

**Social Structure And Social Mobility  
In The USSR: A Case Study Of  
Social Stratification - 1965-75**

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
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A. PRASANNA KUMAR

1175XP



CENTRE FOR SOVIET AND EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY,  
NEW DELHI - 110067

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SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND SOCIAL MOBILITY IN THE USSR:  
A CASE STUDY OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION-1965-75

IN MEMORY OF MY MOTHER



जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
NEW DELHI - 110067

CENTRE FOR SOVIET & EAST EUROPEAN STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES.

C E R T I F I C A T E

Certified that the dissertation entitled  
SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND SOCIAL MOBILITY IN THE USSR:  
A CASE STUDY OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION - 1965-75  
submitted by A. PRASANNA KUMAR in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the award of MASTER OF  
PHILOSOPHY, has not been previously submitted for  
any other degree of this or any other University.  
To the best of my knowledge, this is a bonafide  
work of the candidate.

I recommend this dissertation to be  
placed before the examiners for evaluation.

  
(PROF. R.R. SHARMA)

SUPERVISOR :

  
(PROF. R.R. SHARMA)

CHAIRMAN

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*A. Prasanna Kumar*  
(A. PRASANNA KUMAR)

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## INTRODUCTION

In this study an attempt has been made to examine the social structure and social mobility in the USSR. At a more analytical level, it is proposed to examine structural changes and structural developments in the USSR. The study begins with a discussion of the theoretical models of studying the social structure both from the Marxist and liberal perspectives . After giving a brief account of the evolution of the concept in the history of ideas. The basic thrust of the present exercise has been to evaluate Soviet performance in building new type of social structure. The evaluation is done from the Marxist perspective, since the Soviet state has accepted Marxism as the perspective on the basis of which the society is to be constructed. The interrelated questions regarding social stratification and social mobility and social inequalities are also dealt with in the undertaken study, though they are not given detailed treatment.

The Soviet experience towards building a new



social structure and in eliminating the<sup>10</sup> inequalities and old social structure in the initial stage of socialist construction encountered a number of problems which varied from the hostility of the former exploiting classes to the resistance from the peasantry and other petty-bourgeois sections. It has been constantly agreed in this study that in spite of various draw backs, the Soviet efforts were on the whole in line with the ideological frame of the Marxian model. It had made remarkable achievements along with several limitations which were largely the outcome of historical circumstances. Indeed stratification is relatively more popular topic among Soviet sociologists than American sociologists. Certain new social problems (disproportions) bearing on stratification and mobility appeared in Soviet society in 1960's the period which also witnessed the coming of the Scientific and Technological Revolution (STR).

Though the study is based on the Marxist

method of analysis, its sources are not confined to books and articles written with the Marxist approach or to Soviet sources only. In fact some of its important findings are derived from the works of Western scholars.

This study has been divided into three chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter seeks to analyse historical development of the concept of 'Social Structure' and the differences between liberal and Marxian concept of social structure.

The second chapter deals with structural changes in the USSR after the Bolshevik revolution. It also seeks to examine shortcomings in the initial stages.

The next chapter is directly concerned with the subject matter, which deals with socio-class differences, and development of new classes and also deals with social homogeneity in the Soviet society.

The methodology followed in this study is mainly historical analytical based on the data contained in Primary and Secondary sources.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND SOCIAL MOBILITY:  
A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social structure is a basic concept in sociological analysis. There are indeed conflicting perceptions of what constitutes a social structure. Herbert Spencer was the first thinker to throw light on the structures of a society. However, his perception was largely partial. Likewise Durkheim also made a futile attempt to define parameters of the concept. Let us examine various perceptions of social structure.

S.F. Nadel in his analysis of social structure maintained: "We arrive at the structure of a society through abstracting from the concrete population, and its behaviour, the pattern or net work (or system) of relationship obtaining between actors in their capacity of playing roles relative to one another".<sup>1</sup> Nadel seeks to explain that structure refers to a definable articulation, an ordered arrangement of parts. It is related to outer aspect, or the framework of a society and is totally unconcerned with the functional aspect of a society. Thus he emphasizes that the social structure refers to the network of social relationships which emerge in the

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1. S.F. Nodels, The theory of social structure (London, 1969), p.12.

process of human interaction based on status hierarchy, etc. Nadel therefore maintains that structure indicates an ordered arrangement of parts which can be treated as transportable, being relatively invariant while the parts themselves are available. Tolcott Parsons another noted sociologist analysed social structure in the following terms "Social structure is a term applied to the particular arrangement of the inter-related institutions, agencies and social patterns as well as the status and roles which each person assumes in the group".<sup>2</sup>

Tolcott Parsons has tried to explain the concept of social structure in an abstract form. All the units of social structure, i.e. institutions, agencies, social patterns, status, and roles are invisible and intangible and hence are abstract. He has emphasized that the status and roles of individuals are determined by customs, traditions and conventions of society. These statuses give birth to different institutions, agencies and patterns. All these when inter-related and organised in a particular manner build the social structure of society. Social structure is concerned with forms of inter-relationships between these units rather than

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2. Parsons Talcott, Essays in Sociological theory, Revs. ed., (New Delhi), p.84

with the units. These units constitute society. The ordered arrangement seen between these units is social structure. Talcott Parsons has described four types of social structure. His classification is based on four social values: Universalistic social values, Particularistic social values, achieved social values and ascribed social values.

Universal social values are those which are found almost in every society and are applicable to every-body. Particularistic social values are the features of particular societies and those differ from society to society. Social structure is the web of interacting social forces from which have arisen various modes of observing and thinking. Social structure is concerned with the principle forms of social organization, i.e. types of groups, associations and institutions, and the complex of these constitute society.<sup>3</sup>

The components of social structure are human beings and the structure itself being an arrangement of persons.

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3. Ginsburg, Reason and unreason in society, (London, 1962), p.18.

The various modes of grouping together comprise the complex pattern of social structure. In the analysis of the social structure the role of diverse attitudes and interests are revealed.<sup>4</sup>

Apparantly what is central to all these perceptions is the idea that social structure is an abstract phenomenon, which refers to the external aspect of a society. Its units are groups, institutions, associations and organizations. When men relate themselves to each other, they establish structural forms. Social structure is thus made up of these structural forms, which are arranged in an interrelated way to enable the society to function through these structural units. Institutions, associations, groups, organizations community are parts of social structure, institutions through which it functions. The meaning of social structure can easily understood if we take the example of an organic structure known as body, which is an arrangement of different parts. The body works through these parts which are inter-dependent and inter-related. Though the parts of organic

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4. Maclver and Page, Society an introductory analysis Madras ; p.212 Macmillan (1986)



structure are the same in every case, yet the forms of organic structure of the people differs. That is to say that every social structure has a family, religion, political organization, economic institutions land area etc. However, concrete forms of social structure are not identical.

Harry M. Johnson writes, "The structure of anything consists of the relatively stable inter-relationships among its parts; moreover, the term 'part' itself implies a certain degree of stability. Since a social system is composed of the inter-related acts of people, its structure must be sought in some degree of regularity or recurrence in these acts".<sup>5</sup>

Thus according to Johnson the term 'structure' itself is a pattern of stability, which is created by the inter-relation of the parts. These parts are the groups and sub-groups of society. He does not mean by stability that there is no change at all in the structure, but actually he means that it is comparatively stable. For example,

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5. Johnson, H.M., Sociology, A Systematic introduction ed., by Roberton K Marton, Bombay; Allied 1973.

the structure of community consists of institutions and associations which in turn consists of human beings. Every human being is allotted a particular status and role to perform. With the death of the individual there is no change in the status and role itself. The new incumbent who succeeds the deceased person is again to perform the same role in the same status. Thus the status and the role are relatively stable which in turn make the structure stable. Among the constituent parts of social structure Johnson includes groups, sub-groups, roles regulative norms and cultural values.

There is broad consensus in all the cases that structure means essentially the inter-relation arrangement of parts in some total entity, or a whole and that the adjective 'social' specifies the character of that 'whole' which is society or any of its sub-divisions excluding culture.

Indeed, the economic, political and other structures of society may be viewed as various rather different aspects of its social structure. The Marxist approach, on the other

hand, to social development reveals the determining role of the system of economic relations, i.e. the economic structure, in relation to other social structures, noting simultaneously the significance of the reverse influence of <sup>the</sup> latter on the economic structure. The relations which determine the functioning of separate spheres or institutions of societal life constitute the social structure of production, politics, science, leisure and so on. Finally, social structure more precisely, social composition - in terms of the distribution and quantitative inter-relations of classes, of social groups, as well as of strata, professional cultural and other groups can be correctly understood as

only in conjunction with the inter-relations of appropriate institutions spheres of society and types of division of labour, i.e. only through the social structure of society as a whole.<sup>7</sup>

The social structure of a society may be considered on three planes: first the functional plane, i.e. as an

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7. S.F. Nadel, The theory of social structure (London, 1969), Also see in A. Levada "Social Structure" in Murray Yanowitch Wesley A. Fisher. ed., Social Stratification and Mobility in the USSR (New York, 1973), p.4

ordered system of framework of social activity, ensuring the functioning and development of a particular whole; the units of analysis in this case are distinct spheres of the social division of labour and social institutions;

Secondly, the organizational plane, i.e. as a system of relations forming different types of social groups, characteristic of a given social system; the units of analysis in this case are collective, organizations and their structural elements and finally as a system of orientation of social action (collective and individual) the units of analysis in such an approach to social structure and elements of social action are roles, goals and means motives and stimuli, norms and standards, programmes and their elements etc.

All these approaches to the social structure of a society may be considered as different cross sections which complement each other, each of them permits theoretical and empirical analysis, although the degree and forms of their correspondence to each other are not alike and make fundamental differences.<sup>8</sup>

The main concern of western sociology, i.e. structural

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8. Ibid.

and functional sociology has been the actions of individuals and collectives (rulers, armies etc). Action has an orientation when it is guided by the meaning which the actor attaches to it in its relationship to his goals and interests.<sup>9</sup> That organised sector of an actor's orientation which constitutes and defines his participation in an interactive process is the "role". It is the "role" which is the most significant variable of social structure.<sup>10</sup> Roles differ in their specific goals and cognitive orientations and signify the need - disposition of different individual actors to social or non-social objects, and on the basis of which they interact with each other and with the social system as a whole. The social system allocates facilities and rewards, i.e. power, prestige and income to fulfil the need-disposition of actors playing different roles. Since these facilities and rewards are scarcer in society, it is allocated in different amount to the actors and thus ensures the system of social stratification.<sup>11</sup>

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9. Talcott Parsons and Edward A. Shils, ed., Towards General Theory of Action (New York, 1962), p.4.

10. Ibid., p.23.

11. Ibid., pp. 196

....."the structure of a society through abstracting from the concrete population and its behaviour the pattern or network (or 'system') of relationships obtaining between actors in their capacity of playing roles relative to one another".<sup>12</sup>

According to the structural functional approach, societies and organised units within societies, i.e., groups, associations, institutions etc., have a structure, or can be regarded as units displaying a structure. A structure essentially incorporates not only its parts, but also the mechanism of inter-relationship of its parts. In the structural analysis the basic unit is the "role", i.e. a complex of behaviour expectations which are associated with a given social position or status, the human individual in the fullness of his expressions figures only as an incumbent of such position and "player" of a role. The relation between roles and their agglomerations around certain institutional spheres (occupation, education, family politics etc.) are expressed by the concept of function, that is to say, by their latent or explicit

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12. Nodel, n.I, p.12.

(manifest) consequences for the functioning of the total structure. Thus, the structure of a society, in such an approach, presents itself in its most formal aspects as a functional system the units of which are social roles and role sets.<sup>13</sup>

Marxism on the other hand demonstrates the connection of social classes.<sup>14</sup> With a particular phase of the development of production and consequently reveals the functional structure (the division of labour and private property) which serves as the basis of the existence of the corresponding social groups. This also makes it possible to approach scientifically both the organizational structure of a society and social action.<sup>15</sup>

Since Marx's main concern was social change, the category of social structure therefore was no more than a tool to tackle this problem; his theory of

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13. Rolf Dahrendorf, *Class and Class Conflict in industrial society* (London and Henley, 1976), p.120.

14. V.I. Lenin, *A Great Beginning Collected Works* (Moscow, 1965) Vol.29, p.421.

15. Levada, n.8, p.4

class was not a theory of a ~~cross~~ - section of society arrested in time, in particular, not a theory of social stratification but a tool for the explanation of changes in total societies. "In elaborating and applying his theory of class, Marx was not guided by the question 'How does a given society in fact look at a given point of time' but by the question 'How does the structure of a society change?'"<sup>16</sup> For him the concept of class was not static but 'dynamic' not 'descriptive' but 'analytical'. He was mainly concerned with the analysis of certain laws of social development and of the forces involved in this process.<sup>17</sup>

Marxist conception of social structure is dichotomic a generalization for the whole society of an asymmetric<sup>18</sup> relation in which one side is privileged at the expense of the other; society is divided into two correlative and diametrically opposed classes in such a way that each

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16. Dahrendorf, n.13, p.19.

17. Ibid.

18. This asymmetric relation can assume forms: First the relation.



of them is characterized by the relation of its members to the members of the opposed class.<sup>19</sup> This dichotomic division of society applies to slave-owning society, feudal society, capitalist society and even socialist society but does not apply to primitive communal or communist society; since in the last two societies there is no private property and hence no exploitative division of labour - collective ownership of the means of production and an egalitarian distribution of products prevail.

While analysing a division based on the relations of ownership, i.e. rich and poor, the dichotomy usually clashes with the fact that there are gradation of wealth with a whole range of intermediate position. Similarly, estate or caste privileges are taken as the principle of division, the clash with reality is apparant everywhere where the estate or caste hierarchy is not confined to the division between free men and slaves or between nobles and the ordinary people.<sup>20</sup>

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19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., p.32

In the Marxian conception of social classes, viewed as groups determined by their relation to the means of production, there are three criteria of a dichotomic division. Two of them are particularly important; First, the ownership or non-ownership of the means of production; and secondly, the employment or non-employment of a hired labour force. The overlapping of these two criteria leads to, what Ossowski calls, a three-tier system, through the separation of the class of those who own the means of production but do not employ hired labour and work themselves on it. This overlapping is not alien to Marxism. In any society characterized by oppression and exploitation of one class by another, the dominant antagonistic relation tends to conceal to the exist-ence of the other groups and other conflicts from the major oppressed class. Thus for the serf, society is composed, above all, of lords and serfs, for the industrial worker, it is composed of workers and capitalists. In order to emphasize those aspects of social structure that are most important from a class perspective, the knowledge of existence of other groups is pushed on to the margin

of awareness.<sup>21</sup> While noting the insignificance of the differentiation of a hierarchy of privileged classes from the view-point of the lowest class Engels wrote:

In speaking of the bourgeoisie I include the so-called aristocracy for this is a privileged class, as aristocracy, only in contrast with the proletariat. The proletarian sees in both only the property - holders, i.e., the bourgeoisie. Before the privilege of property all other privileges vanish.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, in the periods of class-struggle, emphasis on the dichotomic conceptions of social structure and overlooking of the intermediate position between the two contending classes "becomes an important propaganda factor for those whose strategy is best suited by the stressing of single front line".<sup>23</sup> While taking into account the contemporary reality of intermediate groups, Marx and Engels also postulated the polarization

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21. Ibid., pp. 33-34.

22. F. Engels, "The Conditions of the Working Class in England", in K. Marx & F. Engels On Britain (Moscow, 1953), pp.310-11, cited in Ossowski, n.18, 34-35.

23. Ossowski, n.18, pp.34-35.

of society in two classes as the outcome of further historical development. This also reinforced their dichotomic image of society in an era of class struggle. Besides, in Marxist conception, which regards the diametrically opposed classes as the main component of social structure, the intermediate classes are less important and less enduring due to the fact that it is a typically marginal class and in course of sharp conflicts, it must join with one or other of the two opposite classes. Its existence therefore does not deprive the social structure of its dichotomic character but only blunts its sharpness.<sup>24</sup>

The alternative to this dichotomic conception of social structure, i.e., the gradation of social groups on the basis of wealth, the amount of property or the size of a person's share in the national income, or the educational qualification does not provide any scientific enquiry into social structure and obliterates the basic units of social forces in it.

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24. Ibid., p.39.

Marxist Approach to Social Structure under Socialism:

In Marxist theory, the social structure of a socialist society is not marked by the absence of classes or strata. The social inequality that persists during the stage of socialism is a 'legacy' from antagonistic social orders. Because of social nature of property, the equality of all members in relation to the means of production, the equality in leadership functions, and the community of basic economic interests, there are no antipodal or antagonistic social groups in a socialist society. However, differences still remain (a) in relation to socialist property, associated with its existence in two principal forms (this is the chief basis for residual social differences between the working class and the collective farm peasantry), and (b) in the degree of utilization of property (this is the basis for differences under socialism between workers of differing skills and complexity of labour, between personnel in mental and

manual labour, between urban and rural residents).<sup>25</sup>

Since differences of the first type - in relation to the means of production - are not inherent, in the first phase of communism they are overcome more rapidly than differences of the second type, which are conditioned by an unequal degree of actual utilization of property and which persist considerably longer.<sup>26</sup>

The totality of such socio-economic differences characterizes that system of social relationship which is reproduced on the basis of socialist production relations, but which is developing in the direction of the gradual elimination of these differences. In long run, differences between mental and manual worker, difference between town and country will disappear. When socialism liquidates private property, it eliminates the consequences of private property & antagonistic classes.

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25. O.I. Shkaratan, Sources of social differentiation of the working class in Soviet society. In Yanowitch and Fisher, n.7, p.10.

26. Ibid.

Distinction Between the two Approaches:

In opposition to structural - functionalism the Marxist theory of classes provides a genuinely scientific basis for understanding the social structure of any society and all the process of its change, including social mobility. The essential differences between these two approaches can be formulated as follows:

First of all, Marxist sociology, according to the principle of dialectics, examines a society not abstractly but as a historically evolved, qualitatively definite type of society. Although certain general laws of social development operating at all stages of historical progress among all the people of the earth can be discovered, the social structure of every social order is distinct from the proceeding and following ones and, therefore, its specific features must be revealed. In contrast to this, the attempt of the functionalist to divide every society into the

same layers ('Strata') independently of the prevailing socio-economic order cannot be regarded as scientific. Thus the social - class structure of capitalist and socialist societies are fundamentally different and hence, all arguments concerning their "increasing similarity", or "convergence", and the like, must be rejected.<sup>27</sup>

Second, in analysing social structure, scientific sociology bases itself on the materialist conception of social life. Lenin wrote that a basic idea of Marx and Engels was that social relations are divided into material and ideological relations. The latter represent only a super-structure relative to the former, which are formed the will and consciousness of human beings....., Therefore, in studying the division of society into social groups, the foundation of this division must be sought in differences in their economic

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27. M.N. Rutkevich and F.R. Filippov, Principles of the Marxist approach to social structure and social mobility, in Yanowitch and Fishev, n.7, pp. 229-30.



position.<sup>28</sup> The Marxist theory of classes is based on the materialist conception of the development of society as an objective or, in Marx's expression, "natural-historical process".



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In contrast to this, the prevailing notion in current bourgeois sociology is that the position of individuals is determined by a "status hierarchy" and that this depends on the "scale of values" in the given society, viewing these "values" particularly Prestige, as criteria of social status. Bourgeois sociologists derive the social division of society from manifestations of consciousness, Public opinion etc.<sup>29</sup>

Along with the concept of 'status' the functional sociologists introduced the concept of "social roles" which are varied in their totality determine the position of the individual in a society. The social role of the

28. Ibid. p.231.

29. Ibid.



individual is essentially his function in society, and this respect, therefore, the argument contains an element of truth. But Bourgeoise sociologists inject ecleticism and sub-jectivism in to their "role theory". In the first place they treated social role sub-jectively divorcing it from objective social position and the functions associated with it. Secondly, in studying the multiplicity of 'roles' they do not distinguish the principal role (function) at all, or distinguish it arbitrarily. In reality, among the variety of functions or roles, there exists a basic function or role which is determined by the objective position of the individual and of the group of which he is a member in the system of economic relations.<sup>30</sup>

According to Marxist sociological approach to social structure the main differences in position in the system as economic relations are essentially differences between social classes. Hence class composition and

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30. Ibid.

class relations determine the principal features of social structure of society, and thus, the functions of groups and the individuals in them, as well as the totality of 'roles' belonging to them.<sup>31</sup>

Thirdly, in elucidating the social structure Marxist sociology and bourgeoisie sociology differ in their approach to economic characteristics. This is particularly important to consider, since along with such features of social division as prestige, power, and education, the works of bourgeoisie sociologists and economists assign a role to such objective economic features as income level and occupation. The eclecticism inherent in bourgeoisie sociology is manifested in the fact that all these features (and frequently many others - for example religion, ethnic background, etc.) are examined in parallel, without elucidating their internal connections. If the inter connection between any two factors is examined, for example, income and education it is done in purely empirical terms.<sup>32</sup>

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31. Ibid, 234.

32. Ibid., p.232.

The outlines of actual American class structure that emerge from the inequality of income, wealth and economic power, "Kolko states that the characterizing 'class' one must also consider, cultural, racial and other factors. In many studies, he asserted the latter 'overshadow' the economic basis of class. Bourgeois sociologists gave importance to concepts like, power, prestige, culture, they did not give much importance to the economic factor.

In the light of above we may argue that the Marxian approach to social structure is more wholesome. It gives us a greater insight into functional mechanism of a system, as also its dynamic evolution.

Social Mobility:

A fundamental characteristic of systems of stratification is the extent to which they are open or rigid. How much opportunity is there to move from one position to another in a society? The study of such movement - the reasons or sources, the patterns,

and the consequences is the study of social mobility.<sup>33</sup>

Like social structure we can elaborate what are the common features and specific character of social mobility in a socialist society as compared to capitalist society. The common features are conditioned by the fact that capitalism and socialism coexist in our epoch and are at approximately the same level of development of productive forces, and thus can not help but have common features.<sup>34</sup> However, despite equal level approximately of development of their productive forces, these two social formations are fundamentally different as regards the nature of their economic and therefore, all other social relations. From this there also follow fundamental differences in the nature and results of the process of social mobility.

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33. Melvin M. Tumin, Social Stratification forms and functions of unequally prentice-Hall of India Pvt. Ltd. (N. Delhi, 1981), p.87.

34. M.N. Rutkewich A.N. Philipov, n.27, p.234

In a perfectly open society everyone's chance to locate the position most suitable for laws is equal, restricted only by his relative suitability and preference for the position. Moreover, suitability for a particular task is a function of native talent alone. Neither birth, father's position nor differential access to training or motivation would in any way impede the free flow of persons into their most suitable circles. This type of open society we can find in socialist countries. Whereas in capitalist societies social structure is frozen so that once individuals are assigned to a place, usually at birth, they are unable to advance, for instance, as in caste system in India or House of Lords in London where they get their status at their birth, these two are example for the closed society.

Social mobility is obviously a complex phenomenon, for addition to the three directions in which movement can take place, there in the dimension of time. That is change can occur from one generation to another (intergenerational mobility) or within one generation (intra-generational

mobility) or one can be concerned with the amount of time, inter or intragenerational, that it takes for persons to move from one set of position to another.

A third dimension by which systems of mobility in the context or institution in which mobility occurs. Here refers to occupational or educational mobility, mobility in general evolution.

A fourth aspect is the unit of mobility individuals, families, groups, state or whole society<sup>35</sup> all of these units, as well as culture are the proper objects of study in the Soviet union we can find <sup>u</sup>forth types of mobility, where whole society intensified great mobility.

In a socialist society, as a result of fundamental changes in the social class structure, most of the real barriers to social mobility must disappear. The character and social consequences of mobility change

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35. Melvin M. Tumin, n.33, p.88

qualitatively, and finally, the nature of the stimuli which impel people to change their social position also changes. For the first time this mobility becomes one of the forms of gradual elimination of social differences.

But certain features, conditioned by level of material production, create a number of similar tendencies in social mobility. Demographic process also exercise a similar influence on social mobility, the decline in birth rates associated with the growth of the urban population and the employment of women in production, the increase in the average length of life and the change in the rate of 'rotation' associated with this i. e. the renewal of employed personnel in different fields of activity. Social mobility of youth under both capitalism and socialism is affected by the inevitable lengthening of the training period for work associated with scientific technical progresses. The theory of convergence of capitalism and socialism, are the ideas of a common industrial society and the like speculated precisely on these common features, studiously avoiding and ignoring the fundamental differences between capitalism and socialism including the differences in the process of social mobility.



The conceptual reproduction of Soviet social reality is perhaps inconceivable without a retooling of the conceptual instrument of analysis. A meaningful sociological balance-sheet of Soviet social system is eminently conceivable only within the conceptual framework of Marxism - Leninism, which must not be viewed only as a doctrine that merely serves the nefarious ends of 'Propaganda'. It is imperatively important because it sets the conceptual framework, with quite a sophisticated logic, of Soviet Weltanschauung, which obviously has been the guiding force in the long process of reconstruction of society. Any meaningful work on Soviet society is possible only within the framework of a clear understanding of Marxist - Leninist theory, which will have the merit of 'Knowing and understanding' the system from within. So we can say more useful and productive discussion can be facilitated on the basis of, or rather within the conceptual framework of Marxist sociology. It will be our special endeavour to trace the ideological and the historical roots of socio-economic structures, and the variables of Soviet policy designed to change the imperatives of the social system inherited from the past.

ORIGIN AND GROWTH OF THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE  
IN THE TRANSITION PERIOD ( 1917 - 1940 )

While studying the problem of genesis and evolution of social structure in the Soviet society it is necessary to have a searching look at the historical background with a view to comprehending the nature and scope of social change in the Soviet period.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth century Russia was an amalgam of feudal and capitalist modes of production. The nobility and serfs played a major role in agriculture and the whole nobility was dependent upon the Tsar who used to rule by divine rights. As the following tables reveal, the land was mainly monopolized by nobility.

Table - I

Division of Labour in 1905

	No. of Owners (in Millions)	Million Desyantin land (Des- yatin=2.6 acres)	Average of land per owner
Poorest Peasantry	10.5	75.0	7.0
Middle Peasantry	1.0	15.0	15.0
Rich Peasantry & Medium Estates	1.5	70.0	46.7
Big land owners estates appange crown land industrial & mercantile capital	0.03	7.0	2333.0
Not divided in group	-	50.0	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>13.03</b>	<b>280.0</b>	<b>21.4</b>

Source: Alexander Baykov: The Development of the Soviet Economic System (Cambridge, 1970), pp.13-15.

The nineteenth century Russian state was in fact noted for its social and political backwardness, though several reforms like emancipation of serfs in 1861 and Stolypin - Reforms (1906-1911) were implemented. But they were too late and too inadequate to introduce some significant changes in the agrarian relations. While the forces like the Renaissance, the reformation and concepts of constitutional monarchy and parliamentary democracy were shaping the future of Europe, Tsarist Russia was not at all touched by these currents of change. The capitalist mode of production was present in embryonic form. Indigenous capitalist class was very weak. In the late nineteenth century much industry was either formally government owned and controlled or foreign owned and subsidized by the states.<sup>1</sup> The task of industrial growth in pre-revolutionary Russia, this was entirely undertaken by state with the

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1. David Lane: The end of inequality: Stratification under State Socialism: (Penguin, 1971), p.17.

collaboration of foreign bourgeoisie. However, inspite of the average annual rate of growth of industrial output being as high as compared to any capitalist country of the world, Russian agriculture remained semi-fenday and backward.

Table - III

Average annual rate of growth of industrial output.

(Per cent )

Period	Russia	USA	UK	Germany
1890-1899	8.03	5.47	1.80	5.44
1907-1913	6.25	3.52	2.72	3.90

Source: A. Gerschenkron: The rate of growth in Russia.

The Journal of Economic History, Vol.7, Supplement,  
p.156.

The entire countryside, as Lenin argued, was in the grip of big land lords. The rich 10 per cent of peasant households, on an average possessing more than 20 dessiatins (about 55 acres), owned about 35 per cent of all land.<sup>2</sup> A vast majority of the rural population depended on the big land-lords, who enjoyed the highest prestige and status.

In short, to quote Lenin, Russian economy combined a very backward agriculture and a very primitive village with a very advanced industrial and financial capitalism.<sup>3</sup>

Russia was therefore politically<sup>4</sup>, and economically<sup>5</sup> backward as compared to other west European countries,

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2. Maurice Dobb, Soviet Economic Development Since 1917 (London, Routledge, 1966), p.43.

3. Lenin, V.I., Collected Works, Vol.20, p.570.

4. Robert Munting: The Economic Development of the USSR, (London, Croom-Helm 1982), p.26.

5. Alec Wove: An economic history of the USSR, (Middlesex, 1972), p.16.

characterized by rigid autocracy coupled with feudal agrarian relations. The pre-revolutionary soviet society was rigidly stratified by rank and status in the form of estate system, the following table illustrates the pre-revolution social structure.

Class Composition in the year 1913

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Class	Numerical breakdown (Millions)	Percentage breakdown
Employees	4.8	3.0
Workers	22.3	14.0
Individual Peasants & Freecraftsmen	106.2	66.7
Bourgeoise Landowners traders & Kulaks.	25.9	16.3

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Source: M. Mathew: Class and Society in Soviet Union (London, Penguin, 1972), p.35.

Some occupational groups like wage labourers and intelligentsia were emerging though very slowly. In

the place of earlier two major classes noble men and serfs, workers, bourgeoisie, intellegentsia, were beginning to appear on social scene.<sup>6</sup>

Table -

Growth of Working Class, Russia, 1860-1913.

Year	Estimated Population (0005)	Industrial workers (0005)	Workers as per- centage of total population.
1860	74,120	565	0.76
1900	131,710	1692	1.28
1913	161,723	2282	1.41

Source: Frank Lorimev: The Population of Soviet Union,  
(Geneva, 1946), p.

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6. L. Trotsky: The History of Russian Revolution (trans.),  
(London, 1934), p.33.



To summarize, on the eve of the revolution of 1917, Russia found herself despite the dominance of agricultural economy, moving towards social change. The backwardness of Russia in contrast to socio-economic order in contemporary west-Europe was rooted mainly in the century long absence of bourgeoisie and in the equally long continuence of peasant serfdom.<sup>7</sup>

Thus the development of capitalism and state capitalism in particular within the feudal structure was a peculiar feature of Soviet society.

Social inequalities in various possible forms were very much present in pre-revolutionary Russia. Apart from uneven economic development, two major classes formed bi-polar social scenario. The exploitation of peasantry by nobility received state sanction because it

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7. Boryis Meissnev(ed.), Social change in Soviet Union (trans. (Notredme 1972), p.20.

was actually subject to the effective controls of the nobility. Thus income differentials, class distinctions, status hierarchy, etc. were bound to exist in a feudal society experiencing gradual disintegration and combining therefore, the elements of stagnation and change.<sup>8</sup>

After the Bolshavik Revolution land was nationalized and was given rentfree to peasants. The redistribution of land through the decree of January 1918 was a major step towards minimizing differentiation in social structure. All industrial, financial and trade enterprises were nationalised. The decrees on workers control led to several factories being taken over by workers. In December 1920, nationalization was extended to any enterprise employing more than ten workers using no mechanical power. The declaration of the rights of the people of Russia proclaimed the equality and sovereignty

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8. V.I. Lenin, The Development of Capitalism in Russia, (Moscow F C P W, 1956).

of all people of the country, their right to free self-determination and the abolition of all national privileges, the free development of all national minorities and ethnographic groups. Lenin also devised the policies to liquidate the privileged classes of pre-revolutionary Russia. A severe attack was launched on the land lords and capitalists. Senior bureaucrats were dismissed, the members of previous ruling class were deprived of civic rights and position, privileges, salaries, etc. were abolished. Women were given equal legal rights, the educational system was designed to reduce the social division between manual and mental work.

During the nine months following October revolution, more than 950 decrees<sup>9</sup> were issued which in themselves show the vital processes of social transformation directed towards an egalitarian society

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9. Yuni Akhupkin: First Decrees of Soviet Power (Lawrance and Wishart, 1970).

under the leadership of Lenin. The decree of land resulted in the revolutionary transformation of agrarian relationships when land was handed over to the peasantry. The state-machinery along with the previous ruling class was destroyed. Production and distribution were placed under workers control and division of society into estates was abolished. Laws were also made to ensure the protection of labour, regulations of wages, alimination of unemployment and sickness allowance. The educational system was made uniform with due emphasis over physical and non-manual training so that the common differentiations between mental and manual labour can be eliminated from the very beginning.

The main thrust of planned equalitarianism was to effect a revolutionary change in the social structure by way of declassing the possessive classes and also through the minimization of wage differences so that re-emergence of inequalities could be prevented. 'Complete equality' was not and could not be a Bolshevik

aim during the years following the revolution but what Lenin wanted was to ensure the rule of the proletariat in order to prepare the background of socialist construction.

Even the wage differentials were narrowed down to a large extent in the initial years of war communism in 1919, the official wage ratio between the highest and lowest grades of manual workers was 1.75:1.<sup>10</sup>

In this process the prerevolutionary class structure of soviet society was largely destroyed, partly during the phase of revolutionary turmoil and partly as a result of conscious design. The class structure and the stratification pattern of Soviet society was radically modified with the expropriation of landed estates, the nationalization

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10. A. Bergson: The Structure of Soviet Wages: A Study in Socialist Economies, (Harvard University Press, 1944), p.182.

of industry etc. These measures significantly restricted the socio-economic scope of reproduction of the old, prerevolutionary social structure. However, the class heritage in the immediate post revolutionary period was relatively durable in the sense that several social classes of the pre-revolutionary period were still functional until the end of 1928.

Lenin was also well aware of the social diversity in the Post revolutionary society, which was also characterized by a very low level of development of productive forces. He thus identified that the very backwardness and the petty - bourgeoisie character of the economy was reflected in the basic forms and forceness that were functional in the society.<sup>11</sup> The basic stratified social groups were the, bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, peasantry and the proletariat.<sup>12</sup>

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11. R.R. Sharma, Parameters of Social differentiation and integration in Soviet society. A Marxist construction in Marx & Marxism, ed. by Ajit Jain & Alexander Mertejko (Tracher Pub., 1984).

12. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol.21 (Moscow Foreign Language Pub. House, 1962), p.479.

The phase of war communism successfully eliminated the inequalitarian heritage of feudalism by abolishing age old 'Estate system' and further reduced the possibilities of their reproduction by nationalizing all major industries and other means of production. The policy towards nationalities and women is particular also had egalitarian tendencies. Equality did not mean equal treatment of bourgeoisie and proletariat. The entire social engineering was aimed towards creating a new social structure through narrowing down the differences between man and woman, skilled and unskilled worker and also between town and country. It is important to note that whereas in August the ratio between unskilled and skilled workers wage was 1:2.35 it had fallen by June 1, 1918 to 1:1.9 and by 1920 to 1:1.04.<sup>13</sup>

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13. Marcel Libman (Trans.), Leninism under Lenin, (London, Merlin Press, 1980), p.352-3.

In 1921 the New Economic Policy (NEP) was launched which stopped the grain requisitions, imposed a progressive tax and restored the peasants right to dispose of his surplus. The tenth Party Congress announced the new policy under the guidance of Lenin. The policy was some kind of return to legal market system or a compromise between state control and private enterprise.<sup>14</sup> The New Economic Policy was the outcome of the realization that the transition from capitalism to socialist order could not be achieved overnight.<sup>15</sup> The NEP had its own inner contradictions. It provided a fertile ground for so called New Economic Policy - Men in the towns and kulaks in countryside. The Kulaks, NEP Men, and bureaucracy signalled a changed scenario of social relations marked by widening differentiation in terms of income, living standards, status, etc.

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14. M.K. Dziewanoswki: A History of Soviet Russia (New Jersey, Prentics Hall, 1979), pp.140-41.

15. Ibid., p.137.



The social structure of the Soviet society did not experience a radical transformation in the first decade after the revolution if we observe this table we can find it.

Class Composition (1913-28)

Class	1913 (in %age)	1928 (in %age)
Manual Workers	14.0	12.0
White-Collar Workers	3.0	5.6
Small Independent Peasants etc.	66.7	74.9
Bourgeoise & Kulaks	16.3	8.5

Source: Cited by R.R. Sharma, The USSR Sixty year in  
Zafar Imam (ed.) Economic, Social and Political  
Development, (Tulsi Publ. Calcutta 1970)

The initial period of industrialization and collectivization i.e., 1926-30 was a positive one in

so far as it helped to eliminate the Kulaks and NEP men and also attempted to remove the fundamental contradictions in the Soviet economy existing between socialised industry and private agriculture. The collectivization and rapid industrilization provided a sound base for the Soviet economy with the elimination of private property in agriculture, trade and industry. The system was moving towards greater homogeneity during the period because socialist mode of production under the centrally controlled economy was realized after collectivization and the danger of capitalist renewal no longer existed in the agrarian sector. The collectivization and industrialization also resulted in rapid urbanization and transformation of peasants into workers. The following table shows structural change during this period.

Structural Composition of the Population 1928-39 percentage breakdown:

	1928	1939
Workers & White Collar workers	17.6	50.2
Collective foremen etc.	2.9	47.2
Others	4.6	2.6

Source: Cited by R.R. Sharma, in The USSR Sixty years economic social & Pol. Development (Trlsi Pub. House, N.D.87)

The period also experienced a high rate of upward social mobility, creation of more homogenous social structure in relative terms. Notable decline in agriculture workers in contrast to increase number in industrial and other non-agrarian sector was observed in this period and the trend continued throughout the subsequent history of Soviet Union. To sum up, industrialization and collectivization can rightly be regarded as well-designed attempts towards social levelling characterised by general socialization of means of production, central planning and maximization of economic growth. Antagonistic class differentiation along with the gulf between town and country, skilled and unskilled, mental and manual, peasants and workers, etc. was minimised to a considerable extent due to above-mentioned policy inputs.

During the transition period the three major social groups were the intelligentsia, working class and the peasantry. A drastic change in their character was evident. The Soviet intelligentsia was quite

different from the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia, in its social origin and ideology. Whereas pre-revolutionary intellegentsia was proland lands and pro-rich in their origin and character, the Soviet intellegentsia was growing very rapidly from the ranks of the working class.

The year 1931 began with S<sub>t</sub>alin's denunciation of wage equalization. He opposed the idea of low wage - differentials under socialism on the ground that it signified a petty bourgeoisie and utopian thinking, which has got nothing to do with Marxism. He argued that Marx had never held that individuals could be in all respects equal and Lenin had also admitted the inevitability of 'inequality' in the first and lower stage of socialism.<sup>16</sup> According to Stalin, "Equalitarianism owes its own origin to the individual peasant type of mentality, by psychology of share and share alike, the psychology

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16. Mervyn Mathew: Privileges in the Soviet Union, (London George Allen & Unwin, 1979), p. 9.

of primitive communism. Equalitarianism has nothing in common with Marxist socialism. Only people who are unacquainted with Marxism can have the primitive notion that the Russian Bolsheviks want to pool all wealth and then share it equally. That is the notion of people who have nothing common with Marxism.<sup>17</sup>

It was commonly shared belief of Marx, Lenin and Stalin that equality in real terms can be achieved only in the higher stage of communism and unequalitarian legacy of capitalist society does persist in some form during the lower stage of socialism. However, 'Class exploitation' is made impossible due to reduction of fundamental inequalities. Stalin was not only able to derive ideological support from Marx and Lenin but he also opposed the practice of levelling off on other grounds. This concerned the policy of industrialization

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17. Stalin, Collected Works, Vol.13, (Moscow, 1955), p.120-21.

which Stalin launched in the closing years of previous decade. The purely practical reason behind Stalin's adverse attitude towards 'wage equalization' was economic one because wage-equalization always results in labour fluidity. As a matter of fact, the rapid economic transformation as envisaged by Stalin would have never been realised if wage structure was left intact. Signifying the economic consequences of wage-equalization, Stalin remarked that apart from the lack of incentive, the worker's sticks to the work place only temporarily so to earn a little money and then go off to try his luck in some other place.<sup>18</sup>

Stalin also introduced Five year plans and industrialization. The fundamental task of first Five Year Plan as Stalin noted, was in converting the USSR into an industrial country, to widen the front of

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18. Stalin, Problems of Leninism,

socialist form of economy and to create the economic basis for the abolition of classes in the USSR, for the building of a socialist society.<sup>19</sup> The plan attained its primary objective - construction of heavy industry on a firm basis. The success in quantitative terms was quite remarkable and some of its main targets were achieved ahead of schedule.<sup>20</sup>

During the first Five Year Plan, a remarkable pace of collectivization was also witnessed. More than 60 per cent of the peasant farms were united into collective farms which meant the fulfilment of five year plan three times over.<sup>21</sup> Along with such major changes in agriculture and industry the problem of unemployment was also abolished. The differentiation

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19. Ibid., p. 588.

20. Maurice Dobb: Soviet Economic Development Since 1917, (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p.255.

21. For detailed account, the reports presented by Stalin to 17th and 18th Party Congress.

within the peasantry which touched new height with the launching of NEP was also reversed.

The elimination of Kulaks was complete. The proportion of working class to entire population was also doubled during the period of first Five Year plan. An increase in national income, annual wages, social insurance fund in public welfare service was also observed. The antithesis of town and country of mental and manual labour was also narrowed down due to the expansion of education and assimilation of peasants and workers as all were equally involved in the process of socialist production. Literacy among the population rose from 67 per cent at the end of 1930 to 90 per cent at the end of 1933.

The decade between 1928 and 1938, during which two five year plans were executed represented a radical change i.e. the crucial watershed between the State capitalism of the early and mid 20's with complex admixture of economic forms, and the pre-dominantly collectivist or socialist economy that had emerged by



closing years of the 30's.<sup>22</sup> In 1931, the share of socialist economy came to 99 per cent in the country's fixed production assets, 99.1 per cent in the national income, 99.8 per cent in industry, 98.5 per cent in gross agricultural production, and 100 per cent in retail trade.<sup>23</sup>

The constitution of 1936 was also instrumental in reflecting the change brought about by deliberate social planning. The constitution declared the elimination of all exploiting classes including land lords, capitalists, Kulaks and merchants and class hostility was put to an end. However, peasant class and working class did exist according to Stalin, though in an entirely new form. Soviet intelligentsia was also different in its composition as it also consisted of the people who had come from working class and peasantry.<sup>24</sup>

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22. Dobb., No.20, p.282.

23. P. Lopata: Communism as a social formation (Moscow, Progress Pub., 1983), p.92.

24. Stalin: No.18, pp. 800-03.

The Stalin period, in the evolution of Soviet society remains a period of radical transformation never seen by any other country in the world history. The USSR, as a result of its successful industrialization large scale machine production in industry and collectivized agriculture found itself very sound in economic terms in the closing years of thirties. As Deutscher puts it,

"the core of Stalin's historical achievement lies in the fact that he found Russia working with the wooden plough and left her equipped with atomic piles".<sup>25</sup>

The industrialization produced higher rate of upward mobility, with an enormous increase in the strength of working class due to the growth of migration from rural to urban areas. Both industrialization and collectivization caused a major shift in the dynamics of class structure of Soviet society which also goes

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25. Issac Deutscher: Russia After Stalin (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1953), p.55.

a long way in narrowing social differentiation. The collectivization produced a peasantry of new type with less differentiation as Kulaks were liquidated. The class relationship underwent a radical change as relationships of domination and subordination were removed and the Soviet society contained no classes acting as the monopolistic possessors of means of production. The trend towards convergence and merging of the working class and the collective form peasantry was also observable.<sup>26</sup>

In short, a clear cut trend towards more homogenous class structure was visible though the process was slowed down due to various historical reasons. The scientific and technological revolution

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26. M.N. Rutkevich: 'Elimination of Class differences & the place of non-manual workers in the Social structure of Soviet society, Soviet Sociology, (New York, Fall 1984), Vol.3, No.4, pp.3-13.

in the subsequent periods combined with the already existing industrial base to take Soviet society to higher stages of socialism. Each phase of industrialization, both pre and post world war -II, was responsible for the emergence of different stratified layers of the working class. The entire process was too complex to allow for the smooth development of socio-cultural homogeneity within the working class.

CLASS COMPOSITION OF SOVIET SOCIETY

Class	1913	1924	1928	1937	1939	1959	1968
<u>(Percentage Breakdown)</u>							
Employees	3.0	4.7	5.6		17.7	20.1	22.9
Workers	14.0	10.0	12.0	45.7	32.5	48.2	54.8
Collectivized Peasantry	-	1.3	2.9	48.8	47.2	31.4	22.27
Individual Peasants	66.7	75.4	74.9	5.5	2.6	0.3	0.03
Bourgeois Landowners Kulak	16.3	8.5	4.6	-	-	-	-
<u>Numerical Breakdown</u>							
Total population	159.2	137.7	150.0		170.6	208.8	236.7
Employees	4.8	5.2	8.4	163.4	30.2	42.0	54.1
Workers	22.3	15.2	18.0		55.4	100.6	129.8
Collectivised Peasants		1.8	4.4	79.7	88.5	65.6	52.7
Individual Peasants	106.2	103.8	112.3	9.0	4.4	0.6	0.1
Bourgeois	259	11.7	-	-	-	-	-

Source: M. Mathew: Class & Society in the USSR, p.35.

EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE IN  
THE USSR: 1960-1975

The Soviet Union witnessed no significant changes in its social structure in the 1940s and 1950s. This was a period when the country was mainly occupied with war and post war reconstruction. No major programme or policy changes could be envisaged under these conditions. So the social system that followed the industrialization and collectivization of the 30s continued without much change. However, there were significant changes since the beginning of the 1960s. Two important factors that were behind these changes were the Scientific and Technological Revolution (STR) and the changes in the CPSU programme.

In fact it was 20th CPSU Congress, regarded as a great historic 'water shed' which reviewed the socio-economic and political issues in great detail and decided to initiate strategic changes in the social and economic policy. They recognised economic disparities and social differences, but sought to minimize them.

The changes proposed included raising minimum wages of the lowest paid income categories, lowering considerably the existing disparities in wages, radical improvement of the pension system, raising in particular the minimum level of old age pension etc.<sup>1</sup> Khrushchev, like wise, emphasised the growing imperative need to cut to size the age old division between mental and physical labour. In his report to the Central Committee in June 1958 Khrushchev aptly argued that 'It is theoretically incorrect and harmful in practice to set the two forms of socialist property, one against the other' and that a further advance towards communist relations of production will proceed through the 'Perfection of State property and the rapid development of cooperative and collective farm property'.<sup>2</sup>

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1. M. Dobb, Soviet Economic Development since 1917, (London, 1972 edition), p.323.

2. Ibid., p.329.



In 1961, the 22nd CPSU Congress presented a programmatic perspective of social and economic development. This was embodied in the third programme of the Party, which proposed a series of measures to ensure reduction of differences in mental and physical labour, the abolition of narrow division of labour and reduction in income inequalities. The major directions proposed by the Congress were:

(a) 'Gradual transformation of social relations in the Soviet country side' and eliminating 'in the main', the distinctions between town and country. A number of social benefits, such as pensions, paid holidays etc. were envisaged for collective foremens.

(b) It was also stipulated that in the following two decades or so the income disparities between various socio-economic groups would be steadily reduced. In this connection, it was also proposed to replace gradually unskilled labour by skilled labour.

Khrushchev went on to elaborate that it was essential to bring about significant transformation in the nature of work.

(c) In order to reduce the accentuation of differential access to consumption goods and consequently the differences in life style, it was decided to enhance the public consumption funds. This implied partial introduction of new norms of distribution among members of the society through these fund proceeds, regardless of the quantity and quality of their labour. In this regard, it was proposed to expand the development of all types of public service and socialization of education. The programme emphasised the introduction of compulsory secondary general and polytechnical eleven year education by 1970 and a system of education in which professional training was combined with 'socially useful labour'. In putting forward such a programme of education, one major objective was to do away with individual differences in the style of life and the division between intellectual and manual labour.

This is indeed a bird's eye view of strategic directions given by the 22nd CPSU Congress to do away with the diverse disparities in Soviet society.

What has been the outcome of these directions is central to our further discussion.

A plenary meeting of the Central Committee in March 1965 proposed a series of significant measures in that direction. One of these was, of course, a larger proportion of investment in favour of agriculture from 18 per cent in the nineteen sixties to 23 per cent in the Seventies. Accordingly, Kosygin argued before the 24th CPSU Congress that in the past five years, great changes have taken place in the countryside..... A major step has been taken in providing electricity for the rural areas.... The supply of farm machinery, fertilisers and chemicals to collective farms has been considerably increased.<sup>3</sup>

Like wise, Brezhnev, in his report to the 24th Congress argued that the peasantry has to a great extent acquired 'features in common with the

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3. Ibid., p.89.

workers. The number of collective formers whose work is directly linked with the machines and mechanism is growing steadily and the educational level of the collective farm peasantry is raising'.<sup>4</sup> Further he informed the party congress that the relationship between the two major sectors of socialist farming has been strengthened and that the inter-collective farm and state collective farm production associations have been widely established. He also reported the establishment of agro-industrial complex which was in line with the policy laid down by the 22nd Party Congress.<sup>5</sup>

In the 25th CPSU Congress, Kosygin reported that a good deal of progress had been made with regard to overcoming differences between town and country. Elaborating, he pointed out that the life

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4. Ibid., pp.60.61.

5. C.I. Brezhnev's report on the Draft Constitution, Soviet Review, No.47, 48, p.10.

of the rural population has changed beyond recognition.<sup>6</sup> Since the class differences have been greatly eroded, certain distinctions within the society which transcendent the class framework have been central.

The nature and complexity of work is being increasingly used to deal with the plurality of the social structure. The following table is illustrative of new focus of research and approach. It can be seen that a large chunk of the working population which was engaged in simple physical labour and had never had any modern occupational training has moved away from the position. Now two thirds are employed in complex, skilled occupations. The majority of working class and a large portion of the peasantry are working in such occupations. Personnel with higher or specialised secondary education now form a major stratum of working people, far out-numbering the peasantry. They now make up the bulk of the intelligentsia. There has been noticeable development of a new social category of 'worker specialists' combining 'socio-psychological traits' of both workers and intelligentsia.

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6. A. McAuley, Economic welfare in the Soviet Union, (London, 1979), pp.210-13.

TABLE

Distribution of Working Population according to Nature and Complexity of Work ( in per cent)

Category Occupational	Late 1930s	Late 1950s	Late 1960s	Late 1970s
Doing Physical work & requiring no occupational training (Prior to work)	64	52	35	29
Doing complex physical & mental physical work requiring occupational training. (These have been trained in a Technicom or Technical training school)	19	29	38	41
Employed in relatively simple predominantly mental work (These have going through a certain level of general education)	8	4	4	5
Employed in complex mental work requiring specialised higher and secondary education (including executives, etc.)	9 (2)	15 (4)	23 (4)	25 (5)

Source: The table is drawn by Gordon & Kazimova from the all union publication censuses of 1939, 1959, 1970 and 1979, reproduced in Soviet Sociology, Vol. XIV, 1985-86, p.10.

Apparently, towards the end of 1950's the Soviet government became directly interested in the elimination of various differentiations and in the reduction of the inequality in the USSR. There were extensive changes in the administration of wage and salary policy, and radical reorganization of both pay structure as well as various social insurance programmes. The appearance of a series of studies on earnings differentials and distribution of income during the sixties implicitly suggested that this was a desirable topic for academic research and probably it was an area of current governmental concern. In the intervening years, the Soviet social structure had fully evolved.

The process of differentiation and integration in inter and intra class relations have been quite evident in Soviet society from the early 1960s. The process of differentiation here refers to the intensification of division of labour by branch and occupation and the process of improvement in specialization and qualification of personnel. The whole process

is quite significant in so far as it leads to the growth of the number of skills and occupations involving both physical and mental labour.<sup>7</sup>

The process of inter and intra class integration deepened in the early 1960s. In particular, its potential was increasingly reflected in the overcoming of the internal differentiation of the working class, which was evident earlier by the wide structure of inequalities among its socio-occupational groups. As a result of this, there had been gradual obliteration of the principal class characteristic of the peasantry.<sup>8</sup>

The processes leading to inter and intra class integration are deeply related to the conscious efforts to intensify the potential of the Scientific and Technological Revolution (STR) in the USSR. The

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7. P. Simush, 'Social changes in the countryside, Soviet Law & Govt., 16 (1978), pp.59-66.

8. Ibid., pp. 5 & 62-65.



STR has influenced social structure of the Soviet Union in two inter connected ways: First as a direct productive force, and secondly by transforming the subjective elements of the productive force i.e. the labour.

As a productive force the STR has contributed to the growth of production in both industry and agriculture. It has brought radical and deep-going changes, qualitative as well as quantitative, in the means of labour through mechanization and automation process of the production. It has brought into being many new industries. It has also helped in various discoveries, research and technological innovations that have contributed to the improvement of the industry and agriculture with new sources of energy, raw materials and other production processes like rational and scientific organizations of labour etc. A large number of machines, institutions and instruments of various types had been designed and are in use, many of them unique, the first of their kind in the

world.<sup>9</sup> The high rate of low-cost production of various goods had increased the national income as a result of which the per capita income had grown and the standard of life of average individual of different classes and groups risen. High inequality in income, with which to great extent, the style of life, is associated and which marked a high differentiation between different classes and strata of the people in the period of building and consolidation of socialism has been reduced. Steps have been taken to favour the people at lower scale of income. In proportion to other classes and strata of the people they have been provided with more salary and other material benefits. For instance, as the class of peasantry has been the most disadvantageous class, its income and other material benefits have been increased more than other groups.

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9. L. Brezhnev, 'Report of Central Committee of the CPSU to the 23rd Congress of the CPSU, (Moscow, 1974), p.341.

Due to large scale introduction of the latest achievement of the STR, combined with other economic measures, industrial sector fulfilled its seven year plan target ahead of schedule. By the end of the plan in 1965, the Soviet Union's industrial capacity was nearly doubled. Some 5,500 large industrial enterprises were built and 30 giant power stations were placed under the operation during this period. The world's largest power complex, the Bratsk Hydropower Station begin its operation at full capacity.<sup>10</sup>

The mechanization level of agriculture rose considerably. In 1959-65 the number of tractors at the collective and state forms increased by nearly 600,000 of self propelled harvest - combines by 2,00,000 and lorries by nearly 3,00,000.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, the last year's of the plan saw an appreciable increase in the rate of agricultural production, of the output of grains and industrial crops, and of the live-stock population.<sup>12</sup> In the same period, the national income

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10. Y.I. Bugayev & Others, A Short history of the CPSU, (Moscow, 1974), p.341.

11. Ibid., p.342.

12. Ibid., p.241.

used for accumulation and consumption increased by 53 per cent, industrial production by 84 per cent. The basic assets of the economy increased by 92 per cent. Industrial enterprises exceeded their output target to the tune of 46,000 million roubles. There was also substantial increase in the output of foodstuffs and items of cultural use.<sup>13</sup>

The growth of production was accompanied by an increase of social wealth. This allowed the state to take a series of measures to improve the standard of living of the workers, peasants and intelligentsia - of all the working people. During 1959-65 wages of the personnel in the state sector rose as did the incomes of the collective farmers. More wages were paid out from the social consumption funds. For the country as a whole, the wages of industrial and office personnel went up from an average of 78 roubles in 1958 to 95 roubles in 1965. Together with the payments and benefits acquiring to them from the social consumption

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13. Brezhnev, no.9, p.59.

funds, the wages rose from 104 to 128 roubles.<sup>14</sup>

The salaries were raised for people employed in the public services, including educational, health, cultural and retail trade workers, and people employed in the housing and community services. Guaranteed pay as well as old age and disability pensions were introduced for the collective farmers at the beginning of 1965.<sup>15</sup>

More investment were made in educational sphere. Consequently, more than 70 million people were attending tuition-free general vocational, specialised, secondary and higher educational establishments, schools and colleges by 1965. The number of hospitals, polyclinics, sanitorial and holiday houses rose steadily during 1960-65.<sup>16</sup> Prices were reduced as a result of consumption of the people increased considerably and the sale of good through the state and cooperative total

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14. Ibid., p.65, See Table-I.

15. Bugayev & Others, n.10, p.342.

16. Brezhnev, n.9, p.99.

network increased by 60 per cent.<sup>17</sup>

During the same period the national income grew by 41 per cent, industrial production by 50 per cent. The national income which went into consumption and accumulation increased at an average rate of 7.1 per cent a year, as against 5.7 per cent in the preceding period (1961-65).<sup>18</sup> During 1966-70, real income per head of population increased by 33 per cent as against 19 per cent in 1961-65. The minimum wage for workers and office employees for the country rose by 26 per cent. Collective farmer's income from social production increased by 42 per cent. Social consumption funds increased by 50 per cent to almost 64 thousands million roubles. Social welfare measures during this period include lowering of pension age creation of five day work week with two days off, paid annual leaves having been lengthened for a considerable part of the working people.<sup>19</sup>

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17. Kosygin, Report on the Directives for the Five Year Eco. Devt. Plan of USSR for 66-70 in 23rd Congress of

the CPSU (Moscow, 1966), p.175.

18. Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 24th Congress of the CPSU, (Moscow, 1971), pp.41-87.

19. Ibid., pp.43-44.

The most generalised indicator of the enhancement of production during 1971-75 was the accelerated growth of labour productivity which accounted for 84 per cent of the industrial out put, 78 per cent in construction and the entire increment in agriculture. This was the result of the higher qualifications acquired by the working people and of increase in technical equipment made available to industry. The economy absorbed 9,300,000 recent graduates of the vocational and technical schools and more than a million specialists with a higher or secondary specialised education. Nearly 40 per cent of basic production assets in industry and 56 per cent in agriculture have been renewed (replaced or renovated) during this period.<sup>20</sup>

To sum up, the growth of productive forces brought about radical changes in the living standards of the Soviet population as a whole, and contributed to the process of evening up of the components of the Soviet social structure.

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<sup>20</sup>. Brezhnev, n.9, p.35.

The average monthly pay of collective farmers in 1975 was 92 roubles- which represented an 80 per cent increase between 1965 - 75 and it reached three fourths of the wages of state farm workers. If earnings from private garden plots is included in the incomes of collective farmers the ratio of the per capita incomes of collective farmers to those of state farm workers and white collar personnel is more favourable - 9 to 10.<sup>21</sup> The incomes of state farm personnel as a share of those of workers and office staff in industry rose from 74 per cent in 1965 to 80 per cent in 1975.<sup>22</sup>

A study in the average monthly wages and salaries of workers and office employees (according to industries) between 1940-72 undertaken by Semyonov leads to the following conclusions. First since 1966 the average monthly wages of workers in industry and construction were higher than the average wages and salaries of all

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21. P. Simush, 'Social change in the Countryside', Soviet Law & Govt., Vol.16, no.4, Spring 1978, p.67.

22. Ibid., pp.67-78.



workers and office employees in the Soviet economy. Secondly, the wages of workers which in 1940 were less than the salaries of office employees in the above mentioned industries have, since 1960 exceeded the salaries of the latter. The increase for agricultural workers has been in effect since 1970. Thirdly, the gap between the general average monthly wages of the worker and the average monthly salary of ~~Engineers~~ and Technicians has narrowed considerably (regardless of the industry). Thus in 1940 industrial and construction workers received 50 to 60 per cent less than Engineers and Technicians in 1972 they began to receive 30 per cent less and agricultural workers about 40 per cent less. Finally since 1960 the wages of industrial and construction workers have exceeded the salaries of civil servants.<sup>23</sup>

The operation of new machineries and production processes in industry, agriculture and service sector as introduced in the wake of STR require highly skilled

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23. V. Semyonov, 'Evening up of the Social status of the working people in the USSR', Social Sciences (Moscow), Vol.6, no.3, 1975, pp.112-13.

workers which has influenced different aspects of Soviet social structure. New class people like technical professions did appear in the countryside during the first year of collectivization and later (tractor drivers - combine operators, agronomists and others), notable feature of today's mechanization and automation brought about in the wake of the STR in the countryside is the emergence of electricians, mechanics, controllers, automatic production processes operators and computer operators who are engaged in agriculture side by side with engineers and technicians and workers in industrial enterprises and service sectors.

It is imperative to see briefly the impact of the developed socialism through the growth of productive forces and through the transformation of the content and process of labour on three important social classes and stratum of the Soviet society, namely, the Peasantry, the working class, and the intelligentsia separately.

The Peasantry:

As noted above, under socialism, the Soviet society retained contradiction among different classes and groups; between the workers and the peasantry, between town and country, between mental labour and manual labour so on. Notable among these was the class distinction between the workers and the peasantry; from which to a large extent other contradictions resulted. The farmer has been associated with the two forms of property - State and Collective forms property and has manifested itself in the area of work, content of work, consumption pattern, socio-occupational structure and the spiritual realm. In the solution of these problems, the main part is to be played as the CPSU programme of 1961 noted, by the development, the rapprochement and, in the course of time, the fusion of collective form, cooperative property with the property of the whole people in a single, integrated form of communist property. The key to this rapprochement lies in the economic growth of the collective farms in the development of the productive forces in the

countryside, in the socialization of production in the collective forms and the modern scientific and technical skills of the rural people, most importantly, among the people directly associated with the agricultural production in the collective forms.

The practical solution of this task presupposes the creation of a number of economic pre-conditions, the most important of which are as follows:

First of all, comprehensive industrialization and mechanization of agricultural production on the basis of modern science and technology must be completed. This means developing a national economic agro-industrial complex transforming agricultural labour into a variety of industrial labour; developing the branch specialization of agricultural production and cooperation between inter-connected industrial and agricultural proper sections, implementing comprehensive mechanization and automation in forming and animal husbandry through the introduction of effective system of machines. All these measures would contribute to

the enhancement of labour productivity, appreciable reduction in labour resources employed and to other conditions for the intensification and concentration of agriculture. Consequently, agricultural production would come on a par with industrial production in terms of level of socialization.<sup>24</sup>

Secondly, in the course of industrialization of agriculture on the basis of modern science and technology another pre-requisite is created for the removal of socio-economic distinctions between town and country; the development and improvement of collective farm and state forms of production and the gradual levelling of their material and technical basis. This is invariably linked with the full use of the possibilities and incentives for raising production efficiency of embodied in the collective and state farm forms of economy and the further intensification of the tendencies towards their drawing closer together.<sup>25</sup>

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24. K. Kupustin, 'The Scientific & Technological Revolution & the improvement of Socialist production relations, Social Sciences, Vol.1, no.1, 1975, p.79.

25. Ibid., pp. 79-80.

Thirdly, the comprehensive industrialization and high level of socialization of agricultural production, its concentration, and the growing similarity in the conditions under which collective and state farms work - all these create a objective foundation for the massive development of production cooperation on the part of agricultural enterprises, both with each other as well as with mutually related industrial enterprises. As a result, agro-industrial associations would develop which would embrace both collective farm and state enterprises and meet the task of bringing the level of concentration of agricultural production and the forms of its organization closer to those of industrial production and of drawing together and integrating the two forms of socialist ownership namely collective and state forms of production.<sup>26</sup> The interaction of collective farm state farm and industries would lead to a better economic ties among them. Soviet Union during 1965-75 bringing together all these different sections.

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26. Ibid., p.80.

This together with changes in the structure of agricultural labour into a variety of industrial labour would ensure the gradual obliteration of the socio-economic distinctions between industrial and agricultural labour and the essential distinction between town and country.

As a result of the STR, the new equipments and technical know how is being introduced, at accelerated rate in agricultural production in the Soviet Union. Consequently, the nature and content of farm work are changing significantly, the need for unskilled labour is declining and that for skilled labour is increasing. Over the years there has been a considerable expansion of the sphere of mental work and the requirements for the general and specialised training of all who work in the countryside are rising. The STR has accelerated the industrialization of agriculture in a qualitatively different form which has produced noticeable change in the structure of the peasant population. This process is expressed in the progressive tendency towards the 'Proletarianization' of this population. Each year

the number of farm machine drivers, workers in maintenance and construction trades, set up men, and equipment operators is increasing. Their labour is turning more and more different from that of the traditional peasant who drive horse-drawn vehicles and do manual jobs (without acquiring specialised skills). In practice, this means a broadening of the group of peasants whose work shows the characteristic features of industrial labour, and who possess the same skills and occupations of those employed in industry.<sup>27</sup>

The interaction between the collective farms, state farms and rural industries are increasing. Interaction among themselves frequently eliminates the lines of demarcation between agricultural and industrial labour. At industrial type of cooperative enterprises, the employees have skills that are basically the same as in industry proper. For example, about two thirds of the people employed at a modern live stock - raising complex have the skills of

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27. Simush, n.7, pp.56-57.



electrical implement operators, adjustment mechanics and laboratory personnel.<sup>28</sup> The range of occupations both physical and mental is increasing with the increase of the set of skills each individual may employ in his work. In an agro-industrial complex, a given groups of working peoples labours seasonally alternating between farming and industry. Consequently, migration outside the district is reduced and stability of the work force is increased. At the same time, the per centage of rural population not directly involved in agriculture increases.<sup>29</sup> The development of agro-industrial complexes have revealed the following changing relationships in rural areas: Communities with industrial functions are developing more rapidly; many sub-urban villages are gradually being transformed into towns, a certain portion of the ablebodied population of the surrounding villages are being attracted to work at these new industrial centres. The growth of 'Pendulum migration'

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28. Ibid., p.56.

29. Ibid., p.59.

between agriculture and industry testifies to the fact that the village is losing one of its traditional features - low 'Mobility' of the population. At the beginning of the 1970s, there were four million people working in the newly emerged urban centres.<sup>30</sup>

While the interaction of different sectors of economy in the countryside is leading to a merger of cooperative and public means of production, a significant shift in social relationships is also evident. On the one hand, the continuing increase in inter-farm cooperation is spreading the equalization of production conditions and economic potentials of all the farms, while on the other hand it is giving rise to a number of features and characteristics shared by both state and collective farms.

Two tendencies - differentiation and integration are constantly increasing in the development of social relationship in the countryside. The farmer signifies a deepening division of labour and the advance forefront

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30. Ibid., p.59.

of differences connected with the division of labour by branch and occupation and with the specialization and qualification of personnel. Under this process, we find the emergence of specialised groups of personnel such as those employed by the Farm Equipment Supply Organization (who number 1.5 million). Land improvement workers (1.3 million), Personnel in the organization of the ministry of Rural Construction and the inter-collective Farm Construction Agency (2 million), the personnel of service industry enterprises (449,000) and others.<sup>31</sup>

The second tendency signifies the emergence of signs of interaction and the development of features common to the social aspects of all Soviet people. In particular, the trend towards homogeneity in terms of social class is leading to gradual obliteration of the principal class characteristics of the peasantry. The process of the intensification of the features of integration for the peasantry signifies: (a) the adoption by the peasantry of the best socio-political and ethical

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31. Ibid., p.66.

features of the working class (b) the emergence of common qualities characterising the contemporary socialist worker and the peasantry; (c) and a convergence between basic groups of the peasantry, and persons performing mental work ( a part of the production personnel of the collective farm).<sup>32</sup>

There has been a considerable decline in unevenness in the educational levels of different social groups in the Soviet Union previously unfavourable to the collective farmers. Thus in 1959, there were four times as many peoples with seven or more years of schooling per 1000 persons among professionals, semi-professionals and white-collar people than among collective farmers. By 1975, the gap had declined to 1.8 times.<sup>33</sup> During the seven year plan period (1959-65) the number of persons with a secondary education rose from 23 to 31 per cent among collective farmers.<sup>34</sup> The number of

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32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.

34. A. Kosygin, Report on the directives for the Five Year Economic Development Plan of the USSR for 1966-70 in 2nd Congress of the CPSU (Moscow, 1966), p.174.

persons with higher and secondary specialised education increased from 12 to 36 per thousand employed in collective farms.<sup>35</sup>

Working Class:

Under the developed socialism the STR has brought radical change in the content and nature of labour of the workers, in their position in the production process and in the level of their general education and technical training. The change in labour power are mainly in the following directions: (1) Complete elimination from production of all kinds of arduous, unskilled and little skilled labour; (2) Transition of all workers to a higher stage of general and technical education when a complete secondary or specialised secondary becomes the lowest boundary; (3) Abolition of the old vocational division of labour and transition to a new division of labour based on broad theoretical training and the acquisition of many sided production

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35. Simush, n.7, pp.56-57.

skills; and all round development of production workers on the basis of organically combining manual and mental labour.<sup>36</sup>

Over all automation and mechanization which are the characteristics of the present day STR extend the vocational range of workers abolish narrow specialization and enhance the creative nature of labour. Changes thus taken place in the function of the main groups of workers previously engaged in the direct operation and service of equipment. The size of this category of workers is greatly reduced due to automation. On the other hand, there is a steep raise in the share of jobs in maintaining and setting up automatic trans and machines. *Line 2* Automated production thus changes the proportion between different groups of workers of enterprises and their functions. A new technical division of

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36. Borisov, Political Economic Problems of the Contemporary Scientific & Technological Revolution, in the USSR Academy of Science ed., The STR and the Modern Society, (Calcutta, 1970), p.46.

labour occurs where the major agents of the new aggregate labourer of an enterprise become the adjuster, repairman, electrician, programmer and engineer and technician.<sup>37</sup>

The development of the working class in the Soviet society in this period has been two fold: extensive and intensive. The first process signifies the induction of a new generation of the workers into state farm sector and state industry with higher general education and modern occupational training of a skilled kind suited to the requirements of automated and mechanised sections. The second process signifies the acquisition of higher educational qualifications and modern vocational skilled training by the already existing members of working class in order to work in the hard industrial establishments. The 1960s were in general characterised by a tendency towards both absolute and relative increase in the

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37. Ibid., p.47

number of workers being trained for upgrading <sup>38</sup>.

In the rural sector, the reequipping of state farms and rural state enterprises with modern achievements of the STR, creation of new mechanised and automated industries in the rural areas have been responsible for the growth in agrarian component of the working class with more and more specialised skills and with higher general and technical education. This has considerably contributed to the growing similarity of the working class population in town and country. This process has been further reinforced by the increasing material and cultural facilities provided to them through increased salary, large share from social customs funds, large distribution of material and cultural goods, i.e. television and radio facilities, medical and educational benefits and so on.

In the urban sector too, the existing industries and services are being reequipped with modern technology

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38. See Table 2.



and on scientific basis, and new ones are being created. As a result, here, also the working class has equipped with new skills educational qualifications.

As far education, during the seven year plan period the number of persons with a secondary education rose from 45 to 58 per cent among industrial workers.<sup>39</sup> In 1959 there were 386 workers with higher or secondary education per 1000, by the end of 1970 this figure reached 550.<sup>40</sup> The number of personnel with higher and secondary specialised education in state farm more than doubled from 1965 to 1975; from 27 to 58 per thousand.<sup>41</sup>

Intelligentsia represents the highest group in Soviet social structure in terms of its mental skills, culture life style, socio-political awareness and directions to socio-political and economic life of the Soviet society. It is undergoing a significant transformation under the development of its professional skills, culture and life style.

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39. Kosygin, n.34, p.174.

40. Report of the CPSU Central Committee, n.11, p.86.

41. Simush, n.7, pp.56-57.

The major trend in the development of intelligentsia is its changing composition in the sphere of science and technology. The development of the productive forces under the conditions of developed socialism and under the influence of the STR creates real opportunities for further growth of the intelligentsia. In 1939, Soviet society had a social class structure corresponding to the initial stages of the building socialism; workers numbered 33.5 per cent, intelligentsia were 16.7 per cent ( all persons doing non manual work) and the collective farm peasantry together with craftsmen belonging to cooperatives comprised 47.2 per cent. In 1959, 49.5 per cent of the population consisted of workers, 31.4 per cent collective farmers and 18.8 per cent intelligentsia. In 1975, the last group had become 22.2 per cent.<sup>42</sup>

A numerical rise in the personnel engaged in mental labour has occurred in every branch of the economy, but it has been largest in science, industry, construction

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42. I.S. Puchkov & G.A. Popov, 'Socio-demographic characteristics of Science Personnel (Part-I)', Soviet Sociology, vol.16, no.3, Winter 1977, p.68.

and agriculture, and also in transport and communication enterprises. Between 1940 and 1950 the number of scientific workers in the USSR increased from 98,300 to 162,500 persons, that is to say, less than two-fold. During the next decade their number rose to more than double, to 354,200. The next 100 per cent increase was achieved within six years and by 1966 the number of scientific workers reached 712,400; while by 1970 the figure was 927,700 and by 1975 it has reached 1,223,400.<sup>43</sup> This process cannot be a permanent one, since doubling would occur even more frequently and "the entire population would very soon be absorbed in the sphere of scientific activities."<sup>44</sup>

There are many professions in the Soviet Union which are being replaced by entirely new ones. Recently

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43. V. Movkhov & Y. Meleshchenko, 'Specific features and social consequences of the scientific & Technological Revolution, in Robert Deglish, ed., The scientific and Technological Revolution: Social effects and prospects (Moscow, 1972), p.147; T. Khaturov, The Economy of the Soviet Union Today (Moscow, 1977), Chapter VII, Scientific & Technological Progress and the development of socialist production, p.151.

44. Mokhov & Meleshevenko, n.43, p.147.

under the STR, there has been sharp growth in the number of specialists in cybernetics, the atomic industry, space vehicles, construction and design, rocketery, quantum generators etc.

In addition to scientific personnel, many other social groups under the stratum of intelligentsia have developed under the STR. According to Z.I. Monich, the leaders of farming brigades and the heads of livestock units in the rural sector also come into the category of intelligentsia.

The STR is bringing new occupations into being agricultural chemist, technician for labour-intelligentsia processes in livestock farming, electrical technician, planning economist so forth. For example, an entirely new occupational grouping that of economists - have developed in the collective and state forms of Belorussian Republic. There the number of Planner Economists grow from 2,500 to 3,200 between 1965 and 1969.<sup>45</sup>

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45. Zinda I. Monich, The Professional and Para Professional component in the structure of the rural population, (Based on Data from the Belorussian SSR), Soviet Sociology, Vol.12, no.3, Winter 1973,74, p.38.

This professional groups will continue to grow immensely as such posts have not yet been filled on all the farms.

In addition to the growth in the number of intelligentsia directly engaged in material production there has also been a considerable increase in the number of that section of intelligentsia who are engaged in non material sector of the Soviet economy.

The Emergence of Social Homogeneity:

Under the conditions of developed socialism there has been an intensive development of the processes whereby Soviet society has been becoming socially homogeneous. This tendency has further being intensified under the influence of the revolution in science and technology. One of the most important manifestations of the gradual emergence of social homogeneity in Soviet society in the over closer convergence and often direct merger with the working class of those groups in the toiling population that had previously differed significantly from it by third place in a specific historical system of societal production, by their relationship to the means of production, by their role

in the social organization of work and consequently, by the methods through which they acquired social wealth and by the size of the share of the social wealth at their disposal.<sup>46</sup>

The emergence of social homogeneity and the convergence of classes and social strata in Soviet society is an extremely complex process occurring on many planes under the influence of social, political and economic factors; it is expressed in various phenomena of culture and reflects social and cultural changes in Soviet society.

The acutest disputes among the Soviet sociologists are those with respect to the question of the convergence and merger with the working class of office personnel and the intelligentsia who, in their majority, like the workers are employed in the state

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46. Gordon & Klopov, The Social development of the working class of the USSR, Soviet Law & Govt., Vol.II no.3, Winter 1972-73, pp. 242-43.

sector of the economy. Essentially the discussion centres around one, but central point of the problem as to whether there exist grounds to speak of high level convergence of these groups or their sub-divisions with the working class and even of their becoming part of the working class. Discussion of these problems is not merely of theoretical interest and acquires greater significance by the fact that it pertains to the paths and character of development of large groups of the working people which are constantly increasing in number. The intelligentsia and office personnel in the Soviet Union number tens of million.

The basis of the convergence of persons doing no physical work in services (office personnel in the narrow meaning of the word) with the working class is the fact that both perform the same kind of work - primarily implementary, repetative, and occupy fundamentally identical position in the system of social production (that is to say, the work of most office personnel and nearly all workers is not in any way involved with giving direction to the people). . Important closeness

to each other of the workers and office personnel as social categories and factors making for their convergence are the gradual elimination of the formerly very substantial differences in the levels of education and the standard of living. This closeness is further manifested in the repeated changing of jobs (for the ready availability of such change) in the course of a life-time during which office personnel become workers and vice-versa. The growing unity in daily life of these groups and the wide occurrence of families containing both workers and office personnel further reinforce their social similarity.<sup>47</sup>

Major changes are also occurring in the status of intelligentsia and its relationship with the working class. Significant differences bearing a class character between the working class and the intelligentsia disappeared comparatively long ago.

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47. Ibid., pp.248-9.



In the pre-revolutionary Russia most of the intelligentsia had been either part of the exploiting classes or closely associated with the latter. Under the building of and consolidation of socialism, these differences disappeared. The bulk of the intelligentsia today do not differ their objective relationship to the means of production and their ethnical and political attitudes. The developed socialism is bringing intelligentsia and working class together.

In the first place, the growth in the number of the intelligentsia has been sharp and at a more head long process than any other social groups in the generally employed population of the USSR.<sup>48</sup> Also the membership in this group has lost the elite meaning it may have had in the past. The professions of engineer, teacher, physicians, economist and agronomist, have come to exist on the same mass scales as workers' trades. The mass

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48. See Table 4.

character of the professions of intelligentsia as well as the elimination of the social, cultural, and material barriers that formerly hindered the working people from access to this stratum has opened broad potential for filling the intelligentsia with the people of working class as well of peasant origin.

Secondly, unlike the past a large number of intelligentsia today is engaged in the sphere of material production, by the end of 1960s over 40 per cent of the intelligentsia, which rose to 7 million persons in 1970 were engaged in material production.<sup>49</sup>

As a result of above development, the majority of professional intelligentsia engaged in material production are employed as members of large work forces and are subject to their discipline organization and interest. Furthermore, in the course of STR, there has been an increase in the group of professionals

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49. See Table 5.

chore work differs little from that of workers in terms of the degree to which it is sub-divided.<sup>50</sup>

Thus, today in addition to the same relationship to property, the participation in material production collectivity size of work staff and the organised nature of work created close convergence between substantial strata of intelligentsia and the working class. The convergence, however, is not complete and significant functional differences persist between the engineering and technological intelligentsia and the production workers as such. These differences will disappear only with further fundamental change in the character and content of labour in the course of the reorganization of material and intellectual production under the influence of the STR and with further development of social relationships. For the intelligentsia continues to differ from the working class in level of culture and life style.

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50. Gordon and Klopov, n.46, p.253.

In conclusion, the social structure of the Soviet society by the mid 1970s had thus become developed under developed socialism. This maturity was determined by the degree of elimination of existing socio-class distinctions, by society's readiness for the processes of obliterating distinctions between classes, stratum, social section and groups. The relevant process of obliteration of social distinctions between the working class and the collective farm peasantry, between them and intelligentsia, between manual and mental labour, between town and country, as well as of their drawing together took place on the basis of the high achievement in the development of the productive forces, achievements in improving distribution and labour conditions advances in the skills, material and cultural levels of working people, in their political activity and participation in administering social affairs.

The working class which numbered almost 66 million and made up 56 per cent of the employed population in 1975 was the most advanced, organised

and leading social groups; the proportion of highly educated and skilled workers is increasing. As the chief productive force and as the carrier of technological progress it holds the leading position in the system of socialist social relations.<sup>51</sup>

Although the collective farm peasantry as a whole decreased in terms of size and proportion in the social structure, its most advanced sector connected with technology, i.e. machine operators, is steadily growing. This brings the alliance of the working class and the peasantry to a new and more equal level.

The strata of intelligentsia and office employees have also undergone qualitative and quantitative changes. The increasing growth rates of the scientific and technological intelligentsia in the recent years have created even broader prospects

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51. V. Semenov, Reprints from the Soviet Press, (New York) Vol.16, n.7, 6 April, 1973, p.13.

for the development of labour which combines mental and manual functions. Thus the gap between the workers and collective farmer on the one hand and the intelligentsia and office employees on the other have considerably been bridged new phenomena in the structure of the Soviet society.

TABLE - I

GROWTH OF INDUSTRIAL OUT PUT (1960-1965)

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	1960	1965	1965 % of 1960
Gross Industrial output (Thousand million roubles)	155	234	15%

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Source: L. Brezhnev, Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the 2nd Congress of the CPSU, in 23rd Congress of the CPSU, (Moscow, 1966).

TABLE - 2

TRAINING AND UPGRADATION OF WORKERS

	1940	1950	1960	1965	1970
Graduation of workers from trade & technical schools (Thousands)	-	493	741	1100	1638
-ratio thereof to average annual number of workers %	-	1.8	1.7	2.0	2.6
Number of workers taught new occupations and skills of enterprises and institutions(Thousands)	1606	2326	2807	2407	4500
-ratio thereof to average number of workers %	7.0	8.4	6.3	6.3	7.3
Number of workers given upgrading training at enterprises and institutions (Thousands)	1472	3490	5358	7225	9000
-ratio there of to average annual number of workers %	6.4	12.6	12.1	13.4	14.5

Note: These data do not include information on the training of skilled personnel in collective farms or in paid courses in the general schools.

Source: Cited in L.A. Gordon and E.V. Klopov, 'The Social development of the Working Class of the USSR, Soviet Law & Govt., Vol.11, no.3, Winter 1972-73, p.244.



TABLE - 3

NUMBER OF PERSONS WITH HIGHER AND SECONDARY SPECIALISED EDUCATION EMPLOYED IN THE SOVIET ECONOMY AND THEIR SHARE IN THE TOTAL NUMBER OF WORKERS & OFFICE PERSONNEL

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	1928	1941	1950	1960	1965	1970
Number of Professionals (Millions)	.5	2.5	3.3	8.8	12.1	16.8
As % of total number of workers and office personnel	4.5	7.0	8.0	14.0	15.5	18.8

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Note: Office Personnel have been taken for white collar employed.

Source: Gordon and Klopov, 'The Social development of the Working Class of the USSR', Soviet Law & Govt., Vol.11, no.3, Winter 1972-73, p. 252.

## CONCLUSION

The Social Structure symbolises the nature of development of a society. It helps us to understand a society and its dynamics in a systematic manner. Every society has its own social structure. Their social structures are qualitatively different depending on their prevailing socio-economic system, e.g. capitalist and socialist.

In the feudal society, feudal land lords were dominating society. They were the ruling class. In the capitalist society, capitalists dominate the society. We find all types of inequalities in these societies. There are indeed conflicting perceptions of what constitutes social structure. Herbert Spencer elaborated social structure for the first time. Later it was defined by different sociologists in different ways.

In the 'structural analysis, the basic unit is the 'role, i.e., a complex of behaviour expectations which are associated with a given social position or status, the human individual in the fullness of his

expressions figures only as an incumbent of such position and 'player' of a role. The relation between roles and their agglomerations around certain institutional spheres (occupations, education, family, politics etc.) are expressed by the concept of function that is to say, by their latent or explicit (Manifesto) consequence for the functioning of the total structure. Thus, the structure of a society, in such an approach, presents itself in its most formal aspects as a functional system the units of which are social roles and role sets.

Marxism, on the other hand, visualizes a socio-economic system that liberates humanity from all kinds of exploitation, demonstrates the connection of social classes with a particular phase of the development of production and consequently reveals the functional structure (the division of labour and private property) which serves as the basis of the existence of the corresponding social groups. Thus, it also makes it possible to approach scientifically both the organizational structure of

society and social action.

Since Marx's main concern was social change, the category of social structure therefore was no more than a tool to tackle this problem, his theory of a cross-section of society arrested in time, in particular, not a theory of social stratification but a tool for the explanation of change in total societies.

Soviet society is based on Marxism and Leninism, and so only by applying the Marxian approach we can understand and study social structure in the Soviet Union.

The Marxist theory, the social structure of a socialist society is not marked by the absence of classes or strata. The social inequality that persists during the stage of socialism is a legacy from antagonistic social orders. Because of social nature of property there is equality of all members in relation to the means of production. There are no antipodal or antagonistic social groups in a socialist

society. But differences still remain in relation to socialist property associated with its existence in two principal forms. (working class and the collective form peasantry) and in degree of utilization of property (this is the basis for differences under socialism between workers of differing skills and complexity of labour, between personnel in mental and manual labour, between urban and rural residents.

Since the differences of the first type in relation to the means of production are not inherent in the first phase of communism, i.e. socialism, they are overcome more rapidly than the differences of the second type. In long run, it is expected, the differences between town and country, and between skill and non-skill will also disappear.

Marxist-Leninist analysis of social structure, an important plank of building up the theoretical as well as material basis of the social system in the Soviet Union, even though it faced serious problems, in the initial stage with the land lords, kulaks and

with the bourgeoisie they overcome all these difficulties.

After the Bolshevik revolution land was nationalised and was given rent free to peasants. The redistribution of land through the Decree of January 1918 was a major step towards minimizing differentiation in social structure. All industrial, financial and trade enterprises were nationalized. The Decree on workers control led to several factories being taken over by workers. The Declaration of the Rights of the peoples of Russia proclaimed the equality and sovereignty of all nationalities in the country, their right to free self-determination and the abolition of all national privileges, the free development of all national minorities and ethnographic groups. These were some of the drastic steps taken by Soviet government during the initial stage to build a socialist society. In the latter stages, particularly during New Economic Policy (NEP) period some concessions were given to the private property owners, but withdrawn subsequently in late 1920s and 1930s. Along with collectivization and industrialization was

abolished all types of class inequalities. The education system was made uniform with due emphasis over physical and non manual training so that the common differentiation between mental and manual labour can be eliminated. The main thrust of planned egalitarianism was to bring a revolutionary change in the social structure by way of de-classing the possessive classes and also through the minimization of wage differences so that re-emergence of the qualities could be prevented. Complete equality was not and could not be a Bolshevik aim during the years following the revolution, but what Lenin wanted was to ensure the rule of the proletariat in order to prepare the back ground of socialist construction.

Even the wage differentials were narrowed down to a large extent in the initial years of war communism (1918-21). In this process the pre-revolutionary class structure of Soviet society was



largely destroyed, partially during the phase of revolutionary turmoil and partially as a result of conscious design. The basic stratified social groups in the initial stage were the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, peasantry and the proletariat.

The initial period of industrialization and collectivization (1928-30) helped in eliminating the Kulaks and NEP men and also attempted to remove the fundamental contradiction in the Soviet economy existing between socialist industry and private agriculture.

Since the end of 1950s there were qualitative changes in the Soviet social structure. The year 1959 saw an important political event in the Soviet Union. The extraordinary Twenty-first congress of the CPSU was held in 1959 which examined and endorsed the basic directions of the Seven year plan of development of the national economy (1959-65).

The Congress reflected extensively on the concept of building the material and technical base of communism in the USSR, provided a new stimulus to the development of a new social structure in the USSR with the help of STR. This period is very important in the Soviet history.

With the acquisition of the new advanced skills and higher education by the people cutting across socio-economic distinctions, as both the pre-requisites and result of the STR, the increase in social wealth and its equitable distribution among the people, with special emphasis to favour and uplift the lower strata of the population, there has come about a further, narrowing of the socio-economic and cultural differences between the working class and the intelligentsia, the peasantry and intelligentsia and so on and so forth. The trend of homogeneity and convergence among the people of different classes and strata have been taking place at a higher level. This is also illustrated by another significant change in Soviet social structure, namely, the reduction in

the number of the peasantry and manual workers, which means their absorption (through upgrading of skills and education) into the intellegentsia and skilled labour force. This also means increase in the number of the latter groups.

Another trend to be noted is the emergence of inter - collective form cooperation and agro-industrial integration which has been abliterating the traditional features of collective farms. This in association with the application of the achievements of the STR to the rural sector have created conditions whereby another traditional and inherited distinction between rural and urban areas is being gradually bridged.

The trend of convergence and homogeneity, however is not yet completed. Significant functional, socio-economic and cultural differences persist among different classes and groups in the Soviet society. So is the case with the differences between rural and urban areas, agriculture and industry and and so on. With further development of socialism and

its wider application to the society, and industrialization on an intensive scale can eliminate in the course of time the difference existing at present.

In this period, there has also been new developments in the class structure. Working class is developing numerically, peasantry has been reduced. Intellegentsia has changed its old nature. Today's intellegentsia belongs to working class socio-occupational strata are developing because of intensive industrialization, scientific and technological revolution.

The trend is towards the coming together of various social classes and groups in their cultural, social and economical life.

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