

## WAS THE 1905 REVOLUTION A PRODUCT OF RUSSIA AS A 'DEVELOPING SOCIETY'?

### A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF TEODOR SHANIN'S *THE ROOTS OF OTHERNESS; RUSSIA'S TURN OF CENTURY*

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"Die, if necessary, for the preservation of  
the equal right of every peasant to land --  
die for the communal principle."

**Alexander Herzen**, *The Bell* (1859)

"The Western precedent would prove here  
nothing at all ..."

**Karl Marx**, 2nd Draft of his Letter to  
Vera Zasulich (1881)

"They cannot represent themselves, they  
must be represented."

**Karl Marx**, *The 18th Brumaire of  
Louis Napoleon*

Within the short parameters of this modest paper it is impossible to do justice to the scope and comprehensiveness of Teodor Shanin's latest work. This two-volume work is a very significant contribution to the study of both early twentieth-century Russia in general, and of the role of the peasantry in the 1905 revolution in particular. Accordingly, I can touch here briefly only upon his central thesis, namely that the 1905 revolution (the subject of his second volume) was the product of Russia as a 'developing society' (the topic of his first volume).<sup>1</sup> First, it should be pointed out that Shanin's two-volume work is not a restatement of accepted orthodoxies of whatever kind, liberal, conservative or Marxist. His study is a revisionist piece of work of a high order, and, therefore, if I take issue with his thesis that does not mean that I do not have a very high regard for many, indeed most, of the finer points raised by his book. It is indeed my contention that his own critique of the dominant historiographical positions makes the acceptance of his own rather simplistic view, as I see it, that he puts forward, highly unlikely.

Shanin is perfectly aware how difficult it is to apply Western concepts, such as that of 'feudalism' or 'capitalism' to Russia. I always tell my students that there is something called "the terrible simplicity of Russian history": Russian history may be superficially simple when compared to that of the West, but it requires explanations that are complex. Take the importance of the Russian state for any explanation of Russian history: while in the West it was society that shaped the state, in Russia it was the state that shaped the Russian society, both in the Muscovite and Imperial periods. Shanin knows this and criticizes those schools that deny this: "Rooted in the West European historiography was the liberal-Marxist view that tsardom is but a case of a belated 'feudal' state, lingering behind a society that has already left this 'stage' of socio-economic progress".<sup>2</sup> In other

words Shanin knows better than anybody that the liberal and Marxist explanations of the basic relationship between state and society in Russia are fundamentally flawed. Take another example, that of capitalism. If capitalism is the result of the change in the base which then proceeds to make a revolution in the superstructure in the last resort (this important rider is by Engels), then the carriers of such a change in the base, (the bourgeoisie) should be determining these changes. Well, of course, in the Russian case they have not: Russian capitalism was a completely state-dominated and state-guided phenomenon. For three decades, under Bunge, Vishnegradskii, Witte, Kokovtsev, the Russian state followed the policy of forced industrialization from above. Here Shanin asks the key question: "To advance and supersede the debate between the 'capitalism-already' " position of the Marxists, and " 'capitalism-not-yet' school of thought" of the Populists "one must begin not with the question 'how far did capitalism advance and feudalism retreat and therefore how 'semi' was its 'semi-capitalism', but to explore first if it was 'capitalism' which was advancing and/or what do we mean by that term in Russia at the turn of the century?"<sup>3</sup>

Now as every student of Russian history knows, it was Plekhanov and Lenin who 'proved' that capitalism was already the dominant mode of production in Russia, not because there were so many factories in Russia (anybody, including the Populists could see that), but because it had affected the national economy of the great majority of the Russians, namely agriculture. It was Lenin who in his early work, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, published in 1899, used statistics to prove a classical division of agriculture under the impact of capitalism into the exploiting kulaks and the proletarian batraks with the middle peasants, occupying naturally, the middle ground.<sup>4</sup> Shanin, however, in Addendum Two to Volume One, showed that Lenin's figures were grossly exaggerated and based on inaccurate computation. Shanin proposes his own figures, based on the corrected estimates, which show that most of the peasantry was neither proletarian nor capitalist, but middling.<sup>5</sup> Shanin appears to be on solid ground when he argues that "the character and change of the Russian peasant economy can be satisfactorily explained neither as capitalism *sensu strictu* nor as feudalism nor else simply as 'something in between', for in a number of ways it obeyed (and reacted to 'external' impact through) its discrete operational logic".<sup>6</sup> (See Appendix I, p.73).

After going through the recent and fashionable theories of peasantry as a social and political force, Shanin concludes that

Russian peasant communities showed distinct cultural patterns of cognition--traditionalism, conformism, egalitarianism, conformity and a tendency to justify action in terms of the communal will [which] was reinforced by the Russian form of commune and in turn supported it.<sup>7</sup>

Here, as I shall demonstrate later, Shanin has come close to admitting that the key to the understanding of the Russian peasantry and its role in the 1905 revolution lies in an understanding of the role of the peasant repartitional commune. Shanin then faces the problem raised by his own rejection of the Marxist orthodox view: if Lenin's figures do not prove the capitalist nature of the Russian agriculture, simply because they are wrongly computed, as Lenin himself admitted by 1906 when he confessed that his early estimates of capitalist development within agriculture had been overestimated,<sup>8</sup> then Shanin is left only with the non-agrarian sectors of the Russian economy (he will return to agriculture later). He takes up first - of course - the old Timasheff who published in 1946 his analysis of Russia's projected pattern of development had there been no Russian revolutions and no World Wars.<sup>9</sup>

Timasheff "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...Central to this argument, the economic growth of pre-revolutionary Russia at the rates recorded in 1909-13 was assumed to be self-perpetuating into the future--a 'take-off' to join the 'West'.<sup>10</sup>

At this point Shanin asks the central question of his entire study: "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'...that is not only poor and/or 'backward' but that shows a major gap-sustaining or gap-generating tendency of its economy and social structure?"<sup>11</sup> At this point Shanin gives his answer; it represents a revisionist view and demands our closer scrutiny: "At the turn of the century Russia was 'a developing society', arguably the first of its kind. This generalization denies neither the development of 'classical' capitalism within Russian society nor the uniqueness of its history. Russia's immediate opportunities for rapid economic development and transformation activated in the spells of industrial growth during 1892-9 and 1909-13 were on the whole better than those in the 'developing societies' today. Yet the chances for these favourable, i.e. 'growth-facilitating' economic conditions in Russia to persist were anything but good. To return to Timasheff: 67% of the value of exports was agricultural primary produce as late as 1913 and nearly all the rest were products of mining. It was the increase in foodstuff prices in the early 20th century that secured the overall export figures. Once World War One was over, the terms of trade were to become increasingly unfavourable to primary products and specifically to foodstuffs."<sup>12</sup>

Shanin then goes on to summarize the stranglehold that Western capital had over Russian industries:

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.<sup>13</sup>

On the basis of such a state of the Russian economy under Witte and Stolypin, Shanin concludes that

'if undisturbed', to use Timasheff's term for proceeding along the same line of development, Russia would have faced in the post World War I period a massive and increasing crisis of foreign payments and of further loans just to pay off the old ones ... We know such scenarios from ... Latin America, Africa and Asia.<sup>14</sup>

At this point all of us have a feeling that Shanin is portraying Imperial Russia under Nicholas II as another contemporary Brazil. But he is forced to admit that

figures show that during the period in question Russia was neither catching up, nor was it clearly falling behind its Western competitors. Between 1861 and 1913 the estimated growth of rates of Russia's national income per capita were close to those of the European averages, but half the figure of 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.<sup>15</sup>

Now at this point you may exclaim: but that does not look like Brazil; Italy, even Spain, but not Brazil. And Shanin tells you that Russia belonged to

a third, intermediate group [between the lucky first-comers (i.e. those societies that benefitted from the early development of a mercantile, industrial and colonial capitalism) and between the 'other' (often colonized) peoples]. This group 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 core of the third group consisted of the triad of Germany, Japan and Russia.<sup>16</sup>

So it turns out that, according to Shanin, Imperial Russia was not another Brazil, but in pretty respectable company. Shanin, however, qualifies this right away by saying that

whatever the effort, the model or the pretence, Russia's advance was still no match for that of Germany. This is the point where the significance of the dilemma of either 'Germany or China' [mentioned in Witte's memorandum to the Tsar of 1899] "comes in. The less the Russian similarity to Germany, the more realistic the comparisons to China...<sup>17</sup>

So now it seems Russia may not be another Brazil, but may be close to another China. In any case she qualifies as 'a developing society' :

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 radical political action. That is why Russia was also to become the first 'developing society' to begin and recognize itself as such.<sup>18</sup>

Throughout his book Shanin sets himself against the prevailing 'holist' interpretations of the Russian development, be they conservative, liberal or Marxist of whatever sort. Yet, as a sociologist, he does believe that certain general laws of social development can be predicated of any society including Russia at the turn of the 19th century. He is quite aware that such a solution does involve risks:

Our book proposes 'dependent development' as Russia's major characteristic. What does it mean in (the) terms of social analysis? The question 'Was the Russian case one of 'capitalism' or of 'feudalism', 'an oriental despotism', 'a developing society, a *de facto* colonialism' or something else?' is badly put in one fundamental sense. As an approximation or intellectual shorthand it may suffice, but it is epistemologically naive to mix two levels and languages of discourse: that of social reality and its theoretical models. It goes without saying that these relate and it is within the process of relating .....that a systematic knowledge of society is

born. There is, however, no logical way to reduce those languages one into another. Theoretical models do not reflect reality directly, simply, or fully, but are meaningfully selective representations of some of its properties, in the light of a general theory assumed. Models focus on some aspects of reality, thereby necessarily caricaturing it. It is for this reason that 'the price of employment of models is eternal vigilance'. That is also why the query: 'Is this society capitalist, or feudal etc.?' must be ever followed by..... 'If so, in what sense?' and 'What precisely do we learn and/or subtract from our perception by the use of this concept?' ..... The characterization of Russia as a 'developing society' should be supplemented first by the answer to the questions of its additional characteristics of parallel significance. A way to begin is to categorize the characteristics of our case, i.e. a society, a period and an international context, into *the general, the typical and the unique*. Put succinctly and limited to the most significant features only, those would be: for the general--capitalism, for the typical--a 'developing' (or 'peripheral') society, for the unique (or 'specific')--the Russian state history, ethno-history and some of the characteristics of rural (i.e. mass of the population) Russia. The Russia of that day cannot be understood outside the context of capitalism...operating both internally and intranationally.<sup>19</sup>

Very few people will disagree nowadays with Shanin that under Witte and Stolypin Imperial Russia was undergoing an accelerated industrialization along capitalist lines. Whole sectors of the Russian economy were clearly run along and dominated by capitalist lines: heavy industry, textile industry, power-generating industry, transportation, especially railroads, banking, insurance, etc.<sup>20</sup> We shall come back to his typical feature of 'a developing society', but let us look next at the third feature of Shanin's paradigm: "The unique/specific that most profoundly characterized the Russian social scene at the turn of the century and made its mark as its past within its present was represented particularly by the Russian state, ethnos and peasantry."<sup>21</sup> I wholeheartedly agree with Shanin when he argues that "to categorize (the Russian state) as an intermediate form between European Absolutism and Asian Despotism" [the view held by Plekhanov and Trotsky] really does not tell us much. It is true, as Shanin points out, that the Russian state *did* contain elements of European Absolutism as well as of "Orientalism", if we include the Mongol influence and consider the Byzantine legacy as 'Oriental'. But Shanin's conclusion deserves to be emphasized: "Russian tsardom was to a degree that is usually understated, a sovereign Russian invention."<sup>22</sup>

I do not propose to indulge any fancy ethnological explanations of the uniqueness of the Russians; even in a scientific garb these smack too much to me of the 'Russian soul' type of explanation. In my opinion, accordingly, everything hinges on the last, but most important unique/specific trait: the Russian peasantry. For it was the Russian peasantry that rose massively in 1905-07, and apart from the strikes in the cities in 1905-06, represented the biggest single challenge to the survival of Imperial Russia. At the end of Volume I Shanin finally comes out openly and spells out his thesis that the Revolution of 1905-07 in the country-side was the direct product of Russia as 'a developing society':

The Witte System (1892-1903) ...was intimately linked with a Witte-type crisis, which *directly represented the characteristics of 'dependent development' and closely paralleled much of what we encounter today in Latin America, South Asia and Africa. The growing international debt and linked financial and technological*

*dependence endangered long-term growth, and made the whole 'national economy' vulnerable and volatile, especially when facing international 'downturns' or a war effort.*<sup>23</sup>

Now, as every student of Russian history knows, Russia experienced both in quick succession in 1899-05: first a world slump, and then a disastrous 'little war' against Japan. In Russia the term 'national economy' was used in a narrow sense for agriculture. According to Shanin, the international 'downturn' of 1899-1903 and the war effort of 1904-1905 resulted in the Revolution of 1905-07. This revolution was thus the product of a 'typical developing society' and of 'the general impact of capitalism' I propose to test this central thesis of Shanin by examining briefly his second volume. It is my contention that Shanin's rather simplistic view will not measure up to his own critique of the dominant historical theories. Again I have to point out that I cannot do justice to Shanin's study within such a brief compass. Accordingly, I will leave out his chapters, extremely valuable, on how political leaders of both conservative monarchist (Stolypin, Kokovtsev) and Social Democratic (Trotsky, Lenin) stamp, revised their theories in the light of what happened in the Russian countryside in 1905-07, which has been covered by others.<sup>24</sup> It should also be pointed out that Shanin's book does not deal with the 1905 revolution in the cities. Accordingly, I shall concentrate on his revisionist treatment of the behaviour of Russian peasantry in 1905-07.

The value of Shanin's second volume lies very much in his access to much-restricted published studies by both pre-revolutionary and early Soviet historians (before Stalin clamped down). As he points out,

three patterns can be seen at the root of the peasant struggle. These are the regional divisions, the seasonality and the general course of the peasant struggle during those years. The most riotous provinces stretched along the so-called Black Earth Belt of the Ukraine and Russia proper. In a number of *guberniyas* the peasant struggle of 1905-07 was particularly violent, involving massive and spontaneous destruction of the manors. The seasonal rhythm of the disturbances... peaked in summer and nearly disappeared in winter. During the period 1905-07, October to December of 1905 was the only exception to this... The destruction of manors reached its peak in 1905 and declined thereafter, while 1906 saw the height of strike actions. Only twice, in the autumn of 1905 and in the summer of 1906, did the mass of local and regional acts of rebellion increase in intensity to form, over large territories, a manifest chain reaction.<sup>25</sup> (See Appendix II, p.74).

Shanin then turns to the Soviet argument repeated *ad nauseam* that the revolution in the countryside coincided in timing and intensity with the workers' struggles in the cities:

The centre-piece of the evidence for the claim that peasants followed where workers fought has been statistically a comparison of the chronology of workers' strikes with that of the peasant agrarian disturbances. Dubrovskii based his argument in 1956 on the monthly reports of 'agrarian disturbances' in the 1905-07 police files. He argued that ... the peak of agrarian disturbances was reached in November 1905 directly after the general strike, and not in June 1906 when the intensity of the workers' political struggle was at a much lower level.<sup>26</sup>

All those who still believe that the urban disturbances and the peasant revolt in 1905-07 were two sides of the same coin, should read carefully Shanin's review of evidence in his Addendum to Volume II.<sup>27</sup> His conclusion that the peasant revolt in the countryside reached its peak *after* the crushing of the workers' revolts, and that it followed its own, seasonally-dictated pattern must be seriously considered. (See Appendix III, pp.74-6).

He then attacks another holy cow of Soviet scholarship, namely, that both the peasants and the workers, in so far as they fought the Imperial regime, aimed at similar goals; and he points out the falsity of such a claim :

By the evidence available and mostly accepted, the majority of the politically active workers in Russia fought in 1905-07 not only for their livelihood but for the political destruction of Tsardom and followed in this struggle the revolutionary and socialist parties on the national scene. By the evidence available and mostly accepted, the militant Russian peasants ... fought for land.<sup>28</sup>

Next to suffer Shanin's axe is the Soviet claim that it was the landless and poor peasants who led the revolt :

There were few cases in which the rich peasants were reported not to have participated in the Jacquerie... Many reports indicated cases where it was the rich who led the peasant attacks and who derived the most benefit from them... According to all reports, the rural wage-labourers of Russia (*baraki*) and the poorest of peasants did not play a prominent or even an active role in the confrontations. It was the 'middle peasantry' inclusive of its poorer households, i.e. smallholders engaged mostly in agriculture on their holdings but with different amounts of land, equipment and supplementary income who were the marching army of the Jacquerie. (Moreover) the large majority of rural strikes in Russia in 1905-07 were strikes of peasant smallholders, partly or seasonally employed on the neighbouring estates. They were mostly led by their communal assembly (*mir*) which decided on the strike, established its aims, supervised its execution and manned its pickets.<sup>29</sup>

Having disposed of this myth of the rural proletariat leading the revolts, Shanin demolishes another favourite one:

The issue 'against whom?' was examined with particular care...A consensus seems to exist : to a decisive degree the Jacquerie was aimed at the squire and his rural holdings. The army, police and state officials came next, attacked mostly as they rushed to the defense of the manors. Rich peasant landowners and/or employers were seldom harmed. Dubrovskii's figures for 1905-07 suggest that 75.4% of the relevant cases were aimed at the squires, 14.5% at the army or police, and 1.4% at the rich peasants...<sup>30</sup>

Shanin thus agrees with Perrie's article, "Russian Peasant Movement of 1905-07",<sup>31</sup> that there was no class war between the rural proletariat and the so-called kulaks :

No actual militancy of a rural proletarian vanguard -- the main expectation of the Russian Marxists and a central focus of their

tactical decisions --was ever identified in 1905-07 in Russia proper. Most of the attacks against the 'Kulaks' and/or incidents of inter-peasant class war came not from the rural proletariat but from family farmers.<sup>32</sup>

Even so, as was just indicated, it was an insignificant number.

Shanin then attacks and demolishes the central myth of the Marxist interpretation of the 1905 Revolution, namely that it was the Bolshevik workers who led and influenced decisively the behaviour of the peasant revolts. First of all, he points out rightly that "the stacks of new evidence ... gathered and published in the USSR since the later 1950s, does not necessarily add illumination here."<sup>33</sup> This is because all the regional studies of peasant revolts have followed rigidly the interpretation set down by S. Dubrovskii in his *Peasant Movement in Russia, 1905-07*,<sup>34</sup> published in Moscow in 1956, already referred to. Shanin goes through the evidence and disposes of the intelligentsia's influence on the peasantry :

"The image of an intelligentsia-led peasant revolt falls to the ground. Most of the rural intelligentsia in the south tried very hard to prevent the burning of the estates. Yet the peasants laid waste thousands of manors. The intelligentsia, on the whole, was republican and for the most part, the peasants stayed vaguely monarchist. Contrary to claims of the government, the rural intelligentsia did not lead the Russian peasantry. The same holds for the Socialist Revolutionaries manipulating the peasants."<sup>35</sup> Which leaves only the Bolsheviks. Shanin first repeats the Soviet position, found in Addendum 2 of Volume I, namely

that the agrarian disturbances followed directly and necessarily the vicissitudes of the workers' struggle. The view that the peak of agrarian disturbances was reached in November 1905, (after the general strike) and not in June 1906 expressed that view directly.<sup>36</sup>

Having proved that the peak indeed took place in June of 1906, he proceeded to examine the next and crucial argument of the direct leadership of the peasant masses by the Bolshevik party:

the claim of a direct and decisive impact of the Bolshevik party on the peasants in 1905-07 is the more recent and the less substantiated. Much of its rests on brazen inexactitudes of admission or omission of which the authors must be aware.<sup>37</sup>

Shanin is unquestionably right when he concludes that :

no party had enough resources to influence peasants nationally in that way... There were no RSDWP party organization consisting mainly of peasants within Russia proper. At the peak of Russia's largest peasant revolt in centuries, the number of peasants within the cadres of the Bolsheviks was about zero... The story about the Bolsheviks leading the Russian peasants in the 1905-07 revolt dissolves once the relevant evidence is considered.<sup>38</sup>

And that is why the final conclusion Shanin reaches is that "the Russian peasant war of 1905-07 was mostly of the peasants, by the peasants, peasant-led, and aiming for peasant goals."<sup>39</sup>



In the preface to his first volume Shanin quotes the warning by Mark Bloch that "the knowledge of fragments, studied by turns, each for its own sake, will never produce the knowledge of the whole; it will not even produce knowledge of the fragments themselves."<sup>40</sup> Shanin goes on to say that "this book has chosen as its fundamental 'fragments' the Russian state, peasantry and capitalism,... -- a fundamental triangle of social determination."<sup>41</sup> In my opinion Shanin has not avoided the pitfalls contained in the study of 'fragments'. I fully agree with his revisionist critique of existing reigning historiographies, liberal, conservative or Marxist, but I disagree with his attempt to impose a new paradigm, fashionable at the moment, which equates Russia with modern-day Brazil. For in my opinion his paradigm of 'a developing society' is another catchphrase, another 'holist' approach, that cannot stand up to closer examination. I have quoted Shanin himself whenever possible because my contention in this paper is that *Shanin's own, often truly revolutionary analysis, does not substantiate his thesis. And this is why : his own revision of Soviet historiography, especially his correction of Lenin's figures, proves that the Russian countryside was not capitalist, and his reversal of Dubrovskii's findings proves that the 1905 revolution in the countryside was not linked directly and necessarily to either the economic or the political developments in the towns. As he himself admits, "on the strength of the evidence, the peasant movement of 1905-07 was, in European Russia, a spontaneous and/or self-led affair."* <sup>42</sup> *If it undoubtedly was that, then there is no link between Russia as 'a developing society' and 'the Revolution of 1905 in the countryside'. Shanin is committing the same sort of error that he accused Marx of committing, when the latter claimed that the peasantry "cannot represent themselves, they have to be represented."* <sup>43</sup> *Only this time they are represented (in theory) by modern Western sociologists of Shanin's type who claim to find in capitalism the key to the understanding of modern peasantry from Indonesia to Brazil, via Russia. Shanin himself quotes but never takes fully into account a crucial piece of evidence that suggests that the peasant revolt of 1905-07 in Russia followed a centuries-old pattern that was self-generating and not reducible to the general impact of capitalism :*

The Land repartition within the Russian peasant communes caught the particular attention of its analysts, which explains why Maslov, Groman and many others insisted that the peasant political action was ... the creature of, and necessarily limited to, the specific regions where the repartitional communes were active. The Russian commune formed a flexible and ready-made framework of organization for whichever large-scale tasks were accepted as necessary, beside functioning as a major unit of identity..... The Russian peasants 'voted with their feet' for it every time when sustained and radical action was necessary. It happened in 1905-07 and again in 1917-20. In all probability, this also happened before, even though nobody bothered to document it. The times of peasant revolt (and more generally 'times of troubles') were also the times of the particular flourishing of the peasant commune.<sup>44</sup>

I fully agree with Shanin and with his proof that Russian agriculture was not capitalist, and that therefore the peasant commune was not responding to the capitalist threat. The paradigm of a 'developing society' accordingly does not hold. And therefore Marx's warning that 'the Western precedent would prove here nothing at all...' holds true in 1905-07, as it did in 1881 when he wrote it in his letter to Vera Zasulich. And that is why the first of the epigraphs I have chosen to head my article in my opinion characterizes the struggle in the Russian countryside in 1905-07, and the general state of Russia best: for it was the commune that wanted land, and rose in 1905, as indeed in

1917, to get it. The communal principle, "the equal right of every peasant to land" was a dream worth fighting for in 1905; in 1917 the peasants made it a reality while Lenin could only watch. Shanin has given us an excellent analysis of the various fragments that make up his paradigm of a 'developing society'. But his new whole will not fit his own revised evidence, and his own conclusions. Shanin's book is an impressive piece of scholarship as an analysis; as a new synthesis, a new explanation, a new paradigm, it is shallow and hollow. His thesis that the 1905 revolution in the Russian countryside was the product of Russia as a 'developing society' is a classic example of what Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch have called a badly-put question, 'une question mal posée'.

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<sup>1</sup> Teodor Shanin, *The Roots of Otherness: Russia's Turn of Century*, Vol. 1: *Russia as a 'Developing Society'* (Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1985); Vol. 2: *Russia, 1905-07: Revolution as a Moment of Truth* (New Haven & London, 1986); Henceforth referred to I and II respectively, followed by a page number.

<sup>2</sup> I, 52.

<sup>3</sup> I, 170.

<sup>4</sup> I, 170.

<sup>5</sup> I, 93-102.

<sup>6</sup> I, 172-173.

<sup>7</sup> I, 84.

<sup>8</sup> I, 154: "... by 1906 Lenin declared his early estimate of capitalist development within agriculture to have been 'overestimated'".

<sup>9</sup> N. Timasheff, *The Great Retreat*, (New York, 1946).

<sup>10</sup> I, 174.

<sup>11</sup> I, 176.

<sup>12</sup> I, 176-177.

<sup>13</sup> I, 187.

<sup>14</sup> I, 188.

<sup>15</sup> I, 189.

<sup>16</sup> I, 190.

<sup>17</sup> I, 191-192.

<sup>18</sup> I, 192.

<sup>19</sup> I, 195-196.

<sup>20</sup> For details see T.H. Von Laue, *Sergei Witte and the Industrialization of Russia*, (London, 1963).

<sup>21</sup> I, 197.

<sup>22</sup> I, 197-198.

<sup>23</sup> I, 199 (my italics).

<sup>24</sup> II, Chapters 5 & 6; this question has been dealt with by (among others) Leopold Haimson, "The Problem of Social Stability in Urban Russia 1905-07" in the *Slavic Review* 23/4 (1964) I & 24/1 (1965); W.G. Rosenberg, *Liberals in the Russian Revolution* (Princeton, 1974); L. Haimson, *The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism* (Boston, 1955); G. Yaney, *The Urge to Mobilize* (Urbana, 1982). Still very useful is D.W. Treadgold, *Lenin and His Rivals* (New York, 1953).

<sup>25</sup> II, 84. The map showing rural struggles is on p. 86.

<sup>26</sup> II, 160.

<sup>27</sup> II, 174-183; tables and figures reproduced here from pp. 175, 177, 180-183.

<sup>28</sup> II, 161.

<sup>29</sup> II, 85-87.

<sup>30</sup> II, 87.

<sup>31</sup> Maureen Perrie, "The Russian Peasant Movement of 1905-1907: Its Social Composition and Revolutionary Significance" in *Past and Present* 57 (November, 1972), 123-155 including extremely valuable tables and maps.

<sup>32</sup> II, 162.

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- 33 II, 139.  
34 S. Dubrovskii, *Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v revoliutsii 1905-1907gg.* (Moscow, 1956).  
35 II, 145.  
36 II, 154.  
37 II, 155.  
38 II, 157-158.  
39 II, 170.  
40 I, xiii quoting Marc Bloch, *The Historians Craft* (Manchester, 1954).  
41 I, xiii.  
42 II, 89 (my italics).  
43 K. Marx, *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* (my italics).  
44 II, 171-172.

## APPENDIX I

## European Russia 1905

Social stratum	Land per holding (des.)		Holdings	
	Range	Average	Mill.	%
a. Ruined feudal peasantry crushed by exploitation	0.15	7.0	10.5	80.6
b. Middle peasantry	15.20	15.0	1.0	7.7
c. Peasant bourgeoisie and capitalist landed proprietors	20-500	46.7	1.5	11.5
d. Feudal latifundia	500+	2333.0	0.03	0.2
All strata	0-500+	21.4	13.3	100.0

## The socio-economic differentiation of Russian Peasantry (an alternative table)

## European Russia 1897-1905

Categories	Peasant households %	Population %
Capitalist farmers	0.8 (1.2)	1.2-1.8
Peasant family farmers:		
rich	2.6 (3.9) }	94.2-95.8
well-to-do	12.4 (10.7) }	
middling	51.8 }	
poor	24.4 (26.4) }	
Rural proletarians	8.0 (6.0)	3.0-4.0

## APPENDIX II



Rural struggles 1915-17

## APPENDIX III

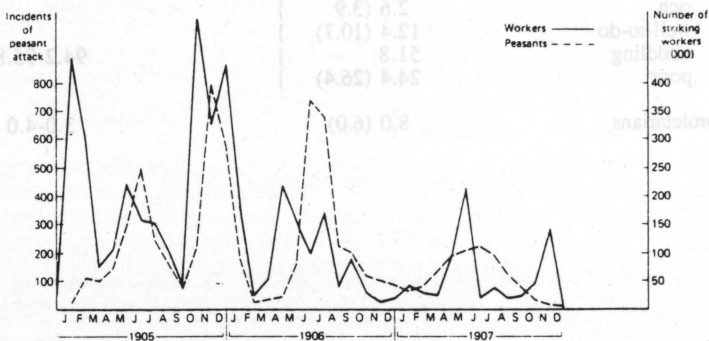


FIGURE 4.1 Dubrovskii's comparison of striking workers and 'agrarian disturbances' 1905-07 (monthly)

Source:

## APPENDIX III (continued)

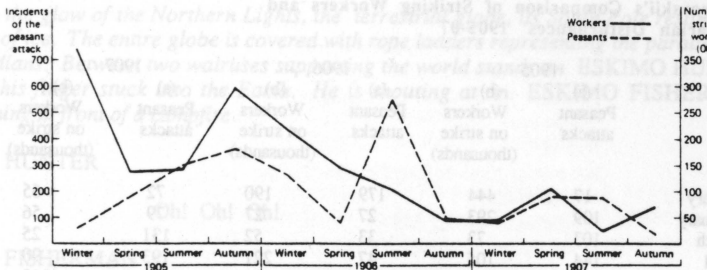


FIGURE 4.2 Comparison of the striking workers and 'agrarian disturbances' 1905-07 (seasonal)

Source:

As in Table 4.1

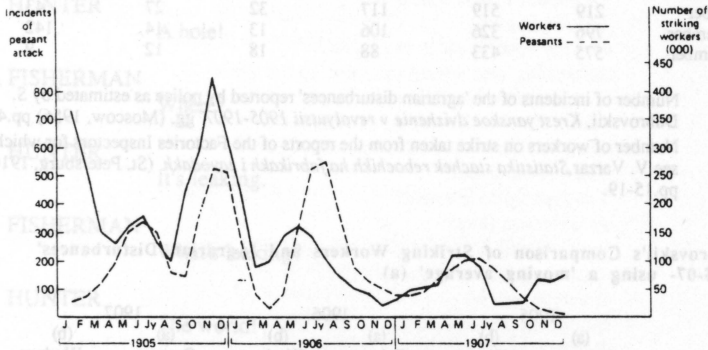


FIGURE 4.3 Comparison of the striking workers and 'agrarian disturbances' 1905-07 (using a 'moving average')

\* For every month, an arithmetic average is taken, of the figures for that month, the preceding month and the following month. The figures for January/February 1905 and November/December 1907 are in each case the average of the two months only.

Source:

As in Table 4.1.

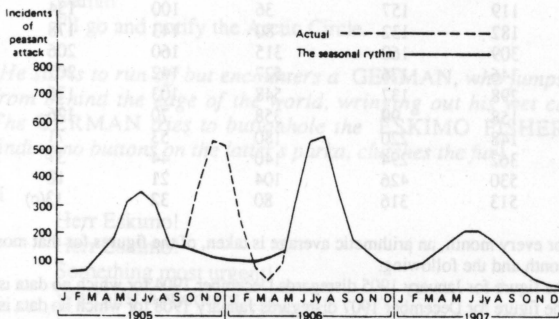


FIGURE 4.4 The general rhythm of 'agrarian disturbances' 1905-07\*

\* The intensity of peasant attacks was 'smoothed down' by the use of a 'moving average' and 'extracting' the impact of the general strike, the manifesto promising a Duma with legislative powers, and the events which followed, that is, the October 1905 to January 1906 peak in urban struggle (the actual curve is marked by a broken line).

Source: As in Tables 2.1 and 2.3.

## APPENDIX III (continued)

## Dubrovskii's Comparison of Striking Workers and 'Agrarian Disturbances' 1905-07

	1905		1906		1907	
	(a) Peasant attacks	(b) Workers on strike (thousands)	(a) Peasant attacks	(b) Workers on strike (thousands)	(a) Peasant attacks	(b) Workers on strike (thousands)
January	17	444	179	190	72	65
February	109	293	27	27	79	56
March	103	73	33	52	131	25
April	144	105	47	221	193	90
May	299	221	160	151	211	212
June	492	156	739	101	216	21
July	248	152	682	169	195	36
August	155	104	224	40	118	19
September	71	38	198	88	69	23
October	219	519	117	32	27	43
November	796	326	106	13	14	142
December	575	433	88	18	12	9

- (a) Number of incidents of the 'agrarian disturbances' reported by police as estimated by S. Dubrovskii, *Krest'yanskoe dvizhenie v revolyutsii 1905-1907'* gg. (Moscow, 1956) pp.42-3.
- (b) Number of workers on strike taken from the reports of the Factories Inspectors for which see V. Varzar, *Statistika stachek rebochikh ha fabrikakh i zavodakh* (St. Petersburg, 1910) pp.15-19.

## Dubrovskii's Comparison of Striking Workers and 'Agrarian Disturbances' 1905-07- using a 'moving average' (a)

	1905		1906		1907	
	(a) Peasant attacks	(b) Workers on strike (thousands)	(a) Peasant attacks	(b) Workers on strike (thousands)	(a) Peasant attacks	(b) Workers on strike (thousands)
January	63(b)	368(b)	260	217	80	46
February	76	270	80	90	94	49
March	119	157	36	100	134	57
April	182	132	80	143	178	109
May	309	160	315	160	206	108
June	346	176	527	142	207	90
July	298	137	548	103	176	25
August	158	99	358	70	126	26
September	148	220	180	53	71	28
October	362	294	140	44	37	69
November	530	426	104	21	18	64
December	513	316	80	32	13(c)	75(c)

- (a) For every month, an arithmetic average is taken, of the figures for that month, the preceding month and the following.
- (b) The figure for January 1905 disregards December 1904 for which no data is available.
- (c) The figure for December 1907 disregards January 1908 for which no data is available.