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Land and Money

Lag and catch-up development

"The Russian crisis is in particular and above all an agricultural crisis," Pavel Miliukov wrote in his book [*The Russian Crisis*],¹ which was published at the beginning of the twentieth century in France and the United States. This was a true but incomplete assessment because the irreversible crisis of agriculture—as the economic foundation of Russian life—presented the entire Russian agrarian society based on this foundation with the final limit. This was its crisis and a sign of rural Russia's ever more appreciable lag behind Western countries, which were becoming increasingly industrialized and urbanized.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Russian's backwardness was recognized by everyone—from radical critics in the revolutionary-democratic camp to the author of a book commemorating the tricentennial of the Romanov dynasty that was intended to demonstrate Russia's successes and to show the "striking dimensions of the nation's economic growth." "The well-being of the broad masses, their educational level, public wealth, and cultural development are virtually incomparable with those of Western Europe and America," we read in this loyal work.² Here are just a few fleeting illustrations of pre-revolutionary Russian backwardness.

Industry: Russian industrial output in 1913 was 2.5 times lower than French; 4.6 times lower than British; 6 times lower than German; and 14.3 times lower than U.S. Russian per capita coal production was 209

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kilograms (U.S., 5,358 kg); electric power 14 kilowatts per hour (U.S., 176), and cotton consumption in Russia was 3.1 kg, compared with 14.3 kg in the United States.³

Agriculture: Russia's average grain yield in 1909–13 was 4.5 poods [pood = 16.381 kg] per desiatina [desiatina = 1.09254 hectare] and was 2 times lower than France's and 3.4 times lower than Germany's. Per capita grain production in Russia was 26 poods, compared with 48 in the United States, and 73 in Canada. Mineral fertilizer consumption was 6.9 kg per sown hectare; in France, 57.6; in Germany, 166; in Belgium, up to 236 kg per hectare.⁴

National income: 102 rubles per capita in 1913 (according to other estimates, 101–114 rubles),⁵ i.e., 2.9 times lower than Germany's; 3.5 times lower than France's; 4.3 times lower than Great Britain's; and 6.8 times lower than that of the United States.⁶

Infant mortality: in 1906–10, 269 per 1,000 births; in France during these same years, 128; Germany, 174; Great Britain, 117; the United States, 121 per 1,000.⁷

Life expectancy: in 1907–10, 32 years for the male and 34 years for the female Orthodox population compared with 47 and 50 years in France, 46 and 49 in Germany, 50 and 53 in Great Britain, and 49 and 52 years in the United States.

In the same book about Russian economic growth, we read: "Russia, like all other cultured states, has made major strides in its economic and cultural development, but it will have to exert even greater efforts to overtake other peoples that have left us far behind."⁸

"Overtake"—there was nothing new in this word for the Russian ear. Many countries and entire continents entered the period of catch-up development in the twentieth century. But for Russia, this period started much earlier—at least in the seventeenth century when, in Vasilii Kliuchevskii's opinion, Russian society noticed for the first time that its Western neighbors had achieved certain extraordinary successes, and found that "the paucity of its material resources compared with those of Western Europe was revealed more and more evidently in wars, in diplomatic relations, and in the exchange of goods, which led to the recognition of its backwardness."⁹

As the lag increasingly made itself known, "in Moscow," Kliuchevskii wrote, "in government circles and in society, there are people who are driven by the doubt that antiquity [*starina*] has bequeathed the totality of resources sufficient for future happy existence;

they lose their former national smugness, and begin looking elsewhere in an effort to learn from strangers in the West, becoming increasingly convinced of the West's superiority and of their own backwardness."¹⁰

Russia, which had already felt itself a mighty power, and which was already accustomed to being victorious, to expanding its territory, and to dictating its will to its neighbors, was suddenly faced with the choice of lagging behind and relinquishing its position as an influential force in the European political arena, or of racing after the West and being affirmed as a Third Rome among neighbors that have gone their separate ways for valid reasons. The choice, incidentally, was made very soon. Russia, evidently, had already developed what Berdiaev later called the "instinct of state might."¹¹ To overtake and to be affirmed—there could be no other choice.

The decisive word was spoken by Peter I. With a firm hand, he carried out far-reaching reforms that affected all aspects of the life of the people and the state, that reformed government, the economy, the military, the church, education, and private life to varying degrees, and seemed to extricate the country from its lagging position, and to transform it into a mighty empire. "This reform responded to the *principal* motif of the Russian reform—the motif of *self-preservation*—with a firm and able *yes*."¹² If this assessment of Petrovian reforms is not unanimous, it is at least widely recognized. "Europeanization" is a term used by historians belonging to many different schools. The "modernization" of the Russian people and its entry into the circle of European nations are the most substantive features of the Petrovian era not only for Sergei Solov'ev, the principal scientific spokesman and proponent of this point of view, but also for Slavophiles and Westernizers. "Europeanization," a term that is used in the attempt to denote the quintessence of both the domestic and foreign policy of Peter I, is also frequently used by Western authors.¹³

However, it is not by chance that Russian historical tradition, while paying tribute to Peter's actions, includes them in a successive number of events that began before his birth and that possibly have not ended to this very day, because the lag behind the West, which was recognized even before Peter was born, had already been a nightmare to Russian state, and probably not only state, thought for four centuries. The attempts at modernization, at overcoming the lag, have been equally long. The modernization of *Soviet* society in the twentieth century is nothing more than a stage, albeit a very important stage, in this evolution.

There were been many attempts at modernization in post-Petrovian Russian history. While they left their mark, they did not produce the results the reformers hoped for. In any event, not one of them rescued Russian society from the nightmare of backwardness. Defeat in the Crimean War only four decades after the victory in the war against Napoleon; the defeat in the Straits of Tsushima after four decades of energetic, seemingly reform-oriented economic development; failures at the front in World War I—all these failures were particular, but irrefutable signs of continuously mounting backwardness that is immune to all manner of reform.

The same was also repeated in Soviet history when, four decades after the defeat of Nazi Germany, the country again saw itself as catastrophically backward. Time and time again, Russia embarked on the path of reform that seemed to curb backwardness and generated optimism and hope, which were confirmed by real successes and victories. But after a while, backwardness was once again apparent, attesting either to the limited nature of the reforms or to their rejection under the pressure of forces opposed to the reform. It was as if society was resisting modernization and rejecting innovation.

Catch-up development and inhibition

Why have the reforms been ineffective? Did the reformers perhaps have an incorrect understanding of the backwardness and its causes? Were they perhaps not free in their actions when they encountered objective limits to all manner of reform activity?

The answer to both questions is: yes. For a long time, the recognition of backwardness was quite superficial. At first, Russian society had great difficulty seeing and recognizing it and even then could do so only partially. While criticism of the anachronisms of Russian life gradually became deeper, the superficiality of this criticism has evidently not been entirely eliminated even today.

Backwardness can be discussed only in comparative terms. In the seventeenth century, such a comparison could only be made by a very narrow circle of people who were primarily connected with state activity and who therefore had a certain measure of contact with the West. But the [common] people did not have such contacts and could not make any comparisons that were disadvantageous to them. They had their daily cares and difficulties, but also had every people's conviction

of the superiority of the way of life, faith, and morals bequeathed to them by their fathers and grandfathers and favored them over the way of life, faith, and rights of all foreigners.

Thus, backwardness, if it was recognized at all, was recognized by only a very small part of society's upper crust. But even this element did not by any means see everything, did not see even the main aspects of this backwardness, but essentially saw only certain of its external manifestations: differences in political influence, in military might, in wealth, in housing comfort. Solov'ev, for example, sought the sources of Petrovian reform in economic backwardness. "Poor people," he wrote, "became aware of their poverty and the reasons for it by comparing themselves to wealthy peoples and tried to acquire the resources to which foreign peoples owed their wealth. Consequently, it had to begin with economic reform."¹⁴ Commenting on these words by Solov'ev, Kh. Bagger notes that their author, "judging by everything, viewed 'Europeanization' not as an end in itself, but as a primary means for stimulating the nation's economic development."¹⁵ Kliuchevskii viewed Peter's military activity as the principal driving force behind reform. "War indicated the order of reform, its tempo, and the actual methods employed. Reform measures followed one after another in the order indicated by the needs of war."¹⁶ Once again, modernization was only a means, not an end in itself. Reforms have an instrumental orientation and are directed not toward the restructuring of the entire social body, but only toward modifying certain of its organs to preserve the whole.

However, backwardness was specifically in the construction of the entire social body. It permeated the entire structure of society, its economic relations, culture, and everyday life, and bound reformers hand and foot, dooming their very best beginnings to failure. But this idea was beyond seventeenth century Russian society. The rare and sporadic contacts between the Muscovite state and European countries precluded an in-depth analysis of the differences that existed between them, while it is far more difficult to make a comparative assessment of them than it is to evaluate military might on the battlefield.

Incidentally, not even this was the point. The very concept of "backwardness" is not universal. It makes sense only in a system of ideas that organizes a certain sequence of historical movement and equates states of different societies with stages of such a movement on a common evolutionary path. This view of things is quite natural

for the twentieth century, even though it is not presently shared by everyone. But it was simply inconceivable in seventeenth-century Russia, and therefore an objective comparison of Russian and foreign living standards was also inconceivable. They were two different worlds, each bewildering to the other. Differences were not construed in terms of being ahead or behind and did not evoke the idea that it was necessary to catch up. But it would never have occurred to anyone to borrow a system of economic relations, political institutions, or religious beliefs from the Germans or the English. Russians had their own versions of all these things. Not only did they not consider themselves to be backward in any way in these areas, but they were convinced of the superiority of their economic, political, and religious institutions. Therefore, even in radical reformer Peter I, Kliuchevskii sees "the unaccountable propensity to reproduce echoes of the past in his innovations,"¹⁷ and says that "Peter took state *forces*, supreme authority, law, and the estates from old Russia, and borrowed technical *means* for organizing the army, navy, the state and national economies, and government institutions from the West."¹⁸

Its lag with respect to means was secondary, derivative. But at first, the main, deep-seated lag was at best perceived only vaguely by a few of the most perspicacious individuals of the time. Its true scale and causes remained unknown for a long time. The idea of the historical evolution of society yielded in the face of the mythologization and canonization of the immutable features of public life. Just as soon as criticism of backwardness became deeper and transcended the boundaries of technical, military, and in the extreme case, economic backwardness, affected Russian life at the grass-roots level, Russian society's understanding of life and its value paradigm, it evoked an equally deep defensive reaction that led to a different system of assessments. What looked like backwardness to the critics (radicals, revolutionaries) was perceived as a unique feature of Russian society and Russian culture by the defenders (conservatives). The conservative defensive reaction had its own objective bases and would not permit even the most radical reformer to carry out more extensive reforms.

Simple society: the power of the soil

Before continuing our topic, let us make a small methodological digression. According to current views, particularly those that have been

developed due to advances in cybernetics, any development means an increase in the complexity of a developing object, its internal differentiation. While this is seen in biological evolution, for example, it also holds true for society: historical development makes social systems more complex. At the same time, there is an increase in internal diversity, which makes the system more flexible and its functioning more efficient. Diversity is a merit. It increases the number of degrees of freedom. But at the same time, the efficiency of the management of a system, without which there is an increase in entropy and disorderly behavior by individual elements in the system, is linked to the restriction of diversity (W. Ashby's well-known words that benefit can usually be derived from the restriction of diversity.)¹⁹ The restriction of diversity in the behavior of elements of a system in turn requires the appropriate diversity of control reactions. ("The law of necessary diversity" has it that only diversity can increase diversity; the power of a regulator cannot exceed its transmissivity as a communications channel.)²⁰

The idea that the transition from medieval life forms to modern, bourgeois forms also meant the transition to a more complex type of social organization was expressed long before the inception of cybernetics. Karl Marx, for example, wrote about ancient social productive organisms that are "incomparably simpler and clearer than bourgeois [organisms]" and that "are based either on the immaturity of the individual person, who has not yet broken away from the umbilical cord of natural-clan relations with other peoples, or on the direct relations of domination and subordination." He also noted that in such organisms, "the transformation of the product into a commodity and, consequently, the existence of people as commodity producers plays a subordinate role that, however, becomes more important as the communal way of life declines. . . ."²¹

Essentially, the cybernetic idea of fewer and more complex systems and the view of fundamental differences in the mechanisms they control are contained here. In simple systems, this is the direct relationship of domination and subordination between people; in complex systems, they are the same relations, but are mediated by the commodity form of product of human activity, by money, and by the market. The market is the regulator resulting from historical development that has an unlimited number of "communication channels" which make it possible to restrict the dramatically increasing internal diversity of the social system and to regulate its functioning in accordance with the system's

internal objectives. But it is precisely the existence of such a mechanism that makes possible the great diversity of types of activity, lines of behavior, and individual fates; that affirms the freedom of individual choice as fundamental principles of modern civilian society; and that constitutes this society itself.

Russian agrarian, rural society remained simple all the way up until the twentieth century. Consequently, all its social mechanisms were simple and from today's heights could also be called primitive. The correspondence of levels of complexity of society and the social mechanisms controlling its life ensured the integrity and viability of the body social.

Many thinking people in Russia at the end of the nineteenth century saw this correspondence as based on the "power of the soil." They used this metaphor in an effort to understand the internal conditionality and organization of life in the Russian countryside and the type of relations and behavior that were dominant in it for centuries.

Gleb Uspenskii, who coined the expression "power of the soil," saw in it the organizing principle that guided the actions of every peasant, that was the main factor "*vis-à-vis* not only the people's spirit and thought, but the people's entire way of life as well."²² People who have cultivated their rye fields from generation to generation and who are dependent on them cannot live otherwise than these fields demand. "The farmer does not take a step, does not perform an act, does not have a thought that does not belong to the soil. He is entirely enslaved by this tiny green blade of grass."²³ "If this blade of grass is to feed us, there must be a mass of adaptations, a mass of labor, and a mass of attentiveness in interrelations between people."²⁴

The concept of the power of the soil made it possible to understand and explain a great deal in the life of the Russian countryside and hence of all Russian society, but chiefly the peasantry. But it had its limits. It emphasized, so to speak, man's technological bond with the soil. At the same time, the "green blade of grass" is a part—albeit an important part—of the force without which there can be neither the people's stomach nor the people's spirit. And in order to assess this entire force, it is also essential to take into account the invisible social threads of which this connection is also based.

Because of the small size and considerable isolation of the rural commune, within which the majority of people spent their lives, man was constantly in contact with his fellow villagers, with the rural commune, and he lived under its constant supervision, and was connected

with everyone by reciprocal, general responsibility. Under these conditions, the main feature in the mechanism for social management of human behavior is external control, the orientation toward the invariable repetition of existing behavior stereotypes and toward the preservation of man's fixed place in a strictly hierarchical social structure.

The Russian peasant lived like the innermost figure in a *matreshka* doll set: he himself was within the family, the family was within the commune, and all other levels of Russian society were based on the family-commune. Slavophile Ivan Kireevskii described its entire hierarchical structure in the mid-nineteenth century as follows: "Everyone's family relations were determined primarily at birth: in this predetermined order, the family was subordinate to the *mir* [commune], the larger *mir* was subordinate to the *skhodka* [gathering], the *skhodka* was subordinate to the *veche* [assembly], etc., and all particular circles joined in a single center, in the unified Orthodox Church."²⁵

The "*matreshka*" design of the system of social relations makes it possible to combine the quite strict vertical co-subordination of levels of the social pyramid with the relative independence of each level. (This also applies to land relations: the right to distribute land among levels, none of which owns the land entirely.) Such a design presupposes a hierarchy of personal dependencies and the personification of all relations that conveys "human warmth" to life in this system and that is nostalgically recalled by people who find themselves in a world of impersonal urban relations.

But the social organization described above is extraordinarily simple precisely when compared with this more recent, more complex world. Hence also the relatively simplistic, undifferentiated understanding of the social reality of social consciousness, of its syncretism. This kind of consciousness is not oriented toward understanding the internal contradictoriness and contradictoriness of the natural and social world. It makes it possible to see the world only as a whole, to view it only in terms of blocks that cannot be differentiated. This is a simplistic mentality, a product of the simplicity of society itself. The syncretic mentality does not permit analysis or social self-criticism. It equates evaluation with moralizing. It demands faith, makes it possible to interpret everything exclusively in terms of good and evil, of true and false values, etc.

The collectivist system of values, which affirmed the primacy of We in the people's consciousness and combined "vertical" authoritarian-

ism with "horizontal" egalitarianism, self-styled democratism, and the "*veche*" ideal, was entirely in keeping with the social organization of public life and the syncretism of the people's consciousness.²⁶ The primacy of We is the consequence of the predominance of external behavior regulators over internal regulators and hence means that I is of secondary importance.

The *veche* ideal is of an absolutist nature. It recognizes victory in the "battle of monologues" (according to A. Akhiezer's apt expression)²⁷ but does not allow the minority to have a special opinion and independent individual rights. Kireevskii wrote about this with unquestionable approval: "In Russia . . . forms of communal life, while expressing the general wholeness of existence, never took the form of individual independent development, which is cut off from the life of all the people. . . . A pronounced peculiarity of Russian character . . . consisted in the fact that no individual in his social relations ever tried to present his natural uniqueness as some kind of merit; but all the ambition of private persons was limited to the striving to be the correct expression of society's basic spirit."²⁸

And so the peasant subsistence economy, simple social relations and primitive forms of their mediation (personal dependence), syncretic thought, and the collectivist and egalitarian value paradigm were the main pillars of Russian agrarian society, the guarantees of its integrity and viability. They are integrally linked to the socio-psychological traits of a person raised within the framework of traditional village relations: the lack of development of the individual personality which was dissolved in the commune; low social mobility; dislike of innovation; and belief in the stability of firmly established order and the authority of its guardians—institutionalized representatives of the social hierarchy—from the head of the family to the father-tsar.

"Complex" Western urban society is the alternative to "simple" rural society of the Russian type. The distinctions here are historical rather than geographical.

Already in our day, writer Vasilii Belov has written the book *Harmony* [Lad], which reveals and poeticizes the astonishing internal harmony of traditional rural life. "Everything was interconnected, and nothing could live separately or by itself. Everything had its appointed place and time. Nothing could exist outside the whole or get out of line."²⁹ Belov, like Uspenskii, emphasizes what could be called the technological bond between peasant life and the soil. And yet, if every-

thing was determined exclusively by that bond, peasants everywhere would be the same—an idea (supposedly espoused by Maxim Gorky) about which F. Braudel was highly dubious.³⁰

And indeed, not only had rye long been cultivated on the Russian plain, but it was also well known to the West European peasant. Why was the power of the soil not the same there as it was in Russia, and why did peasants and city dwellers live somehow differently, compelling the Russians to feel their backwardness all the time?

The reasons for the dissimilarity between peasants and peasant life, and later between peasant societies in Western and Eastern Europe, and the deep roots of Russian backwardness extending over more than one century, lay primarily in age-old differences in land relations, in the principles of peasant land tenure (land being the principal means of production and principal wealth of agrarian societies). In the sixteenth century, when our backwardness was discovered for the first time, these distinctions were subsequently preserved and perhaps became even more pronounced. Their influence has not disappeared to this very day.

Of course, it still cannot be said that private land ownership by peasants existed in sixteenth century Western Europe. But movement in this direction was inevitable. The hereditary use of a plot of arable land and its indivisibility when it was inherited (usually by one of the sons) were the norm. The *corvée* [*barshchinnaia*] system was gradually eliminated between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries: the *métayage* [*natural'nyi obrok*] sphere also became narrower. The peasant emerged little by little from his social *matreshka*, became more and more closely bonded to his indivisible hereditary plot, cherished it, and had reason to concern himself with improving his land and his agriculture.

In Russia at that time—the sixteenth century—everything was different. Here, in the words of Kliuchevskii, “we have before us a migratory, finely dispersed rural population which, not having the means or motivation to widely and assiduously work the vast wooded spaces, subsisted by cultivating barren plots of land, and, having harvested several crops from them, abandoned them indefinitely to repeat the same operations on other virgin lands.”³¹ The fact that peasants were not tied to their plots was a disincentive to improve their agriculture, to become owners or at least long-term users of the land, and to concern themselves with its indivisibility.

At the same time, Russia did not move at all in the same direction as

its Western neighbors. There was a real divide here. It was the principal manifestation of historical backwardness. At a time when the practice of binding peasants in Western Europe to the land, of *corvée* labor, and the personal dependence of peasants were increasingly becoming a thing of the past, in Russia serfdom, which Braudel called the “second enslavement,” was yet to come. Land was more and more frequently bought and sold and land prices rose. The market and market institutions and the circulation of money developed everywhere, and the leasing of land for money eliminated sharecropping almost entirely. There was also an increase in the mortgage debt of peasants trying to subsist on plots of land they did not own. The power of the soil was no longer entirely complete. It was very powerfully driven out by the power of money, and this new power broke the shell of the rural world, opened it up, and drew people into complex and diverse social relationships they had never even dreamed of. The idea of peasant ownership of land was simply knocking at the door; life itself prepared the Napoleonic Code.

This was not the case in Eastern Europe where *corvée* and *métayage* flourished, and the system of family divisions and redivisions of land within the commune was affirmed instead of the system of inherited indivisible peasant plots. While the peasant serf was, of course, no longer the “restless tiller of the land” of the sixteenth century about whom Kliuchevskii³² wrote, he was nevertheless still very remote from European hereditary land tenure. And even centuries later, after the abolition of serfdom, and on the threshold of the twentieth century, the idea of hereditary land tenure and especially of private ownership of land did not mature in Russian society and seemed alien in the Russian countryside.

We should evidently pay careful heed to Braudel's idea that the paths of development in Western and Eastern Europe in the second half of our millennium were not independent. “Since the beginning of the sixteenth century, the economic situation with twofold and threefold consequences doomed Eastern Europe to a colonial fate—the fate of a producer of raw materials, and the ‘second enslavement’ was only its more noticeable aspect. . . . The ‘second enslavement’ was the other side of trade capital, which found its advantage and to some extent its very *raison d'être* in the situation in Eastern Europe. The large landowner was not a capitalist, but he served Amsterdam capitalism or some other kind of capitalism as an instrument and comrade-in-arms.

He was part of the system."³³ If this idea is true, then Russia's catch-up development is not evidence of political or military ambitions of any sort, but is simply the consequence of the fact that it long ago became a part of the system, became firmly entrenched in the orbit of European capitalist development, and had begun living according to the principle that "we are undernourished at the same time that we are exporting" long before this principle was clearly formulated in the late nineteenth century.

In one way or another, the power of the soil in the West, even in the countryside, was not for even one century the same as it was in Russia. It was very strongly driven out by the power of money; the peasant felt himself to be the master of the land to a much greater degree than he felt himself to be its subject.

But it may be still more important that the countryside open the door to the deeper reform of all society and to its transformation into an urban, market society. The market and money, which have existed since time immemorial, gain new life and are the means that make it possible to sever direct interpersonal relations and to replace them with indirect relations. It may be that the producer and consumer, who in the past usually knew one another personally, will never meet today: they will be connected to one another by the market and money. This makes life in an urban society anonymous; it is impossible to maintain external control over everyone. Certain new regulatory mechanisms are required to keep society from becoming chaotic, and they are truly developed by new social practice.

Together with urban social space, there is also unprecedented development of the internal space of the urbanite's personality, self-awareness, capacity for reflection, for moral and emotional feeling, etc. As G. Simmel noted, "the city acquires an entirely new value in the world history mentality . . . People who are freed from historical ties now want to be different from one another. Every individual is no longer a 'person in general' and it is specifically the qualitative uniqueness of his character that now constitutes the basis of his values."³⁴

All this makes the new principles of social control over human behavior possible and, moreover, necessary. External control increasingly gives way to self-control; "shame" before others when social norms are violated gives way to internally felt "guilt." People's behavior is now regulated "internally" to a much greater degree than "externally" and this regulatory mode is perceived by them as freedom

compared with the absence of freedom under the conditions of the external censorship of the countryside. Thus the medieval maxim "city air makes a person free" now has a new ring to it.

Together with urban (and market) social space—which is much more complex and differentiated than rural space—there is also unprecedented development of the internal space of the individual, his self-awareness, capacity for reflection, for moral and emotional feeling, etc. Man is no longer satisfied by the syncretic perception of the world; his attitude toward the world becomes more and more critical; his behavior becomes increasingly selective. The "censor," the part of which has always been played by one's immediate social environment, moves inside us, and we perform—or do not perform—various acts not because we seek approval or fear the condemnation of our neighbors, but because we can draw upon our inner conviction, on the developed system of values that we have assimilated in the course of socialization. The "external" social control naturally does not disappear entirely, but its role is greatly diminished. People feel themselves closely confined within the framework of the traditional "rural" institutional regulators and not because—or not only because—they do not assure the nation of sufficient wealth or military power but also because (perhaps primarily because) they as people, as private persons, have outgrown their old institutional clothes. Modernization becomes a personal concern rather than a concern of the state, becomes a question of life and death for everyone, and everyone acts as its agent. Thus, the transition is made to the new principles of social control and hence to a new type of society.

Compared with old rural society, it is much more flexible, open to innovation, and is therefore more *effective*—primarily because it rears a new type of individual who is more universal and initiative-oriented than before, who is potentially capable of mastering the unprecedented diversity of the external world and of becoming involved in a new, more complex system of social relations.

It is naive to attempt to overtake such a society while retaining the old, "rural" social control mechanisms. No matter how many times one tries to attach the hammer to the sickle, to transform society from agrarian to industrial, no matter how many cities one builds, it will remain rural and stagnant unless there is fundamental change in social control mechanisms.

It would appear that catch-up development can be successful only if

it leads to change in the qualitative state of society, to the transition from a "rural" to an "urban" type of society. But this jump is not simple. It cannot be made without the old society experiencing the gravest crisis, without facing the bitterest conflicts between what must disappear and what must take its place. Russia long ago entered the period of such crises and conflicts. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth century they had become very acute and made inevitable an event of great historical significance: the Russian Revolution.

**The crisis of the Russian agrarian system:
From the power of the soil to the power of money**

No matter how much is said about the backwardness of prerevolutionary Russia, backwardness in itself is still not evidence of a crisis. Crisis is a characteristic of the internal state of society, of tension produced by contradictions resulting from its discrepant principles. This discrepancy originated long ago, back in pre-Petrovian times, and increased gradually together with new attempts and new failures of modernization reforms. By the end of the nineteenth century, it affected a significant part of society and all its strata.

The fact that forms of rural life that had until recently been entirely viable in Russia reached their historical limit was of decisive importance. Powerful economic and social forces that broke their centuries-old foundations formed in the countryside, especially after the abolition of serfdom in 1861. The change of power—the power of the soil yielded its place to the power of money—was increasingly rapid here. New power also demanded new forms of communal life. The country slowly groped its way toward it.

The rapidly increasing division of labor and the development of industry and trade that transformed Western Europe at one time also descended on Russia in the second half of the nineteenth century. The role of agricultural labor as the sole source of existence for the majority of people began to decline before their very eyes and the role of the market began to grow with equal rapidity. The power of money literally broke into rural life. And the first thing this faceless power did was to destroy the age-old harmony of rural life. Literature in the second half of last century was replete with examples of incipient disharmony. Here is one of them borrowed from Uspenskii.

"This disharmony, which began penetrating the family and all Rus-

sian villages when agricultural labor was no longer the sole source of earnings in the countryside, had affected the family I am describing for quite a long time. Since this family was exclusively agricultural, joint communal-family life was understandable to everyone. Everyone worked for the common good, everyone consumed the product in common, and everyone shared the same concern: the success of agricultural labor. Everything was subordinate to it, and this subordination was understandable to everyone. Now, however . . . the morals of everyone, not excepting even the oldest brother, were more or less shaken. The first unsettling news of the new times was the elimination of the slave mentality, the idea of belonging to another person—the lord of the manor [*barin*]. This news—the best that could visit a family in recent years—immediately gave way to unsettling news, news of the curtailment of land. There was less land, but there was more time to work it. There was also a surplus of manpower that had previously been swallowed up exclusively by agricultural work, by work for oneself and by work for the *barin*. This surplus did not remain idle, but was immediately put to use. One of the middle brothers went to Saint Petersburg where he drove a hack in the winter; another—also a middle brother—became a forester and began receiving a salary, and with the earnings of each of them, the agricultural family union became disharmonious. . . . It is impossible to depict all this disharmony entirely."³⁵

This brief description alone makes it possible to see from a very close distance changes in the inner life of the peasant household generated by the development of trade and industry in Russia and by the ever deeper penetration of new economic relations into the countryside. In the literature at the end of the last century, there are innumerable references of this type, all of which indicate that the countryside was powerless to oppose the mounting onslaught of the ruble. "The power of money," Lenin wrote, "descended with full force on our peasant serf. Money had to be obtained at all costs: to pay taxes, which were raised by the beneficial reform; to lease land; to buy the few factory-made products that were beginning to replace the peasant's home-made products; to buy bread, and so forth."³⁶

Miliukov wrote about the same thing in a slightly different tone: "The situation has become particularly serious because of the accelerating rate of transition from the agrarian to the industrial phase. The reasons behind the accelerating rate of transition from the 'home' 'subsistence economy' to an 'exchange economy' are numerous and quite

complex. Most important among them are the rapidly growing needs of the state and Russia's position among countries that are more developed economically and with which [Russia] is forced to compete in the world market. . . . The purchases that the Russian peasant is compelled to make in the market are inevitable. The increase in spending on food, electric light, etc., does not by any means indicate the enhancement of well-being, but, on the contrary, is an indication of impoverishment."³⁷

The "change of power" in the countryside had to have enormous consequences for it and hence for all society. They made themselves known immediately, grew rapidly, and were felt by everyone. The main and general fact was that a force that destroyed the monolith of peasant society from within appeared for the first time. The money virus penetrated the countryside, depriving it of its age-old immunity and drawing it into the modernization process, which it had previously opposed as something alien. From then on, Russian agrarian society entered a period of general irreversible crisis.

Recognition of this irreversibility and of the inevitability of profound change also came little by little. Russia's backwardness was now perceived not in itself, not in its particular manifestations in the economy, education or military affairs. The entire structure of Russian society, the backwardness of which was seen as an inherent feature, became the object of criticism. Something more than the influx of capital, the development of the internal market, an increase in the number of specialists, etc., was required to overcome it. The entire system of relations, views, and institutions had to be changed and the basic value paradigm of Russian society had to be replaced, because the more it was modernized, the clearer became the limits to the modernization of the old Russia. Its successes were only partly rooted in its own Russian soil. Much was borrowed from the West or else matured among our top-echelon elite and was not properly echoed in the mass social consciousness and behavior of Russians.

The further development of capitalism, the growth of trade, monetary circulation, industry, cities, education, etc., required change in the "soil" itself so that it could nurture more and more of the country's economic and other successes itself. The task of overcoming backwardness merged with the task of revising the economic and social structure and of changing the type of society.

The power of the soil ultimately had to yield its place to the power of money; feudal-communal ownership of the land had to give way to

private ownership of land. Medieval class institutions had to fall in the face of the onslaught of the institutions of civil society. The individualistic value paradigm had to replace the old authoritarian-egalitarian paradigm. The medieval syncretic mentality had to give way to the rational-utilitarian mentality.

Such changes also meant the creation of a new "soil," an end to backwardness, and the transition from "catch-up development" to simply development.

But what kind of fate awaited the old soil in such a case? A deadly threat hovered above it. But the old system of relations based on [the old soil] still preserved in Russia considerable viability and strength, was reinforced by millennial tradition, by the Orthodox faith, and by powerful counterforces in the folk culture. The conflict between the two soils, between old and new value paradigms, between old and new cultures rooted virtually in the times of the church schism, proliferated rapidly, penetrating and destroying every cell of Russian society. The conflict demanded a reappraisal of values, a revision of many fundamental views and behavioral norms, the replacement or modernization of institutions, and a restructuring of all life. Economic successes only intensified this conflict, demonstrating the effectiveness of the new life principles, and thereby devaluing the old ones. Essentially, two mutually exclusive modes of organization of the social life of people became locked in mortal combat in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Russia: the essence of the crisis gripping society consisted therein. This development ultimately led to a social explosion of enormous force, which was followed by the existence of Soviet society for three-quarters of a century and which continued the line of modernization and catch-up development dating back to Petrovian times.

A century later: A new crisis

Russia is now summing up the Soviet stage of its history and is entering a new stage—once again in an atmosphere of crisis. We should probably not be surprised by this.

Modernization—today, as it was 300 years ago—is not simply renewal. It is a battle between two eras, between two types of existence, between two types of societies. Peter's activity can be characterized by Lenin's words: "stubborn struggle, bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, pedagogical and administrative,

against the forces and traditions of the old society."³⁸ In so describing the dictatorship of the proletariat, Lenin acts as a prophet of modernization that is understood specifically as a struggle.

But the modernization struggle (is another kind possible?) cannot be crisis free. It splits society and generates forces of resistance, which is very powerfully reflected in the modernization processes proper. They were very intensive in many directions in the USSR, but on the whole they were highly contradictory and inconsistent, and could not resolve a number of the most important problems generated by the crisis in Russian agrarian society at the end of the last century. By the middle of the 1980s, the impasse that once more beset the country became entirely obvious.

Awareness of the scale and number of unresolved problems led both "upper" and "lower" levels of society to understand the necessity for change. Curiously, practically all diagnoses—from the most optimistic to the extremely harsh and shocking—were based on the premise that the country was experiencing an extraordinary, special moment in its history, related to the fact that it was following its own special path. Some spoke of this with pride and connected the crisis with the mistakes of pioneers, with the difficulties of building a "new society." Others, on the contrary, attributed everything to the fact that the country had turned off the high road of world civilization or its own civilization and was now paying for it. No one recalled that even the very word "*perestroika*" was by no means new to the political lexicon used by Kliuchevskii when he described the mood of the Moscow upper crust during the times of Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, father of Peter I. In Kliuchevskii's words, it experienced difficulties consisting of "the impossibility of coping with the state's urgent needs with the available domestic resources supplied by the existing order, i.e., in the awareness of the necessity of a new restructuring of this order that would provide the state with the resources it needed."³⁹

But was the crisis of Soviet society, which led the country to the need for the changes which the term "*perestroika*" at least initially designated, really something out of the ordinary? This was probably so from the standpoint of its influence on the fate of the world. From the standpoint of many centuries of Russian history, this is more likely an average stage of development, even though it has its own vivid peculiarities.

Western countries have also gone through more than one crisis be-

fore reaching their present level of development which, incidentally, is also not crisis-free. But in Russian history in recent centuries, of necessity there was much that was borrowed and artificial, which, of course, made development still more disharmonious. The Soviet period did not bring anything new in this sense with the possible exception of a conviction—possibly even stronger than before—of the extraordinary exclusiveness of the path chosen by Russia. In the thrall of this conviction, the country tried to perform the impossible, and for seventy years marched in two opposite directions. It took a step in the direction of convergence with the West and at the same time took a step in the opposite direction, avoiding certain conflicts and preparing itself for other, still more dangerous conflicts. The time has come when it has become impossible to move further in this way.

Notes

1. P. Miliukov, *La crise russe* (Paris, 1907), p. 323.
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3. P.I. Liashchenko, *Istoriia narodnogo khoziaistva SSSR. Vol. II. Kapitalizm* (Moscow, 1948), p. 288.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 276–77.
5. A.L. Vainshtein, *Narodnyi dokhod Rossii i SSSR* (Moscow, 1969), p. 68.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 348.
7. *La mortalité des enfants dans le monde et dans l'histoire*. Ed. P.-M. Boulanger and D. Tabulin (Liège, 1980), pp. 147–49.
8. Migulin, *Ekonomicheskii rost Russkogo gosudarstva*, pp. 221–22.
9. V. Kliuchevskii, *Kurs russkoi istorii* (Moscow, 1937), vol. 3, p. 278.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 276.
11. N.A. Berdiaev, *Istoki i smysl russkogo kommunizma* (Moscow, 1990), p. 15.
12. V.V. Rozanov, *Psikhologiya russkovo raskola*, in V.V. Rozanov, *Religiia i kul'tura*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 190), p. 76.
13. Kh. Bagger, *Reformy Petra Velikogo. Obzor issledovaniia* (Moscow, 1985), pp. 34–35.
14. S. Solov'ev, *Publichnye chteniia o Petre Velikom* (Moscow, 1984), p. 30.
15. Bagger, *Reformy Petra Velikogo*, p. 34.
16. Kliuchevskii, *Kurs russkoi istorii*, vol. 4, p. 63.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 222–23.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 227.
19. U. R. Eshbi [W. Ashby], *Vvedenie v kibernetiku* (Moscow, 1959), p. 185.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 294, 299.
21. K. Marx, *Kapital*, vol. 23, p. 85, 86.
22. G.I. Uspenskii, *Sobranie sochinenii* (Moscow, 1956), vol. 5, p. 177.

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24. Ibid., p. 176.
25. I.V. Kireevskii, *Kritika i estetika* (Moscow, 1979), p. 149.
26. A.S. Akhiezer, *Rossiia: kritika istoricheskogo opyta* (Moscow, 1991), vol. 1, p. 62.
27. Ibid., p. 63.
28. Kireevskii, *Kritika i estetika*, pp. 286–87.
29. V. Belov, *Lad. Ocherki o narodnoi estetike* (Moscow, 1989), p. 6.
30. F. Brodel' [Braudel], *Material'naia tsivilizatsiia, ekonomika i kapitalizm XV-XVIII vv.*, vol. 2. *Igry obmena* (Moscow, 1988), p. 247.
31. Kliuchevskii, *Kurs russkoi istorii*, vol. 2, p. 310.
32. Ibid., vol. 2, p. 329.
33. Brodel', *Material'naia tsivilizatsiia*, pp. 259, 264.
34. G. Simmel, *Metropoles et mentalité*, in Yves Grafmeyer and Isaac Joseph, *L'école de Chicago* (Paris, 1984), p. 76.
35. Uspenskii, *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 4, pp. 447–50.
36. V.I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 4, pp. 395–96.
37. Miliukov, *La crise russe*, pp. 323–24, 326.
38. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 31, p. 27.
39. Kliuchevskii, *Kurs russkoi istorii*, vol. 3, pp. 276–77.

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On the Distinctive Features of Political Consciousness in the Post-Perestroika Period

Introduction

The object of this investigation is the political consciousness of the population in mid-1992. We have attempted to determine attitudes to basic sociopolitical values under conditions of a deepening systemic crisis, as well as to ascertain the level of support for the most influential political forces during the period of the investigation. We should stipulate from the outset that the ethnonational components of ideological conceptions remained outside the framework of the study.

Since investigators have been intensely interested in the study of political consciousness, let us briefly examine some of the most important results in the context of our examination.

Several works have been published in the past few years in which the "liberalism versus conservatism" contrast has been used to differentiate the political consciousness of contemporary Russian society. This couplet has been used as the basis for a theoretical typology of value orientations in society [1]. A set of empirical indicators of "liberalism versus conservatism" constituted the initial basis for constructing a

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