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Reform and Its Critics

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Empire and Modernization in Russia

M.E. Sharpe

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In This Issue

Joseph Stiglitz's "Whither Reform? Ten Years of the Transition," a paper presented at an April 1999 World Bank conference, reverberated through Washington and Moscow as well as points between. In his critique of the post-Soviet economic reform and the "Washington consensus," Stiglitz found basic flaws at every level and on all sides, and observed that the Chinese were succeeding where Russia and its Western advisers had failed. (The text is available on the World Bank web site and elsewhere on the Web.) Vladimir Mau's rejoinder to Stiglitz, which opens the current issue of *Problems of Economic Transition,* argues that critics of the Russian reform give slight attention to Russian preconditions and so operate at a level of abstraction that makes their observations unhelpful on the ground. On the subject of preconditions, we offer Anatolii Vishnevskii's long essay on "conservative modernization"—a summation of the argument presented in his well-received book *The Sickle and the Ruble.*

P.A.K.

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ANATOLII VISHNEVSKII

Conservative Modernization in the Soviet Union

All the main events of Russian and Soviet history in the twentieth century are grouped around one pivotal process—modernization, that is, turning society from traditional, agrarian, rural, and holistic into a contemporary, industrial or "post-industrial," urban, and individualistic one. This transformation began in Russia several hundred years ago, and it has still not been completed. But its culmination came precisely in the twentieth century, and now it has passed.

I. The crisis of Russian agrarian society

Backwardness and catch-up development

The past three centuries were a period of catching up in development for Russia, with the aid of which Russian society tried to overcome the economic and social backwardness behind the Western countries that had pulled ahead.

For a long time, this gap, if it was detected at all, was noticed by

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only a small upper portion of Russian society. But even they did not see the whole of it, only some of its outward manifestations: differences in political influence, military power, wealth, and life comfort. Accordingly, the reforms undertaken since the time of Peter I were "instrumental," aimed at remaking some of the "working bodies" of society that were trying to adapt to the old social body.

The backwardness was precisely in building the whole "social body," it permeated the whole organization of society, its economic relations, culture, and everyday life. This was not realized for a long time. The idea of historical evolution receded in the face of the mythologization and canonization of the unchanged features of popular life. As soon as criticism of the backwardness moved out of the context of technical, military, and, in the extreme case, economic backwardness and touched on the fundamental strata of Russian life, the understanding of life by Russian society and its values paradigm, it elicited a defensive reaction that gave rise to a different system of evaluations. What looked to critics (radicals, revolutionaries) like backwardness, defenders (conservatives) saw as the enduring individuality of Russian society and Russian culture. The defensive conservative reaction had its objective grounds, and did not permit even the most radical reformers to make the transformations go deeper.

The power of land and the power of money

The majority of the population of pre-revolutionary Russia were peasants. The peasant in Russia lived, as it were, at the very center of a social Russian nesting doll [*matrioshka*]: he was inside the family, the family was inside the commune, and all the other floors of Russian society were then built on this family/commune foundation. This system of relations assumes a diversity of inequality and a complex hierarchy of personal dependencies. At the same time, all relations are personified, which gives life in this system the "human warmth" that people in the world of impersonal urban relations recall so nostalgically. But it is precisely compared to this later and more complex world that this "nesting doll" social

organization is quite simple. The integrity and indivisibility of human communities and their collective and holistic existence are placed at the forefront in it, and the individual man is seen only through the prism of the institutions of such a collective whole. It is a world in which the principle of *the man for . . .* reigns supreme: for society, for the state, for the family, and so forth. The whole edifice of Russian society was sustained on the village foundation, and, even on its upper floors, the principles inherent in the life of the village were reproduced, albeit with some changes.

The foundation of this whole order in Russia at the end of the nineteenth century was seen in the "power of the land"—a metaphor by which they tried to interpret the inner conditionality and harmony of peasant life. But it was clear even then that in the Russian village, especially after the abolition of serfdom in 1861, that powerful economic and social forces were taking shape that had broken its centuries-old mores, and that the power of land was giving way more and more to the power of money. The virus of money penetrated the village, stripped its centuries-old immunity, and dragged it into the modernization process that it had previously resisted as something alien and borrowed. The village became the subject as well as the object of modernization. Since this time, Russian agrarian society has been in a phase of general irreversible crisis.

In search of the image of the future

Russians became more and more self-critical in the face of this crisis. The backwardness of Russia was no longer based only on its frequent manifestations in economics, education, or the military arts, as it had been before; the whole structure of Russian society was becoming the target of criticism. At the same time, the self-criticism of Russian society, which increased to the extent that its crisis degenerated, was invariably combined with criticism of the "West," the experience of which was either utterly rejected or only partly acknowledged. These two criticisms accompanied all the searches for Russia's historical path. Their continuous coexist-

ence in the public and individual consciousness constantly prompted searches for the future of Russia, such as a "third way," which would be devoid of both the shortcomings of the "pre-Petrovian traditions" and the "West" but would combine their merits.

However, both "one's own" and "alien" were undisputed realities of Russian or European history. This cannot be said in relation to combined plans for the future, and it does not follow from anything that these plans are generally feasible or will lead to the result on which their compilers were counting. The status of such plans is the status of good intentions, the status of utopias. All the Russian plans were utopian, including the Bolshevik plan for the modernization of Russia that, with repeated transformations, they tried to incarnate for seven decades.

The Bolsheviks did not simply inherit the ancient Russian tradition of the "two criticisms," but brought it to the limit. No one condemned Russian backwardness, the "remnants of feudalism," tsarist autocracy, and the like with such ferocity—and no one demonstrated such hostility toward the West, which they branded as "bourgeois," "capitalist," and "imperialist." Accordingly, the image of the future toward which the Bolsheviks were striving, especially after they came to power, took shape from two heterogeneous parts.

The *first*, "instrumental" component of this image was Western material civilization, with its industry, cities, universal literacy, and so forth. This was among the "merits" of the West (or capitalism, which was the same thing) and was suitable for borrowing. But its *second* component was a pseudo-collectivist, anti-liberal, "socialist" utopia. They wanted to build a society in Russia that was to combine the material and technical achievements of the West with the economic and social virtues as they were understood in communal peasant Russia: no money, no market, egalitarianism, and the like.

Russian–German dialogue

The revolution in 1917 was an answer to the worsening "Russian crisis," however in and of itself it did not lead to overcoming the

crisis but only destroyed many of the impediments in the way of the necessary changes. They were able to get started on the changes, on the broad-scale modernization that alone could pull the country out of crisis, roughly ten years later. These years were spent, aside from everything else, on refining the Bolshevik "plan" and bringing it into conformity with the harsh realities of life.

Other European countries that had been drawn into the crisis needed such work as well, in particular, Germany, which had also known its own catch-up modernization and was possibly the first country in the modern era that had to catch up to its Western neighbors that had spurted ahead, and, accordingly, was the first to demonstrate a social reaction to this not entirely ordinary situation.

Even though the Germans were the trailblazers, a German–Russian dialogue eventually arose in which there was not only the simple assimilation of German achievements by Russia, but also a mutual exchange of experience; sometimes Russia even outstripped Germany. Both geographically and historically, Russia was closer to Germany than many other countries of the world that were gradually being drawn into modernization in the nineteenth or twentieth centuries. This proximity was revealed, in particular, in similar views of the ideal future. It was not identical, but similar, since in both cases it included the already mentioned heterogeneous foundations. Social sentiments in Russia as well as in Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century were inclined more and more strongly in favor of rapid industrial development. The voices of the critics of industrialism were gradually stifled by the voices of its adherents, frequently excessive. But because industrialism here was late and borrowed, it was perceived as something apart from the "Western" social soil that had nurtured it, and the attitude toward it remained critical. Modernization, in all of its complexity, was perceived not as the multifaceted and profound restructuring of the whole social body, but became only a synonym for industrial and technical progress alone, which could be combined with the preservation of social archaism.

Such sentiments were reflected in the concept of "conservative revolution" devised by German intellectuals (not without

the influence of the Russian–German dialogue), and in their reading of the German and European realities that had taken shape after World War I. These realities were perceived by them as evidence of the complete collapse of the idea of social progress inherited from the French revolution, and proof that only "eternal" principles that knew no progress could serve as the solid bulwark of society. In its transition to practice, this philosophy signified the rehabilitation of the medieval holistic institutions and the whole spirit of the Middle Ages against which the Age of Enlightenment had fought, imparting to these institutions and this spirit the status of "eternal." It was precisely the adaptation of a social organism permeated by the spirit of the eighteenth century to the spirit of the twentieth that was, in the opinion of Spengler, "the goal of the *organizers*."[1]

On the verge of the Soviet "conservative revolution"

While the wager on preserving and even resurrecting medieval institutions had certain underpinnings in Europe, they existed even more in Russia, where many elements of the Middle Ages were preserved in almost untouched form. The ideas of "conservative revolution" and ideas close to them met with great interest in the Russian émigré intellectual milieu. New plans for Russia, often openly anti-Western and permeated with a spirit of "new medievalism," were maturing there—corporatism in the spirit of Italian fascism, the cult of the authoritarian state, and official religiosity, among others. With the most consistency, the "Eurasians" developed the "neo-medieval" plan, which could be called "Orthodox-Bolshevik." It had all the traits of the neo-Bolshevik plan that had gained in force in the 1920s (a nationalized economy, totalitarian ideology, one-party political system, anti-Westernism, etc.), and like it, was suggested by the true course of events in the Soviet Union. As a whole, the Eurasians approved of it, emphasizing that they explained it by the effects of "popular spontaneity and not the Communists, who were just handy tools and generally obedient instruments."[2]

But the neo-Bolshevik plan devised in the 1920s, in the course of

adapting the old Bolshevik plan to the realities of post-revolutionary Russia, was nevertheless being implemented in the Soviet Union. Its modernization could rely only on those social forces that were available at the time—forces that were nevertheless very archaic, "medieval." Therefore, it could indeed only be "conservative," based on organizational forms that corresponded to the inner state of early Soviet society. The initial plan had to be redrawn immediately, and it was stripped of its very important liberal-Westernizing component. This was never acknowledged in the Soviet Union, where piety toward the ideas of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, toward "progress," "democracy," "civil rights," "internationalism," and so on, was preserved in word alone. But real Soviet history speaks to the fact that this was precisely a "conservative-revolutionary" choice that met, as a whole, the conditions of the place and time and led to the affirmation of totalitarianism.

II. Economic, urban, and demographic revolution

Economic revolution

The sense of the economic revolution that took place in the Soviet Union is revealed in a stereotypical phrase: the transformation of the country from agrarian to industrial. The most important macroeconomic proportions changed radically in the country over five or six years. The portion of the population employed in agriculture dropped from 80 percent to 20 percent, while rising from 8 percent to 38 percent in industry and construction. The contribution of agriculture to national income declined from 54 percent to 19 percent, while industry and construction rose from 29 percent to 56 percent. The Soviet Union became one of the world's major producers of fuel and energy resources, electric power, many metals, and a number of other industrial goods. It had more than a quarter of the world's exports of arms, was first in the world to go into space, possessed enormous military might, and had the latest nuclear technologies.

Nevertheless, the Soviet Union was not an advanced industrial

state, and many archaic traits remained in its economy. It was close to such countries as Spain, Portugal, or Ireland in the percentage of those employed in agriculture (20 percent), but it could not compare with the United States (3 percent employed in agriculture), Germany/the FRG (5 percent), and France (7 percent). In the percentage of those employed in industry, the Soviet Union was more similar to the developed countries, but the much higher percentage of those employed in agriculture inevitably signified the underdevelopment of the services sphere. The contribution of industry and construction to the gross national product in 1985 was 45 percent in the Soviet Union and 31 percent in the United States. Agriculture was 17 percent in the Soviet Union and just 2 percent in the United States. Participation in creating the gross product in transport, communications, trade, and the services sphere in the Soviet Union, on the other hand, was limited to 38 percent (it was 67 percent in the United States).

The chief distinction from the Western countries was that, while imitating their instrumental achievements, and, by dint of enormous effort, having created a modern production apparatus similar to the Western one, Soviet modernization did not lead to the creation of the immanent mechanism of self-development and self-regulation in a modern economy—the market—without which the entire economic system remained inefficient and stagnant.

Urban revolution

Vigorously industrializing, the country was turned simultaneously from rural into urban. The share of the urban population of the Soviet Union increased from 18 percent in 1929 to 66 percent at the end of the 1980s. The number of cities of a million or more rose from 2 to 23, and the number of cities of 100,000 or more went from 89 to 296 from 1939 through 1989 alone, and the share of the population of only the major cities (100,000 inhabitants or more) was 39 percent in 1989. Urbanization went very far, although we still cannot say it was completed. Indigenous urban residents numbered no more than 15–17 percent of sixty-year-old

residents of the country at the end of the 1980s. They were approximately 40 percent of forty-year-old residents. Urban residents were more than half only for twenty-two-year-olds or younger (37 percent of the population). It thus cannot be said that by the time of the break-up of the Soviet Union, Soviet society had become primarily urban. The inhabitants of the Soviet Union were still primarily first-generation urbanites—half or even three-quarters of urban inhabitants—while half or a quarter of peasants bore the stamp of being transitory, marginal.

And once again, speaking only of quantitative assessments, we can state that urban revolution was left behind in the Soviet Union, especially in its European portion. The shame, however, is that Soviet urbanization, like Soviet industrialization, was instrumental. The growth of cities and the urban population was not accompanied by the formation of a full-fledged urban environment or, most important, by growth in the middle social segments, the bourgeoisie—the natural agent of urban relations. The population was urbanized, but the cities themselves became rural, continuously reproducing the social marginality of their inhabitants.

Demographic revolution

The economic revolution changed the conditions of the everyday production activity of people, and urban revolution changed the conditions of their everyday social interaction. The demographic revolution, which was associated with both, changed the conditions of the private, intimate life of people, and affected the profound and existential aspects of the human personality. The chief quantitative indicators of demographic revolution are the figures for declines in birth and mortality rates. The average life span in the Soviet Union in the middle of the 1960s had increased from thirty-two to sixty-nine years compared to the beginning of the century, and it was among the thirty countries with the lowest mortality rates. The birth rate had dropped in the European republics of the Soviet Union accordingly, and a balance of the birth and mortality rates typical of economically developed countries

was established. The demographic and family behavior of people, family roles and values, the status of women and children, the conditions of family upbringing, and attitudes toward life, love, and death had all been fundamentally changed.

However, this modernization was not and could not be brought to an end. It caused a quite significant convergence of demographic behavior and its results in the Soviet Union and the Western countries, and the changes that occurred were irreversible. But the low value on life, archaic pattern of the causes of death, and increasing lag behind the West in average life span, enormous number of abortions, and preservation of conservative views of family life and the status of women, among other things, all point to the fact that demographic modernization had not been completed either. The ideological blinders, low level of well-being, paternalistic social policies, and limited freedom of movement characteristic of the Soviet period essentially contradicted the main principle that is affirmed in the course of demographic modernization—the principle of freedom of individual choice in everything pertaining to the personal life of man.

The economic, urban, and demographic revolutions sharply expanded the realm of human freedom, and thus make objectively possible a civil society based on liberal principles that are counter to the medieval "conciliarism" [*sobornost'*], absorption of the personality by the state, commune, church, ethnic group, family, and so forth. Even in the incomplete form in which the three revolutions have been realized in Russia to the present time, they have brought it to the realization of these principles in earnest.

III. Cultural revolution

The conciliar man

"We want," Lenin wrote in 1919, "to build socialism directly out of the material that was left to us by capitalism from yesterday to today, right now, and not from people prepared in greenhouses."[3] So what kind of "material" was that?

It was the Slavophiles, trying to interpret the specific nature of the Russian social milieu, who advanced the idea of conciliarism. Today they frequently see in it virtually the main focus of "Russianness," although from the very beginning of its development a Russian–German exchange was heard that often pointed to the likely link of the ideas of the Slavophiles with a book by the German author Moehler, *Die Einheit in der Kirche oder das Prinzip des Catholicismus*,[4] who belonged "to that generation of German Catholic theologians who were waging an internal struggle in those years with the age of Enlightenment."[5] Obviously, the concept of "conciliarism" does not arise by accident, but serves as an interpretation of one of the fundamental links in the holistic and collectivist system of values in a watershed era when it was forced to accept the historical challenge of individualism and mobilize all the forces of traditional culture for its defense. The sense of conciliarism is thus usually revealed through its juxtaposition to the principle of autonomy of the personality, individualism, and the like. German anti-individualism differed from the Russian, of course, but not always and not in everything, and, in the views of the interaction of man and society, the advocates of the Russian idea were close to the Prussian champions of the idea.

The conciliarist paradigm reflects universal principles of the organization of social life in relatively simple and not very efficient "rural" societies. Their freedom was fettered by the rigid framework of economic and demographic necessity, which also justifies the subordination to the unconditional imperative of *the man for*. . . . The conciliar man has his own, syncretic picture of the world, a conciliar consciousness does not strive for understanding of its inner complexity and contradictoriness, makes it possible to see the world only as a whole, does not permit analysis or social self-criticism, requires faith, and for it, to evaluate means to moralize.

The principles of conciliarism correspond to the demands of the traditional "external" social controls in simple societies, and thus preserve for them the significance of the idea reflected in all of the main social establishments. That is how it was in Russia as well—until economic and other changes undermined the "power

of the land," there was no doubt of the conciliar ideal, and a new mass human type was not summoned to life.

The development of commercial trading along with urban development, affirming the power of money, required a transition from a society of drive belts where the motive force in the social field comes to each from the top of the pyramid, from the center of one or another level, to a society of people possessing "built-in" and autonomous engines and an individual system of goal-setting, from holism to individualism. This signified the end of the conciliar man.

The autonomous personality: the "superfluous man" and the "coming boor"

The very fact of reflection on the matter of conciliarism in Russia in the middle of the nineteenth century was caused by the fact that the conciliar ideal had proved by that time to be faced with a challenge thrown down to society by a new type of people who had moved away from the conciliar norm. There were two reasons for their appearance in Russia: European influences and the increased complexity of Russian life itself.

In the beginning, the first of the two causes was the main one. Russia had experienced neither the Reformation nor the Enlightenment, had not gone through an independent school of the "economic man," and the conciliar principles for the organization of social life had been manifesting a surprising viability here for a long time, because the soil nurturing it—the traditional life of the peasant majority of the people—was alive. Therefore, at first, only small numbers of court and near-court circles were able to feel that they were "new people," those who, through their cultivation of Western manners, were the first to be able to perceive Western cultural achievements.

For a whole century, the attention of Russian culture was chained to a thin layer of people who thought, felt, and acted in a new way, and thus proved to be in conflict with society and felt themselves superfluous in it. The idea of self-work and moral autonomy of

the individual that the "new people" were defending, and the transition associated with it from the principle of *the man for . . .* to the principle of *for the man . . .* contradicted at root the prevailing conciliar idea. An intense and dramatic struggle for the affirmation of an individual idea new to Russia was needed. The *principle* was defended, and therein lies the unparalleled significance of the Russian intellectual and spiritual questing at the end of the last century and the beginning of this one. But all questions of the affirmation of the principle were not resolved.

The economic and social life of Russia was quickly becoming more complex in the second half of the nineteenth century, and it was their own mechanism rather than a borrowed one for overturning the conciliar world, which had now been in effect not in a limited environment but across the entire social field of Russia, that was gaining force. Russian society was facing the enormous task, new to it, of turning the elite, autonomous individual into a *mass* human type. This was possibly the central task of the entire developing Russian revolution, and, thus, a task of exceptional complexity whose accomplishment was further complicated by the resistance coming both from above and below.

Faith in the permanence and eternal nature of the conciliar peasant was deeply rooted in Russia. But with the penetration of the power of money into the village, the thinking and behavior of the peasants started becoming more and more pragmatic and rational-egotistical. The court intelligentsia, who for a long time had not been strangers to rationalism or utilitarianism, did not recognize in the modernized peasants a repetition of themselves, did not acknowledge their right to free choice that they themselves valued so much, but rather declared them bourgeois offspring, held in contempt and cursed by all.

The fear of the multiplying "philistinism," the "coming boor," affirmed the fact that the principles of organization of the new and individualistic world had penetrated into the thick of the conciliar peasantry and that a competitor to the "educated classes" had appeared. The court higher-ups of Russia were apprehensive about the onslaught of the bourgeois peasant, and they feared a peasant

uprising—the preservation of conciliar principles seemed like a real alternative, and practically all strains of Russian social thought rose up in their defense in one form or another. The desire to preserve the status quo demanded justification for the favored status of the few. The individual could be autonomous and have self-worth, but it was not accessible to all—such was the inner logic of this justification, which is connected, in particular, with the enormous popularity of Nietzsche in Russia at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth.

But resistance to diluting the conciliar principles also came from "below," from popular culture itself, since it had also been left out in the cold at the time. It was created by the "power of the land," and supported it and was itself sustained by it. Now that the power of the land had receded under the pressure of the power of money, even village life, the more so urban life, was demanding changes. Accordingly, a crisis of the conciliar-commune world of the Russian village developed, and the traits of its collapse multiplied in business, communal, and family life; this gave rise to protective forces of the traditional popular culture, which still had many adherents.

Russia was at a dead end by the beginning of the twentieth century: in order to unblock the emergence of the autonomous individual as a mass human type, it was necessary to accelerate economic and social modernization. Only the "new people" were capable of accomplishing that modernization, and it was precisely they who could not be hatched in sufficient quantity from the conciliar whole.

The autonomous individual: "Homo Soveticus"

The Bolsheviks conceived the idea of breaking this vicious circle. They were counting on a rapid cultural revolution, with the aid of which they hoped to speed up the proliferation of urban, "Western" culture, and thereby the formation of the "new man" essential for the building of socialism. Things actually turned out differently in practice: the village culture overwhelmed the city for a

while, leading to the resurrection of the old conciliar ideology and giving new life to the principle of *the man for. . . .*

This turn of events was characteristic of more than Russia alone. Everywhere the man who had still not hatched—or had not hatched completely—from the medieval communal and corporate shell was unable to perceive and realize in his activity the principles of economic and political democracy by which urban society lives. But as soon as the social mutation began, he also could no longer follow the prior holistic principles without reservation. The old communal corporate ties had been broken, the new social structure had not yet taken shape, and millions or even tens of millions of people were forming amorphous, weakly structured "masses" that fell easily under the sway of destructive instincts.

The willfulness of the mass threatens society with chaos and collapse—such was the impression taken away by the European "political class" of the 1920s from the paroxysms of war and revolutions that had just passed. The efforts of political thought at the time were frenziedly aimed at searching for ways to bridle the raging masses and restore the lost order. Representatives of the most varied views and political strains—W. Rathenau and N. Berdiaev, Moeller van den Bruck and the "Eurasians," Mussolini and the Harbin "Russian fascists"—all linked the future of post-war Europe with the resurrection of the medieval corporate structure. The Russian Bolsheviks, however, were hardly the first to be worried about confronting the "atomism of private individuals." The very state of early Soviet society prompted them to search for new ways to structure the "masses," ways of modernization relying not on the autonomous "private individual" but on the conciliar man-cog included in some new forms of collectivism that conformed to the industrial and urban era.

Naturally, now this was not the conciliar peasant of past centuries, but neither was it an individualistic and autonomous man, nor a Western-type "bourgeois." This was a new, conciliar "simple man" who differed markedly from his peasant predecessor, but only in outward, instrumentally material traits. In essence, this was the same communal peasant, now dressed in urban clothes

and with modern education. As for the profound principles of social existence, the inner world, the mechanisms for determination of behavior—he remained the same passive and undemanding *man for . . .*, the standard cog in the social machine. The attempt to create such a sociocultural centaur was indeed undertaken in the Soviet Union.

One of the main instruments for implementing this design was the Soviet "cultural revolution," aimed primarily at carrying out purely instrumental tasks such as uplifting education, introducing modern scientific and technical knowledge, disseminating household, sanitary, and physical culture, and the like. No small successes were achieved in accomplishing these tasks in Soviet times, even though such a truncated and instrumental cultural modernization could not be brought to its conclusion. But even if it had been completed, it was far from being the deeper revolution toward which Russia had long been moving and which was to change not only the "instrumental" but also the "value" substance of culture, leading to the replacement of the holistic "rural" cultural paradigms with the individualistic and liberal paradigms of contemporary urban society.

This more general task could not be accomplished without rejecting the collectivist socialist utopia, behind which a preserved and refaced conciliarism could be clearly seen. An intermediate and inwardly contradictory "cultural mix" formed that was devoted to an unattainable ideal of human personality—the "simple Soviet man," *Homo Soveticus*—to the extent that the conservative revolutionary design was able to be implemented in the Soviet Union. It artificially combined the "instrumental" merits of the contemporary urban inhabitant with the collectivist peasant virtues of the "conciliar man."

The real or imagined successes of the Soviet conservative modernization, just like the "conservative revolutions" in Italy and Germany, first gave rise to some illusions of surmounting the crisis of the conciliar ideal and its resurrection under the banner of socialist collectivism, corporatism, and nationalism. Not too much time was needed to reveal the common denominator of the

various options for the "new medievalism"—totalitarianism. The totalitarian regimes showed their true face, and the illusions started to evaporate.

The crisis of Soviet conciliarism

In the face of the limited nature of instrumental modernization, it still bore fruit, and the social world became more complicated and started to come more and more into contradiction with the artificial simplicity of *Homo Soveticus*. Living under the new conditions, man was feeling the natural and social macrocosm in a new way, and that required changes in the structure of his individual microcosm. The more complicated social environment forced new rules of the game by which they had to live. According to those rules, the "censor," which role the immediate social circle had always played, had to be moved "inside," had to become an inner personality trait with the ability to set goals under conditions of multiple choices that the prior life had not known. The customary "conciliar" and "cog" discipline was now being perceived more and more as an impediment, and elicited protest and resistance. It was now impossible to halt the maturation of the "new man," who was coming to replace both the prior conciliar man and the intermediate *Homo Soveticus*.

Naturally conciliarism, which had taken on a new face by that time and had been transformed, in accordance with the economic, political, and military imperatives of the twentieth century, into a state totality, did not intend to give way. But it could no longer restrain the growing individualization of man. For a time, for several postwar decades, a shaky equilibrium of forces was seemingly established, but their correlation had been changing in hidden fashion. The "new" man, an individualist and a pragmatist, was gaining strength. People's way of life, their needs, tastes, everyday behavior, and aesthetic preferences, were moving ever closer to the "Western," that is, increasingly conforming to the homogenous material and social environment of industrial and post-industrial societies. Soviet society started more and more to forget

its old "conciliar" traits, and was turning into a society of autonomous individuals.

The official ideology fought the theory of convergence of Soviet and Western societies. Something more than convergence is what actually happened. Convergence assumes only an outward similarity, with the preservation of fundamental inner differences. The essence of man changed in the Soviet Union, and the political differences between "socialism" and "capitalism" became more outward and were more and more on the surface. They were ultimately ground down to the limit and disappeared all at once, as if they had never been.

Russia is still far from the culmination of a genuine cultural revolution today. The principle of autonomy of the individual is still weakly rooted here and its advocates are not prepared to part with the accustomed conciliar-paternalistic picture of the world once and for all. The generations that replaced the classic "Soviet man" bear the burden of the recent as well as the remote past. But it is now impossible to halt the movement. Of course, the conciliar principles will never be completely outgrown, and, to some extent, they are no less essential than the principles of personal autonomy, which have always been present in social life. Only the correlation between them moves, the center of gravity shifts. But this changes everything.

IV. Political revolution

Dictatorship of the masses or dictatorship of a "new class?"

The few decades before the revolution and the first post-revolutionary decades, while not leading to the creation of a mass "new man," gave rise to an intermediate social type of the masses consisting of marginal "half-conciliar" people. Those masses filled the stage of post-revolutionary Russia, and became the social base for Soviet totalitarianism. The words of H. Arendt that such masses grow "out of the remnants of an exceedingly atomized society"[6]

can explain little in Russia, since Russian society *was not* atomized, and thus could not produce such fragments. In the other European countries where the "uprising of the masses" led to the establishment of totalitarian regimes, the societies were far *less* atomized than in the "Western democracies" where everything worked out.

The point is evidently not so much the ultimate atomizing as it is the *transition* to it that is made by yesterday's peasants, quite recently the majority in all the European countries, and then torn from their roots and driven out of the villages as the result of changes in European economic life. A cultural interregnum was being established by the time of this transition, when millions of the "new people" were rushing to real but as yet still poorly understood temptations and values of the new urban life, sweeping away everything in their path.

This was indeed a time of *uprising* of the masses, but can we speak of their *dictatorship*? If such a dictatorship—in the form of the brief power of the raging masses—had flashed somewhere in the twentieth century, it was just to prepare the soil for harsh totalitarian regimes that put the man of the masses in his place with an iron hand. It became clear very soon that the masses had not appeared on the political scene for long, and only in the role of statists. Their true place of the political processes of our century cannot be understood if we do not consider, at the same time, the functions and role of the *new elites* and the sense of *their* uprising and *their* dictatorship.

The new elites are just as much an inevitable outcome of historical changes as the new autonomous man. To the extent that he turns into a more mass type and the "molecular composition" of society changes, the most active agents of their interests, values, and principles are singled out, and they gain increasing influence and displace the former elite. But it is not simply a battle for influence and power, which goes on all the time. We are talking about a change in the very *type of the elite*, the principles of its formation, the nature of its functioning—all of this should conform to the foundations of the vital activity of the renewing society.

New bourgeois layers had started to appear in Russia along with the usual higher nobility as early as the nineteenth century, and vertical social mobility arose that was almost unknown to the old estate society. It is directly connected with changes in which the new elite had a vested interest, and which the old elite, losing at least some of its privileges, opposed.

Strength is still on the side of the old elite, it blocks changes, and the newly arrived *raznochinets* [an educated commoner of no defined class], trying to change the unfavorable correlation of forces, seeks an ally in the "people." This is the chief secret of the "love of the people" of the Russian intelligentsia and the idealization of its peasant. The *raznochinets* revolutionaries were genuinely convinced of their fealty to the cause of the people, but they always saw themselves as its leaders, and, as a rule, did not take into account that the interests of the "people" and their own might not coincide, or coincided only partially.

This lack of conformity was detected very soon after Russia joined the social upheavals of the first half of the twentieth century. It was precisely then that the immature and simplistic political and legal consciousness of the Russian revolutionaries was in fact united with the undeveloped and spontaneous consciousness of the declassed half-urban and half-village, peasant/soldier masses alarmed by wars and revolutions. The revolution opened up new channels of vertical social mobility, and, first and foremost, for the majority. The "people" quite naturally rushed into them, in the name of which swore several generations of Russian semi-gentry, semi-bourgeois revolutionaries, but which now had no need for them as leaders at all.

The roiling masses immediately swept from the political stage the representatives of almost all the revolutionary strains that had taken shape in Russia. The Bolsheviks stayed in power for a while, but not for long. The vigorous expansion and elevation to power of marginal elements started at the end of the 1920s, and their ultimate triumph over the "very thin layer of the Party old guard" (Lenin's expression) was preordained by the simple quantitative correlation of forces. Only those members of the "old guard" who

deserted to the side of the new majority were able to stay whole. This also predetermined the choice of Stalin and his whole strategy of relying on the "masses," and, more precisely, on the new "marginal" elite. This was precisely what, for a while, became the solid bulwark of the political regime, which it passed off as the "dictatorship of the proletariat" and which could look from afar like the dictatorship of the masses, and formed a new ruling class.

Since he had gained a firm hold on power relying first and foremost on political rather than economic levers, and it had happened in a poorly structured society, his power was especially despotic, and the Soviet period became a time of powerlessness and lack of rights for the masses, and the extent to which they were deceived and exploited was rare for a country of such a level of development.

Totalitarian ideologies

Revolutionary activity in Russia had remained primarily the business of the intelligentsia, and extremist political trends, as a whole, were considerably less popular than liberal ones. Pre-revolutionary Russia was developing quite successfully down the Western, capitalist path, and this consolidated the positions of the pro-Western liberals and their faith in the power of money, the strength of the market, the economic principles of *laissez faire,* and the values of multiparty democracy. When the country was dragged into crisis and the "people" went off to revolution, the liberal hopes started to give rise to more and more doubts. The events of the revolution of 1917, the civil war, and then the failed attempt to advance Russia down the liberal path during the time of the New Economic Policy [NEP] decisively revealed the immaturity of domestic liberalism and its unsuitability for the Russia of the time, as well as the utopian nature of the Russian liberal project at the beginning of the twentieth century.

But as soon as the liberal project was deflected by life, it could be countered only with a plan for a totalitarian society built "from the top down"—from apex to foundation. The experience of the

twentieth century points to the two main ideological axes around which all such projects and the ideologies corresponding to them are grouped: Marxism and nationalism. The difference is not in the goals but in the means, in the ways of mobilizing social forces. Placing a stake on the identical methods of mobilizing social energy—a rigid state centralism combined with belief brought to fanaticism—unites the practice of Marxism and nationalism. The difference is the belief *in what*, and, more precisely, the belief *in what enemy*.

If we are speaking of Soviet Marxism, naturally, we are talking only about a name that is convenient for a number of reasons for the adherents and opponents of this ideology. Berdiaev wrote that in Russia "a Russification and orientalization of Marxism occurred," with its adaptation to "the uniqueness of the Russian historical process."[7] In the Soviet Union, this Russified Marxism was turned into an official ideology and religion, and gave an answer to the main question of belief in what enemy. They had to believe in a *class* enemy: he had to be fought, they had to unite against him, he had to be eradicated constantly. This is the specific feature of the mobilization scheme of Marxism, in contrast to nationalism, which develops its mobilization potential by uniting forces against *a different enemy.*

Internationalism, which in fact conforms to the logic of *class* struggle, is usually considered a distinguishing feature of Marxism. It seemed that the coming to power of a Marxist party in postrevolutionary Russia signified a crushing defeat for Russian nationalism and all others in Russia. However, the objective bases for nationalism did not actually disappear. Accelerated modernization engenders a crisis of ethnicity (see below for more detail on this), which makes it possible and quite easy to play on ethnic feelings for political purposes. This also gives rise to nationalism—one of the most powerful means of mobilizing social forces in a tense and unsettled social climate. In counterbalance to the image of the class enemy, the no less sinister but more convenient image for certain social segments of the *ethnic* (racial, ethnocultural, ethnoreligious, etc.—depending on the circumstances) enemy is put forward. Nationalism turns into an alternative to Marxism, into its competitor in the struggle for influence on the masses.

In the 1920s, when the triumphant "reds" in Russia were working out their plan for the mobilization of social energy based on the constant agitation and worsening of the "class struggle," the vanquished "whites" in exile were developing their own alternatives for development, which, if they differed at all from the Bolshevik ones, did so only in the stake they placed in ethnic and denominational feelings rather than class. Russian ethnic and denominational "patriotism" clearly lost out to Marxist "internationalism" for a long time, as the latter had seized the central place in the sole official orthodoxy, while "patriotism" was content with its lot as a tolerable (albeit often persecuted) but peripheral heresy. The crisis of Soviet totalitarianism in the 1980s and 1990s, which undermined its status as an official ideology, promoted the ascent of its "patriotic" competitor. The ideological field increasingly started to fill up with the old nationalist cliches, which were quite easily picked up by the many recent "internationalist" Marxists, who held onto their inner sympathy to totalitarianism in any form. The Russian "patriots" did not demonstrate their hostility to "Marxism" from anti-totalitarian positions at all. As before, liberalism is still a greater enemy for them, so nationalism emerges not only—and perhaps not so much in a direct sense, as an anti-liberal onslaught intelligible to the "people"—as an ideology of totalitarian revanchism.

Socialist Middle Ages

The first half of the twentieth century in many countries of Europe became a time when awakened political instincts of the marginalized "masses" met the totalitarian ideologies that had matured by that time and that, to a significant extent, guided the search for reasons for the European collapse and ways of overcoming it. All of them linked the way out of the crisis not with the accelerated development of economic and political democracy

based on liberal and individualistic values, but with a return to the tenets of the Middle Ages, with the rehabilitation of its principles.

"The grandiose enterprise of recent history must be eliminated, it has failed," Berdiaev wrote in 1923. "The new Middle Ages will overcome the atomism of recent history."[8] Using Berdiaev's example of the "new Middle Ages," and, the more so, using the example of the "volte face" people and the Eurasians, it may be seen that the criticism of Bolshevism even by representatives of the émigré opposition hostile to the Bolsheviks sometimes refuted far from all the aspects of the Middle Ages that had rolled over the Soviet Union. The denial of "Western" economic and political liberalism, the dominance of the state over society in Soviet Russia, and then in the Soviet Union, aroused sympathy not only in many of the emigrants, but also among many Westerners, especially German ideologists and politicians. The aggressively negative attitude toward individualism, liberalism, Western parliamentary democracy, and the like in Weimar Germany, so consonant with the increasingly clear Soviet practice, grew stronger as well. Many of the German plans for the future at the time were adorned with these sentiments.

If not the "bourgeois democracy" endlessly reproved in the Soviet Union, if not the liberalism so constantly reviled in Germany,[9] then what? The answer was unanimous and one and the same in both countries: *socialism*. In Russia, it was the officially proclaimed doctrine, and in Germany there were many plans under discussion, far from all of them communist or social democratic. "Only socialism could have profound significance in Germany" (Spengler).[10] "We look at Russia because it is the country, most likely, that will take the path with us leading to socialism" (Goebbels).[11] "We face the question of German socialism" (Moeller van den Bruck).[12] "German socialism . . . is *popular* socialism. . . . It encompasses the whole people, all aspects of their life" (Sombart),[13] and so forth.

Many political and ideological strains diverged sharply from Marxism in Germany after World War I, but not at all from socialism, whose slogans were widely used while emphasizing in every way possible the non-Marxist lines of its genealogy. ("We must free German socialism of Marx," wrote Spengler.)[14] Socialism for

them embodied everything that could be juxtaposed with the "uprising of the masses" and protect the aristocratic spirit and feudal order of old Europe from ruin. They constantly stressed that they were talking about "German socialism," about the incarnation of the "Prussian idea," and so on, but it is hard to find anything national in the main features of the order they were proclaiming. They were talking only about one of the two sets of ideas that collided in Europe in the nineteenth century, and then in the twentieth, about the spirit of the Middle Ages in its juxtaposition with the spirit of the New Times. The German version of the "spirit of the Middle Ages" was distinguished from the Russian, Italian, or any other only in the details, while all of its national versions were united by the most important thing: they were fighting the "atomism of the new history," against the individualism of "private individuals," decentralized economic solutions, the control of society over the state, parliamentary democracy, and human rights and freedoms. Wholly applicable to "German socialism" are the words of Mussolini: "We offer a clear and categorical antithesis . . . to the whole world of the eternal principles of 1789."[15]

The language of Soviet ideology of those years was completely different. In words, the French Revolution was considered a great historical event and its conquests were highly regarded. In practice, Soviet socialism marked itself as the conservator and defender of the principles and institutions of pre-industrial, rural, and feudal societies doomed by history to oblivion, and, in this sense, it was also an absolutely "clear and categorical antithesis" to all the counter-medieval achievements of the nineteenth century. We can take any aspect of the life of Soviet society, and, without difficulty, we can immediately find typical medieval features that often testify to the rejection of even the quite modest achievements that were brought to Russia in the nineteenth century.

The general structure of the socialist Middle Ages also predetermined the type of its elite. The Soviet system brought to power a new elite that was democratic in its origins, but it did not create democratic mechanisms for its renewal. On the contrary, the new ruling elite, the nomenklatura, being the natural offspring of cen-

tralized state socialism, reflected as nothing else the medieval features of the system. The main characteristic of the Soviet elite was its status; it was reminiscent of a feudal aristocracy. Status was not inherited, it was "bestowed" from above, but there were practically no differences in all the rest. The representatives of the party/state nomenklatura ruling the country embodied not capital, knowledge, or ability, but their positions. Their status depended much more on the higher levels than on real processes occurring in their sector or territorial "fiefdom." Stability was much more important to the nomenklatura than development, and, if it acknowledged any innovations at all, then it was only on command from above. But development in and of itself—to the letter as in the Middle Ages—held no interest for them whatsoever.

The total state

And nevertheless, the new, socialist Middle Ages were not an exact copy of the old. Their main characteristic relied on preserved or restored medieval, feudal structures, on the conciliar man and the principles of his vital social activity, but it was itself not characteristic of the Middle Ages. We are talking about the all-pervasive presence of the state.

At the beginning of the 1920s, when the possibilities of the "total state" were still not yet clear, the future of Russia, like other European countries, was frequently linked with the resurrection of the medieval corporate order. The corporate idea served the Soviet Union pretty well, where not only the peasants—then the principal mass in the country—but also the urban tradesmen and even people in the free professions—such as writers, artists, and composers—were "collectivized" and thereby placed under control. Nevertheless, it was not this path that proved to be the main one. To the extent of industrialization and the expansion of the state sector of the economy, civil servants and white-collar workers were growing increasingly numerous and gradually becoming a majority, and direct state control moved to the forefront.

At first, the totalitarian regime in the Soviet Union was not absolutely dysfunctional, it was not seized by the mass consciousness, and, furthermore, it was perceived as something positive and joined the important social values. Post-revolutionary Soviet society as a whole accepted the mobilization model of modernization, and it was precisely the mobilization function that became the organizing link of the entire political system. The Soviet totalitarian regime became dysfunctional when the historically justified tasks of the mobilization model were by and large fulfilled. However, then its fate was already welded fast to the fate of the nomenklatura elite, tied by its origins and functions to the centralism of the economic and political system. Protecting its own, egotistical interests, the nomenklatura, as it could, stalled the collapse of the mobilization economy and the total state, finding their (and its own) later justification in the ever greater militarization. But the crisis not only did not disappear from this, it became increasingly acute, destroying from within the whole "conservative-modernization" Soviet system.

The crisis of totalitarianism

The revolutionary goals and conservative means, united in one model of modernization and initially in contradiction with each other, had to come into open conflict sooner or later. It was inevitable precisely because of the *successes* of modernization, albeit half-hearted.

Even though not one of the revolutions from which Soviet modernization took shape was completed, they nevertheless prepared, even though in rough form, the new material and spiritual foundations for contemporary social life, incomparably more mature and all-encompassing than those that pre-revolutionary Russian capitalism had been able to leave after itself. Instrumental modernization does not exhaust all the tasks of modernization, but it is important as well, and, to the extent that it took place in the Soviet Union, many tens of millions of people gained access to the fruits of it. All of this could not help but have an effect on the state of the transitional Soviet society and gave rise to the forces of its new structuring.

With the development of industry, cities, and education, local—regional, sector, and combined—centers of economic and social life gained in strength and became more complex, inwardly disparate, capable of significant economic and political independence and horizontal interaction. Once again, as in the nineteenth century but on a much larger scale, the number of elite institutions increased and quite numerous layers associated with them took shape. They were recruited from yesterday's marginals and, of course, bore the imprint of the classic *Homo Soveticus*, initially acting behind the usual mask of the nomenklatura. But their nature was now objectively different. First of all, to an ever increasing extent, the new generations of the elite embodied the interests of systematic self-organization coming "from below"—in contrast to the old nomenklatura, which was carrying out designs that originated "from above." Second, the representatives of the new generations of the elite, compared to their fathers, felt more independent, since they had their own inalienable baggage: professional knowledge, urban culture, a feeling of rootedness in the new social soil. A shift in the direction of the autonomy of the individual was reflected in them with the greatest distinctiveness, and, in less pronounced forms, it affected many tens of millions of second- and third-generation urban residents.

The new, not entirely nomenklatura and partly nomenklatura elite started to fill the Soviet political stage beginning approximately in Khrushchev's time. At that point, it was small and it needed decades to multiply, to meld into a force, to be liberated from many illusions, and to be able to start restructuring the world as it saw it. When the time came, it quite decisively rejected the centralized economy, the mobilization ideology, the political totalitarianism—all of this did not conform to its interests. But it took what it was able to take from what had engendered it and was now receding into the past, and the internal kinship with it has still not been lost.

It was precisely the members of the nomenklatura of all ranks, with complete conviction of their rights, who set about the hasty dividing up of the riches of an enormous nation, and, for that matter, of the state itself. This dividing up proved to be very simple, since it had been prepared by all of Soviet history, which had taught society both the omnipotence of the nomenklatura and the voicelessness of the "masses." The regime that so loved to pass itself off as the incarnation of popular will left an absolute desert behind itself precisely from the standpoint of the popular will: no ideas, no people, and no institutions that could have advanced society even a little in the direction of social democracy limited the boundless appetites of ownership and power. Having come face to face with the new realities, the one mob that controlled the country fell apart into a host of small ones, as a rule, hatched from the prior large one and genetically and ideologically linked with it—and indeed, there is nothing else that could have happened. But, as soon as it did happen, the level of monopolism dropped sharply and a polycentric world arose that objectively corresponds more to the level of complexity and diversity of the urban industrial societies of which Russia is now solidly a part. This world also requires a different system of power, since it lives by its own laws, with which all of its legal entities and individuals will have to reckon sooner or later.

V. The tread of the Russian empire

Territorial growth

Between 1600 and 1900, the Russian empire annexed 17 million square kilometers of new lands, and, by the beginning of the twentieth century, it was the largest country in the world, occupying 22.3 million square kilometers—one-sixth of the world's land surface. From the very beginning, the modernization aspirations of Russian society were closely linked with the military and political ambitions of the state with its autocratic, imperial role and constant territorial expansion. The continuous colonization of the Russian expanse was a heavy burden on the national economy and sapped the psychological energy of the nation, but the imperial and patriotic principles were merged in the Russian consciousness for a long time, which eased the mobilization of the country's manpower and the resources necessary to maintain its prestige as a great nation.

World War I and the February and October revolutions in 1917 made clear the latent crisis of relations that had come to a head within the empire, but they hardly caused the empire to disappear. However, the depth and acuity of the crisis of Empire in Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century were nonetheless not enough to make its collapse final. The collapse was halted and the empire was restored in an updated form under the name of the Soviet Union.

In 1922, when the Soviet Union appeared, its territory was only 800,000 square kilometers less than the territory of the former Russian empire, and the territorial losses totaled less than 4 percent. True, these were densely populated lands. In 1897, about 22 million people lived on them (17.3 percent of the population of the former empire),[16] and, in 1920, according to estimates, 28 million (the same 17.3 percent).[17] Only later, during World War II, did the Soviet Union recover the greater portion of these losses and even acquired some new territories after the war ended. According to official Soviet estimates, in 1939 some 20.1 million people were living on territories annexed in 1939 and subsequent years (12 percent of the population of the Soviet Union before the border changes).[18] The empire once again occupied one-sixth of the world's land mass and was the largest nation in the world.

East Slavic colonization

The territorial growth in the empire was linked first and foremost with the historical fates of eastern Slavdom. The eastern Slavs created their own civilization, the originality of which was a result of the concrete characteristics of its "place of development" and was strengthened thanks to the cultural and religious isolation and constant distancing from the historically more developed, and thus dangerous, Western Europe. But it was not possible to fence themselves off from it entirely. Since the time of Peter I, the convergence of Russia with the West has been irreversible, and, little by little, cultural borrowings from the West started to change the eastern Slavic civilization background, on which was superimposed a new and more modern European layer that mixed with it.

The ancient civilizational layer was gradually covered by a new one, which nourished and reworked it. This was, in particular, one of the main preconditions for the east Slavic expansion of the past three centuries.

One of its principal directions was the colonization of *southern European Russia*, where large portions of the territory of modern Ukraine and the remaining portion of New Russia, as well as the steppe regions of the North Caucasus, were assimilated through the joint efforts of Russians and Ukrainians. Another important direction of colonization, also primarily Russian and Ukrainian, was the assimilation of *Siberia*. With movement beyond the Urals, along with European Russia, Asian Russia appeared, and, ultimately, after the annexation of the Far East, it surpassed the territory of European Russia by several times. Finally, the third and later stage in the colonization was the advance into the *Caucasus* and into *Central Asia*.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the population of the empire numbered 130 million—about 8 percent of the world's population. According to census data from 1897, the inhabitants of Russia spoke 146 languages and dialects. Russians (that is, in the terms of the census publications, all the eastern Slavs—Great Russians, Little Russians, and White Russians) totaled 67 percent of the population of the empire. The Orthodox were a little more, above 69 percent. Furthermore, there were more than 11 percent Muslims, more than 9 percent Catholics, about 3 percent Protestants, and more than 4 percent Jewish, with other Christian and non-Christian faiths represented as well (Old Believers, Armenian Gregorian, and Buddhists, among others).

Today, the mythology of Russian colonialism still lives, endowing it with traits of special tolerance and humanity toward the annexed peoples. In fact the "Russian *Drang nach Osten*, concurrent with the German one, left fewer bloody tracks on the pages of history,"[19] but it was not peaceful and bloodless either; it was accompanied by the displacement of significant numbers of the population of the colonized lands, sometimes dooming them to a life under worse natural and economic conditions and

often prompting them to abandon the land of their forefathers altogether.

Beginning in the fifteenth century but primarily in the sixteenth, the peoples of the *Finno-Ugric* group felt the pressure of Moscow colonization—the Mordovians, Udmurts, Mari, and Komi. At the end of the eighteenth century, the advance of Russian colonization into the lower Volga led to the dissolution of the Kalmyk Khanate and the emigration of 200,000 *Kalmyks* to China. Major emigrations were caused by the colonization of the *Turkic Muslim* world, and more than a million Muslims left from the end of the eighteenth century through the end of the nineteenth, leaving fewer of the indigenous population in the Crimea and the Caucasus than the number who had left. The indigenous inhabitants of the steppes of Kazakhstan and Central Asia were driven to worse lands and the aboriginal population of Siberia were driven deep into the woods and the tundra.

The displacement of the *Jewish* population, which had ended up part of the empire after the partitions of Poland and constituted more than half the world's Jewish diaspora at the end of the nineteenth century, is a special page in the history of the empire. Under the pressure of artificially created unfavorable economic and social conditions and lawlessness, and especially the almost regular pogroms, between 1881 and 1914, approximately two million people emigrated from Russia,[20] that is, almost two-fifths of the total Jewish population of Russia in 1897.

Imperial traditions in the Soviet Union

The advance of the Eastern Slavs into non-Slavic regions of the empire continued during Soviet times as well. Sometimes, as before, it was associated with agrarian colonization (for example, the assimilation of the virgin lands of Kazakhstan in the 1950s and 1960s), but more often with the urban industrial development of the outlying regions of the Soviet Union. The immigration niche created by the modernization of the Soviet model in these regions was filled, as before, either voluntarily or involuntarily, primarily

by representatives of the more numerous eastern Slavic peoples—Russians and Ukrainians, although their flow drew representatives of other ethnic groups along behind them, including Belarusians, Tatars, Jews, Germans, and Armenians. As a rule, the non-Russian population included in the migratory movements was either initially the population of Russian culture, or, in any case, Russian-speaking or becoming so, parting with their native soil and living far from their homeland.

After World War II, the movement from the east Slavic center to the periphery of the empire lasted for some time, but, as a whole, the second half of the twentieth century became, in this sense, a turning point. The greatest influx of Russians into the republics came in the 1960s, but this influx had already slowed by the 1970s and virtually ceased in the 1980s. Moreover, the ubiquitous displacement of Russians from the republics, where their numbers started to decline, began to be distinctly felt. The Ukrainians and Belarusians continued to settle in almost all the non-Slavic republics in the 1980s as well. But, as a whole, the era of eastern Slavic colonization was approaching an end. By this time (1989), there were 15.2 million Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians (7.6 percent of their total number) living outside the borders of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, and, if we limit Russia only to its European portion—to the Urals inclusive—that number was 43.6 million (21.9 percent), including 39.3 million Russians (27 percent of their total number), 3.6 million Ukrainians (8 percent of all Soviet Ukrainians), and 700,000 Belarusians (7 percent of Soviet Belarusians).

During the Soviet period, there were also flows of migrants in the other direction, from the non-Slavic republics to Russia and Ukraine, but their absolute dimensions were not great, and, by the time of the breakup of the Soviet Union, the penetration of non-Slavic peoples of the Soviet Union into the regions of primarily eastern Slavic settlement did not leave any appreciable traces. The displacement of the non-Slavic peoples—sometimes to worse territories within the empire and sometimes even beyond its borders—continued during the Soviet period as well.

The Soviet authorities went in for something that even the tsarist

government, not very ceremonious with non-Russians, had never permitted itself—the deportation of entire peoples. The Crimean Tatars (but also the Greeks and Armenians, among others, living in the Crimea) were resettled to Siberia and the lightly populated regions of Kazakhstan and Central Asia; they also displaced the peoples of the North Caucasus—Chechens, Ingush, Karachai, Balkars; Germans living in various parts of Russia and Ukraine; Kalmyks from the lower Volga; Turkish Meskhetians, Kurds, and Khemshils (Islamicized Armenians) living in Georgia; Finns from Leningrad Oblast, and so on—more than 3 million people in all. Decades later, in 1989, these deportations were deemed illegal and criminal, but, in many cases, it was no longer possible [for them] to return to their initial status. The Crimea became Russian and Ukrainian to an even greater extent than before, the lands of the Volga Germans were occupied by Russians, the lands of the Ingush were given to North Ossetia, and so forth.

Another form of displacement of ethnic minorities in Soviet times, just as before the revolution, was their forced or semi-forced emigration. Despite the closed nature of the Soviet borders, sometimes, for various reasons, the Iron Curtain was opened for a while, and major flows of emigration arose. The participation in them of many ethnic groups was disproportionately high. World War II and the events associated with it gave rise to very large "ethnic" emigration flows. About 900,000 Germans were driven from the territory of the Soviet Union as it took shape after the war; about 2.3 million Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians—refugees and displaced persons—ended up outside its borders; about 4 million Poles from western Ukraine and western Belarus moved to Poland; more than 400,000 Finns were resettled from Karelia to Finland, and so on.[21]

After the migratory flows caused by World War II had by and large abated, the scale of emigration from the Soviet Union declined drastically, but its "ethnic" nature became even more pronounced. The Soviet Union in the postwar decades was very reminiscent of the Russian empire at the end of the nineteenth century. The right of citizens to emigrate was not recognized, but,

in the course of constant diplomatic games with the West, the Soviet government sometimes opened up the spigot a little for some ethnic or denominational groups. Over slightly more than forty years—from 1948 through 1990—more than 1.1 million people emigrated from the Soviet Union; these were almost exclusively representatives of ethnic minorities—Jews, Germans, Armenians, and Greeks.[22] After 1990, many impediments to emigration disappeared and its magnitude grew, but it did not lose its pronounced ethnic coloration.

Again, *Jews* made up the largest group of emigrants. In 1959, in the Soviet Union, there were 2.3 million Jews (1.1 percent of the population of the Soviet Union versus 2.5 percent in 1940) and in 1989, 1.4 million, and, by the beginning of 1996, on the territory of the former Soviet Union, according to estimates, only 660,000 Jews remained, including 360,000 in Russia.[23]

Germans made up the second largest group of emigrants during the postwar period. There were 1,790,500 Germans in the Russian empire in 1897, including 1,030,000 on territories that became part of the Soviet Union in 1922.[24] The change in the borders of the Soviet Union in 1939, and then in 1945, did not lead to an increase in the number of Germans. According to the Soviet–German agreements of 1939 and 1940, about 400,000 Germans from Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, which had become part of the Soviet Union, were resettled beyond its borders.[25] The same thing happened later, in 1944–45, when 500,000 Germans were resettled from East Prussia by decision of the Potsdam Conference.

The fate of the intrinsic "Soviet" Germans (1,427,000 according to the 1939 census)[26] was different. They all became "special settlers," devoid of the right to leave the regions of Siberia, Kazakhstan, and Central Asia allotted to them. The first emigrants appeared after the revocation of the "special settler" status at the end of 1955, but repatriation to Germany, even though it occurred in the 1950s and the 1970s, was very insignificant and only took on mass proportions toward the end of the 1980s. According to estimates, during the entire period from the end of the 1940s through 1996, 1.6 million people left the former Soviet Union and the post-Soviet nations for

Germany;[27] of these, roughly 1.1 million left during 1991–96.

A new factor in the postwar migratory movement was the departure of the *Armenians* who had previously emigrated to the Soviet Union.

The constant displacements of the non-Slavic population did not elicit any particular concern at all for Russians, Ukrainians, or Belarusians. They bore much greater losses in absolute terms—dying from hunger, repressions, deportations, and emigration—than all the other peoples taken together. But the demographic masses of Slavs and non-Slavs were uneven, since the overall result of the migratory movements in Soviet times was a significant change in the ethnic composition of the population of many regions of the Soviet Union.

This is what happened, for example, in Latvia and Estonia. In 1939, Latvians made up 74.9 percent of the population of Latvia, and Russians 9.6 percent (11 percent counting Belarusians); Estonians were 91.8 percent of Estonia, and Russians 4.6 percent. By 1989, as a result of postwar migrations, the percentage of Latvians in Latvia had dropped to 52 percent while the share of Estonians in Estonia had dropped to 61.5 percent; meanwhile, the percentage of Russians had risen to 34 percent and 30.3 percent, respectively (42 percent and 35.2 percent counting Ukrainians and Belarusians).[28] Another typical example was the population of Kazakhstan. Its ethnic composition was changing quickly even before the revolution, as a consequence of the mass peasant resettlements, and, by 1917, the share of Kazakhs had already dropped almost to 60 percent. By 1959, it had dropped sharply again, and totaled just 30 percent, while the share of Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians exceeded 52 percent. In the 1960s–1980s, the indigenous population of Kazakhstan experienced a demographic explosion, as a consequence of which its share of the population rose to almost 40 percent. But it nevertheless remained lower than the aggregate share of Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians (more than 44 percent in 1989).

According to the last Soviet census (1989), the population of the Soviet Union had reached 287 million people. Due to the population explosion in the Third World, the Soviet Union's share of world population (5.5 percent) was less than the share of the Russian empire at the beginning of the century, but, in terms of population size, it was nevertheless the third largest nation in the world after China and India. According to the classification used in the census, there were more than 100 peoples living in the country, of which more than twenty numbered more than 1 million people. The majority of the population belonged to the Slavic (70 percent) and Turkic (17 percent) groups, but there were also several million representatives of other language communities.

As a result of the many years of migratory movement from the country's eastern Slavic center to its periphery, and, to a certain extent, reciprocal movements, the population of many regions of the Soviet Union was very mixed in an ethnic regard. Sixty million people—almost a fifth of the country's population—were living outside the borders of "their own" union republics.

VI. Empire and modernization

Eastern Slavic mother country

In contrast to other colonial empires, the Russian empire was spread across a cohesive and continuous territory, and, at first glance, there was no obvious division into mother country and colonies. If a mother country existed in the Russian and then in the Soviet empires, then it was the area of the primary settlement and vital activity of the eastern Slavs with no clear-cut geographical boundaries. Many parts of the Russian empire occupied an intermediate status, being in some ways colonies and in some ways parts of the mother country. As early as the nineteenth century, they were contemplating whether or not to consider Siberia a colony. The debate has been going on for many years about whether Ukraine was a colony, as many of the advocates of Ukrainian independence were insisting. However, in the Ukrainophilic milieu, colonial self-abasement was sometimes followed by imperial self-aggrandizement, and the separation of Ukraine from Russia sometimes

appeared to Ukrainian separatists not as the separation of a colony from the mother country but as a schism of the mother country, with the subsequent partitioning of the holdings of the Russian empire and the transformation of Ukraine into a European colonial power.

The civilizing mission of empire

The civilizing mission of Russia that was often talked about in the nineteenth century to justify colonial usurpations, while, of course, not the motive force for imperial conquests, was not a complete fabrication either. It actually was carried out, albeit to a limited extent, and Russian culture did possess some civilizing potential—and not so much by virtue of its primordial "Russianness," as because of its convergence with European culture.

Reflecting on the influence of Russian culture on west Ukraine, one of the founders of the Ukrainian movement, M. Dragomanov, noted: "Muscovite incense has proved to be not at all good for the history of Galician resurrection; the St. Petersburg window on Europe provided immeasurable services even in Lvov, since it proved to be a true conduit for the world of mankind."[29] One of the leading ideologists of Russian Islamic enlightenment, Ismail bei Gaspraly (Gasprinskii) wrote about the same thing: "Providence . . . makes Russia the natural intermediary between Europe and Asia, science and ignorance, movement and stagnation."[30] Gasprinskii said that the Tatars would like to get from Russia "not the old Asian but the new European coin. . . . The dissemination of European science and knowledge in general among us, and not simple dominance and collection of tributes."[31]

Was Russia able to meet these expectations? At best, only partly. The manpower and resources of tsarist Russia, and later the Soviet Union, were limited and went by and large to other goals, military or peaceful. The mother country itself was acutely in need of modernization, which, intertwined with militarization, swallowed up the empire's economic resources. The seven Soviet decades changed a great deal, but the colonial type of development

of "outlying national areas" was not overcome. Accusations of excessive exploitation of the colonies in their own interests against mother countries are perhaps unjustified. The main "colony" at the expense of which the most vital problems of economic modernization of the Soviet Union were able to be solved was the village, and, first and foremost, the eastern Slavic village. When the country had become slightly more prosperous, quite a few efforts were made that were aimed at overcoming the colonial status of the southern outskirts. But they had limited success, and the objective division of the Soviet Union into European-Eastern Slavic mother country and Asiatic colonies inherited from the past has been preserved as a whole.

The Soviet-Slavic model of modernization

The main seats of modernization in the nineteenth century were concentrated in Russia and Ukraine, which were becoming increasingly commercial-trading and urban. The number of advocates of changes multiplied there, impatience and the readiness for sacrifices in the name of more rapid development grew, and the soil in which the Soviet, essentially the Soviet-Slavic, mobilization model of modernization—industrialization—would later take root was formed.

The people were accustomed to the tension and sacrifices in the name of state grandeur that this model demanded, and thought of them not as alien but as something justified by the special purpose of Russia. For tens of millions of people, yesterday's peasants, the industry created in Soviet times was the main gateway opening up access to a new life for them. The inhabitants of the mother country say the "socialist transformations" of the post-revolutionary decades—rapid growth in cities, new amenities of urban life, the dissemination of education, increased vertical mobility, reduced mortality rates, growth in military strength—as the clear fruits of the industrial leap forward and confirmation of the correctness of the chosen path.

Matters were different in the outlying regions of the empire.

The rapid catching up in development that had kept eastern Slavic Russia under pressure for several centuries did not play a large role in the life of the non-Slavic people of its eastern and southern colonies. The new values of urban industrial life long went unrealized as values, industrialization was not perceived as a good thing, and it had no widespread social support there. Urban industrial development in all of these regions could thus rely for a long time exclusively on the newly arrived eastern Slavic population.

The unique situation in the Baltics, and somewhat in western Ukraine as well, was different. Many civilizational shifts took place here without industrialization, as a consequence of the long communality with European development. There was no readiness here to make sacrifices in the name of an industrial leap forward, and industrialization "Soviet style"—with its mobilization pressure, reliance on heavy industry and military production, with very low wages, and so on—alienated the local population and required a newly arrived population, once again, eastern Slavic.

The Soviet model of modernization, already contradictory, thus proved to be particularly ineffective in the transfer of Soviet-Slavic models to the sociocultural soil of the Baltics, Caucasus, or Central Asia. But they were usually unaware of the specific historical and cultural features of the model and the limits of its applicability, and the prescriptions of Soviet conservative modernization by force were pushed onto all regions of the Soviet Union, and frequently other countries as well; this was one of the main forms of colonialism in Soviet times.

The results of all the principal modernization "revolutions"—economic, urban, demographic, cultural, political—and their many innovative processes in the republics and regions of the Soviet Union had proved to be very disparate by the middle of the 1980s. It was becoming increasingly clear every day that relying on the completion, or at least acceleration, of modernization in the mother country with its simultaneous acceleration in the backward outlying areas could not happen. The preservation of the empire was increasingly becoming an obstacle to the modernization of its more developed parts. The impossibility of preserving the empire and

abolishing its long-held semi-colonial structure in the foreseeable future became one of the main causes of the new crisis.

The new regional elites

The modernization of Soviet times greatly accelerated the formation of new regional elites that had begun in the previous century. These elites, like all the elite groups in the Soviet Union, were "nomenklatura," and depended on the higher levels, on the Center and its "indulgence." But the situation changed as regional systems developed and grew more complex. Elites of a new type, more deeply rooted in the new and intrinsically regional soil in many regards, were taking shape alongside the old nomenklatura elites, and sometimes within them. These elites had dual interests.

On the one hand, they were the offspring of instrumental modernization and accepted its results in principle. In this sense, they were one with the nomenklatura, and went even further than it in their rejection of traditionalism that tried to base itself only on the conservative component of Soviet modernization—on the preservation and protection of social archaism—but did not accept many of its instrumental consequences. On the other hand, in their regional capacity, the new local elites had to act as the enemies of the nomenklatura who embodied the centralism of the unitary state and to see as allies the traditionalists whose ideology had always been structured on the emphasis of regional and (or) ethnic and ethnoreligious features.

The fatal incompleteness of Soviet modernization was a brake on the development of modern elite groups, making them semi-modern, weakening their vigor, prompting them to adapt themselves to the old rules of the game, and so forth. But it was nevertheless impossible to avoid the objectively inevitable conflict of the interests of centralism (the old nomenklatura embodied it) and the regionalism that was closer to the new elites. The objective disposition of forces changed in favor of the new elites, and they felt increasingly confident. But the nomenklatura—the intermediate link between the classic feudal elite and the new

"democratic" elite—had no intention of leaving the historical stage so easily. Confrontation ensued, and crisis arose in the Soviet empire.

VII. Crisis of empire

Crisis of imperial centralism and federalism

The very existence of an empire facilitated the development of regional economic centers and the strengthening of horizontal ties among them, which, in turn, lessened the significance of the imperial vertical power structure that gives particular weight and authority to the imperial center. Forces of self-organization opposed to the imperial center were awakening in many regions of Russia in the middle of the nineteenth century, federalist ideas behind which there stood an aspiration for the redivision of economic, and, if possible, political, power between the regions and the imperial center in favor of the regions. The first regionalists (for example, the Siberian "oblastniki") emphasized the exclusively "territorial" nature of their demands, which were not associated in any way with the "national idea."[32] But in most of the outlying regions of the empire, the territorial idea was very soon joined with the national idea, which gave rise to demands for transition to a federative structure for the Russian state on a national-territorial basis. These demands were becoming increasingly insistent and were evidence of an emerging crisis of imperial centralism.

The crisis of localism and national response

Territorial localism always conformed to territorial centralism—self-sufficiency and the self-contained nature of territorial communities at all levels. Localism eased imperial administration, which relied on a small local elite, while centralism protected the integrity of all links in the system, as it did the stable status of the local elites. Whatever may happen with the empire, the "locales" continued to live as they always had.

However, this same development of horizontal ties that caused the crisis of centralism led to the fact that a universal mobility came to replace local self-containedness, with the constant mixing of émigrés from various parts of the empire, the destruction of any initial barriers between people, which gave rise to a crisis of localism. One of the most vivid manifestations was the crisis of ethnic identity, or, more concisely, a "crisis of ethnicity," which devalued the prior ethnocultural or ethnodenominational social integrators.

The ability of society to find an answer to this challenge of the times depended on its readiness to accept the whole aggregate of changes associated with modernization, *all* the new foundations for the organization of the social world. Had such readiness existed, it would not have been difficult to see in the crisis a manifestation of the very profound and fundamental changes that demanded, in particular, a transition to other, and *nonethnic*, mechanisms of social cohesion that were different from the prior ones. Precisely this historically new task had been addressed and accomplished by a number of Western societies, where the concept of "nation" summarizing that solution had been devised. The idea of the nation negates all the inner boundaries and partitions and contains a presumption of equality, the identical nature of the chances for all *citizens*, regardless of origins, skin color, faith, and the like.

The crisis of localism and nationalist response

The preconditions for the emergence of a nation are created by historical development, entailing modernization only in its more recent stages. These stages have not yet been completed and the idea of nation as co-citizenship has not been accepted, and the response to the crisis of ethnicity has been attempts to restore the past significance of prior ethnic integrators.

It is precisely such a response that was offered by Herder as far back as the end of the eighteenth century, in the course of a debate with the ideas of Enlightenment and their adaptation to German soil. This answer for a long time conformed more to the attitude of

the peoples of Russia, and all of Eastern Europe for that matter, than to the Western "citizen's" understanding of nation. At the beginning of the twentieth century, a Russian author wrote: "The word 'nation' sounds like a foreign word to us, not sufficiently mastered by the Russian tongue and still alien to it."[33] The Russian mass consciousness was inclined to see only a confrontation between the idealized "ours" and the criticized "theirs" in the diverse manifestations of crisis in the traditional world order in a profound *internal* conflict between the old and the new, and surmounting the conflict entailed eliminating the "theirs" that was being foisted on them by ethnic enemies. This is how ideas and feelings took shape that nurtured faith in their ethnic superiority and fostered ethnic nationalism. It became the main offshoot of the crisis of localism, the product of its agony, a reflection of the unaccountable and hopeless attempts to return to a world that had fallen apart once and for all, separated by impenetrable barriers.

Such attempts were equally typical of the anti-imperial national movements and the nationalist defenders of the empire. The sole ally of imperial centralism was Russian nationalism—both were manifestations of anti-modern reaction and were fighting for a return to the past. The enemies of centralism and the advocates of a federative structure for Russia both tried to use the mobilization potential of "local" nationalisms in their own interests. This was a less natural route for them than for the unitarists. Even though both the federalist and the nationalist forces and movements in the Russian empire were brought to life by modernization, the future of the former was objectively linked with the successes of modernization and the use of its fruits, while the latter represented anti-modern reaction and was oriented toward returning to the past. Regional federalism and ethnic nationalism were potentially hostile.

But federalism and nationalism had significant areas of overlapping interests under the actual conditions of the Russian empire at the beginning of the twentieth century. Regional elites felt more confident when they were able to rely on national movements and feel themselves to be national elites at the same time. Russian federalism tried to strengthen its forces thereby. It was

most likely nationalism that actually won out, and federalism ended up hostage to it. The chauvinistic advocates of imperial centralism facilitated this outcome. Not wanting to recognize the equality of the peoples of Russia, they pushed all the national movements to radicalization, the positions of liberal-federalists weakened, and the weight of the nationalist arguments in favor of separatism rose. Even though the federalist position was characteristic of most of the national movements in the Russian empire at the beginning of the twentieth century, after the collapse of central authority in 1917, the federalist demands for national-territorial autonomy were replaced with demands for complete independence. Federalism openly gave way to separatism, which led to the first collapse of the empire.

The facade of Soviet federalism

It was easier for many parts of the empire to declare independence than it was to preserve it in the disarray of the revolutionary years. In most cases, the regional elites found neither the strength nor sufficient social support to oppose independence. Most of the parts of the empire that had split off ended up back inside the boundaries of the unified state at the beginning of the 1920s.

The restoration of the empire during Soviet times proceeded under federalist slogans. Soviet federalism brought to life the idea of national-territorial autonomy. It was trying in that way to answer two different questions, to combine in a contradictory "conservative-revolutionary" way the solution to the federalist task of modernization (change) along with a reliance on the preservation, and even reinforcement, of destroyed ethnic partitions (the rejection of change).

This contradiction made itself felt immediately following the formation of the Soviet Union. Real federalism was impossible in the Soviet Union of the 1920s for the same reason that it could not make any headway in pre-revolutionary Russia—due to the still weak intrinsic "weight" of the regions and regional elites. Federalism did not have a sufficient social base and was doomed to slip into either nationalist separatism or unitarism. A battle

was launched between these two extremes for the right to speak in the name of the declared federalism, and the objective conditions of the times effectively preordained the victory of unitarism. It also took firm hold in the Soviet Union, while ethnic separatism was weakened to the utmost and driven underground. But this was a temporary retreat.

The consistent incarnation of the principle of national-territorial autonomous areas that were treated as "states" was impossible owing to the very number of peoples populating the Soviet Union, as well as the scattered nature of their settlement. Quite a few national-territorial formations were created nevertheless, and this supported the illusion of the intrinsic statehood of the peoples populating the Soviet Union. All the practices of "national construction" in the Soviet Union—the continuous creation of new territorial-national formations and the abolition of prior ones at the behest of Moscow, the arbitrary establishment and redrawing of their borders, the deportation of peoples or significant groups distinguished by ethnic traits, the renaming of cities, the replacement of alphabets, and the naming of puppet "national leaders," among others—speaks to the fact that this was an illusion. The utter lack of rights of national formations at all levels had the constant effect of routine everyday interference from the Center in their economic and cultural life and personnel policies. The federalist institutions only camouflaged a de facto unitarism.

The crisis of Soviet federalism

In proclaiming, albeit in word more than in deed, the rights of national autonomous areas and simultaneously pursuing a policy of modernization in them, the central authorities of Soviet times were in need of new national elites who could be the agents of this policy and create conditions for growth in "national cadres," while counting on their loyalty to the nationwide idea. Such a calculation was only partly justified. The status of the national elites, even those who grew up under the tutelage of the Center, was contradictory and nursed centrifugal as well as centripetal forces.

The national elites became increasingly numerous and independent, and increasingly mature, to the extent the national territorial formations became stronger and their economies and social structures became more complex, and, as had already happened once in the pre-revolutionary decades, they started to make use of their ethnic affiliation either as an additional trump card or as a hindrance in the competitive struggle. Thus was the soil prepared for the resurrection of ethnic separatism.

The separatist pressure by the moment of breakup of the Soviet Union was nevertheless not so strong. The Soviet Union ceased to exist not so much because forces with a vested interest in its collapse were so strong, as because the forces of unity were weak and undeveloped.

Naturally, it cannot be asserted that such forces were absent entirely in the Soviet Union. Given all the inconsistency and incompleteness of Soviet modernization in the Transcaucasus, North Caucasus, and Central Asia, they had gone quite far to bring to life and expand the urban middle segments there. Their interests, associated by and large with the modern aspirations of economic, political, and cultural life, far from always made them advocates of the destruction of the union whole, as such destruction did not promise only undisputed advantages; losses were inevitable as well. So the middle classes in the Caucasus or in Central Asia and the political elites associated with them were not alien to federalist sentiments. But these segments themselves were still small, undeveloped, and largely marginal there.

The unity of the nationwide economic expanse was an important bulwark of federalism, and it was felt that such a unified expanse existed. In fact, it was *pseudo-economic*, it was not the expanse of an internal market in which the economic interests of specific people or groups of people were defined and collided, with owners depending on everything that happened in that expanse and able to have an active influence on the state of it. There was accordingly no mass layer of agents of the federalist idea that would strive toward less dependence on the center in the name of greater freedom of action in the domestic market, but who did not

want to lose that market or break it up. This resulted in the weakness of Soviet federalism and the centripetal forces objectively engendered by it.

One more important source of this weakness was the differing advancement of various parts of the Soviet Union down the road of modernization. The cumbersome unitary empire, not permitting flexible decisions and equally backward, was a burden first and foremost on its more advanced parts, which intrinsically included Russia itself. It was one of the weakest links in union federalism. The separatist strivings that led to the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 easily achieved their aim, first and foremost, precisely because they did not encounter any significant resistance from Russians, and primarily from the Russian elite, from which the union elite had by and large been recruited. It was very easily inclined toward separatism, while almost no serious defenders of federalism were found in its ranks.

This is most likely explained by the fact that there were neither union nor regional elites in the Soviet Union in the modern sense of the word, there were no middle social layers on which those elites could rely, there were no agents of "horizontal" interests closely linked with the fate of the Union. The nomenklatura regional-national elites, just like the Russian union elite, felt good in the context of the rigid vertical pyramid of power typical of the Soviet system, but it lost little if, by falling apart, it simply broke up into similar pyramids smaller in size. The local elites ended up closer to the top in small pyramids, and the breakup of the Soviet Union was for them an enhancement in status, which was the most important thing for them. The reliance on that same ethnic nationalism that had crept across the Soviet Union helped solidify their positions, their power and legitimacy that had previously been sanctified by the union center.

Only the social segments consisting of independent individuals, of owners relying on horizontal and primarily economic ties indifferent to administrative boundaries, could have a genuine vested interest in the preservation of the Soviet Union. But there were effectively no such segments in the Soviet Union.

VIII. The empire and the world

The Russian empire in the club of European imperialism

The transformation of Russia into a great nation coincided with the onset of the era of European colonization of all the poorly assimilated or less developed regions of the planet. The Russian advance to the north and east was part of the general European colonization expansion.

Russia was not the only country bordering Siberia and Central Asia. Other contiguous nations—China, Persia, and the Ottoman Empire—could have their own claims on these regions of the world. If Russia was much more dynamic than them in the eighteenth–twentieth centuries, it was only because it had been Europeanized to no small extent by that time as a result of Peter's and subsequent reforms. It had become a great power of the eighteenth–twentieth centuries as a member of the European club of the masters of the world, as one of the main participants in its division. But Russia nevertheless remained a semi-European country, economically and socially backward, and it could not vie with England or France on the world stage. Therefore, even in times of the greatest triumphs, Russian imperialism was just a junior partner of West European imperialism. The enormous territorial growth of the empire was eased by the fact that the main European geopolitical interests in the eighteenth–nineteenth centuries were focused in the west and south, and Russia's advancement to the east did not particularly trouble the Europeans. But its attempts to move its borders west and south, which affected the interests of the European powers, as a rule, were blocked by them, and, here, there was nothing Russia could do.

The relations with Europe were thus ambiguous, and had conditioned the contradictory nature of the Russian view of Europe since ancient times. It was hard for Russia to acknowledge that its imperial pretensions did not conform to its true capabilities, while its military and economic potential was much lower than that of the other major European powers. Russian great-power ideologists and

politicians had a unique kind of inferiority complex, which found expression in increased hostility toward Europe, true, by and large in word alone. In deed, Russia had no freedom of action in its relations with Europe, was constantly looking for alliances with the European nations, and paid to enter them with the sole extensive strategic resources it had in abundance—territorial and human. Its military might was kept at their disposal, and they were compensated with poverty and economic and technological backwardness.

The Soviet Union on the path to World War II

The Soviet Union inherited great-power status from tsarist Russia, along with its inordinate territorial claims and its ambiguous relations with the West. Only the words changed. The "West" was turned into the world of capitalism, and pan-Slavic solidarity gave way to the international proletariat, the essence of which remained as before. The "fight against capitalism" between the two world wars took on the nature, usual for the Russian imperial tradition, of intra-European intrigues with the frequent changing of allies and adversaries.

The civil war had not yet ended when Soviet strategists had already conceived a return—under new slogans—to the former directions of imperial expansion and were drawn toward the warm seas, thinking about approaches to India and the like. Soon, however, it became clear that it was not these plans that were defining great policy in the new era. The gravitation that was constantly seeping through toward Soviet–German convergence was much more important. In the 1920s, the Soviet Union was vigorously developing its collaboration with Germany and actively facilitating the resurrection of its military-industrial partner—in circumvention of the Treaty of Versailles. The coming to power of Hitler broke off this collaboration, but only for a time; collaboration resumed at the end of the 1930s and grew even closer. The Soviet–German pact of 1939 allowed Stalin to restore the former boundaries of the empire to a significant extent, while allowing Hitler to start World War II and prepare calmly for the offensive against the Soviet Union.

The foreign policy reorientation of the Soviet leadership at the end of the 1930s was clearly erroneous and disadvantageous for the Soviet Union, exposed it to a blow that was nearly fatal, and was inexplicable without taking internal political events into account. The open alliance with Nazism would hardly have been possible without the cadre coup of 1937. It was one of the concluding episodes in the transition of power to the hands of the mass marginal segments and the mutation of the Soviet regime associated with it that had begun long before. It was not simply that people were replaced; the whole system of political values was changed and—in accordance with the "conservative-revolutionary" logic—the old views of the correlation of the individual and the state, the old reading of Russian history, the old understanding of imperial interests, the old great-power ideology, and so forth, were resurrected.

Soviet totalitarianism was increasingly feeling its kinship with totalitarianism of the German or Italian type—and the internal adaptation to "Western democracies"—on both the domestic political and foreign-policy planes. The political practices of Hitler or Mussolini were much closer to and understandable to Stalin than were the American or English ones. His sympathies for them and desire for collaboration were becoming sincere.

Lessons of World War II

World War II constitutes one of the most tragic and contradictory pages in the general and military history of Russia and the Soviet Union.

According to the official Soviet version, the Soviet Union won in this war an unprecedented victory practically all by itself over an enemy superior in might. In fact, it had powerful allies and suffered enormous unwarranted losses, and was knowingly warring on the stronger side. This was to a significant extent the consequence of the lack of preparedness for war and the direct disarmament of the Soviet Union in the prewar years, when the country's interests were sacrificed to the political intrigues of the upper rulers.

The Soviet Union ultimately occupied the customary place of

the old Russian empire. It ended up among the victors, in the role of an undisputed world power, having paid the winning alliance in its usual currency: territory destroyed by military operations and colossal human losses, totaling from a third to a half of those borne by all the countries that participated in World War II. The allies of the Soviet Union made their own contribution to the victory, and a very large one, but their strategy in the war was different. The Americans and British looked after their soldiers. They preferred to support economically the direct military efforts of the Soviet Union, in the meantime increasing their material supremacy to land a decisive blow with the least human losses. The principal weight of the direct military operations fell to the Soviet Union, which did everything it could to lessen the attack on itself.

The price of victory proved to be incredibly high for the Soviet Union, and the consequences of the war were felt for many decades. It cannot be ruled out that the "echo" of the material, and especially human, losses in World War II can still be heard in Russia to this day.

Lessons of the Cold War

The victory in war gave rise in the mass consciousness, just as in the consciousness of the Soviet political elite, to the illusion of the extraordinary military might of the Soviet Union. The enormity of the losses, under the pen of the official ideologists, was turned into something like an object of pride, they considered it a measure of the contribution to victory. But if we consider the contribution of the Soviet Union to the victory over the Axis to be proportional to the casualties suffered, then we should deem its military might insurmountable as well. Such was the logic of the postwar Soviet leadership, which decided that the Soviet Union now had to get along without its Western allies, as a non-European, "non-Western" state, and implement a different model of global strategy than the one to which it had been adhering so far: not a search for alliances with certain European countries against others, also Western, but a fight for world supremacy with a reliance on the "non-Western" world.

The goal of the long-term policy of the Kremlin was to "bury capitalism," that is, the "West," its chief political competitor, and to restore a unipolar world similar to the Eurocentrist world of the nineteenth century, but with a new decision-making center that was to be located in Moscow. It seemed for a time that this design was being realized. The Soviet Union headed an enormous "anti-imperialist" bloc that included, aside from the Soviet Union, a number of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and East and Southeast Asia, including China. But the success proved short-lived. Moscow's principal miscalculation was not even that it did not have sufficient forces to achieve this exceedingly ambitious goal, but that the goal was unattainable in principle, and a world with a single center of world dominion did not exist anymore. The second half of the twentieth century gave rise to a fundamentally new imperative—the imperative of a multipolar world avoiding global confrontations. All countries started to adapt themselves to this new method of international cohabitation.

Only the Soviet Union stubbornly continued to follow its prior course, making the world into "two camps" that, according to all the logic of the development of events, had to join in a decisive clash sooner or later. In preparing for this clash, it expended enormous amounts of funds to maintain its status as one of two world superpowers, but it clearly overestimated its capabilities. Domestic problems piled up and grew worse in a country depleted by military and other "great-power" spending, and it reached the limits of its extensive resources and fell apart.

Variations on the theme of the future

Various scenarios exist for the geopolitical future of the entire post-Soviet expanse and its largest portion—Russia. Let us consider some of them.

A return to Europe

The defeat in the Cold War and criticism from "within" of Soviet imperialism brought about the appearance of liberal foreign policy

plans that were contrary to the sense of it and based on the idea of the collaboration of "East" and "West," which are encountering the same global challenges. Despite all the attractiveness of such plans, they give rise to quite a few questions as well.

"Returning to Europe," the post-Soviet expanse closes the "northern ring" around the planet. It is becoming part of the North, and in a certain sense is reproducing the former "Eurocentrist" (now "North-centrist") structure of the world. Does that not increase North-South confrontation, given the clear superiority of the North? Will that not lead to the appearance of neo-colonialist "spheres of influence?"

A second danger is associated with the mutual relations within the North. The Cold War rallied the "North" in the face of a common danger, but many of the external impetuses for convergence receded along with the Soviet threat. If Russia—alone or with other parts of the former Soviet Union—becomes part of the North, even while having repudiated the Soviet legacy of confrontation, the system of relations among the parts of the North will become more complex, which could increase its internal tensions and even call its unity into question. But will new confrontations not arise within the seemingly solid North, similar to the former internal European ones that have already twice led to world wars?

The ideologists of liberal "Euro-Atlantic" plans give reassuring answers to these questions, but an optimistic picture of the beginning of the third millennium is more easily drawn than brought to life. However tempting the liberal logic of a nice "end of history" may be, it gives no guarantee of a peaceful future.

A third Russian imperialism

The defeat in the Cold War, the breakup of the Soviet Union and its loss, and, accordingly, the loss of its successor Russia, of its status as one of the two world superpowers was painfully received by some parts of post-Soviet Russian society. There are sentiments of great-power *revanchism* in Russia natural for the current period in its history, and new imperialist scenarios are being offered up

that rely on national-patriotic and chauvinistic ideas and are called upon to replace the former scenarios that were being brought to life under the slogans of proletarian internationalism and the national liberation struggle of the colonial peoples.

All of these scenarios are related by a desire to rewrite the history of the twentieth century, reconsider the results of World War II, rehabilitate totalitarianism and militarism in all of its forms, and, naturally, to restore the Russian empire. Ideas are being borrowed from various sources—from Danilevskii and the Eurasians to the geopoliticians of the Third Reich and the European "new rightists." Sympathies are openly demonstrated for a "new European order" of the times of the Nazi Germany occupation of Europe, old plans for the creation of a Berlin–Moscow–Tokyo axis are being resurrected, and so forth. The task is sometimes candidly advanced of breaking up the whole world into spheres of influence of a few great powers, which include Russia as well, or else worldwide domination by it.

Internal political aims and a desire to return to the strategy of the "besieged fortress," to restore the lost "defense consciousness" and thereby to create the preconditions for a return to totalitarianism, can be discerned behind the great-power geopolitical rhetoric. We are essentially talking about a *geopolitical utopia* being proposed in place of the millenarian utopia of building communism that has lost its attractiveness. The great-power slogans, however unrealistic they may be, conform to the sentiments of society, and this has to be taken into account by all the actors on the Russian political stage. The ideology of imperial foreign-policy plans is penetrating the consciousness of the conformist intelligentsia and the Russian political elite, and is being materialized to a certain extent in the official policy of Russia as well.

A Eurasian union

An awareness of the danger of large-scale shifts in the correlation of world forces and upsetting of the already brittle global equilibrium prompts a geopolitical conservatism, a search for ways to

rehabilitate the post-Soviet expanse and turn it into one of several major regional poles participating constructively in maintaining the world geopolitical equilibrium.

On leaving the Soviet Union, its former republics did not change their geographical place on the planet and were not deprived of the grounds to seek out the best conditions for existence in the geopolitical environment around them. The feeling of regional commonality of interests has now lessened, and the decay of the Soviet Union has been accompanied by a strengthening of centrifugal tendencies. But centripetal ones have not disappeared either.

By the end of the twentieth century, many of the rules of the world game had changed, it had taken on a different scale, and all the European states felt too small to act on the world stage alone. The European (and essentially Western European) Union is a regional response to this new situation. The post-Soviet countries face the same challenge. The novelty of the situation is not that the necessity of organizing a "Eurasian" expanse and protecting its interests as a whole has receded, but that the accomplishment of these tasks should rely on foundations other than the earlier ones. The empire was a historically necessary compromise between the interests of the center and the outlying areas. A new compromise is needed today that excludes the very concepts of center and periphery. The era of equating Russian and Eurasian interests has ended and the time has come for collective Eurasian security, the subject itself should become collective. The system of such security should preserve its continuity in relation to certain traits of the geopolitical strategy of imperial times, while simultaneously separating itself distinctly from other features that are made pointless by the times themselves.

Summary

The twentieth century will go down in Russian history as the era of modernization, that is, the transformation of Russian society from traditional, agrarian, rural, patriarchal, and *holistic* to modern, industrial or "post-industrial," urban, democratic, and *individualistic*. The "launch conditions," and not anyone's thoughtlessness or ill will, predetermined the profoundly contradictory nature of the Soviet version of modernization and made it "conservative." It allowed the Soviet Union to receive, and sometimes even to develop, many instrumental achievements of Western societies (modern technologies, outward forms of life, science, education, etc.), but it did not create suitable mechanisms for their self-development (a market economy, a modern social structure, modern institutions of civil society, political democracy, etc.).

Economic modernization transformed the country from agrarian to industrial and gave it the basic elements of contemporary technological civilization. But it did not create the social mechanisms that support the development of the economic system of the industrial societies—private ownership and the market.

Urban modernization moved tens of millions of people from the village to the city and altered the conditions of their everyday social interaction, subordinating it to the technology of urban life. But it did not create the agents of specific urban relations—middle-class urban segments able to support independently and develop the social organization and culture of urban society.

Demographic modernization changed the conditions of reproduction of the human species, and thus the conditions of the private and intimate life of people. But it was also left incomplete, because it developed in a climate that contradicted the main principles of demographic modernization—the principle of freedom of individual choice in everything pertaining to the personal life of man.

Cultural modernization has provided for vigorous growth in education, an affiliation with contemporary engineering and scientific knowledge, and other instrumental changes without which the emergence of a modern *type of culture*, and thus a *type of individual* as well, is impossible. But it did not lead to the displacement of the medieval, holistic cultural paradigm of the contemporary individualist and gave rise to the *Homo Soveticus*, an intermediate personality type combining modern and traditional "conciliar" traits.

Political modernization opened up new channels for social mo-

bility, and, moreover, for the first time for the majority of the people, and brought to power a new political elite that was democratic in origin. But it did not create the democratic mechanisms for its functioning and renewal. The new elite remained based on "status," depending only on higher levels, and regenerated rapidly. This led to the affirmation of the political regime of the "new Middle Ages," which took on the form of totalitarianism in the twentieth century.

Whatever component part of the changes we take as an example, in each case, after a brief period of successes, the modernizing instrumental goals came into insurmountable contradiction with the conservative social means, further changes were blocked, and modernization was left incomplete and at a dead end. This ultimately led to the crisis of the system and required its complete transformation.

The already profound systemic crisis was further aggravated by the enormous territorial heterogeneity of the Soviet Union.

The Soviet model of modernization, the core of which was accelerated industrialization with a particular reliance on the development of heavy industry, took shape in the twentieth century, but it had its roots in the past as well. The very aspiration for modernization, just as the methods of achieving this aim, were largely dictated by the role of the tsarist or Soviet empire as a great world power. This role was more understandable to the population of the eastern Slavic mother country, and, to a certain extent, fit its aspirations and historical experience, so the Soviet modernization model was readily accepted as well. But the semi-colonial outlying areas of the empire had difficulty accepting this model. Even though the empire performed a civilizing and modernizing role in relation to most of them, its civilizing capabilities were limited. The "five modernizations" that paved the way to all parts of the empire were thus even more "conservative" in the outlying areas than they were at the center. The incompleteness of the modernization, which had reached a dead end everywhere in the Soviet Union, was especially great in its Central Asian or Caucasus periphery, as well as in some internal "national" regions.

Even though the requirements of imperial existence played an enormous role in urging Soviet modernization onward, it was precisely modernization that ultimately led to the collapse of the empire. It engendered or strengthened both centripetal and centrifugal forces, on the correlation of which the fate of the empire ultimately depended. The conservative nature of Soviet modernization limited opportunities for the growth of centripetal forces and the federalism associated with it, and, on the contrary, created favorable preconditions for the strengthening of centrifugal forces, nationalism, and separatism. When the economic and political strategy that inspired the great-power ambitions exhausted the Soviet Union, it became easy pickings for separatism, which a weak and fictitious federalism could offer nothing to counter.

This was more proof that, by the end of the twentieth century, the capabilities of the Soviet modernization model had been completely exhausted. Continuation of the modernization that had not been completed in a single part of the former Soviet Union required changing the model and devising a direction of development that would make it possible, on the one hand, to preserve the principal achievements of the "instrumental" modernization of Soviet times, and, on the other, to develop the social groups, social mechanisms, and institutions befitting them that had not existed in the Soviet Union that would have made the post-Soviet societies capable of developing themselves. Russia enters the new century and the new millennium with these tasks.

Notes

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