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Revisiting the Specific Features of Russian Modernisation

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***Abstract* – The concept of "modernisation" is one of the most widely represented concepts in modern knowledge about the development of society. This is a new paradigm of social and human sciences which has replaced the Marxist concept. The author substantiates the theoretical standpoint, according to which the key thesis for the analysis of the specific features of Russian modernisation is its "partiality", fragmentation, and structural incompleteness.**

Keywords – modernisation, Chinese model, disruption of modernisation, urbanisation, secularisation, "plurality of modernity"

I. INTRODUCTION

Modernisation is the topic of our time. The problem of profound historical transformations that take place in individual countries and regions at least in the past five hundred years and which acquire global, planetary character in recent centuries is, directly or indirectly, the subject of all social and human sciences. The multidisciplinary field of research combines the results of scientific research of specialists in different areas. Hundreds of specialised and interdisciplinary scientific papers on various aspects of this problem are published in the world every year.

The interdisciplinary discourse of modernisation that has formed during almost two centuries has been and currently is the semantic centre of basic research in the field of the philosophy of history and social philosophy in general. The theory of modernisation forms a new paradigm of social and human sciences which has replaced the Marxist concept. This paradigm is still in the process of formation and continues to provoke heated discussions of specialists in many ways.

The concept of "modernisation", which means "improvement" (literally – "updating") in the widely used everyday sense, has at least two special scientific meanings represented in the areas of social and humanitarian knowledge and journalism. The first sense is basic and "original", and indicates the transition from the traditional (agrarian) type of society to the industrial type. When this concept was being developed, the "past" state was opposed to the "modern" state. The second sense is derived from the first and characterises the subsequent development of industrial society, its transformation into a post-industrial (informational) one.

The basis of the concept of modernity was formed in the works of the greatest theorists of sociology and social philosophy of the XIX – early XX centuries, such as A. Saint-Simon, K. Marx, G. Simmel, M. Weber, and E. Durkheim. Each of them tried to answer the question of how modernity differs from other periods and contrasted the new (contemporary, modern) with the old (past, traditional). A. Saint-Simon designated the modernity by using the concept of "industrial society", opposing it to "feudal society", and stated its main distinctive features (industrialisation, democratisation, secular culture). In his works, K. Marx studied modernity as capitalism and used the opposition of the relations of "personal dependency" which dominated in the previous historical epochs and the relations of "property dependency" which form the foundation of capitalism as the most profound theoretical basis for singling out modernity as a special type of society. M. Weber pointed to the cultural and ethical origins of modernity (Protestant ethics as the "spirit of capitalism") and discovered the phenomenon of "rationalisation" as the main feature and the main driving force of modernity. It was M. Weber who developed a universal formula for the secularisation of the culture of modernity – "the disenchantment of the world". Explaining modernity, G. Simmel took the notion of "abstraction" ("abstractness") as a basis, believing that it is precisely the degree of abstractness of social relations that distinguishes the modern society. This is manifested in the increasing value of abstract systems (money, law, state), in the predominance of "long" (mediated and impersonal) over "short" (direct and personal) social relations. E. Durkheim contrasted society with "mechanical solidarity" (archaic community), in which the underdevelopment of individuality is determined by the same functions of people, with the society of "organic solidarity" (modernity) which develops individuality, because it is built on a complex division of labour and exchange of activities. The studies of this period also recorded the main vector of changes in social institutions during the transition from traditional society to "modernity"– the transition "from Status to Treaty" (G. Maine), the increase in the value of "contractual", functional and role-playing professional relationships.

This stage (the "historical background of the issue") is often characterised by the authors beyond the framework of historiographic reviews. Meanwhile, its importance should be emphasised due to the fundamental nature of the general sociological ideas presented here and in order to avoid the vulgar tendency of identifying modernisation with "Europeanisation".

The next development period which forms the "structure" rather than the foundation of the modernisation discourse creates more conceptually shaped ideas, and develops the conceptual apparatus of the theory (T. Parsons, U. Rostow, S. Black, D. Lerner, M. Levy, S. Eisenstadt, S. Huntington), but at the same time is a more specialised and rich empirical material. During the middle and the second half of the twentieth century, experts distinguish three "waves" of the development of the theory of modernisation:

- late 1950s–1960s – "classical period", the upward development and growing influence of this theory;
- 1970s – "critical" – criticism of the concept of modernisation, mainly from the standpoint of I. Wallerstein's world system theory, neo-Marxism, "dependency theory" against the backdrop of post-colonial relations;
- late 1980s–1990s – "neo-modernisation", the revival of the basic concepts of the "classical" period with the emphasis on the idea of "plural modernity". [1] The reflection on the accumulated experience in the implementation of modernisation projects in different countries, including the "breakdowns" of modernisation, leads to the development of a multi-linear model.

In their works, R. Aron, E. Toffler, J. Galbraith, D. Bell simultaneously developed the main provisions of the theory of the next stage of modernisation – the so-called "information society".

Thus, modernity as a social type (industrial society) is characterised by an urbanised infrastructure and an urban way of life, domination of industry in the economy, a developed system of labour division and exchange, the monetary system and the market, capitalist production relations (entrepreneurship for profit, self-employed or wage labour), rationality of economic system (measurability and the principle of efficiency), class-professional social structure and high social mobility, democratisation and formation of civil society institutions, the growing "abstractness" of relations (weakening and disintegration of directly personal clan and community ties), predominance of secular (non-religious) culture based on the education system and science.

As a rule, the main structural elements of the modernisation process are recorded in a synthesis scheme that reproduces its key areas ("measurements"). In accordance with the spheres of public life, it is possible to single out the following phenomena:

- industrialisation;
- urbanisation;
- formation of a market economy (capitalism);
- democratisation;
- secularisation.

The above list is not exhaustive; its contents vary among different scholars, but the general sociocultural meaning of this process is reproduced in all cases.

According to the theory of modernisation, the totality of the designated characteristics of modernity is not a description of the unique features of the historical fate of European nations ("European civilisation") but a stage of world-wide historical development – a certain type of sociality, an invariant that manifests itself, especially in the current globalisation conditions, in all regions of the planet, in diverse national and state variations, on different ethnic bases. The processes of modernisation – diverse and contradictory, sometimes tragic in their manifestations and consequences–act as a deep social subtext of all large-scale events of the past centuries – a kind of "mystery" of the history of the New and Contemporary Ages.

II. Problem Statement

The variety of forms of modernisation implementation, the multilinearity and variability of its "ways" in different countries and regions, as well as the situations of "breakdowns" of modernisation [2, 3] became the subject of scholarly study and most heated debates in the last decades of the XX and early XXI centuries.

Russian modernisation in terms of historical and modern characteristics is currently the key subject of Russian historical science. Many leading experts recognise the necessity to master a new conceptual apparatus and to be ready to apply it in explaining events in Russian history, taking into account its specific features. The largest-scale socio-economic and political events of the last three centuries in Russia can only be explained within the framework of the modernisation of theoretical scheme.

The above mentioned vectors of interpretation are highly relevant for the study of Russian history as applied to the period from the 17th century till the present day. Problems such as the birth of an empire, the development of Russian absolutism and serfdom, the cycles of reforms and counter-reforms in imperial and Soviet Russia, the inclination of the elite to "power-property", the significance of reform activities implemented by Alexander II, Alexander III and Peter Stolypin, the "origins and meaning" of the February and October Revolutions, the nature and social essence of the Soviet system and, in particular, Stalinism, the specific aspects of Soviet industrialisation, collectivisation, the political regime, the systemic crisis of the Soviet system and the collapse of the USSR should be considered through the prism of modernisation. The problems of the post-Soviet development of Russia, in particular, the definition of development goals and objectives, national and socio-cultural identity, can not be considered outside the context of modernisation either.

III. Discussion

Several most significant problem areas are emerging in modern Russian historical science and the corresponding socio-philosophical discourses on the specifics of Russian modernisation, with respect to which there is a significant (even opposite) divergence of opinions and assessments. In a most general form, their characteristics can be reduced to the following.

The description and explanation of the processes of Russian (Soviet) modernisation in terms of identification of their main properties, as well as the logic of cause and effect, conclusions and assessments of success ("achievements") or, conversely, the lack of implementation, "breakdowns" of modernisation in the history of Russia (USSR). In this context, one of the central issues is the role of the elite, its merits or/and historical guilt in relation to the events of modernisation at its various stages. The main problem is the essence, role and importance of the revolutions of 1917 (the Russian Revolution), especially the October Revolution, in the Russian and world history. Did this revolution present the liberation of the people, a progressive phenomenon, a stage of Russian modernisation, or did it signify the collapse ("breakdown") of modernisation and, ultimately, the destruction of the country?

Both of the above mentioned viewpoints are represented among many published research works dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution [4-6]. In this sense, the Russian Revolution of 1917 remains "an unsurmountable revolution", according to Yu. Pivovarov [7]. It can be stated that this revolution yet is not explained; therefore, its causes and consequences are not overcome, even in conscious mind, and, even in conscious mind, the immunity against social upheavals of the kind is not developed.

Within the framework of this area, the historical backwardness of the country from the leading European and American "old industrial powers", the "catching up" nature of its development is recognised by scholars such as A.S. Akhiezer, V.G. Khoros, A.G. Vishnevsky, N. M. Pliskevich, A.N. Medushevsky, and others). The characteristics are pointed out that indicate the imperial (military-mobilisation) nature of modernisation, the inconsistency of the main processes and the combination of progress and archaic in them: "conservative" modernisation (A.G. Vishnevsky). [8, 9] Russian modernisation is predominantly characterised as "archaisation", "breakdown", and even "imitation". Scholars emphasise the historical fault of the Russian (and then Soviet) elite for the implementation of the mobilising-imperial model of development that was exhausting the people and splitting the country, as well as for the revolutionary breakdown of 1917.

Researchers focus on the following main features of Russian modernisation:

- cyclical development (reform–counter-reform);
- mobilisation type;
- military bureaucratic dominant;
- partiality (fragmentation);
- socio-cultural split ("civilisational heterogeneity").

The alternative position is most clearly represented in the fundamental monographs by B.N. Mironov on the history of the Russian Empire. [10, 11] The author gives a positive assessment of the Russian modernisation, stating that it is successful, meaningfully and structurally corresponding to similar processes in Europe and America, and lagging behind only due to the historical circumstances. [11, pp. 612-620]

"Many contemporaries were aware that the common people – the predominant part of the population of Russia –lived in an earlier time, in a different historical era in comparison with the privileged groups of the population or with their Western neighbours." [11, p. 618] Further, the formulations are even softer: "... the difference between Russia and the West is not backwardness, but a lag; Russia lives in a different time zone of European civilisation." [11, p. 623]

As regards the issue of success of the Russian modernisation, we will provide a quotation from an article by N.M. Pliskevich. "A country that has experienced accelerated, mobilised, forced industrialisation with millions of victims (Peter I, Stalin) receives not only a powerful industry, but also all attendant disasters and "time bombs"– the sociocultural split and the marginal communal consciousness of people, the imperial syndrome in its grassroots version, archaic paternalism." [3, pp. 37-50]

The second area of research, the importance of which must be highlighted, is connected with attempts to specify and operationalise the concept of "modernisation" with reference to the modern conditions of Russia and other countries. The work in this area was initiated by Chinese sociologists. Over the past decades, they performed considerable work to make a theoretical analysis of the ideas of the modernisation theory in order to substantiate "socialism with Chinese specific features" and the "Chinese model of modernisation". In parallel, they carried out not only the conceptualisation of the basic concepts, but also the operationalisation of the relevant material. For a long period (more than ten years), studies were conducted on the basis of empirical material registering indicators of socio-economic and socio-cultural development, provided by various international organisations, in order to determine the level of modernisation of different countries in a comparative format and their development trends. This resulted in the publication of the famous "Review Report on Modernisation in the World and China" [12] which influenced the formation of the school of thought of N.I. Lapin, the Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the publication, in particular, of the Atlas of Modernisation of Russia [13] with a general trend similar to the Chinese research.

These publications contain a huge amount of valuable information, summarised through a system of specially designed indices into single semantic blocks. As regards problematic aspects of this area, it is possible to point out a significant transformation of the very content of the concept of "modernisation" in terms of its structural and substantive elements.

Just like in earlier history, including the history of Russia, civil society institutions and the rule of law were excluded from the "Chinese model". The "Chinese modernisation", implemented since the time of reforms of Deng Xiaoping (1978), turned out to be viable and successful in comparison with the Soviet "state socialism", because its authors put a market economy as the foundation of the social structure. Thus the question "Is it possible to fully develop a market economy without political democracy in the conditions of "partial" modernisation?" is getting more and more relevant. [14]

IV. RESULTS

The reflection on the above material shows that the key aspect of the topic of Russian modernisation and its specific features is its "partiality" (fragmentation).

In the countries of the "second echelon" of modernisation, Russia being one of them, the impulses of social transformation from tradition to modernity were mainly formed in the countries that were not prepared for this. Innovation processes in the "second echelon" were launched not because a certain country was "ready for a change" in its lifestyle and mass consciousness (in particular, social forces had been formed, ready to implement these changes). External factors–international competition, defeat in wars, threats to national independence– were decisive for the beginning of modernisation. Being conscious of a higher level of economic and technical development of the "old industrial powers", the ruling elite of the "second echelon" countries regarded the achievements of the former as role models, benchmarks for their own development, and resources for borrowing. To an even greater degree, however, the elite of the "second echelon" countries considered the power of more developed countries as a challenge, an actual and potential threat. In addition, the political ambitions of the ruling elites, their desire to achieve the "greatness" of the developed countries, especially against the backdrop of the imperial development model (Russia, Turkey, Japan), played a significant role. This resulted in a boosted (accelerated and forced) nature of modernisation, a special (dominant) role of ruling establishments in the formation of social institutions of an industrial society, the partial and selective nature of transformations, and finally, the main characteristics of this type of modernisation processes– their internal inconsistency, "split" nature, and acute social conflict.

The forced, accelerated rates of the "second echelon" modernisation are an almost inevitable feature of the "catching-up" development, and this is clearly manifested in the Russian history. The lack of historical time and the need to accelerate social processes dictates the reformers the logic of actions dominated by mobilisation methods – coercion, violence. The level and scale of coercion applied to a society directly reflect a specific historical situation, national specific features, goals and objectives of reformers – they range from moderate authoritarianism to mass repression of totalitarian regimes. The need to force the pace causes the ruling establishments, which create certain forms of "development dictatorships", to take the lead in the modernisation process. In these conditions, there is always the temptation to implement mobilisation models of modernisation implemented using military-administrative and repressive methods. These models were dominant in the history of Russia. The government mass violence in relation to society was generated on the basis of opposition between progressive and conservative ideas not only and not so much by ideological differences within the political elite. It was mainly due to the desire to intensify the exploitation of its own people, to directly seize from the population the means and resources necessary for transformations, primarily for accelerated industrialisation. Starting from the XVIII century, this task was set by the Russian elite at least once a century (the manufacturing production in the era of Peter I, mass industrialisation of the 1880s–1890s, Stalin industrialisation of the 1920s–1930s). Tax oppression sharply increased, the number of duties grew, serfdom occasionally recurred, huge camp systems kept prisoners in the conditions of camp slavery with massive use of their labour, the community was strengthened as the main tool of survival and tax administration, and the institutions of representative power that had already been created were actually eliminated. Such trends in historical science are denoted by the term "archaisation", that is, the revival of old, feudal, outdated social institutions and relations. This term indicates the main contradiction of Russian modernisation –the presence of progressive and regressive (archaic) elements and trends in its structure.

The forced (mobilisation) model of modernisation generates one of its most significant characteristics –"partiality", structural insufficiency and incompleteness. The mobilisation option of modernisation not only fails to solve but does not even set all the modernisation tasks which, if fulfilled, can ensure "organic" (balanced) development, consistency of the main segments of social life and activity. The experience of the "first echelon" countries is borrowed selectively – the ruling elite borrows only what directly relates to military and technical (industrial) power and also affects education and science (since they provide the personnel basis for industrialisation). At the same time, the most important elements in the modernisation structure – socio-economic and political institutions (the foundations of the market economy and democratic statehood) – are not created; moreover, they are often suppressed in the bud, because their development poses a threat to the interests and the very existence of autocratic power elite. Such "partial" modernisation turns out to be flawed, unstable and prone to "breakdowns".

In Russia, the transformation of forced modernisation began during the reign of Peter I. It was the time when the country made a development "leap". Simultaneously, a universal imperial model of Russian modernisation was being formed, and later it was reproduced in its basic features over the course of three centuries. In this model, we can trace opposing, modernising and archaic, tendencies. The main contradiction is as follows: modernisation in engineering and science against archaisation (or stagnation) in economy and politics. This contradiction became a chronic disease for Russia – throughout the subsequent Russian history, it was constantly suppressed and periodically exacerbated, giving rise to acute crises in the form of uprisings and revolutions. As a result, the "leap" made in the era of Peter I, paid for it with people's blood, did not secure the preconditions for sustainable development of the country: Russia was forced to continue moving in fits and starts, constantly accumulating a backlog and periodically trying to overcome it with emergency measures applied by the government.

The October Revolution followed by the Civil War (13 million deaths, 2.5 million involuntary emigrants) had a mixed and highly contradictory outcome. On the one hand, it was a "breakdown" of modernisation – the destruction of the bases of market economy and civil society that had been gradually created earlier (including within the framework of the February stage of the Revolution). On the other hand, the implementation of the Bolshevik project realised after the end

of the Civil War became a new – Soviet – version of "partial" mobilisation overtaking modernisation, in which the peasantry was given the role of a "draft" serf class. There was collectivisation and the state-serf system to come, which official documents of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and mass propaganda subsequently referred to as "socialism".

The so-called "Stalinist modernisation" which became the result of the October Revolution in the late 1920s–1930s included elements of opposing processes – modernisation and archaisation. On the one hand, industrialisation, urbanisation, secularisation (part of the Stalinist "cultural revolution" programme) are the most important structural elements of modernisation. On the other hand, instead of the emergence of the structural elements of a market economy and democratisation inherent in modernisation, there occurred actual restoration of the archaic feudal institutions of serfdom (the attachment of peasants to collective farms and workers to enterprises), autocracy (with Stalin actually being the autocrat), class inequality (the position of the peasantry deprived of basic social and civil rights), mass extra-judicial killings of the population (repression). Finally, there was a consolidation and development of the "power-property", traditional for Russia and feudal in essence which was proclaimed "nation-wide".

The "Stalinist modernisation" reproduced all the characteristics of the "imperial" model that had been shaped in Russia since the time of Peter I. The only difference was the use of more violent methods. Recognising the modernisation achievements of the country in this period, however, it is appropriate to speak about a "breakdown" of modernisation – society seemed to have "lost its footing" and "fallen" into the abyss of the past, where the vast majority of people had to accept the fate of the enslaved "draft" class, to put up with having no right to choose a place of work and residence, with a lack of civil liberties and social rights.

V. CONCLUSION

The development of the topic of partial ("fragmented") structural incompleteness of modernisation in Russia is the most heuristic approach to the analysis of the problem. "Partiality" makes it possible to register the "origins and essence" of the main properties of the military-mobilisation model, avoiding the unambiguous "either – or" wording [15] and pointing to the contradictions inherent in this model, and even to their tragic nature. The October Revolution was not "either a modernising or counter-modernising event"– it was both. Moreover, the entire contemporary set of problems of multilinearity, "plurality of modernity", special models of modernisation – Chinese, Latin American, etc. – implies the same problem of the rehabilitation of traditional archaic features by making them standardised, both historically and culturally. It is believed that reflexive analysis of "overcoming", rather than aggressive standardisation, may become the most promising development trend for many countries, including Russia.

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