian Marxists were unanimous that socialism could not be established in Russia without direct assistance from proletarian revolutions in Western Europe. However it is totally impractical to start a revolution on the basis that others will complete it. So that this process of support must continue for several decades in order to advance the relatively backward Russian economy, a period that is

sufficient for the bureaucratization of soviet power and the separation of the workers' party from workers.

Just as this aid can only be conceived as an addition, it does not immediately create a proletariat capable of self-administration, which also means strengthening the authority of the state and the ruling party. Likewise, this support cannot be free of charge; so who will provide free support to a country with a population of 130 million people for ideological or moral motivations? This perception is based on a Marxist firm belief in the unity of the interests of the “world proletariat,” which no practical politician can imagine. Moreover, the peasant component here is neglected; that is the supposed support would be provided mainly to the Russian peasants, because they are the majority of the Russians. So, why would European workers provide support to Russian peasants in huge quantities for a long time? For the sake of Russian workers?! If this is possible, capitalism can also give up its private property in favor of an egalitarian-autonomous society, by mere discussion and persuasion. Finally, it was never possible to ascertain the success of the revolution in Europe and then it was necessary to precisely conceptualize the situation of revolutionary Russia in this case. Kautsky commented on this perception, saying about Lenin : *“although he lived for decades as an emigrant in Western Europe, still never achieved a full understanding of its political and social peculiarities. His politics, which was completely adapted to the peculiarities within Russia, was with regard to foreign countries based on the expectation of a world revolution, which to anyone who knew Western Europe must have appeared from the start as an illusion.”*⁽⁷⁾ The more utopian was Trotsky's additional perception: that the Russian revolution would transfer the revolution to Europe.⁽⁸⁾

Many factors prompted the revolutionary authorities to resort to repression to stabilize the system: the inability of the Russian

⁽⁷⁾ Epitaph of Lenin.

⁽⁸⁾ Results and Prospects, chapter 9.

proletariat - its lack of educated and trained cadres to run the country - the party became entrusted with its rehabilitation and indeed with its restructuring, as a necessity to preserve the new system - the scarcity of economic surplus - the inability of the industry to provide goods to peasants in exchange for food. The authorities resorted to seizing crops from the peasants by force; the police force. In the beginning, the Bolshevik party formed gangs of city workers to plunder the agricultural surplus at gunpoint. Later, this process was organized in a better and more efficient way. The oppression extended up to deprive the masses of workers from any exercise of authority.

Oppression definitely required specialized apparatus, after shrinking of the number of workers and the industry's need for them. These apparatus should require expenses and their members must look for a share of the economic surplus. Therefore, the task of rebuilding the degenerated state appeared (Lenin described the Soviet power in March 1923 as: *“Our state apparatus is so deplorable, not to say wretched”*⁽⁹⁾).

That state found that it is necessary to extract the surplus by itself and to concentrate it in its hands. Thus we became in front of the new Soviet state: the leaders of the party that Stalin had opened to non-workers, technocrats whom Lenin had to return them back in 1919 to their positions and gave them lucrative bonuses generously,⁽¹⁰⁾ old and new senior statesmen, senior officers requited from the old Tsar's army and new ones and a mixture of Bolsheviks and Tsarist elements. That clique began working to build the new system. Its excellent position was codified by special decrees. The theory was “developed” from Marxism-Leninism to Stalinism to suit the new system, and became the official philosophy of the state. The new plan of the new Bolsheviks became: Socialism in One Country and after that they said: “the state of the whole people”! Rather

⁽⁹⁾ Better Fewer, But Better, March 2, 1923.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Six Theses on the Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government.

than making Russia a mere base of the international revolution as Lenin and Trotsky aimed at, and the world communist movement became a reserve and a fifth column for the Soviet Union.

Initially Lenin and Trotsky liquidated all parties except the Bolshevik Party, then the same principle went along; the left wing members of the same party or those opposing the leadership were physically liquidated plus even all the thinkers, leaders and prominent militants of Russian socialism, including Trotsky himself. At the end, the party structure reformed to match the regime of one party rule.

Bureaucratic mode of production:

The mode of production is in broad terms -according to the perfectly reasonable Marxian definition- the social form of the social surplus.

In the Soviet Union, the social surplus was being generated under supervision of the organized state bureaucracy (its core was the party elite), while the workers and peasants were squeezed out of any political or non-political authority. The party had been integrated into the state apparatus, including the army and security. Thus a bureaucratic ruling class had been formed. That class established all system policies and supervised their implementation. It set the objectives of the investment process and the mechanisms of its implementation. At the end it determined the mechanisms of distributing the surplus, its destiny and the proportions of distribution among the different groups that constituted the new ruling class. The member of this class, was merely a position and nothing more, representing power only in terms of his own self professional status and his own self entire activity was directed towards the interests of the system as a whole, not his own interest. If that member had come out of it for one reason or another, he had become nothing, especially during the rise of the system, before the emergence of secret private properties of the bureaucrats. As for the surplus, it was being distributed through mechanisms determined

by the ruling elite to its members in different forms: “salaries,” bonuses, percentages of “profits,” “state awards,” incentives, special services, excellent special products and other not codified forms that emerged later. These mechanisms were linked to the nature of the bureaucracy itself, where specific responsibilities were defined for each individual plus giving him specific power; a margin of movement that enables him to practice unregulated forms of theft, as a margin, related to any bureaucracy in general -even in the private sector- for the purpose of making the administration more flexible.

Everyone in the bureaucratic system received a salary or a wage, but there was a qualitative difference between the “wages” of workers and the “salaries” of senior statesmen. The workers received a ration in exchange for their labor power, while the big bureaucrats received a share of the surplus, not corresponding to professional work, but to their socio-political positions. The most important sector of the bureaucracy; its heart, consisted of highest military ranks, security personnel, the secret service, leading intellectuals of the ruling class, politicians and technocrats in their administrative rather than technical capacity, just as the rest of the upper bureaucracy. That was the ruling class. All this was not deliberately intended or planned; Stalin himself lived as an austere and had little advantages, but running the system required purchasing loyalties.

Bureaucracy formed a social stratum; a position, more than a real class; a legal personality; an institution. It was more important and stronger than its members as long as the system remained coherent. It did not consist of specific individuals; rather, it began its existence as an institution; a social position, an apparatus that included individuals, whom it may get rid of some and recruit others.

The full control of the bureaucratic stratum or class -if we want to call it- over society required the prohibition and proscription of the individual property of means of production. Individual

ownership means that the bureaucracy is deprived of a part of its power as an owning class and of some amount of the surplus (because it depends on direct robbery). Therefore it tended to confiscate it to the fullest extent and became less and less able to do so as its disintegration had proceeded on as an institution.

In this system, the ruling class or stratum was the state itself. Thanks to this concentration, the surplus was being produced and distributed according to administrative plans, by distributing investments, determining wages and gifts and developing the labor power in a way that serves the long-term interests of the system. It was inevitable that the state would provide services such as education, health services, etc., to an appropriate extent for that goal. The system was extracting the social surplus through a general plan that involved distribution of labor, determination of working hours, workers' rights, etc. Thus the surplus was being generally extracted from the working classes as a single block, being organized by administrative methods in the production process. The state employed the worker in a specific place, specifies his rights and it might need to consider his predilections, if the local authorities were reasonable enough, in order to achieve the highest possible performance. As for peasants, the state was “buying” from them a percentage of their crops and obligated them to purchase certain “public” services, both at compulsory prices. In the early periods, peasant's farms were compelled to provide a certain number of them annually to the state to become workers in the cities. In addition, the peasants were being subjugated to generalized servitude, which resembles that of the Asiatic mode of production, in the form of public works. Moreover, the state imposed certain taxes on the products, not related to their cost; with the purpose of guaranteeing a predetermined income. This is not to mention the concentration camps, set up by order of Lenin⁽¹¹⁾, reached its peak

⁽¹¹⁾ Richard Pipes, Lenin's Gulag.

extension during Stalin's rule and incarcerated millions; estimated to be 8-15 million people in 1942.⁽¹²⁾

This system, therefore, consisted of two classes: the upper bureaucracy and the forced laborers. All work was carried out under coercion. In addition, the striking laborer became subject to execution at the late 1920s.⁽¹³⁾ Workers were not distributed among the various production sectors by bureaucratic decisions only, but also by indirect mechanisms, such as the types and quantities of taxes (for example, during the Khrushchev era, the livestock farmers were obliged to sell their products to the state at the price that it set, which meant their conversion from private producers into laborers for the state).

The fact that the bureaucracy was the only owner of the means of production compelled the citizens to work for it. Moreover, the worker did not have the right to move from one job to another except after approval of the state, because their employment contract was being done with the state not with the work place. The citizen had no right to work in other countries, except with a mandate from the state that shared their salary in this case. In all cases, they were not receiving wages, but rations (like soldier's portion of the daily food), which they had no right to bargain about it; rather, they had to receive. In fact, the workers had no role in the determination of their income, were not allowed to bargain, as there was no labor market at all, but the state determined everything for them, according to its own calculations.

Under this system, the working class cannot be considered proletariat, in the Marxian sense of the word, for many reasons. It did not pay surplus value to the state. The mode of bureaucratic exploitation prompted the state to employ the entire population; otherwise they would starve to death. Besides, the working class was not separated from the possession of the means of production; it

⁽¹²⁾ Tony Cliff, *State Capitalism in Russia (1955/1974)*.

⁽¹³⁾ *Ibid.*

could not choose to work and at the same time the state used non-economic means to force it to work; including very dreadful ways. The state also controlled the transfers of the workers, their fields of study and specialization, etc. The worker was just a “subaltern,” working for the bureaucracy as the farmer in ancient Egypt used to work for the king, with some difference, as will be mentioned.

In conclusion, the surplus was extracted from the workers as a whole in favor of the bureaucratic stratum as a legal personality; an institution. This method of robbing was not related to the market mechanisms, but there was no market at all. The state imposed both wages and prices according to its goals, regardless of the cost. It was not concerned with the profit rate of each enterprise, not even the general profit rate in the first place, but it was concerned mainly with the stability of the system as a whole. The state in such system was more important than anything else: politics was first. Economic policy was an element in a policy aimed at securing the social system against both internal and external pressures, whatever the economic cost and losses. This was evident in what is called the inefficiency of the Soviet economy; economic projects were created in the service of the state policy, not for profit-making.

On the basis of this concept, we argue that the surplus in the bureaucratic society was the Generalized Labor Rent. The logic of the economic plan determined from the start the division of labor and the distribution of workers over the means of production. It also determined the quantity and quality of workers consumption, the level of bureaucracy’s income and the rate and areas of capital accumulation. The plan determined everything and the income of the members of the dominant class was determined according to their roles in developing and implementing the policies of the system as a whole. As for the exchange, it did not take place in a free market, but in a central market, which was under control of the state and subject to the general plan, without regarding the cost, production price or exchange value.

This surplus was not a surplus value, because it was not produced through buying and selling labor power, but was extracted through uneconomic ways; by coercion. However, it was not purely feudal surplus; rather, it was an intermediate form, having characters of both.

We call this the Modern Bureaucratic Mode of Production, which differs from the old bureaucratic systems -such as ancient Egypt- because the surplus in our case was extracted as a Generalized Labor Rent from the working class as a whole, not from its members as individuals, or from its divisions (for example, villages communities). Here the rate of exploitation of the individual workers varied and there were even privileged workers who were given high wages and workers who were receiving wages in establishments that were loss-making. But there was a generalized labor rent going to the state.

This system arose as a result of the Russian revolution with its dilemmas as we dealt with, the conditions of Russia and its own social composition. This was not a historical inevitability in any way. The establishment of that system was the result of the balance of political powers in Russia. It would have been certainly that things go differently if the Bolshevik revolution failed for subjective reasons; even that might be better for Russia.

The Soviet power had to extract the surplus from the peasants by coercion, because it was the only surplus that was available at the beginning. Meanwhile, the backward industry alongside the foreign blockade pushed the state to prioritize heavy industry at the expense of the consumer goods industry. This option led to achieving a high accumulation coincident with a low rate of consumption. Besides; the wages were very low, with brutally suppressing the workers and forcing them to work and prohibiting working outside state sector, otherwise labor camps, especially most of the population were peasants, with a shortage of labor needed for rapid industrialization.

We consider this system a pre-capitalist socio-economic formation, not in the Marxian sense, but in the sense that it was less technologically advanced, based on backward forces of production, and its development was blocked after little decades. It was also less modernized than capitalism; the state imposed Marxism over the people as a religion, not allowed to be criticized or refused, so one is not able to think freely without the guidance of another (this is the definition Enlightenment presented by Kant). This is backing out secularism.

Despite achieving a great development of productive forces in the beginning, the formation of modern bureaucratic society implied a strong tendency for stagnation. It did not have a strong internal impulse to develop the means of production as quickly as it actually did (note that the high rate of China's growth began actually after starting transition to capitalism). Western pressures and blockade were the biggest motive for rapid growth. Moreover, the continuation of the bureaucratic system required its success to maintain its isolation from influence of the global market. So the extremely fast industrialization at the beginning, especially for machinery and equipment, arm industry in particular, was very concerned by the bureaucracy.

Disintegration and dissolution of the bureaucratic system:

Notwithstanding the rapid development of means of production in the Soviet Union, the bureaucracy failed to catch up with capitalism. The latter possessed a vast global market, a special internal drive for growth and stimulating development and it was much more advanced than Russia. A costly conflict took place between the two parties. The capitalist countries endeavored vigorously to restore this part of the world that had almost left the global market. This prompted the Soviet bureaucracy to work to strengthen itself, which explains its centering of the entire Soviet economy around the manufacture of weapons (while this did not happen in the socialist countries which the Soviet army was protecting, benefitting from the Cold War). This heavy cost of the

army and armament placed enormous pressure over the Soviet resources, accelerating the collapse of the system.

In addition, domination of the bureaucracy always leads immediately to great corruption, despite all laws and instruments of oversight and control. As aforementioned, this bureaucracy gave its members a margin for private movement in their implementation of the system policy, like any bureaucracy in general. With the growth of sources of the surplus, the private interests of the members of that class grew over time. Hence, peripheries of the system ultimately achieve triumph over the institution as a whole and this was what actually occurred for the bureaucratic systems. As the external pressures continued, the peripheries of the system; the new rich bureaucrats, met with capitalism abroad; hence, the capitalist transformation started. This process was gradually reinforced by the breakdown of the Iron Curtain, under the effect of the communication revolution and the public awareness of the conditions of the opposite world; the capitalist. Then the bourgeois revolution broke out in Eastern Europe and then the Soviet Union, while China had proceeded a decade or more.

In conclusion, what actually took place in the socialist countries was a path which followed the political situation of those countries at the time of their transformation to socialism. It was never the result of some errors or problems, neither in practice, nor - certainly- of foreign conspiracies as some Marxists claimed. The fact that the socialist revolution did not take place in the developed countries, as predicted by Marxism, was not a coincidence, but a challenge to the theory about the socialist revolution and all the predictions of Marx and Engels.

The idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat constituted a fatal weakness in the Marxist socialist theory; it led to an ambiguous utterance about the proletarian state; sometimes a state, a state-

commune and a state that vanishes because it no longer needed. How can we imagine that “special bodies of armed men, prisons, etc.” -in the words of Lenin- confiscates the means of production and then chooses for vanishing of its volition? How can such a state be a non-state at the same time, as described also by Lenin, except on paper? Then how can we imagine, assuming all good intentions, that the state of armed workers will not be a repressive state, while peasants -in the case of Russia- accounted for 85% of the population?

This theory was adhered to in the socialist revolutions following that of Russia: the party rulership on behalf of the working class, even in countries almost had no workers; so who represented that party?! How can we imagine that this party state would be dissolved autonomously?

Because of failure of the socialist state, there was virtually a consensus in the ranks of the socialists on the necessity of finding another socialist alternative in which the state is subjugated to the people. But practically speaking, there is no such “recipe” yet for implementation. Moreover, we do not think that there can be a state that is subject to the people.

Actually, the good state is the dead state.

We end this article by referring to what is being pointed out by the Marxists that the aforementioned socialism was not really socialism, but another system, which they called a bureaucratic workers' distorted state, state capitalism, etc. What we want to call attention to is that we also considered it a stratified and bureaucratic system; but this is the Socialism as it had been implemented. It does nothing to say that another socialist ideal was not established, which history should achieve, just to deny the charges of socialism. Our goal was to analyze the actual reality, not the name; an autopsy.

‘Notwithstanding all the disasters, socialism had achieved great steps in the path of development and welfare for people who were utterly backward and some of them were primitive in the full sense of the word. For instance, we cannot imagine how the peoples of the Tatars and Central Asia could witness this modernization without socialism, as there were no other promising political currents. However, it is not easy to imagine what would happen to Russia and China without the socialist revolution. Would the bourgeoisie have achieved greater freedom, welfare and development for those peoples? Maybe’