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TYPES OF HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT, OR RUSSIA'S MORPHOLOGY OF "BACKWARDNESS" (Part 1)*

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Abstract. With this paper, we start a series of publications on the theoretical aspects of Teodor Shanin's conception of Russia as a 'developing society' first published in 1986 in the book *Russia as a 'Developing Society'. The Roots of Otherness: Russia's Turn of Century. Vol. 1*. In the next issue of the journal, we will publish the second part of the fifth chapter of the book, as well as the refereed translation of the whole chapter. In this part, the author considers the key conceptual approaches to the notion of social and economic development on the global scale and in the historical framework. Thus, the variety of convergence theories assumed that whatever the rhetoric or the crudities of Russia's socialist experiment, it was not much more than a gigantic exercise in 'belated industrialization' and in converging towards closing 'the gap' between Western Europe or the USA and the rest of the globe. The modernization theories divided the world into 'three worlds' — First, Second and Third — and assumed that the Second World would turn into First, while the Third World should go a much longer way. However, the author considers it much more important to specify what is meant by the category of societies defined as 'developing', 'backward', 'underdeveloped', 'emerging', etc. There are essentially two ways to delimit such entities structurally: the first treats 'developing societies' as backward and proceeding towards modernity along the necessary scale of social and economic advance, but for some reasons not yet 'there' or else moving 'there' too slowly; the second approach assumes different venues of 'development', with the 'developing societies' representing a category of this. Further, the article identifies possibilities and limits of different theoretical perspectives, in particular, regarding the Russian intellectual and social-economic history.

Key words: developing society; historical development; backwardness; otherness; convergence theory; modernization theory; 'the gap'; three worlds

In 1946, Timasheff published in London an extensive treatment of Russia's development patterns. In a 'mental experiment', he extrapolated forward the major trends of the Russian economic and social history between the 1890s and 1913. He concluded that 'if undisturbed', Russia would have reached by 1940 levels of industrialization, income and education similar if not higher than those actually achieved under the Soviet rule, a rule that simultaneously 'threw back Russian philosophy and arts at least a century' [62. P. 34, 394—395]. Far from being a necessary removal of the obstacles to development, 'the communist revolution has been a dangerous illness, but the Russians possess enough vital energy to overcome it' [63. P.440]. Central to this argument, the economic growth of prerevolutionary Russia at the rates recorded in 1909—1913 was

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assumed to be self-perpetuating into the future — a ‘take off’ to join ‘the West’ (i.e. the club of the countries of well-being, advanced technology, international power, high educational attainment and further continuous ascent).

The time that has elapsed has not diminished the appeal of Timasheff way of thinking. Quite a number of more recent studies have echoed directly his argument without referring to him or enriching on his analysis [65]. A further twist to this was given by a variety of convergence theories, which extended the argument forward by assuming that whatever the rhetoric or the crudities of Russia’s socialist experiment, it has been not much more than a gigantic exercise in ‘belated industrialization’. Stalin was necessary, explicable (and essentially justifiable) as an economic ‘take-off’ device. With the industrialization targets essentially met, the USSR was converging towards the one and only known and possible ‘advanced world’ of universalized electronics and bureaucratized plenty, mapped out by the way in which we ourselves thrive (see the most recent indexes of GNP, cars, or plastic bags per capita).

Nonetheless, the prospect of universal economic growth and social ascent closing ‘the gap’ between Western Europe or the USA and the rest of the globe is very far removed from the evidence of the world we live in. There have been rapid and deep changes all over the world but the division into ‘three worlds’ first debated in the 1950s still applies in its essential outline. Despite some appearances, the Second World (‘centrally planned’, ‘socialist’) did not turn into First (‘developed’, ‘advanced capitalist’), but it is the Third World that interests us here. Since the early 1950s, when a non-problematic modernization theory offered all round the ex-colonial world optimistic predictions and do-it-yourself kits for ‘take-off’ towards a US-like modernity, both the official reports and the explanatory theories have grown increasingly alarming [56]. The basic parameter of the issue was well stated by A.G. Frank as that of ‘thirty developed countries having less than 30% of the current population and foreseeably only 20% of the world population in the year 2000, which now account for approximately 90% of the world’s income, financial resources and steel production... 95% of the world scientific and technological production... consume over 60% of the worlds food’ [21. P. 153] and what such figures mean for ‘the rest’.

More decisive is the record of the ‘catching-up’ processes. During the four decades that followed the Second World War, despite clear diversification among them none of the major ‘developing societies’ of the 1950s and 1960s came to resemble Western Europe or the USA. That includes those ‘developing societies’ that benefited from the oil windfall (and whose GNP rocketed accordingly) as well as those who have shown rapid industrialization and/or urbanization. Time and time again optimistic frenzy, based on hastily read indices of ‘economic growth’, has swept the press, which declared yet another candidate for the closing of ‘the gap’ or even for the rapid overtaking of ‘the West’: Brazil, Mexico, Iran, India, Nigeria, etc. It usually ended up with yet another national bankruptcy, military *coup d’etat* or revolt of the poor. The economics of different countries change rapidly but one clearly cannot understand and predict major processes by comparing the GNPs, and extrapolating elements of ‘economic growth’ into the future. Moreover, the diversity is not only ‘economic’. The global map of dis-

eases, illiteracy or of military dictatorship and systematic use of torture, and their correlations with the GNPs, bear testimony to the combined nature of the phenomena. So does the comparison of those indices and socio-economic polarization within the countries, which consistently demonstrated a particularly steep contrast in income as typical of the ‘developing societies’. A long-term multiple and substantively growing ‘gap’ between the ‘West’ and the bulk of the ‘developing’ societies (i.e. the countries at the ‘top’ and the ‘bottom’ of the UN global scale) has been documented [29; 71].

It is this experience, central to the realities of power and of economy as well as to the self-images, theories and ideologies of our own generation that should be related to Russia at the turn of the XX century. Was the Russian development different in kind from that of the recent experience of the ‘developing societies’ (i.e. was Timasheff’s projection into the future valid for pre-revolutionary Russia)? Alternatively, was Russia, a ‘developing society’ in the sense we attach nowadays to this term (i.e. a society that is not only poor and/or ‘backward’ but shows a major gap-sustaining or gap-generating tendency of its economy and social structure)? To put this in the words of a recent Soviet writer, is it true that ‘catastrophe nearly met Russia ...which was saved from national destruction and the grip of backwardness ...by the great October socialist revolution?’ [64. P. 13—14].

To place Russia in those terms, a detour is necessary to specify what is meant by the category of societies, even the very name of which has shifted puzzlingly every few years since the 1950s: ‘backward’, ‘underdeveloped’, ‘emerging’, ‘developing’, etc. [1]. Quantitative designations aside (e.g. ‘all the countries with less than \$400 GNP per capita’) there are essentially two ways to delimit such entities structurally. The first treats ‘developing societies’ as backward, that is, as societies proceeding towards modernity along the necessary scale of social and economic advance but for some reasons (to be filled in) not yet ‘there’ or else moving ‘there’ too slowly (the impediment to be ascertained and rectified). The second approach assumes different venues of ‘development’, with the ‘developing societies’ representing a category of this. This fundamental division in the logic of analysis has cross-cut specific topics, different levels of generalization as well as major ideological camps. Moreover, this particular piece of diverse theorizing has been playing a major role in the structuring of political strategies and confrontations. We shall begin by a short sketch of its intellectual history.

The model of industrial capitalism based on XIXth century England offered considerable illumination but also exercised a somewhat hypnotic impact on scholars and laymen alike. The roots of that fascination are deep and carry considerable conviction. Despite the human misery and the new problems it produced, industrial capitalism has ‘delivered the goods’ of material abundance on a scale never before known, and did it at breakneck speed. It put science to direct day-to-day use, both in a technological permanent revolution and in the opening up for quantification of major spheres of social analysis. It offered new experience and hope of material well-being to masses of humans and of the rational resolution of mankind’s major ills. It acted as a global unifying and transforming force, to become in the eyes of many the contemporary Midas myth and the Bible’s book of Genesis rolled into one — what it touched turned into gold, what it produced or socially constructed took on its own likeness.

Timasheff's view of Russia and the convergence theory are particular cases of the modernization theory, reflecting directly those illuminations and fascinations. This paradigm posited the global inevitability, the unilinear nature and the fundamental merit of 'progress' (i.e. of advance along the axis of development marked out by the capitalist industrial societies) [51]. Its conceptual parentage lies with XIXth century evolutionism and classical economics — as much a philosophy and a science of the new world as an apotheosis of capitalism. Its essence has been the interpretation of history *via* the advancing social division of labor related to the rise of new technologies and the transformation of social institutions [17; 38; 49; 59]. The XXth century neoclassical school in economics and functionalism within sociology have continued that line of thought, accentuating and/or building into it a particular dimension of optimism concerning the mechanisms for the resolution of social problems — the assumption and the metaphor of 'social balance'. Any distortion of equilibrium and of homogeneity would produce rectifying forces, the larger the distortion the stronger the rectifying force.

The fact of a 'social gap', international and intra-national, would have produced thereby its own remedies. The evolutionism of the left, associated particularly with the theories developed by the 'orthodox' wing of the 2nd International, accepted all this but went a step further by placing socialism as the next-to-capitalism, necessary and final 'stage' [58; 67]. Socialism was the ultimate 'mode of production' and of equilibrium due to convert the material breakthrough of capitalism to the use of collective producers. Witte's dream of the Russian tsardom as the new industrial giant, the books of Plekhanov (and in particular the twist given to them by the 'legal Marxists' of Russia), Stalin's manner of executing Lenin's unfortunate slogan about communism being 'Soviet rule plus the electrification of the whole country' and Warren's posthumous book published in London, differ radically, but are of a kind in being impregnated by the essential unilinearism and the idea of 'progress' implied by it [50; 60; 69]. It is in that context that the *Oxford Dictionary's* description of 'developing society' should be read as a testimony of West European common sense entrenched by its media: "a poor or primitive country which is developing higher economic and social conditions".

In fact, images of progress seen mainly as the industrialization of backward hinterlands carry considerable ambivalence, especially for socialists and liberals faced with colonialism. Capitalism has been progressive but also repressive and regressive even on its own terms. Capitalism-related colonialism has transformed 'native' societies, but has also suppressed their industries and popular will while twisting objectionably the metropolitan societies and economies. Hobson's *Imperialism* published in 1902 had followed critically that lead. Within the councils of the 2nd International, Marxist social critique and analysis had also increasingly taken a global form, beginning with the works of Hilferding and Luxemburg followed by Bukharin and Lenin [4; 13; 26; 28; 37; 41; 43; 47]. Marxist theory of imperialism came to analyze the exploitation of colonies and its place within the metropolitan economies [33; 36], but it said little of the colonized societies.

Shifting the scene by two generations, the aftermath of the Second World War saw the appearance of new post-colonial world, while the UN and television ensured that

the consciousness of a 'Third World' spread widely. As the modernization theory and policies guided by it in the 1950s and 1960s failed to deliver the goods, new explanation was needed to throw light on its main failure (i.e. on the 'gap' which refused to decline and on the armed struggle growing in the colonies and ex-colonies: Algeria, Vietnam, Cuba, Angola, etc.). The attempt to make sense of the political economies of the ex-colonial countries produced several new beginnings to which, the differences accepted, the works of Myrdal, Prebisch and Baran have been the milestones. The different 'father figures' of the onslaught against modernization theories have personified its diverse prongs. Myrdal and Prebisch were senior advisers to the UN, originating from Sweden and a 'developing society' (Argentine) respectively, Baran was the Russian-educated and the only Marxist professor of economics in the US universities of the 1950s. The remedies suggested ranged accordingly: a call for an assumption of moral responsibility by the West from Myrdal (to be expressed in massive charitable aid), the demand for industrialization policies and for state control of foreign trade from Prebisch, the demand for revolutionary reassertion of sovereignty followed by the restructuring of society from Baran. The modernization theory was dismissed by all of them as inadequate, over-optimistic and ideologically Western-centered.

Myrdal's notion of 'circular causation' and of 'cumulation of advantages and disadvantages' challenged the 'equilibrium' model of economic growth by identifying at least one of the resulting issues [45]. In a 'free market' economy, it is the accumulated investments that tend to produce further accumulation of investments; accumulated ability to produce determines the further increases in productivity; the better the educational facilities the better the conditions for the growth of new educational facilities, and so on. Conversely, shortage of capital, low productivity, limited access to educational facilities, and political feebleness and massive poverty, tend to 'accumulate' at the underprivileged pole of society, in a sequence of 'vicious circles'. There is no 'natural' flow towards equilibrium. The question is not why the 'gaps' do not close, it is rather, how could it happen that some countries of the globe (e.g. Japan) have 'caught-up' with the first-comers?

In Latin America the criticism of modernization theory was voiced by the structuralists school — a first reconceptualization of 'developing societies' in the UN era, coming from those societies themselves. At its centre stood the work of Prebisch who challenged the neoclassical assumption of natural and mutual advantages of international trade by evidence of terms of trade consistently disadvantageous for the 'developing societies' [22; 52; 53]. Paul Baran's pioneering work reasserted the stress on broad aspects of political economy rather than on the 'free market' mechanisms of either equilibrium or inequality and cumulation. He proceeded from the view voiced already in the late 1920s by the 3rd International about the overwhelmingly regressive impact of imperialism on the economies of the colonial societies. Marxist paradigm and terminology were extended by Baran to the inter-state dependencies, suggesting ways the capitalist 'laws of motion' and the existing relations of power, interest and exploitation operate at the lower pole of the global society [7]. International patterns of exploitation would explain the 'blocked' development of the 'underdeveloped regions' (he used the comparison of the deficient economic growth of colonial India, as against the suc-

cesses of Japan which locked itself up against the Western impacts and the ‘open market’). The industries of the ‘developing societies’ are strangled as much by the cheaper mass-production of well-established industrial complexes as by the conscious policies of the major powers. Monopolistic controls purposefully drag down the prices of most of the products traditionally exported by the ‘developing societies’, securing uneven exchange to the advantage of those most powerful. Rule by parasitic and oppressive elites is conserved at the ‘underdeveloped’ pole of the world by the nature of the imperialist impact, which helps to keep those regions ‘underdeveloped’ [6]. It is the capitalist centre of the ‘advanced’ world with its accumulated and accumulating advantages and bullying power and its local agents-‘compradors’ that stand in the way of the ‘developing societies’. That is the rationale of a growing ‘gap’.

At the turn of the 1970s, after two decades of predominance of modernization theory, the dependency theory came for a time to dominate the field of ‘development studies’. In Anglo-Saxon literature it was most influentially expressed in a book of A.G. Frank published in 1967 [9; 20; 46; 57]. It was also most clearly challenged in the debate that followed it. The events of 1968 in Vietnam, the USA, Latin America, France, China and Czechoslovakia offered an immediate background of political crisis and anticipation of dramatic changes. The book presented a view of unequal international division of markets and labor, ‘siphoning away’ the wealth of Latin American ‘periphery’ and leading to stagnation there. It dismissed the earlier images of a (semi?) feudal society or else as a region littered with feudal ‘pockets of backwardness’, which slowly dissolve under the impact of capitalism and/or progress. The capitalist world market transformed it centuries ago into a part of the global capitalist economy. It also provided for the diverse dynamics of different areas on the globe leading to the necessary and deepening decline of countries where the majority of mankind’s poor lived. Frank summed up his pessimistic conclusions in the dramatic image of the ‘development of underdevelopment’ at the peripheries of capitalism.

For a short time, a new dual concept of *centre/periphery* took the place of the universal master-key of explanation, reserved before for the chief polarity of the modernization theory: the *backward/modern* division (and sequence). In what followed, much of the ‘dependency theory’ was rapidly trivialized or taken over. The concept of *centre/periphery*, used loosely, became merely another word for rich/poor with a critical undertone of voice added — a verbal substitute for analysis of complex reality. Even the genuinely critical and sophisticated versions of the dependency theory displayed serious limitations, gradually acknowledged by its authors. Theoretically, the difficulty lay with the ‘holist’ structural assumptions, an overkill of Baran’s line of reasoning and of the older theories of imperialism. World capitalism and/or the international market and/or the multinational companies (or, more general still, the ‘laws of accumulation of capital’) were treated as the sole determinants of history. The ‘peripheries’ and the human collectivities there became thereby by default mere ‘carriers’ or puppets of the characteristics of the international social matrix. Politically the only consequent choice became that of ‘either fascism or socialism’.

Evidence of complex diversification of the ‘developing societies’ and of rapid industrialization in some of them undercut these analyses. So has the evidence of political

struggles and dramatic shifts in policies. The fact that world market was used by Frank as a synonym for capitalism added to the theoretical argument [35]. Importantly, the ‘export substitution’ programs, when adopted, were not doing well either. New types of penetration and safer ways for the skimming of super-profits by the multinationals followed their application. Yet, on the other hand, the ‘gap’ did not disappear.

The 1980s has been one of further debate brought about by new evidence and of very limited theoretical advance, especially in so far as new integrated views were concerned. There have been signs of disintegration and disenchantment with the theoretical field *in toto*. The modernization approach was simply restated by a few of the ex-colonial civil servants or politicians and defended with new vigor and argument by some neo-orthodox Marxists who looked again at the ‘growth’ and doubted the ‘gap’ [25; 32; 36; 69]. Some interesting things were said from different perspectives about the ‘packages’ of modernizing characteristics, about cognitions, ecology and the socially destructive propensities of technological revolution so far as the Third World was concerned [8; 16; 30]. A number of attempts were made to use the concept of ‘mode of production’ as an alternative to the models of dependency [1]. Frank presented rectifications of his views, as did a number of major ‘dependency’ theorists, especially in the important reanalysis of F.H. Cardoso and others in Latin America [14].

On the ‘same side’ in terms of the broad divisions of views, the works of Samir Amin gained considerable support with many of the ‘Third World’ economists, of the ‘left’ as well as of the ‘right’ [2]. In 1974, E. Wallerstein commenced publication of a major study offering a global view of the origins of capitalist economy. While following the views of ‘dependency theorists’ in many major matters (inclusive of a strong ‘holist’ tendency [68. P. 92], and the equating of the spread of capitalism with that of the global market), Wallerstein gave new historical depth to the analysis offered. He put in focus of his historiography the forms of worldwide division and internationalized control of labor and the resulting diverse modes of its use. Relevantly to our case, he extended accordingly the earlier conceptual schemes suggesting a societal category ‘in between’ the capitalist ‘core’ and the ‘peripheries’ (and typified by the prevalence of share-cropping in agriculture and mining commencing ‘the long XVIth century’). It would include the old empires in decline, caught in the process of capitalist peripheralization. Tsarist Russia would be a prime example of this societal category, entering the global system somewhat later. More was done in terms of building up foundations by the social historians who traced the diverse roads of different states/social transformation (e.g. the comparison of Russian and Polish history by P. Anderson) [3].

All in all the debate of the 1970s and 1980s did not result in major conceptual breakthroughs. The fundamental approaches of the 1960s underwent further elaboration and revision under each other’s impact and in the light of the new evidence. A major division still lies between the views by which ‘developing societies’ are an essentially similar but backward version of ‘classical’ capitalism and those who see it as a different social form, venue and set of possibilities, in need of discrete theoretical structures. Unsatisfactory as this state of theoretical affairs is for lovers of ideological final solutions, the conceptual ‘fact’ of different approaches cannot be disposed of by a clever logical trick, an executive decision or by an empiricist computation. One must make

a choice, follow it up through concrete cases and consider the results. Our study accepts in this spirit the view that the ‘developing’ or ‘peripheral’ societies should be treated as a diverse form of social organization and looks at Russia in that light.

The adopted theoretical alternative is to advance further along the line of Baran’s initial insight, while attempting to meet and rectify its limitations. The more recent term and self-description of such a view (with such rectifications) as the theory of ‘dependent development’ will be used. It builds on major conceptual elements of the past debate like Sweezy’s comment about the plausibility of different capitalisms and Hobsbawm’s refusal to accept as self-evident the universality of the feudalism-to-capitalism road of transition [27. P. 171; 61]. It rejects holist analysis of ‘systems’ of the kind that assumes a single dynamic and logic of the ‘centre’ governing it and/or economic determinism of some type. It rejects as well the evolutionist solutions, by which societal forms are essentially different steps along the necessary capitalist road (into socialism, for those who are socialists). The ‘uneven’ and combined development of different societies would mean to that approach not only different speeds and ‘clocks’ but also different ‘roads’, each with its own consistencies, potentials and logic.

Also, a major message of the last generation was that of the growing disconnection between imperialism and colonialism. The Arab proverb that people resemble their times more than their fathers seems to hold true in this case. Colonial history, of some and not of others, does not falsify the generalizations offered when we talk of ‘dependent development’. Its decisive social characteristics are not defined by the colonial past, but by the international and intra-national present. The conceptual sense of the societal category discussed is based on the assumption of a specific type of social structure, social reproductions and patterns of social transformation. It goes without saying that this composite picture should be treated not as a shopping-list of unrelated items or a blueprint of an engine’s exclusive components. It is ‘a system’ of different and often contradictory tendencies and dynamics, related by a variety of ‘degrees of freedom’ and possible substitutions, to follow the mechanical metaphor.

The concept of ‘dependent development’ as recently used indicates a specific placement of the societies in question in the context of an international capitalist system [18]. Within the global hierarchies of institutionalized power, capital and science, the ‘developing societies’ are at the weaker pole, a weakness that if left to the forces of the ‘free market’ tends indeed to cumulate. This ‘placement’ opens those societies to domination and exploitation by powerful ‘partners’. At the same time the metaphor of ‘developing societies’ being the ‘global proletariat’, while not totally devoid of illumination, is badly biased, because ‘developing societies’ do not produce the bulk of goods consumed by the ‘metropolitan’ nations. Nor are they a homogeneous ‘camp’, homogeneously rural or homogeneously poor.

The internal economic context of the countries of dependent development is characterized by extensive ‘disarticulations’. Strategic elements of it operate within the international networks controlled mostly by the multinational companies. Enclaves of foreign-produced and controlled modern technology coincide with archaic techniques of production, and mass underemployment. A fundamental frontier of economic ‘dis-

articulation' usually lies between the massively peasant smallholder agriculture plus the peasant-in-town groups plus extensive 'informal economies' and the 'modern' industries and finance. At the core of the political and economic power-structures stands a state machinery that is variously described as 'over-grown', 'strong' and/or 'state capitalist'. Those expressions try to present and to explain a bureaucratic system that monopolizes not only administrative control and the powers of repression but also the direct assignment of social privileges, the powers of the largest employer, the direct control of major parts of production, and/or foreign trade, of the mass media, etc. Extraordinarily high rates of exploitation correspond in the 'developing societies' with the spread of repressive regimes, breakdown of consensus, often military dictatorships involving semi-official 'torture squads' as a day-to-day system of governing.

The effective control of the industry and finance of the 'developing societies' lies in the hands of a 'triple alliance' of international capital, state 'technocrats' and the local bourgeoisie (linked at times with large landlords). Up to a point the state apparatus acts as a 'gate keeper' for foreign capitalism, serving it but also attempting to control it. The working compromise of those forces, with the first two supreme and the third correspondingly servile (but far from powerless), define the day-to-day running of a dependent economy. It means constant shifts and confrontations by capital in search of quick profits whereby often the state enterprises act as the only effective instrument of long-term investments and capital accumulation. It means also that systematic exclusion of the plebeian masses from any economic gains of 'dependent development', forms part of the process of 'economic growth', with increasing social polarization and tensions to follow. (A consequent transfer by the multinationals of a labor-intensive production process to countries of a cheap and repressed labor force was a major determinant of the recent wave of industrialization within some 'developing societies'.) Specific class structure, ethnic divisions, political characteristics and ideological currents are generated by such a setting. The mass of manual laborers and of the often destitute 'lumpen bourgeoisie' of go-betweens together with the major parts of the local bourgeoisie are mostly devoid of impact upon the actual political life, despite the parliamentary procedures usually being kept as a legitimating device. To that extent, the rhetoric term 'popular masses' is realistic as the antonym of the governing elite and may explain the nature of revolutionary eruptions and the ideologies of protest that cross-cut class boundaries of any description.

'Dependent development' is a process of social reproduction of extensive and extending inequality on both as international and local scale. The consistency of the international 'gap' is the expression of its fundamental 'laws of motion' while many more localized 'gaps' and disarticulations follow similar patterns. So do the patterns of repression, the typical cognitions of social reality and the ideologies of its change.

Since 1917, Russia has been treated as the country in which the socialist experiment commenced, for good or evil. It has facilitated some teleological explanations of Russian history (by which all which happened had to happen), and at the other pole, claims that all is accident, perplexity or bad luck. Looking back did offer some useful analytical insights into Russia's revolutionary transformation and the socialist attempts elsewhere and since. What remained less clear is the extent to which the debate about the nature

of ‘developing societies’ throws light on the history of Russia/USSR. Societies and economic conditions never exactly repeat themselves, but identity is not a condition for comparative analysis. During the period we are talking about, Russia was a country with a massive peasant population, a per capita annual income of less than 100 dollars, a major presence of foreign capital and a government pursuing industrialization policies in a world increasingly dominated by ‘the West’, i.e. the main capitalist industrial societies.

At the turn of the XXth century, Russia was a ‘developing society’, arguably the first of its kind. This generalization denies neither the development of the ‘classical’ capitalism in it nor the uniqueness of its history. These notwithstanding, the major characteristics of what a few generations later came to be called ‘dependent development’, were increasingly evident in Russia. The international context and the grip of foreign capital were already referred to and were recognized in the extra attention given then in Russia to the problems of the types of ‘development’, the ‘gap’, and economic ‘growth’, as well as of capital accumulation, sovereignty and foreign finance. Evans’s concept of the ‘triple alliance’ of capitals ruling industry — the foreign, the state and the local — was pertinent, as was the parallel tendency of state planners to equate industry with modernity and Westernization. Severe strains of economic and social disarticulations and steep class divisions were evident. Major enterprises, especially mining, often linked into international economic circuits with little relation to the economy within which the bulk of the Russians lived. Heavy under-employment on a national scale went hand in hand with a shortage of skilled and ‘reliable’ labor. The largest factories of Europe, manned extensively by part-peasants, coincided with and were linked to pre-mechanical crafts and thousand-year-old farming methods. The advance of industry, urbanization and literacy were paralleled by a widening gulf between the social ‘top’ and the rural and city poor. The level of exploitation of the producers was high, manifest and brutal, and so was the overall extent of state control and the repressions evoked by any ‘disobedience’ or even unauthorized initiative from the philanthropists. Political dissent was building up, expressed in the bottled-up resentment of the plebeian classes as much as in the ideologically and ethically expressed challenges of the intelligentsia.

Russia’s immediate opportunities for rapid economic development and transformation, activated in the spells of industrial growth during 1892—1899 and 1909—1913, were on the whole better than those in the mainstream ‘developing societies’ later. The powerful and highly centralized Russian state was able to mobilize considerable resources and, to an extent, check foreign political and economic pressures. The rise in world prices of foodstuffs, in particular, of grain, ensured a consistently positive balance of payments and helped towards the national ‘capital formation’. The sheer size of the country has often been cited as a major advantage for rapid economic advance. The size of the population as a potential consumers’ market, the extensive territory and mineral riches would by that view facilitate ‘economic growth’. Russia’s Asiatic sector could play the role of an amalgam of British India and the American Wild West, i.e. of an exploited minerals and cotton producing colony and of an ‘open frontier’.

Yet the chances for these favorable i.e. ‘growth’-facilitating economic conditions to persist were anything but good. To return to Timasheff’s ‘mental experiment’ but to make it somewhat more specific, 67% of the value of exports was agricultural primary produce as late as 1913 and nearly all of the rest were the products of mining [11. P. 13—16]. It was the increase in foodstuff prices in the early XXth century that secured the overall export figures. Once the First World War was over, the terms of trade were to become increasingly unfavorable to primary products and specifically to foodstuffs [5. P. 72—79; 72. P. 38—45]. Moreover, “except under specific conditions, the long term movement of the terms of trade between industrial and agricultural products will be against agricultural products” [5. P. 79]. The basic determinant of Russia’s positive balance of payments and a ‘booster’ of its internal market was on the point of an extended downward turn.

The second source of the ‘positive balance of payments’, of the capital investment and economic development, was external. It was assumed by many that without the influx of foreign capital, the spectacular development of Russian industry would be altogether impossible. Estimated foreign investments during the period 1898—1913 were 4225 million Rubles, of which about 2000 million Rubles were comprised of state loans. The hold of foreign capital was growing. In particular, while during 1881—1913 about 3000 million Rubles were taken out of Russia in foreign profits much was reinvested. By 1914, the holding of foreign capital was 8000 million Rubles. This included foreign ownership of up to two-thirds of Russia’s private banking and extensive foreign ownership of mines and of large private manufacturing enterprises [19; 34; 42]. “By 1914, Russia had gone a good part of the way toward becoming a semi-colonial possession of European capital” [44. P. 269] Already by 1916 the cost of the war had more than doubled foreign debts; it had also increased further Russia’s technological dependency on its Western allies. Even ‘undisturbed’, to use Timasheff’s term, Russia would have faced in the post-First World War period a massive and increasing crisis of foreign payments and of further loans just to pay off the old ones, together with the dividends and the payments for foreign expertise and imports. We know such scenarios well from Latin America, Africa and Asia (Brazil, Nigeria, Indonesia).

Even the magnitude of Russia could not be viewed solely as a blessing. The empire had been created by conquest and lived by suppression of the national identity of the majority of population in which ethnic Russians accounted for less than half. Repression could keep the country together, but to see the tsardom perpetuating ‘undisturbed’ into the future, despite its ethnic heterogeneity and inequalities, was unrealistic. Even the hope that the land mass of Russia would solve the problem of its ‘surplus population’ was false. Despite high mortality rates, the percentage of annual population growth in Russia had doubled during 1880—1910 [55. P. 98]. The absorption capacity of Asiatic Russia was limited. The actual land per capita rates in European Russia were rapidly decreasing. A ‘population explosion’ was beginning to build up, with consequences familiar from the ‘developing societies’ of today. The cities absorbed only about one-quarter or one-third of the rural growth. Without it changing or without ‘Malthusian corrective’ (i.e. war, famine and plague) or else without a labor-absorbing agricultural breakthrough the rural ‘surplus population’ could not but proceed to grow.

By the turn of the century, the awareness of these crises was growing among ‘the educated’ of Russia. The resulting debate was not unlike that of the 1950s and 1960s in UN research units such as Prebish’s ECLA or between Baran’s friends, the Marxist economists centred around the *Monthly Review* of New York. There was a major difference of the date under consideration, however. It supported for tsarist Russia neither an iron law of deterioration nor a self-evident extrapolation of the economic boom of 1909—1913, that is, in the language of our generation, neither a version of dependency theory nor a modernization scenario. To say that the socio-economic development of Russia was then a race against time, with the result still in the balance, is neither a rhetorical turn of phrase nor an eclectic refusal to ‘stick one’s neck out’ by offering a firm answer. Figures show that during the period in question, Russia was neither catching up, nor was it clearly falling behind Western competitors. Between 1861 and 1913, the estimated growth rates of Russia’s national income per capita were close to those of the European averages, but half the figure for Germany. Russia was doing better than the cross-national averages of the countries outside Europe, but the growth of its national income was considerably lower than in the USA and Japan [24. P. 474—475; 54].

A further worsening of Russia’s chances in that race was anticipated which made the time factor crucial. In such contexts what counts particularly is not only the matrix of causes, trends and objective *determinants*, but conscious conflicts and state policies, i.e. the active seeking of alternatives by those in power, the forces they could command, the challenges presented and the way they were understood and met. The Russians increasingly came to view the future in terms of the ability of the tsardom to outweigh the effects of cumulative backwardness and global inequality, in terms of a revolution that would radically change the character of Russia, removing the tsardom altogether. To those in the government in whose view ‘modernization’ was necessary while a revolution was out of the question, the future mostly presented an alternative of a German-style rapid economic advance to join the dominant industrial societies or a cumulative political and economic decline to the status of ‘another China’, a society of poverty and internal contradictions, an easy prey to powerful foreign imperialists. *Ex post factum* such a designation of choices is inadequate, but far from spurious. It offers a division in the terms within which major aspects of Russian history can be considered.

Significantly for such comparisons, Russia entered the new century at a time when models of what has come to be referred to as ‘classical’ capitalism, (i.e. the generalized model of England of 1780—1870) were becoming less relevant to the actual capitalist societies. A few intellectual forerunners excepted, the theory was clearly lagging behind, for it took a century for the social analysts to catch up in earnest with the fact of the non-repetition of the social characteristics of the British ‘industrial revolution’ [15; 40]. It took much less time than that for the practitioners of politics and economics to grasp this point. The first inkling of a new pragmatic understanding of these matters appeared within the governing elites of Germany, Japan and Russia. By that time, between the lucky first-comers (societies that benefited from the early development of a mercantile, industrial and colonial capitalism) and between the ‘other’ (often colonized) people, a third intermediate group could be distinguished. It consisted of those countries that

reached the thresholds of massive industrialization somewhat later than the first-comers, but without having their economies distorted by recent foreign conquest and/or colonialism. The USA headed this list, but was manifestly exceptional owing to particularly favorable conditions. Outside its southern regions of slave-and-cotton economy, it lacked entrenched pre-capitalist classes, structures and traditions. It was far enough away to eschew Europe's political tensions, and yet close enough to benefit from its markets, labor and experience. Its 'growth' was well served by the farming of the independent smallholders in the 'empty territories' (i.e. lands sparsely populated by peoples who could be defeated, locked up in 'reservations' or exterminated). The same held for the weakening of the British, French and German global grip when they dueled for world rule in 1914—1918.

The core of the 'third group' consisted of the triad of Germany, Japan and Russia, the last usually at the bottom of the list in terms of its socioeconomic and political indexes. In spite of many differences with regard to their conditions and history, these countries showed marked similarities of government policies and guiding ideologies. At their centre was an attempt to escape what would be called today 'dependency' and 'cumulation of disadvantages', by a powerful intervention of the state, aimed to assure rapid industrialization. In the words of Witte, 'only those economically independent are able fully to exercise their political might ...China, India, Turkey, Persia and Latin America are politically feeble in direct proportion to their economic dependence on foreign industry'. Consequent on that experience, 'in our times the political might of the great states called upon to play a role in history is based not only on the spirit of its people but in their economic system. ...The international rivalry would not wait'. This view assumes a powerful, autocratic and aggressive government effectively opposing external pressures while suppressing any 'internal political obstacles', be it socialist agitation, demands of ethnic 'minorities' or even reactionary impulses within the landed 'ruling class'. The aim was to advance 'by hook or by crook', modernizing the army, promoting capital accumulation, facilitating industrialization, relegating agriculture to a secondary place within the national economy [10. P. 215; 70. P. 133].

For three decades, the Russian government doggedly followed 'the German path'. Bunge, Vishnegradskii, Witte, Kokovtsev — a succession of finance ministers-professed policies of directed economic development and energetic government intervention, within which the all-out support for home industry was central. Government policies facilitated high profit margins for the industrialists, low wages, and the squeezing of peasant economy for the sake of urban capital formation. Yet, whatever the effort, the model or the pretence, Russia's advance was still no match for that of Germany. It was on the battlefield and in the confrontations of international politics and finance that the fact of the matter was first manifested. From a first-class world power in the first half of the XIXth century, the Russian state has deteriorated, by the turn of the century, into a second-class force. The Crimean War of 1854—1855 was followed by the diplomatic defeat by the 'European powers' at the Berlin conference in 1878, the military defeat by Japan in 1904 and retreat before Austrian pressure in 1908. All these rebuffs signaled and contributed to this growing international weakness.

Simultaneously, the severity of the economic crisis at the turn of the century showed how shaky the economic growth of Russia was. Social and ethnic contradictions and revolutionary pressures added to the internal weakness. Given the build-up of political and economic crises and the increasingly doubtful ability of the tsardom to dominate the international and local scene and to mobilize resources, Witte's political design and the later prediction-by-extrapolation by Timasheff of a development able to make Russia into another Germany were anything but prudent. This is the point where the significance of the other horn of the dilemma of 'either Germany or China' comes into its own. The China of the day was to the contemporaries a synonym of declining ancient glory, but mostly a chief example of a victim of foreign political and economic predators. 'Vicious circles' of popular impoverishment, the population outrunning resources and a growing 'compradore' stratum of the economic agents of Western companies were reported from there. The less the Russian similarity to Germany, the more realistic the comparisons to China as seen by the educated Russians of those times. Russia was the first country in which the syndrome of such conditions and problems appeared within the context of political independence of long standing, of a successful competition in the past with the more 'modern' Western neighbors and a country possessing a numerous intellectual elite, trained in advanced European scholarship and deeply involved in social analysis and in radical political action. That is why Russia was also to become the first 'developing society' to begin and recognize itself as such.

The new understanding manifested itself in political strategies and decisions rather than in academic treatises. While theory stumbled behind, the actual leaders of Russia recognized that the theory drawn from 'classical' capitalism, even when superficially adjusted, was insufficient for the type of society Russia was and/or was becoming. The self-understanding and the corresponding state strategies of 'classical capitalism' were first substantially amended in a 'Bismarckian way', theorized by F. List and accepted by the 'middle group' of capitalist developers. List challenged the fundamental assumption of the British political economy concerning mutual advantages of free trade [40]. He believed that a transitional period of 'protectionism' must secure the 'maturing' of the German industry before it would be able to compete 'freely' with Great Britain. He defended state intervention in markets and finance, that is, the policies that came to be expressed eventually in the German Custom Union, a major step towards the country's unification under the leadership of Prussia. Russia's practicing economist increasingly adopted the perspective offered by List. Witte had List's book personally translated and ordered his officials and aids to study it. Yet, transferred to Russia, the Listian policies failed to produce German-like results. The consequent crisis, rebellion and the dismay that culminated during the 1905—1907 revolution, was reflected in a new parcel of strategies of social transformation. These are crucial to the understanding of the 'developing societies' of today and, in turn, understandable only in the light of their experience.

It was in Russia that a 'second amendment' of the initial theories of 'classical' capitalism took shape, offering a theoretical expression and a testing ground for a new type

of ‘revolution from above’ — the ‘Stolypin Reforms’ of 1906—1914. Russia’s revolutionary epoch was linked into, overlaid with and productive of major conceptual revolution. Its first message of originality was that the spontaneity that underlaid the British case of industrialization indeed could not work similarly for the newcomers. Only the fundamental restructuring of the whole social fabric could lay foundations for the List-like policies and the Western-style industrialization to follow in a Russia-like society. A ‘revolution from above’ had to remove obstacles before capitalism could succeed. Stolypin’s ‘revolution from above’ was rapidly followed by its fundamental alternative — the first ‘revolution from below’ typical of ‘developing societies’ and effectively executed and theorized following the lessons of revolutionary experience of 1905—1907 enhanced in 1917—1921.

That is why it is not accidental that while numerous ‘Western’ intellectual fashions come and go, the analytical tenets of Russian experience and scholarship of those times are remarkably fresh when issues of ‘economic growth’ and of the underprivileged component of mankind in the ‘developing societies’ are addressed, be it peasants, the ‘state apparatus’ or the intelligentsia, classes, elites or revolutionary cadres, agrarian reform, capital accumulation or ‘hidden unemployment’. That is also why Witte and Lenin, as well as Stolypin and Stalin, so often sound as if they were directly addressing politicians and militants on different sides of the ideological barriers in ‘developing societies’. To a considerable degree, they exhausted the range of alternative strategies available up to now).

To recapitulate, specific characteristics of Russia as a ‘developing society’ made it differ significantly in social structure from other catching-up members of the industrializing societies (i.e. the USA, Germany and Japan) and to parallel a different category of societal development. That is not what major Western historians of Russia usually assume: “quantitatively, the differences were formidable ...but ...the basic elements of a backward economy were on the whole the same in Russia of the 1890s as in Germany of the 1830s” [23. P. 18, 27]. The writings of von Laue carried the unilinear assumption still further by externalizing fully the sources of change. To him a ‘cultural slope’ continued inside Russia the ‘gradient issuing from Western Europe’. What was taking place in Russia was a “vast revolution from without”, that is, an ‘expansion of Europe’ in which ‘there is no blending of old and new [i.e. ‘Western’] ...the old was being ruthlessly subverted” [66. P. 199, 438, 422].

Despite the dissimilarity of the sources quoted, the authorities and the terminology used, Soviet scholars faced similar dilemmas and conducted similar debates. The arguments about foreign capital and its impact, the actual extent of Russian economic advance before the revolution, the ‘feudal remnants’ in it, etc., were used as a vehicle for it. A major field in which the issue was explicated was that of agrarian history, which explains its significance for the general debate and in academic confrontations of past, present and, doubtlessly, future. Nobody has as yet used directly a ‘developing societies’ model for an alternative explanation challenging the unilinear view, but the accentuation of specificity of the social transformation in the Russian countryside, of ‘semi-feudalism’

and of the peculiarities of ‘the imperialist epoch’ have often carried a similar message. Lenin’s favorite abuse of *aziatchina* (Asianness), when talking of Russia, was never properly explored for insight, but used time and time again in the Soviet debate to stress the specificity of Russian capitalism, its ‘semi’, not-quite-capitalist and not-quite-Western nature. Fundamental differences and arguments were often hidden behind quantitative designation, that is, capitalism was very strongly ‘semi’ to some, less ‘semi’ to others and not ‘semi’ at all to those whom already Marx called ‘the Russian admirers of the capitalist system’ (i.e. Russia’s consistent evolutionists) [58. P. 100].

The shadow of the fundamental debate between Soviet historians entered also via the consideration of what the ‘imperialist epoch of capitalism’ meant where Russia was concerned. The 1968 multi-volume of USSR history and attempts to explore new frontiers offered a middle position. It began by proclaiming as the new general insight of scholarship at the turn of the century ‘deviations in the development of capitalism ...from the *usual* norms of the capitalism of free competition’ [31. P. 8]. That insight was said to be crystallized and advanced by Lenin’s new theory of imperialism ‘as the last stage of capitalism’ and ‘military feudal imperialism’ represented by the tsarist state. This social formation was said to be ruled by a corresponding class coalition — the political alliance between the squires and the top layer of imperialist bourgeoisie which was constructed in the weak post-1906 parliament — the *Duma*. A tendency of financial capital to conserve rather than destroy the ‘early capitalist modes of production’, and the repressive nature of the tsarist policies at the ethnic peripheries, were also pointed out. The nature of the 1905—1907 revolution was defined as a treble conflict and dynamic: proletarian, peasant and ethnic. The model caught well the complexity of the Russian social and political confrontations, but failed to account for some major characteristics representing a new road, a typical/specific pattern of societal transformation. It also bypassed some political forces of major significance.

The difficulties of the general problems reviewed are clearly not of the type that can be resolved by simply piling up data, archival documents or figures. The significance and necessity of close scrutiny of evidence is not in question, but it is rather the conceptualization of it that is opaque. When scholars stumble over words or hide behind them, the way forward, however tiresome, is to proceed with dissecting terms for their analytical meaning.

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ТИПЫ ИСТОРИЧЕСКОГО РАЗВИТИЯ, ИЛИ МОРФОЛОГИЯ РОССИЙСКОЙ «ОТСТАЛОСТИ» (часть 1)*

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Данной статьей мы начинаем серию публикаций, посвященных теоретическим аспектам концепции Теодора Шанина, впервые опубликованной в 1986 году в книге «Россия как развивающееся общество. Истоки инаковости: Россия в начале XX века. Т. 1». В следующем номере журнала мы опубликуем вторую часть пятой главы из этой книги, а также и реферативный перевод всей пятой главы данной работы, чей русский перевод в настоящее время впервые готовится к изданию в знаменательный год столетия Октябрьской революции (вторая часть двухтомника «Революция как момент истины. Россия 1905—1907, 1917—1922 гг.» вышла на русском языке в 1997 год в издательстве «Весь мир»). В статье обозначены ключевые концептуальные подходы к трактовке сути социально-экономического развития в глобальных масштабах и широкой исторической перспективе. Так, разно-

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образные теории конвергенции предполагают, что какой бы ни была риторика или жестокость российского социалистического эксперимента, фактически это был гигантский по масштабам опыт «запоздалой индустриализации» и рывок к сокращению «разрыва» между Западной Европой или США и остальным миром. Теории модернизации разделяют мир на три области — Первый мир, Второй и Третий — и утверждают, что со временем Второй мир должен превратиться в Первый, а Третий пройти более долгий путь. Однако более важным автор считает четкое определение, что же именно подразумевается, когда общества называются «развивающимися», «отсталыми», «неразвиваемыми», «становящимися» и пр. По сути, возможны два пути для этого, исходя из структурных характеристик социальных систем: первый подход трактует «развивающиеся общества» как отстающие и продвигающиеся к современности нужной поступью социального и экономического прогресса, однако в силу ряда причин все еще не достигшие своей цели или же идущие к «нужной точке» слишком медленно; второй подход допускает разные стартовые позиции и варианты «развития», и «развивающиеся общества» — одна из множества траекторий. В статье показаны возможности и ограничения разных теоретических перспектив, в частности, применительно к российской интеллектуальной и социально-экономической истории.

Ключевые слова: развивающееся общество; историческое развитие; отсталость; инаковость; теория конвергенции; теория модернизации; «разрыв»; три мира