

THE FALL OF THE SOVIET EMPIRE

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SOVIET FEDERALISM BETWEEN UNITARISM AND NATIONALISM

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It seems evident that the Soviet Union disintegrated because of the continuous growth of centrifugal forces inside the Soviet empire. But, perhaps, it would be more exactly explained not by the centrifugal forces being too strong, but by the centripetal forces being too weak. The weakness of the centripetal forces, which may be called the weakness of Soviet federalism, was a natural outcome of the entire Soviet development model, though the roots of that weakness are found also in the pre-Revolutionary past.

Early Federalism

Speaking about the moods of Russian nobility, the provincial "regional elite" of Catherine's times, of the classic imperial period, Kliuchevsky said that it had not sought to take part in the central administration of the country, that all its political aspirations had been linked up with the local self-government. "Giving us the uyezds, govern the capital in the way you wish."¹

What had been convenient in the conditions of relatively homogeneous, autarchic landlords' economic management, was quickly losing any sense when urban kinds of activities and economic space of the country were becoming more and more saturated, differentiated and heterogeneous. About the mid-19th century, Russia's gradual modernization resulted in the realization of the independent economic interests of the regions; there, the forces of self-organization opposing the excessive imperial centralization were becoming active.

The narrow upper stratum of nobility dissolved in the broader stratum of new regional elite, which besides the remnants of the old nobility comprised also the bourgeoisie-merchants and industrialists, higher officials, the university professors, cultural workers, and to the certain extent, the entire petty intelligentsia. Making use of the numerous channels of social promotion and enrichment, created by modernization, the new regional elites wanted more independence and started the struggle for greater influence in the Center; they wanted not to acquire absolute power in the empire, as it had

happened in the past but to make stronger their positions in the inter-regional competition.

The Siberian "regionalism" (*oblastnichestvo*) may be a good example of the early emergence of such demands. As one of its active proponents G. Potanin wrote: "the first cry of the springing up of the Siberian regionalism heard, in the fortieth [of the 19th century], had been: "The natural wealth of Siberia is the property of the region!" It immediately and successfully outlined the sphere of economic interests as the basis of the Siberian regionalism.² Potanin stressed the natural character of the division of the empire into separate regions and of their economic competition. "The tendency of regionalism, supported by the economic competition of the parts of the state, is entitled to exist as long as the state itself."³

It means that the regionalists did not simply aspire for autonomy inside their regions, like the nobility of the Catherine times, but sought to expand their rights at the all-Russian scene. Their aspirations formed the ideology of federalism, that is the enhancement of the status of regions (provinces, *oblasts*) to the level enabling them, acting through their representatives in the supreme bodies of power, to effectively defend their interests and restrict the Center's absolute power. Throughout the 19th century, with the consolidation of new regional elites, the federalist demands were voiced ever louder. Their essence was always the same: the redivision of economic, and, if possible, of political power, too, between the regions and the imperial Center in favor of the former.

Crisis of Ethnicity and Nationalism

In the second half of the 19th century, the real forces of the young Russian federalism were not sufficient for such a redivision. But it found a powerful ally in the national movements. Like regionalism, these movements were also born by modernization. Dooming to disappearance the traditional Russian agrarian society, it devalued the ethno-cultural integrators inherent in it and gave rise to the phenomenon which can be called the "crisis of ethnicity."

There was a time when the illiterate peasant in any part of the Empire regarded the language of his father as natural and the only possible. But with the emergence of big cities, railways and modern education the situation became more complex. The knowledge only of his native tongue proved insufficient for a Georgian, Tartar or Ukrainian, who left their native village to enter the big imperial

world. The growth of the mobility of the population strengthened the "imperial" role of the Russian language, and, at the same time, increased the number of those who were forced to use it, not being their native tongue. The lack or poor knowledge of Russian served as a barrier on the road of social uplift desired by a growing number of the representatives of the non-Great Russian ethnicities, life put before them the necessity of a choice or compromise between the native and the Russian languages.

The linguistic situation is only one example of the competition that started between the local and the imperial, demanding to take a difficult choice. The same happened in the sphere of religion, customs, rules of the every day life, etc. Step by step, with different speed for different social, ethnic, linguistic or religious groups, the society was drawn into agonizing search of a new "Us" and a new "They." The imperial consciousness was losing its integrity, bifurcated, and a cultural, value conflict was growing.

Being an obvious consequence of the successes of modernization, it did not become less painful and was regarded by many as the result not of the inner development of societies undergoing modernization, but of the insidious external interference. The deep internal conflict between the old and the new was seen only as the struggle between the idealized "own" and the criticized "foreign." In this way, the ideas and sentiments feeding the national and nationalistic movements took shape, and acquired a mass scale. The successes of modernization aggravated the conflict; the national movements, moderate at first, became more radical, and their attempts to defend the cultural identity of their peoples, their languages, etc., have given way to the slogan of "national liberation," in effect, the demand that "political and ethnic units coincide and that the governed and the governing inside a given political unit belong to one and the same ethnos."⁴ Gellner saw in this demand the essence of nationalism.

The regional elites were quick to realize what a powerful support in the struggle for the redivision of power and influence between them and the imperial Center they may receive from the national movements. The temptation to appeal to ethnic sentiments was so great that even the Russian Siberian "regionalists" tried to develop an "ethnic genealogy" for themselves by coming forward with the idea "of formation by way of crossing and the local physical-historical and ethnological conditions, of a homogeneous and somewhat peculiar regional people."⁵ But in the non-Great

Russian parts of the Empire federalism more and more acquired the national colouring, and at the end of the 19th century merged almost completely with nationalism. The *regional* elites felt more and more confident, when they could rely on national movements and feel themselves as *national* elites, too.

The Symbiosis of Federalism and Nationalism

Objectively, the federalist and nationalistic forces and movements in the Russian Empire were not identical; rather, in many respects they had to oppose each other. Though both of them were engendered by modernization, the future of the former was objectively linked up with the successes of modernization and the use of its results, while the latter were, in fact, an anti-modernist response and were oriented at the return to the past. Potentially, regional federalism and ethnic nationalism are enemies.

But in the actual conditions of the Russian Empire of the early 20th century federalism and nationalism had substantial spheres of coincidences of interests, which resulted in their rapprochement. The symbiosis of federalism and nationalism engendered a contradictory concept of "national-territorial autonomy." At the beginning, the regionalists and nationalists in Russia were spokesmen of different "aggregates," as the borders of territories and ethnicities in Russia never coincided. The compromise idea of the "national-territorial autonomy" disregarded this "discrepancy," not to speak of more profound differences and contradictions of regionalism and nationalism.

Regional demands became regional-national, though in the beginning they were formulated in the terms of federalism and did not infringe on the integrity of the Empire. Even at the beginning of the 20th century the attitude expressed, by example, by one of the Ukrainian leaders M. Hrushevsky was characteristic of the majority of national movements in the Russian Empire. Hrushevsky said: "The form which best ensures the unhindered existence and development of peoples and provinces..., is recognized by progressive Ukrainian platform as the national-territorial autonomy and the federal state."⁶ But the border dividing the national-territorial federalism from separatism was very thin. Entering into the alliance with nationalism, federalism would seem to have strengthened its positions. But, in reality, it found itself a hostage of nationalism, and under the roof of moderate federalism extreme separatist sentiments ripened; in the final account, they just awaited their hour and that hour came.

After the downfall of the central power during the 1917 Revolution the programs of all national movements became more radical, and demand of full independence substituted for the demands of national-territorial autonomy. At that time Hrushevsky, who in March, 1917, occupied the post of Chairman of the Ukrainian Central Rada, wrote: "Not breaking away from the federalist tradition as the leading idea of our national-political life, we must firmly say that now independence and self dependency are our slogan."⁷

To promulgate the autonomy and independence of many parts of the Empire proved easier than to retain them. In many cases the regional elites lacked either the necessary strength, or sufficient social base to defend their self-dependency, their own attitude being contradictory. The shoots of the new were, as a rule, weaker at the outskirts of the Empire than at the center, and the disintegration of the Empire made them even weaker. Anti-modernist reaction got an impetus, always accompanying ethnic nationalism. A "fundamentalist" revision of new values commenced. All that influenced the interests not only of the new bourgeois elites, but also of the broader strata of the society coming into motion, the strata most active because they wanted to change the conditions of their life. The rejection of modernization or its slowing down meant that the just opened channels of horizontal and vertical mobility became more narrow and sometime even completely closed. Such danger could not but engender active opposition and rallied new pro-imperial forces which found themselves in one camp not due to an intentionally created alliance, but because of spontaneous pragmatic responses to the threat of anti-modernist reaction. In this sense, one can agree with the analysis of the Eurasians: though the restoration of the Empire was the result of the activities of the Communist who took the power, the working out of the "main forms of political reality" should be ascribed to the "popular element and not to the Communists who were only convenient instruments and, in general, obedient executors."⁸

The Façade of Soviet Federalism

The restoration of the Empire went under federalist slogans. Though Lenin, as far back as 1913, objected against the "federative principle" (most probably being, as many others, apprehensive of nationalism and separatism), the Declaration of the Rights of the Working and Exploited People, written by him and adopted in

January 1918, stated that "the Soviet Russian Republic is established...as the federation of Soviet national republics."⁹ This principle was reproduced and confirmed in 1922, when the USSR came into being.

The Soviet federalism followed the same inherently contradictory way, on which the representatives of national movements, adherents of federalism, had insisted: it embodied the idea of national-territorial autonomies. Contradictions came to the fore almost immediately. The basis of moderate liberal federalism, not very strong as it was, was sharply weakened in the revolutionary years (it consisted of the strata connected with the abolished capitalism), while the national movements, tactical allies of the Bolsheviks, on the contrary, strengthened their positions. Federalism, even in the greater measure than before, became the hostage of nationalism, behind which the ghost of separatism again was arising.

The Eurasians—emigrants, externally hostile, but internally akin to the Bolsheviks—noticed that danger immediately. Though they realized distinctly the illusiveness of the Soviet federalism ("Russia at present is the most unitary and even the most centralized state," wrote Alekseyev in 1927. "Everything what the Soviet Government says about federalism is a pure deception invented by sly people for stupid people."¹⁰) The danger of nationalistic separatism made them much more uneasy than the reality of unitarism. The latter, in fact, was given indulgence by them: "The principle of centralism, stubbornly adhered to by the Communists in legislation and in the establishment of "general principles," politically fully corresponds to the conditions of Russian life."¹¹ But the slipping to nationalism greatly worried them. "Having created within the Union a great number of national republics the Communists facilitated the awakening of local nationalism which cannot but threaten to turn into a self-sufficient force.... This is a very menacing phenomenon, perhaps one of the most dangerous for the destiny of not only the Soviet government, but also of the future Russia."¹² "The policy of the Soviet state should be aimed at the gradual transformation of its federalism from national into provincial. Not nationality, but the real geographic and economic whole in the form of an oblast or province should be the principle of the federation."¹³

The ruling Bolsheviks could not be so frank as the Eurasians, but many of them evidently were of the same views, and in real policy they have got no option. The establishment of "Soviet federal-

ism" was accompanied by loud criticism of unitarism. Speaking at the 12th RCP(B) Congress in 1923, a few months after the setting up of the Soviet Union, Stalin indignantly spoke of "wishes roaming in the country to achieve by peaceful means what Denikin was unable to attain, that is to create the so called "united and indivisible Russia."¹⁴ This idea was repeated in the resolution of the Congress. "The fact that the Union of Republics is regarded by a substantial number of Soviet officials at the Center and in the localities not as an alliance of equal state units...but as a step in the direction of the liquidation of these republics as the beginning of the formation of the so called "united and indivisible," is one of the striking manifestations of the heritage of the past."¹⁵

If these invocations were sincere, they were backed by nothing, but illusions. The real federalism in the USSR of the twentieth was as impossible as in the pre-Revolutionary Russia: because of the still light "weight" of the regions and the regional elites. Federalism lacked a sufficient social base and was doomed to slip down either to national separatism, or to unitarism. Between these two extremes struggle commenced for the right to be the spokesmen of the declared federalism, while the "conditions of Russian life," of which the Eurasians shrewdly spoke, practically predetermined the victory of unitarism.

Despite all the abuses of the "united and indivisible" voiced at the 12th Congress of the RCP(B), the worry caused by the growth of local nationalism was heard even there. But the Congress was held before the eyes of the whole world, and much was said for the benefit of the public. Only a few months after the Congress this worry was expressed in a more open form at a secret meeting of the Central Committee of the RCP, where unitarism, actually started hostilities against the local Communists. The meeting was held like a trial of a concrete protagonist of the nationalistic evil—M. Sultan-Galiev. It was a kind of practical lesson for the representatives of the new party national elites who had come to Moscow - they were instructed how to interpret the resolutions of the Congress. Thus began the long-term policy of the new imperial authorities, aimed to pull out the nationalistic teeth of federalism.

For some time it seemed that such policy was a success. The ethnic nationalism was greatly weakened, driven underground and stopped playing any significant role, and federalism, too, lost its force, becoming nothing but a decorative facade of the centralized unitary state.

“The One Correct Theory”

However, there were grave reasons for that success being only temporary. Unitarism and centralism, restored and in many respects strengthened in Soviet times, were among the major prerequisites of accelerated modernization which, in turn led to the revival, but on a much greater scale, of the old problems of regionalism, the pressure of local elites, etc. And once again, federalism was taken hostage by nationalism and began slipping into separatism. An important contributing factor was the official theory of nations and the national policy of the Soviet authorities who reacted inadequately to the ethnic crisis which grew inevitably deeper as a result of the acceleration of Soviet modernization.

It seemed that in order to overcome this crisis the USSR could have followed the Western experiment of creating national states. According to the Western meaning, “nation” refers to a category of civil society founded on more universal values than those inherited from a distant past of a precious common language, religion or ancient customs: such nations are born when the crisis of former integrators has been overcome, when new principles of social union are forged as the only possible national, non-empirical form of existence.

In the conditions of a new social space free of internal divides, the meaning of traditional integrators—popular traditions, cultural, religious or linguistic affinities—is reinterpreted. They lose nothing of their former value and in the process may even grow, becoming better than before. They do, however, lose their principle unifying role which is replaced by a new kind of all-national self-recognition (first: “I am a Frenchman,” then: “I am a Breton”; first: “I am an American,” then: “I am an American of Irish descent” or “an Afro-American”), by civil laws and basic economic and political interests. The development of a nation usually coincides with that of civil society and its birth—often in the throes of great crises, wars and revolutions—becomes an essential part of historical experience and is accompanied by an extraordinarily intense spiritual and cultural edification which forever becomes an indivisible common good of the nation in formation.

The conditions in which a nation takes shape arise by a historical process during which, at least in its most recent stages, rustic, holistic, closed, ordered, etc. societies are transformed into societies based on atomistic, individualistic, civic values. As long as these

stages have not been passed, a contemporary nation cannot take shape and the idea of a national state cannot be generated. It can, however, be “borrowed” and result (this is not the only paradox of rapid evolution) in a deformed and unlivable sum of heterogeneous parts of an artificial whole which play one against the other. This is what happened at the end of the last and the beginning of this century when the idea of a national state was borrowed from the English and the French and taken over by the revolutionary- and in part Marxist-intelligentsia in Austria-Hungary and Russia. In the early 1900 s, the Austrian and Russian Marxists were actively looking for a solution to the “national problem” engendered by the crisis in both Eastern European empires. Today, it is clearer than ever how contradictory their positions were: they were trying to unite things which could not be united.

On the one hand, they held the Western experience in high esteem and thought it was the best example to follow for all countries. “The formation of national states,” Lenin wrote not long before 1917, “appears to be...the aspiration of every national movement.... For all of Western Europe—indeed, for all the civilized world—the national state seems to be typical of and normal for every capitalist period.”¹⁶ It was with approval that Lenin quoted Kautsky who said that the variegated States from the point of view of their national composition are the States “whose internal structure, for one reason or another, is abnormal or under-developed”¹⁷ and he stressed more than once that “the self-determination of nations” “in the Marxists’ program cannot...mean anything else but political self-determination, state independence, the formation of a national state.”¹⁸

On the other hand, however, the Eastern European Marxists did not at all wish to part with their “ragged empires,” “prisons of peoples,” and so on, rather, they intended to improve them to transform them into a “union.” Kautsky, for instance, was convinced that the Austrian Empire would last for a long time. “One may think what one likes about the destiny of Austria..., at least one thing seems clear: given the balance of power in this state, it is not on the brink of collapse.”¹⁹ Or as O. Bauer supposed: “historical evolution will lead not to the breakup of Austria, whose nations will uphold her for purely economic reasons, but to the transformation of the Habsburg monarchy into a federated state of nationalities.”²⁰

They had not had the time to bury their empire before the Russian Bolsheviks, having ostensibly changed their extreme position, demanded the right of nations to self-determination and the formation of independent states. The program of national-territorial organization worked out by Lenin before the First World War and later enforced in the USSR had not either foreseen the liquidation of the empire or even its fundamental reorganization along less "centralist" principles. According to Lenin, the Marxists "are ill-disposed to federation and decentralization. The conscious proletariat will always defend a large state.... There will exist as close as possible an economic union throughout the immense territories."²¹

Be this as it may, on the eve of the First World War, the future of both the Austro-Hungarian and the Russian empires presented itself to the Marxist advocates of the "nationality principle" in the form of multinational states which could be organized in various ways. In the context of Austria-Hungary, this idea could not be put into practice, whereas in Russia the opportunity did arise. In the latter the new theoretical understanding for "nation" proposed by the Marxists was driven to its logical conclusion. Within the system of Western representations of the "Nation-State," a multinational state was a *contradictio in adjecto*. In order to extricate themselves from such a contradiction, the Eastern Europeans—including the Russian Marxists—who advocated multinational states, decided to redefine the very concept of "nation," to give it a different meaning from the one it has in the West and tear it away from the State territory. Stalin, having enumerated the different characteristics of nations,²² regarded as an unforgivable mistake of seeing in one of them the existence of their own national state,²³ invoking the "one correct" "Russian Marxist theory of nations."²⁴

In the end, the concept of "nation" was given an ethnic or nearly ethnic interpretation. The national belonging of a man was transformed from a civic one, as it were, to a kind of biological one defined once and for all "by blood," that is by the nationality of one of the parents. He could neither choose (despite the choice between the nationality of the father or the mother) nor change it; it was inscribed in the document certifying his identity; attention was paid to it officially and semi-officially at all stages of his professional and personal life. Having entered the compound of the USSR, the republics continued to see themselves as national states. But given the new concept of the nation, this meant substituting the idea of

"Nation-State" realized in the West by an idea of an ethnic State, utopian and unrealizable, in a contemporary society.

In the Stalinist definition of the nation there was an obvious intention, once having "bowed" to national sentiments, to separate the national from the territorial and thereby prevent the development of nationalistic separatism. But the result turned out to be the opposite. Not being a fully valued citizen in "his own" republic (such a citizenship was not registered even formally and furthermore had no real meaning), a person bearing a fixed nationality in his passport did not feel himself a fully valued citizen of the empire either. This at least strengthened national sentiment which was made acute by the crisis of ethnicity and would have pushed towards ethnic nationalism.

The Soviet authorities could not ignore the danger of nationalism and to a certain extent resisted it. But to break away from the trap of "the one correct theory" was impossible for them also. According to the official version, nationalism was no more than "a vestige of the past." It was presumed that the economic and social modernization would exert on Soviet society at least as much influence as it had in its day on Western European society: modernization would weaken and break down divides among the regions and nations of the USSR, drawing them closer together and mixing the populations. Looking suspiciously at the West, Soviet politicians and ideologists hoped nevertheless for the Soviet Union something similar to Western nations. Much was said and written about the newly born social homogeneity of Soviet society, the internationalization of economic and social life, Russian as a language of communication between nations, Lenin's words about "the coming-together and uniting of nations" were regularly repeated, and so on. A few years before the breakup of the Soviet Union, a thesis was in turn introduced about a kind of "new historical community, the Soviet people" which was already formed and could be interpreted similarly to the American or French nations and which the population of the USSR was beginning to approach. Such an outcome was dreamt about by the "Eurasian" emigrants, among others, who proposed to regard all peoples within the USSR as its "national substratum," as a "specific multi-people nation."

The real development of events was, however, different, since the very Soviet model of contradictory "conservative" modernization was different; "instrumental" technological modernization was combined with the preservation of social archaisms serving as a founda-

tion for totalitarianism. In spite of its "instrumental" nature the Soviet modernization (development of industry, growth of cities, etc.), changing a social structure of population, inevitably engendered anti-totalitarian forces, a taste for the values of civil society, etc. But at the same time it produced also an antidote: expanded the ethnicity crisis with the inherent syndrome of anti-modernism, potential discontent, protest, xenophobia, etc. This potential was skillfully used in politics, in the struggle against any attempts to criticize the regime, against liberal free thinking. Constantly condemned in words, the ethnic nationalism, the antipode of the civil society, made itself to be reckoned with, became a needed favorite child of the authorities. This cannot be said about federalism which may be safely called their stepson.

Federalism—The Stepson of Soviet Modernization

The essence of federalism lies in the maintenance of the equilibrium of the interests of the parts and the whole. Modernization served as a major axis around which these interests united and which forced the new non-imperial regional elites to value the imperial statehood. The ideology of the "classic" pre-Revolutionary federalism—before nationalism allowed to swallow it, —more often was neither anti-Russian nor anti-imperial or anti-modernist. The developing regional elites could not but realize the possibilities opened to them by the imperial space and the imperial might. But they also could not but be aware of their unpreparedness to themselves control the situation in the regions, in case of social explosion the nearness of which was felt by everybody. The fact that they, nevertheless, slipped down to nationalism and separatism and in many respects acted against their own interests, can be accounted for by their natural weakness at that time: underdevelopment, immaturity, and simply their small number.

Seventy years of accelerated modernization of the Soviet period seemed to have changed everything. The powerful industrial urban complexes of the USSR of the eightieth look like organic parts of a united whole, and no regional elites could be interested in the breaking of that whole. This applies to many "national" elites even more than to the purely Russian.

Thus, the disintegration of the Union did not promise any advantages to the Trans-Caucasian and especially the Central Asian republics. They still had to pass through many decisive stages of

modernization, and the "umbrella" of the Soviet empire no doubt facilitated that task, because their internal modernization forces were not as yet sufficiently developed. Even if we speak about the access to rather big economic and technical resources that were at Moscow's disposal, the empire created socio-political and geopolitical climate facilitating modernization, though in the contradictory form in which it existed in the USSR in general. Therefore, political elites were oriented not so much at leaving the empire, but at the redistribution of influence, power and resources inside it in their interests. Why, then, they not only had not opposed the separate movements, but in many cases headed them?

Most likely explanation of it is the fact that in USSR existed no regional elites in the modern sense of the word, no middle class on which they could rely. The Soviet model of modernization did not allow their emergence.

All schoolchildren in the USSR were acquainted with the Manifesto of the Communist Party, where it is said that the economic activities of the bourgeoisie made necessary political centralization, as a result of which "independent or but loosely connected provinces... became lumped together into one nation, with one government, one code of laws, one national class interest, one frontier, and one customs tariff."²⁵

In the USSR the work of Gosplan was substituted for the economic activities of bourgeoisie. The entire economy, entire country, indeed, were regarded as one big plant inside which, of course, the horizontal technological cooperation was of great importance. Accordingly, one technological space was created for the entire country. It was pierced with roads and pipelines, inside it people and loads moved, experience was exchanged, etc. That technological space was accepted as economic. But in fact it was pseudo-economic: it was not the space of the internal market, where economic interests of concrete people or groups of people are determined and clash, of owners directly dependent on everything that happens in that space and able to actively affect its conditions. Accordingly, there was not mass stratum of protagonists of the federalist idea, who would seek smaller dependence on the Center for the sake of greater freedom of action inside the internal market, but did not want to lose that market or to break it up.

The real Soviet regional elites were a weak foundation of federalism. They were status, "nomenclature" elites and depended on

the relations with the Center, on its favor. A separatist solution meant acquiring independence from the Center and therefore the rising of their status, which clearly was more significant to them than the possible losses caused by the breaking of the old connections. Even if the seceded republics suffered great losses, the losses were the least for the nomenclature elites. The strengthening of their power, the legitimacy of which formerly had been sanctified by the Union Center, was helped by the support of the same ethnic nationalism.

The inviolability of the USSR was one of the main constantly declared values of the Soviet political establishment. The Union of republics, indeed, seemed to be singularly strong. But it was the strength of a wooden barrel fastened together by iron hoops on the outside, and not the strength of the atom whose integrity is due to its internal forces. Tremendous efforts were made and resources used to prevent the external iron hoops from becoming rusty and weak. Almost the entire construction of the Soviet mobilization model of development was devoted to that task. But all was in vain, for, the model itself was the main cause of the underdevelopment of much more important internal forces of cohesion. In the final account, the hoops fell down and the barrel crumbled. And not because there were bad coopers in the Soviet Union. Simply, the craft of a cooper and atomic physics are different things.

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