The successes of socialism in the USSR
(Revolutionary Communist Party of France/PCRF)

Socialism in the USSR has shown and paved the way to progress for the peoples of the world. In France, in our primary strategy of building the party, the defence of socialism and its achievements occupy an essential place, even in the defensive context of an unfavorable balance of power. By means of demonstration, it is necessary to re-establish the historical truth in order to arm the contemporary revolutionary battle for socialism-communism. The colossal successes of the USSR are unimaginable in a capitalist country. These successes and social achievements are the consequence of the material and political foundations under socialism, the unavoidable prerequisite being the socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. The strategy of the communist parties is the transition to socialism-communism, that is to say, the transition to a system that sets itself the goal of liquidating all exploitation. An unprecedented event in the history of mankind. The transition from slavery to feudalism and from feudalism to capitalism is the transition from one system of exploitation to another which allows for compromises between the dominant classes of the mode of production. However, in order to move from capitalism to socialism, i.e. to the abolition of all exploitation, there can be no compromise with precisely the antagonistic exploiting class: the monopoly bourgeoisie. The question of the conquest of power is therefore a cardinal question for Marxism. The popular masses under the leadership of the working class, by means of revolution, will break the state apparatus of Capital and establish a new state with its own apparatus composed of revolutionary militants, a state led by the proletariat in alliance with the other popular strata, this is the dictatorship of the proletariat. Throughout the period of transition to communism, the class struggle continues in renewed forms thanks to the support from above, that is to say, from the revolutionary power. This is a decisive issue that was realised in the USSR in its ascendant phase, that is to say until the 1950s. **The foundation of the USSR and its fundamental successes are based on universal features of socialism.** *"The distinguishing feature of Communism is not the abolition of property generally, but the abolition of bourgeois property*". (Marx and Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*). After the revolution, Soviet power, through nationalisation, allowed the means of production to cease to belong to Capital. Nationalisation transferred the means of production to the whole of society: factories, banks, large businesses, land, as well as the instruments of production. Proletarian and popular state power is the guarantee that nationalisation truly acquires a character of social property. Thus, all the wealth produced by society is neither appropriated nor diverted by any owning class. In the USSR, by the 1930s, 99.4% of the means of industrial production were nationalised and thus socialised thanks to the very nature of the proletarian state. This meant that for the first time in humanity, the products of labour belonged to all members of society and not to a possessing class such as the bourgeoisie under the rule of Capital, which appropriates most of it. At that same time, the USSR was the first country in the world to liquidate capitalist exploitation. Unemployment, one of the cruelest scourges of the exploitative system, was eliminated as early as 1930. Under socialism, too, one of the oldest and most fundamental social demands of the proletariat is realised: the abolition of the wages system. The salary continues to exist but not the wage system, because labour power is no longer a commodity bought by some capitalist. The new relations of production engendered by the socialisation of the economy will divide the working day into work for oneself (salary) and work for society, that is, for productive investment, social and collective needs (health, education, leisure, access to culture, housing, transport), which are inaccessible to all proletarians in other capitalist countries. **The result is the continuous and increasing satisfaction of material and cultural needs.** The wage will therefore be the result of the distribution of work according to the principle of "to each according to his work", in other words, each person will be paid according to his ability, his commitment to production. In the socialist enterprises, with all the means of production belonging to the state, it was the government and the Gosplan (in charge of the plan), in consultation and discussion with the soviets and the governments of the various republics, which fixed production - always upwards - and prices, in relation to economic and social needs. Criticism and self-criticism, the driving forces of the socialist development, were exercised both from below

(the soviets, the trade union) and from above through the ministries. This meant a constant struggle by the Bolshevik Party against bureaucratic tendencies which tried to stifle or minimise criticism from below, or even to minimise the role of vanguard workers who challenged the routine. In the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s, the companies as a whole formed a single economic complex, where each company worked optimally to serve the others. In those years, profitability was conceived on a national scale. The new production relations ensured an uninterrupted increase in modern technology and machinery without fear of redundancies or company closures. Under Stalin's leadership, the increase in productivity was reflected in the real decrease in the prices of everyday consumer goods. The systematic policy of price reduction had a real effect on the standard of living of the Soviets: from 1947 to 1954, for example, the prices of the most common goods fell by 56.5%. From 1917 to 1954, purchasing power increased by 600%. The USSR was also at the forefront of social progress: paid holidays, retirement at 55 and 60, holidays, length of the working day, low-cost housing and heating. Social insurance (health, pensions) was paid for by the state and covered all workers. The amount of social insurance increased from 8.9 billion in 1928 to 123 billion in 1955. The development of national income, that is to say, the wealth of the whole country, rose (at unchanged prices) from 25 billion roubles in 1928 to 128 billion in 1940. Each year, in Soviet enterprises, a collective agreement was signed defining the means of implementing the Plan and of increasing wages. **A cultural revolution will take place in the USSR on the basis of infrastructure.** In medicine, culture, engineering and science, the USSR was in the vanguard of humanity. For the first time in history, men and women worked for themselves, the Stakhanovist movement was a concrete expression of that process. Political socialist emulation was the result of a radical change in human behaviour towards work and was based on the principle of mutual aid at work, which can be translated into the well-known aphorism: "All for one and one for all !" **Collectivisation, economic planning, fundamental law of socialism.** In the USSR, there were two forms of property. Socialist collective property, common to all the people, and cooperative property, that of the peasants grouped in production cooperatives : the kolkhozes. Cooperative property is a lesser form of social property, as it is de facto a group property. In the USSR, land was nationalised and common property of the people. The transition to the kolkhoz economy profoundly transformed rural life. In order to consolidate the worker-peasant alliance, the Machine-Tractor Stations (MTS) played a very important role until 1957. These stations, run by the working class, provided the material and technical basis for the kolkhozes. There was also a higher form of property in the countryside: the sovkhozes (nationalised state farms) were large enterprises equipped with the most modern technology. In 1955, there were more than 5000 sovkhozes. Another feature and advantage of social ownership of the means of production is the possibility of planning and steering the economy as a whole, whereas capitalism means competition between companies and workers. Socialism, in fact, puts an end to the anarchy of production. The law of value (money circulation, law of supply and demand) is no longer the regulator of the economy, unlike capitalism. Under socialism, thanks to planning, production and the productive forces will be distributed according to priorities (catching up of backward economic regions, heavy industry producing the means of production) in order to satisfy the growing needs expressed by the population and the country's governing bodies. The five-year plan was thus the instrument for the "harmonious and proportional development" of the national economy. The five-year plan was therefore imperative, at least in the first economic plans before the 1965 reform, which made the profit of each company the number one indicator. The state monopoly on foreign trade is also one of the pillars of socialist construction. It prohibits, at the same time, any plundering of other countries, while rejecting the export of capital (proper to imperialism), the "purchase" of enterprises abroad, and it similarly protects the socialist state from any penetration of international capital. **All these existing political and economic criteria in the USSR will allow a new economic law to emerge and develop during the socialist phase of the transition to communism:** *"The securing of the maximum satisfaction of the constantly rising material and cultural requirements of the whole of society through the continuous expansion and perfection of socialist production on the basis of higher techniques.*" (J.V. Stalin, *"Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR"*. From gender or nationality discriminations to the woes of taxes, indecent housing, unemployment, precarity, poor health, high

living costs, exploitation at work, all the evils of capitalism were overcome by the founding of the USSR. The struggle to develop the foundations of communism and against the bureaucracy unfortunately came to an end with the arrival in power of Khrushchev's opportunist leadership, which engaged in a series of reforms based on the law of value, weakening socialist planning (closure of the Machine-Tractor Stations (1957), economic decentralisation with the law on sovnarkhozes and then the Liberman-Trapeznikov reforms (1965) on profitability by enterprise. These and other international policies led to the reconstitution of a bourgeoisie and the restoration of capitalism with the legalisation of private ownership of the means of production under Gorbachev. In our period of world-wide counter-revolution and new opportunist theses on the "socialism of the 21st century" or "market socialism", the creation of the USSR with its successes but also its demise are the most precious goods of Marxists not only to understand concretely the laws of socialism, what makes socialism, but also what socialism is not. Long live the eternal good of humanity, long live the USSR !