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**THEORIES OF COOPERATION AND SELF-MANAGEMENT
IN THE RUSSIAN POLITICAL ECONOMY**

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In this century two successive periods can be distinguished in the development of Russian social sciences concerning the aims and the methods for the socialisation of production based on worker participation.

The first period began around 1900 and continues until the New Economic Policy (NEP). It corresponds to the theories of cooperative movements of peasants as studied by CHAYANOV, TUGAN-BARANOVSKY and LENIN. The socialist evolution of the agricultural sector is analyzed through voluntary cooperation among peasants, who retain control over their land and organize themselves for such purposes as credit, trade and irrigation.

The second period, from 1970 to our days, is mainly concerned with the theory of self-management, particularly, in the industrial sector. It is this approach which is especially followed in the Perestroïka period.

Even if the two approaches are different, they focus on the same problems.

In our paper we shall analyze these two approaches. We first present the historical environments associated with these two periods and which partly explain the preference for one of these approaches over the other one. Then we discuss the analogies and the differences between the theories concerning the following points:

1. The respective roles of the State and of the market in socialist economies.
2. The forms of land and capital properties.
3. The implied specification for the organization of production and management in industrial and agricultural firms.

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1. THE HISTORY OF RUSSIAN ECONOMIC THOUGHT ABOUT COOPERATION
AND SELF-MANAGEMENT: 1900-1930

a) Economic situation and the main theories

The principal Russian economic school, named Organization and Production was formed at the beginning of our century. Such economists as A. CHAYANOV , A.CHELENTSEV and N.MAKAROV studied the specificity of peasant economy, perspectives on its evolution and the organizational structures of agriculture.

For a better understanding of these economic schools it is important to describe briefly the course of Russian economic development.

In 1917 about 85% of the population lived in the country. Serfdom was abolished by the reform of 1861, but capitalism had difficulties developing in agriculture. The peasants preserved their traditions existing before the reform, especially the communal utilization of the soil, since the landlord of the property assigned the soil to cultivate not to individuals but to the community, named MIR. The community's representatives divided it out among the peasants each year according to some egalitarian principles, taking into account the quality of the soil. A share of land was retained for collective work and the income from it was used according to the decisions of peasants reunion.

The dominant organisational form in agriculture was family farming. In spite of weak income and archaic techniques, that form of organization was surprisingly stable.(Reasons for that were analyzed by V.KOSINSKY (1906)). According to Organization and Production school the level of production depends on the family size, on its needs and on its fondness for work as a moral value. The equilibrium of production is defined as equality between subjective measures of utility of marginal product needed and of marginal effort of the family to produce it. These subjective measures depend on the real situation of goods and financial markets. The knowledge of markets and organization of annexe activities related to production should be managed spontaneously through

cooperatives.

Another representative of agrarian economy was B. BRUTSKUS. His theory (1923 for example) also supported the agrarian way of development. He stressed a fact that if the Russian country was not mature for socialist transformations that Russia in general was not mature for it. But in contrast to the Production and Organization school, he observed the acumen of the grasping spirit in the peasantry, and saw it as favorable for the national economy.

V. LENIN in his book "The Development of Capitalism in Russia" (1899) analyzed the wage-earning and profitability process in industry and in agriculture. The approach of Russian Marxist economists on development was clearly different from those of the Production and Organization school, which was mostly an empirical and micro-economic one. Marxists studied essentially the social structure in the country and its evolution into the large capitalist enterprises. They advocate that autoconsuming economy of peasant family was the most heterogeneous to planned economy, based on social labour division and culture (V. BAZAROV (1928)). The planning required, from their point of view, to oust the family economy, which was potentially the most adequate to independent cooperative movement.

In his article "Brief Lecture of Cooperation" (1925) CHAYANOV defines cooperative as a union of family-owned enterprises, such that the enterprises composing it are not liquidated by the process of cooperation and stay small-scale work enterprises. The agricultural cooperative is imagined as a complement to independent peasant enterprises, serving them and having no meaning without them. The main difference between cooperative organization and leased private enterprise comes from the fact that the latter seeks profit from invested capital. As for cooperative enterprise, it also needs capital, owned jointly by peasants, but it seeks the advantage of the peasants, who created it for the development of their individual farms.

That was the idea of "vertical" cooperatives, the development of credit, buyers, purchasers, sellers, users and other cooperatives. In opposition the collective production farms (kolkhozes), existing in USSR, are "horizontal" cooperatives.

"Cooperation, managed at all levels by the elected persons, which is continuously controlled by the cooperative members, independent from

administrative directives of center, supple in organization, allowing faster and freer manifestation of advantageous local initiative - is a better apparatus there, where local organizational autonomy is needed..." (CHAYANOV (1925) p.12). V.LENIN in his work "About Cooperation" (1923) wrote that it was a better way to socialisation, because not linked to destruction of paysane economy.

Unlike to CHAYANOV, TUGAN-BARANOVSKY (1921) consider cooperation as to be finded out "artificially" by theoreticians for transforming consciously the economic system, and only in connection with this dessein it became social movement. If capitalism represents the legal equality, the socialism had to improve the economic one in addition. For that it was proposed to pass beyond the private property. The main theories of such transformation were anarchism, federative socialism and corporative socialism. Anarchism of PROUDHON supposed that social organisation, economic organisation in particular, should be taken on total liberty upon the individuals without the State. Federative socialism of FOURNIER presented the society composed by amalgamated into falanges (families), and also without State participation. Corporative socialism of BLANC and LASSALLE assumed that the firms and the control of all decisions concerning the production of them had to be transfered to groups of workers, but the State coordinate the group's activities.

TUGAN-BARANOVSKY describe the cooperation not as some social organization, but as a purely economic one, appealing to economic interest of individual. In that sense the cooperative enterprise bears an importante resemblance to other forms of capitalist organizations. And like them, the cooperatives have to remunerate the capital, even if the profitability is no more their objective, but as a mean to reach other objectives. At the same time the cooperatives have their task to compete with capital, and each type of cooperatives compets with specific capital: industrial, commercial ... Cooperatives create different economic structures but through the tools existing in capitalism. The worker's cooperative representing the consumer interests tends in perspective to collective economic system: collective work managed from unic center. But the producer's paysan cooperative under no circumstances can't induce to collectivism (TUGAN-BARANOVSKY (1921) p.500).

It appears that in Russia the idea about economic organisation

that prevailed finally over the cooperation was State-socialism. It was related to the search for the factors of productivity growth, and one of them was planification. Planification has to exist in a whole system and the larger this system the more efficient could be the planification. A form of large economic system is State-economy. From TUGAN-BARANOVSKY's (1917) point of view, State-socialism is needed for planification but not enough for socialism. This is because State-centralisation is fraught with consequences like bureaucratization of social mechanisms, elimination of individual liberties and development of compulsion in social life. As social wealth was created by human labour the socialists couldn't admit any means of wealth increase. For example they couldn't force people to work. The socialists of the 19th century proclaim the economical equality, but the objective isn't equality of all the individuals, the ideal is personal liberty. The State-socialism couldn't achieve that objective. On the other hand planification at a national level is favorable for economic development. According to TROTSKY "The choice of the way is not less important than the choice of the objective". So State-socialism can be accepted but with some limits and help from federal systems. These guarantee greater individual liberties if they are managed by local self-management.

TUGAN-BARANOVSKY indicates that in general in a socialist system the conflict between better productivity and more individual liberty can be explained by the opposition between State-centralism and anarchism and he conceives socialism as a system of confederations of different dimensions and organizational structures.

The Marxist economists N.BUKHARIN in "The Economy of the Transition Period" (1920), L.TROTSKY in "Labour, Discipline and Order Will Save the Socialist Republic" (1918) and E.VARGA in "Problems of Political Economy in a Proletarian Dictatorship" (1922), were the authors to advance the reason for command and administrative management system. They explained that economic efficiency came through a scientifically elaborated general plan. For its realisation all enterprises should become the departments of a sole production process, labour should be an obligatory duty, the cooperatives and trade-unions should become State organisations and barter should be the principal form of exchange.

In 1924 A.CHAYANOV tried to determine the validity of such a system. He proposed the analogy of the national labour economy with the family labour enterprise. As in the family enterprise, according to him, the intensity of labour at the national level has to be determined by the equilibrium between labour effort and the satisfaction of needs for goods. But here the equilibrium could be defined by the State. And precisely because the measure of the level of well-being of everybody became independent of the productivity effort of any individual, not observable at the macro level, the different stimuli have to appear, such as social conscientiousness, State mechanism of compulsion, system of bonus ... in order to reach some equilibrium. And contrary to all known economic systems, which could exist on an elementary, purely automatic basis, the command-administrative system and that kind of State planning require continuous social efforts and many rules of economic and noneconomic measures of compulsion in order to prevent the appearance of activities not stipulated by the plan.

Nevertheless the planning was not a monolithic theory in the twenties. For simplicity it is possible to present briefly the different approaches to planning as a duality, represented by V.BAZAROV, with "theological" conception, on one hand, and "genetical" conception, on the other one. "Theological" conception was elaborated by G.KRJIJANOVSKY (first president of Gosplan) and by S.STRUMILIN. It represents really the directive methods of management with a priority on introducing objectives in planning. But "genetic" conception, represented by N.KONDRATIEFF, G.BAZAROV, V.GROMAN, conceived planning as a part of market economy and based on empirical analysis of stochastic processes and on conjecture. For example, KONDRATIEFF studied different agrarian markets: local, national and worldwide, their situations and the related predictions about them. That was how he got on to the theory of planning, as a next organizational phase coming after the prediction of markets for cooperatives.

b) Soviet history of self-management

The work of TUGAN-BARANOVSKY about human socialism was written in August 1917. The October revolution interrupted the evolutive

process of the economic development. The first decrees created the soviets (local and centralised organizations of self management) in the enterprises, in the agrarian farms and in the regions. Then the civil war destroyed the Russian economy and an extremely centralised economic system, called war communism, opened the history of socialism. In his book written in the middle of the thirties "What is the USSR?" L.TROTSKY say that from the beginning the war communism was imagined as a means to develop the methods of regulating purchasing and production in the planning system. After this period, from 1921 to 1926, a New Economic Policy (NEP) is set up, reintroducing the markets. V.LENIN justified that policy as the only possibility for millions of peasants to communicate with the exterior, because the market was what they knew and utilized. NEP could have developed the pluralist variant of socialism described by TUGAN-BARANOVSKY. As a matter of fact this variant would also have corresponded to the Russian traditions studied by CHAYANOV.

In 1921, before the NEP, the self-managed soviets were abolished in the industrial enterprises and one-man management was proclaimed by the government. Ota SIK explained it by the rapid development of anti-Bolchevik opposition in these soviets. Since that time self-management was under ideological repression as an anarcho-syndicalist tendency. The bureaucratisation of the State apparatus started immediately, according to L.TROTSKY, who explained that the population was not in the habit of self-management and that there was a lack of competent specialists loyal to socialism. In 1929 peasant and cooperative self-management was abolished in the agrarian sphere.

During the NEP many forms of proprietorship existed in Russia. V.LENIN in 1922 described the soviet society as a symbiosis of five economic forms: socialist, State-capitalist, private-capitalist, simple-market and patriarchal. But private property was never very important. Private capital represented, in 1923, a third of trade turnover but only 6% in industry (in the number of wage-earners of leased enterprises) and 4% if it was calculated in power-plant utilisation (Economic Bulletin of the Conjunction Institute, 1923).

After 1930 only three forms of proprietorship remained in the Soviet Union: public property (confused frequently with State property), cooperative property of rural economy and personal property. The

conviction that the number of property forms should be reduced, or at least simplified, dominated economic science during the five decades since that time (ABALKIN L. (1987)). The direction of the evolution of cooperative and personal property could only be their assimilation with State property.

At the end of the NEP economic and political centralisation became equally important, reflecting in a sense the revolutionnary inspirations of the proletariat, its authority and superideology. This is why Stalin's industrialisation represents the external form of proletariat dictatorship.

2. THE RETURN TO REFLECTIONS ABOUT COOPERATION AND SELF-MANAGEMENT AFTER 1970.

a) The social and economic situation of the USSR in the seventies and eighties

The purpose of this section is to provide a short picture of the socio-economic system of the USSR. In agreement with the "theological" conception of planning, the real mechanism took an extensive type of economic growth with constraints appearing progressively on natural resources, on scientific and technological progress, on the level of living... The dominant form of economy is State enterprise. The cooperatives in industry were abolished in 1960. In agriculture the cooperatives (kolkhozes) had less than half of the soil utilized by State farms (sovkhozes). State trade represents about 73%. In those conditions the shadow economy is developing (MAIMINAS (1989)). The principal management method, proposed by BUKHARIN and VARGA, is one of command and administration, signifying that the enterprises receive the commands for production formulated centrally and plans for distribution of commodities. The economy is based on barter and money has a very limited role. In 1987, 74% of the national product was constituted through the State budget. The distribution has paternalistic and egalitarian tendencies, with subsidizing of less efficient enterprises, limiting the wages and favouring some groups of the population through special organisation of distribution. The political style of the economic institute could be colled the authoritative hierarchical power of

bureaucracy.

Leaning on the ideas of V.LEVADA (1989) we can write that in these conditions the main constraint is human resources. It is an objective one when referring to demography, education and health statistics. But it is also a subjective constraint. Sociologists now study motivation in the Soviet society and especially in industrial enterprises through ethical, directive and traditional mechanisms and through existing cooperative structures. They study also economic motivations, which are neither self-sufficient, nor universal sources and conditioners of economic development. V.LEVADA maintains that owners of property existed at the beginning of capitalism. He was a proprietor and his property was represented by his function of ownership, direction and use. With the development of economics the property functions separate from one another, and ownership separates from use and from direction. And in developed countries the three functions of property were already assigned to different economic agents (V.SHEINIS (1988)). The motivation structure of workers transformed with increased remuneration, participation and the stimulus of profit sharing. The motivation structure transforms also in soviet society due to the abstraction of planning and the concentration of all functions of property into the State.

Public property signifies normally that workers are co-proprietors of all public wealth, that they are co-managers of part of it (factories, sovkhoses). But justly that last function was hushed up by State apparatus. The contents of social organization was watered-down. Furthermore, self-management asserts itself when alternative exist in development, in the choice of decisions resulting from plurality of interests. Naturally, when the one man management principal exists, when workers have to execute the plan, decided at the State level, not only can self-management not develop, but simple participation in the organization is limited.

According to the majority of workers in Ivanovo (city of Russia), to be the master of the production process is to work honorably and conscientiously and to respect the labour discipline (A.NAZIMOVA (1989)). These are the signs of alienation of the workers towards their labour.

The consumption mechanism as motivation becomes the dominant one in these conditions, and sociologists observed the increase of family and

other nonproductive ground of workers activity, because in those spheres they have to unfold their capacity to choose and to decide.

b) Theoretical discussions

The fact is that the theoretical works of Russian economists, about cooperation and other variants of federal economic activity of population, were completely forgotten by Soviet economic science. The crisis of Soviet society, dated usually since 1985 gives rise to the reconsideration of the reasons why the workers became estranged from their labour and from the moral values of equality. In this way self-management, as a mean that could overcome the workers' alienation, returns in socio-economic consideration. TORKANOVSKY E. (1986) proposes to distinguish three possible types of worker participation. The first one is machine operation, where the relationship between the workers and the means of labour is realised. The two others are types of human relations: firstly the organisation of production at the macro level. At this level the problems of ownership and of the principles of development of the means of production should be settled. Secondly, management at the micro level contains the decisions about the objectives of production, the use of the added value and product, discipline, control, etc. The last type of worker participation appears only when there are real relations between labour and ownership of the firm. This is why it is important to solve simultaneously the democratic problems and the proprietary relations. In economic literature a "triptych" appears: property pluralism, political pluralism, market pluralism. We know that collective property can be issued from family property (which could be developed according to CHAYANOV's theory of cooperation) and from public property used by groups of workers (the only possible way in the actual situation). New forms of property should appear issuing from the breakdown of State ownership through leasing and through joint-sharing with possible State participation in industry and construction. The family and cooperative forms of ownership, that were dominant at the beginning of the century return now in trade, services and agriculture. The economist Ota SIK says about this fact that as long as the workers aren't the real owners of the capital they won't be interested

in the preservation and the growth of the capital. Actually the workers are interested in wages and employment increases, but they are indifferent to investment, to technical progress, to production structures, or to increase of supplies.

Democracy at the enterprise's level could not exist without political democracy. The theoretical developments on that problem come progressively with rapid changing in social life. In this way the first political transformations were introduced from "above" and they were easily approved and legitimated by the society habitual to obedience (SHEINIS V.(1989)). For instance, the political integrity as ideal and the view of the absolute danger of different opinions begin to shake by this way. At the second stage, after 1986, the different movings took place, one comes from up level with conception of triad of structural modifications (political, market, property), the second comes from lower part with spectacular increasing of interest to political and economic problems. BYZOV L., GORDON L., MINTUSOV I. (1990) consider that pluralist political system in USSR can exist through pluralism in communist party plus the development of social organizations like the workers unions, created during the strikes. They refer to sample survey in February 1989 indicating that 46% of persons were for multipartism, but mainly due to the appearance of the ecological party (74%). The last one was appreciated more as a movement for green development, than the alternative for communist party, because 63% of members of CP approved it. Now the multipartism becomes the reality, proving the rapidity of political culture growth.

We assist at the development of strike activity and the making of permanent strike committees diverting the formal trade unions. The practice of command management and habit to obey passively to all the orders of directory (it should be observed that submission don't signifies the carrying out, but often the contrary) induced the atrophy of trade unions defense function.

The decomposition of the centrally planned system calls for turning to a market economy. For DEMENTIEV and SUKHOTINE (1987) the market is a priori neither capitalist nor socialist, it is the prerequisite for efficiency. In 1990 three distinct approaches of social reforms of soviet

society are present in theory and in policy movement. One of them is the "neo-conservative" approach (the conception exposed in the Programme of the Russian Communist Party in August 1990) analysing the possibility to introduce some flexibility into existing planned system and centralised management of State property. The second one "moderately radical", is the planned-market variant of reforms, accepting pluralist ownership, except private one, through progressive breakdown of State property and assignment of the land to families (Theoretical foundation can be find in ALEKSEEV S.(1989). That programme was juridically regularised in the law about property and law about the land (cf. AGANBEGIAN A.(1990)). The "left radical" approach is the market managed economy , proposing the transformations by breaking down of State property and privatization through 500 days (CHATALIN's programme voted at Russian Parliament and proposed to Soviet Union Parliament in September 1990).

c) Institutional modifications and their tendencies.

An important economic reform was attempted in the seventies in order to promote the self-sufficiency of enterprises: the important part of profits could be utilised by the enterprises, without any State interference. But worker participation wasn't considered and no real social, economic or political conditions were not created for its development. Worker motivation didn't grow because the performance of the enterprise does not only depend on labour; economic organisation and management are also important, and these organization stay centralized. In the eighties a new experiment was tried with the same intention motivating force. The self sufficiency principle is constrained by the tenacity of traditional managerial rules, such as centralised provision, the rules of price elaboration, credit or banking, and by the inconsistency of the economic policy. This can be characterised for example by some important modifications that were engaged in macroeconomy: priority for the development of the consumer goods industry, military industry conversion or diversification of foreign trade. But all of these modifications contribute to reinforce the state economy (EVSTIGNEEVA-EVSTIGNEEV (1990)). This is why the current situation is dramatic. On the one hand self-management does not have yet the real conditions for its

development; on the other hand economic reforms are difficult to realise in an old macro-system. So the economic crisis becomes deeper. The reform movement proposes also the election of the head of the firms, but election could not create the same democratic efficiency as self-management.

In 1987 some important laws were adopted in order to prepare the conditions for self-management. One of them, the law about the State enterprises, establishes the juridical framework for worker participation (Soviet of labour collectives STK) and it reintroduces leasing and cooperation in the enterprises. The other important laws are the law for cooperation, the law of the agricultural arteł and the law of leasing (1988).

The newly created cooperation movement improved nevertheless some defeats. The cooperatives don't fill the supply, but contributed to destroy money circulation. The principal reason for the phenomenon was their dependence on State, beginning at the moment of registration, continuing in credit and provisioning. The taxes (legal and illegal) for all acts were very important, the rare productive cooperatives were connected to State firms and often employ the State workers with concurrent drawing of high salary. That costs provoked the inflation and increasing transfers of clearing money into liquidity.

Among the changes some political events are particularly interesting. There is at first the democratic elections of the local soviets and the adoption of the law about local self-management. Then there is the liquidation of the previous state soviet organisation. Further evolution in this way may help to split the centralised machinery of economic organisation. At the same time the Yougoslavian experience calls for caution and waris against transferring the burocratic system from one to many centers that could be republics or regions.

Finally, we can briefly enumerate the factors that stop self-management in practice. They can be easily understood if one admits that the permission of participation in the use of capital is not sufficient for real participation. The factors are:

- a) The narrow framework of the political pluralism.
- b) Strong opposition to the process of property transformation. This opposition comes equally from the population, that is afraid of

unemployment, etc, and from the government leaders that still profit from the situation.

c) The absence of specialists in economy and management that could organise and inspire self- management at all levels.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The social sciences, and the economic one in particular, knew a very important development in Russia at the beginning of the century. The original economic schools innovated in the analysis of particularity of national microeconomy and of its impact on socialist development. The innovating methods of economic analysis were experienced in relation with that theoretical works. Unfortunately the interesting works of CHAYANOV, KONDRATIEFF, TUGAN-BARANOVSKY and many others on cooperation movements and economic previsions in market economy were forgotten.

Now the russian political economy is confronted to social crisis and to it's proper crisis. The opinion of importance of self-management and other collective organization of economic life is growing, but the theory adequat to today situation still not exists. In the previous section we briefly explored the sociologist analysis due to the weakness of the economic one. The economists, as us in this study, endeavour to interpret the discovery of old economic works on that problems and envisage the possible conversion to proposed solutions in very different social frameworks. That analysis necessitates the revision of such conceptions as market, property and economic democracy.

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