Westernization as the Way to Modernity – Western Europe in Russian Reform Discussions of the Late Tsarist Empire, 1905–1917

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RESÜMEE

Der Artikel untersucht die Rolle und den Inhalt von Repräsentationen Westeuropas in innenpolitischen Reformdebatten Russlands zwischen den Revolutionen von 1905 und 1917. Jene, welche an diesen Debatten teilnahmen, teilten parteiübergreifend eine Reihe von Grundannahmen: Diesen zufolge bewegten sich Russland und Westeuropa auf derselben Entwicklungsleiter vorwärts; Westeuropa verfügte hierbei über einen erheblichen Vorsprung; und Russland war deshalb gut beraten, sich bei seinen weiteren Entwicklungsschritten an jenen Gesetzen und Regelungen zu orientieren, welche der Westen erfolgreich zur Anwendung brachte. Vor dem Hintergrund dieser gemeinsamen Grundannahmen ließ sich mit Repräsentationen Westeuropas Politik machen. Verweise auf den „Westen" wurden herangezogen, um die unterschiedlichsten Positionen zu begründen und zu legitimieren. Gestritten wurde zwischen den Vertretern verschiedener politischer Ausrichtungen vielfach darüber, wie sich das fortschrittliche „Westeuropa" im Einzelnen darstelle und wie dessen Erfahrungen zu interpretieren seien. Die Relevanz dieser Diskussionen für genuin innenpolitische Reformen in Russland stellte dagegen so gut wie niemand in Frage.

I Introduction

1. The West as a Resource for Political Action and Legitimization

Western Europe and the West[1] represented more than merely a geographical space for politicians in the late Tsarist Empire. In contrast to the nineteenth century, during which

1 The terms „Western Europe" [Zapadnaia Evropa] and „West" [Zapad], which were used interchangeably by the

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Slavophile attitudes could at times have considerable influence on domestic political concepts and projects,[2] there was a broad and tacit consensus over a number of basic assumptions in Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century, bar some exceptions on the fringes of the political spectrum: The West and Russia were progressing along the same path of development; the West had a considerable head-start on this path; this allowed Russia to draw lessons from the experiences of the West, adopt measures which had proven themselves successful there and avoid those with largely negative effects. At the same time, the conditions that had been reached in the western states represented the highest level of human civilization to date, and thus an ideal worthy of imitation.[3] These common basic assumptions were in keeping with the ideology of worldwide monolinear progress in the shape of an ascending ladder of development that predominated in large parts of Europe and beyond in the nineteenth century.[4] Yet they were exceptional nonetheless: In no other case did the great majority of the political elites of a major power that had belonged to the European concert of powers throughout the nineteenth century adhere to the notion that *other* powers were at a higher stage of development than their *own*, *backward* country, which had yet to reach this stage.

Against the backdrop of these shared basic assumptions, it was possible to shape and influence policies through representations of Western Europe in Russia during the examined period:[5] From the perspective of Russian political actors, the West provided empirical material for illustrative purposes and orientation in their search for reasonable concepts. Negative and positive past experiences made by the West could thus provide lessons on what was to be avoided in Russian politics and which strategies would lead to the next stage of civilization. The present state of the western nations pointed in the direction Russia was to develop in the future. Moreover, in inner-Russian debates over particular measures and reforms, representations of the West served to legitimize one's

Russian protagonists at the time, refer to all states located to the West of the Russian Empire, including the German Empire and Austro-Hungarian Empire; in case of the „West" this at times also included the USA. As far as their use in the present paper is concerned, they refer to these source-based definitions.

2 The organization of the abolition of serfdom in the 1860s counts among the most notable examples of the influence of prominent Slavophile protagonists: cf. N. V. Riasanovsky, Russland und der Westen. Die Lehre der Slawophilen; Studie über eine romantische Ideologie, München 1954, 128-131. In contrast to the *Westernizers*, the *Slavophiles* denied the analogy between Russian and Western history and wanted Russia to follow its own path.

3 The theses mentioned here are based on ongoing research for my dissertation on the role, content and significance of representations of the West in the political debates of the late Tsarist Empire (1905–1917); for one example see: B. Beuerle, A Step for the Whole Civilized World? The debate over the death penalty in Russia, 1905–1917, in: St. Kirmse (ed.), One Law for All?, Frankfurt/ New York 2012, 39-65; cf. as well M. Hildermeier, Das Privileg der Rückständigkeit. Anmerkungen zum Wandel einer Interpretationsfigur der neueren russischen Geschichte, in: Historische Zeitschrift (1987), issue 244, 557–603.

4 See F. Rapp, Fortschritt. Entwicklung und Sinngehalt einer philosophischen Idee, Darmstadt 1992, 77-83, 153-163; R. Koselleck, "Fortschritt" und "Niedergang" – Nachtrag zur Geschichte zweier Begriffe, in: idem (ed.), Niedergang. Studien zu einem geschichtlichen Thema, Stuttgart 1980, 214–230, h. 222-225.

5 On the concept of representation cf. R. Chartier, Die unvollendete Vergangenheit. Geschichte und die Macht der Weltauslegung, transl. by U. Raulff, Berlin 1989, 7-19; R. Weimann, Einleitung: Repräsentation und Altertität diesseits/ jenseits der Moderne, in: idem (ed.), Ränder der Moderne. Repräsentation und Alterität im (post)kolonialen Diskurs, Frankfurt a. M. 1997, 7–43.

own respective position or de-legitimize the positions of political opponents. Once all protagonists involved were in agreement over the abovementioned premise, references to suggested measures being (successfully) applied in the West, or pointing out negative experiences that had been made in the West with measures suggested by the political opponent, or allusions to statements or opinions of prominent western personalities, could shape arguments whose significance and impact were not to be underestimated. Representations of the West could therefore be employed as a resource for action, orientation and legitimization in Russian politics during the late Tsarist Empire. This was especially true in times of severe political upheaval and high pressure for reform, during which the Russian present, past and tradition came to lose its power of persuasion as a political foundation for significant political projects and an outward orientation gained currency. This applies to the period between 1905 and 1917 in particular.

2. Reform Pressure and Central Reform Issues in the Late Tsarist Empire

The reform debates held in Russia between 1905 and 1917 were both numerous and intense. Virtually no political and social issue remained unaddressed – whether self-administration, jurisdiction, constitutional matters, the military, the position of women in society, or the rights of various nationalities living in the empire.[6] This list could be extended at will. From the perspective of the most diverse range of imperial protagonists, the pressure for reform was considerable. For one, the devastating defeat in the war against Japan had not only exposed severe shortcomings in the military and infrastructure, but also seemed to be symptomatic of the inefficiency of a political system that was in dire need of reform – this was a widespread notion, prevalent even in government circles.[7] Moreover, the 1905 revolution had shaken the autocracy to its very foundations. In October 1905 the Tsar had been compelled to announce the introduction of constitutional laws, basic civil liberties and an elected Duma with legislative powers. With these concessions, which were meant to accommodate the demands of the liberal opposition movement in particular, and a simultaneous rigorous policy of repression, the government was able to contain the revolution during the course of 1906 and allow the Tsar and his cabinet to retain a comparably strong position.[8] Authoritative political protagonists however realized this was merely a victory on borrowed time, which may indeed have temporarily removed the symptoms of unrest but not the main causes behind it.[9] It

6 The list of debated reform issues was by no means limited to Stolypin's reform programme, which was nevertheless rather extensive in and of itself: cf. N. B. Weissman, Reform in Tsarist Russia. The State Bureaucracy and Local Government, 1900–1914, New Brunswick (N.J.) 1981, 124-147; P. Waldron, Between two Revolutions. Stolypin and the Politics of Renewal in Russia, London 1998, 72-93.

7 Cf. ibid., 22; A. Ascher, The Revolution of 1905. Russia in Disarray, Stanford (CA) 1988, 43, 52-53; P. Waldron, The End of Imperial Russia, 1855–1917, Basingstoke/ New York 1997, 29-30f.

8 Cf. A. Ascher, Russia in Disarray (cf. fn 7), S. 222-234, 320-336; A. Ascher, The Revolution of 1905. Authority Restored, Stanford (CA) 1992, 58-71; G. A. Hosking, The Russian Constitutional Experiment. Government and Duma, 1907–1914 (Soviet and East European studies), Cambridge 1973, 1-13.

9 Cf. P. Waldron, End of Imperial Russia (note 7), 31-35; P. Waldron, Between (note 6), 49; A. J. Polunov, Russia in the Nineteenth Century. Autocracy, Reform, and Social Change 1814–1914, Armonk N.Y 2005, 228.

had become apparent since the 1890s that parts of "society" [obshchestvo] (often with a liberal attitude) were critical of the government. The numerous protest actions emanating from these circles prior to and during the revolution surely shocked the Tsar and the government in terms of their mass and at times radical character, but all in all they merely confirmed what had already been looming.[10] In light of this antagonistic attitude among the elites, the Tsar and those around him found consolation in the fact that these elites made up only a small fraction of the overall population, while the simple "people" [narod] were thought to be overwhelmingly loyal to the Tsar, even connected to him through a spiritual bond.[11] Indeed, peasants still made up over 70 percent of the population around the turn of the century. The number of workers – often from a peasant background themselves – may still have been comparably low, yet they were concentrated in a small number of strategically important places and had already become a substantial political factor due to a series of notable protest actions and strikes in the two decades preceding the revolution. The true magnitude of the deep-rooted discontent among the workers and the peasants in particular that came to the fore during the revolution must therefore have been greatly alarming to the Tsar and his government, as it called the myth of the Russian narod's loyalty to the Tsar into question.[12] As a consequence, the government strove to pursue policies that would lead to lasting changes with regard to the discontent among this overwhelming majority of the population. Moreover, it was crucial for Duma delegates and politicians from all parties to demonstrate their commitment to this broad electorate which, according to the revolutionary parties, would have to play a central role in the next revolution.[13]

It is therefore no coincidence that two reform issues of particular relevance to these parts of the population were at the forefront of the agenda over this period of around 12 years, more so than any of the aforementioned ones: labour legislation and the land- and peasant question.[14] It was virtually beyond dispute in Russia in 1905 that these areas were

10 Cf. M. Hagen, Die Entfaltung politischer Öffentlichkeit in Russland 1906–1914, Wiesbaden 1982, 36-37, 77-83; A. J. Polunov, Russia (note 9), 208-213; H.-D. Löwe, Von der Industrialisierung zur ersten Revolution, 1890 bis 1904, in: Handbuch der Geschichte Russlands, Vol. 3: 1856–1945. Von den Autokratischen Reformen zum Sowjetstaat, ed. by G. Schramm, I. Halbband, Stuttgart 1983, 203-335, h. S. 304-315; Idem/ H. Gross, Die erste russische Revolution und ihr Nachspiel, in: ibid., 345-384, h. 345-351.

11 Cf. R. S. Wortman, Scenarios of Power. From Alexander II to the Abdication of Nicholas II, Princeton (NJ) 2000, 13-14, 365-366, 390, 396-397, 490; A. M. Verner, The Crisis of Russian Autocracy. Nicholas II and the 1905 Revolution, Princeton (NJ) 1990, 91; F. W. Wcislo, Reforming Rural Russia. State, Local Society and National Politics 1855–1914, Princeton (NJ) 1990, 142-146; A. J. Polunov, Russia (note 9), 224.

12 D. Moon, Estimating the Peasant Population of Late Imperial Russia from the 1897 Census: A Research Note, in: Europa-Asia Studies Vol. 48, N° 1 (Jan. 1996), 141-153, S. 141-149; R. E. Zelnik, Russian Workers and Revolution, in: The Cambridge History of Russia, Vol. 2: Imperial Russia, 1689–1917, ed. by D. Leaven, Cambridge 2006, 617-636, h. 620-622; R. Wortman, Scenarios (note 11), 396-397. The strike movement had mobilized around 400 000 factory workers in January 1905 and around half a million by October that same year; meanwhile there were over 3 000 recorded cases of (often violent) peasant unrest throughout the year: see P. Waldron, End of Imperial Russia (note 7), 30-30; in more detail A. Ascher, Russia in Disarray (note 7), 161-167; 136-151.

13 See ibid.; R. E. Zelnik, Russian workers (note 12), 624-625.

14 Also included in this list of prominent issues was the question of an expansion of public education. While this particular matter is not featured in this article, an examination can be found in my dissertation.

in dire need of improvement. Russian harvests paled in comparison to Western Europe, the hunger for land among the peasantry remained considerable, and the number of peasants steadily increased due to their high birth-rates, which invariably exacerbated the agrarian question.[15] The workers on the other hand had no provisions or a safety net in case of illness or injury, often their wages barely guaranteed the minimum subsistence level, the living and housing conditions of the workers were frequently desolate, with working hours that were longer than in most West-European states.[16] Anyone seeking to pre-empt a new outbreak of discontent, to allow Russia to prevail in the economic and potentially military competition with its western and eastern neighbours in the medium-term, and anyone who wanted to show the political rank-and-file and the electorate that they were doing something for the people could not avoid addressing these issues. The threat of revolution and upheaval loomed as alternatives to reform and modernization in these areas. But what did modernization mean in this context? More precisely: What was modernity to those who discussed political reforms during this period in Russia, and where was this modernity located?

II Discussions About the Right Path

1. Locating Progress and Modernity in the Late Tsarist Empire and the Particularities of This Case

In order to pursue this question adequately, it is necessary to define what the concept of "modernity" implies in this particular context. Because on the one hand, we are dealing with an ambiguous, loaded term when it comes to its scientific usage. On the other hand, there was no (foreign) word in Russian that would have corresponded to this term in a social-political sense.[17] Hence it would be more appropriate to resort to a concept of modernity that does not necessarily refer to specific, absolute features (i.e. industrialization, rationalization, transition to capitalism etc.), but instead implies a particular historical conception of time that corresponds to the aforementioned paradigm of progress. According to this paradigm, there is a clearly recognizable progression over time with different stages of development, where the highest achieved stage in a given case represents – in dichotomous delineation to the earlier stage – modernity. Therefore, the question is not when the transition to modernity occurs, but what "modernity" means at a given point in time.[18] Accordingly, "progress" and "modernity" describe two aspects of

15 Cf. H. Rogger, Russia in the Age of Modernisation and Revolution, 1881–1917, London (et al.) 1983, 75-78; Waldron, End of Imperial Russia (note 7), 51-52; A. Ascher, Russia in Disarray (note 7), 26-27.

16 Cf. M. Hildermeier, Die russische Revolution, 1905–1921, Frankfurt a. M. 1989, 32; V. I. Novikov, Sotsial'no-politicheskie predposylki revoliutsionnykh sobytii v Rossii v nachale XX veka, in: Pervaia russkaia revoliutsiia: vzgliad cherez stoletie, Moscow 2006, 4-11, h. 4; T. I. Fomina, Zakonodatel'nye akty Rossiiskoi Imperii v oblasti sotsial'noi raboty (1910–1914 gg.), Moscow 1999, 11-12; P. Waldron, End of Imperial Russia (note 7), 82-83.

17 Cf. F. Cooper, Modernity, in: idem, Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History, Berkeley 2005, 113-149.

18 Cf. N. Knight, Ethnicity, Nationality and the Masses: Narodnost' and Modernity in Imperial Russia, in: Russian Modernity. Politics, Knowledge, Practices, ed. by D. L. Hoffmann and Y. Kotsonis, N.Y. 2000, 41-64, h. 41-42; see

the same phenomenon: "progress" (synonymous with "modernization") is the movement that leads a particular society or humanity at large in an upward direction, either from the highest current stage to an even higher stage (as human progress knows no limits according to this ideology), or (as seen from the perspective of Russian political actors in the case of their empire, for example) from a respectively lower stage to the highest stage of development as it can already be observed elsewhere. "Modernity" on the other hand refers to the condition that corresponds to the highest stage that has been reached on the global ladder of progress at a given point in time.

These definitions bring us back to the theses mentioned earlier in this article. Proceeding from the presented concepts of "progress" and "modernity", one can already anticipate where the latter was to be located for the majority of the Russian elites at the beginning of the twentieth century. In social-political terms, there was barely any dissent in this matter among those concerning themselves with Russia's future path of development in the reform discussions. Modernity was to be found in the West – this much was generally beyond dispute. For leftist and rightist liberals, conservatives and socialists alike, it seemed clear that the West was ahead of Russia in terms of its development, that Russia would make progress if it followed the West, and that it was actually proceeding on a path that would have to lead it to where the West already was.

The broad consensus in this matter deserves attention as a time- and space-bound particularity. In Russia itself there had been an influential Slavophile movement throughout much of the nineteenth century that reached deep into parts of the political establishment which by now could only be found at the extreme fringes of the political landscape.[19] The main reason behind this turnaround can be found in Russia's rapid industrialization, which mainly began in the final third of the nineteenth century and accelerated once more in the 1890s, along with the concomitant relevant social problems and secondary effects. The assumption that Russia could pursue a separate socioeconomic path of development and prevent the emergence of a "proletariat" with the help of the peasant commune – the obshchina – now seemed obsolete. This effectively negated one of the central premises of Slavophile thought, whereas the concept of a worldwide unilinear strand of development, on which Russia lagged behind the countries of Western Europe, gained currency.[20] When it came to this matter, the Russian Empire also differed from the Ottoman Empire, which appears to be quite similar at a first glance. Indeed, the latter perceived its own condition as backward and Western Europe as advanced, yet in

as well D. P. Gaonkar, On Alternative Modernities, in: Alternative Modernities, ed. by idem, London 2001, 1-23, especially 6-7.

19 Cf. Riasanovsky, Russland und der Westen (note 2).

20 B. Ananich, The Russian Economy and Banking System, in: Dominic C. B. Lieven (ed.), Imperial Russia, 1689–1917 (The Cambridge history of Russia 2), Cambridge 2006, 394–425, h. 408-410, 414-416; A. J. Polunov, Russia (note 9), 213-214; H. Rogger, Russia (note 15), 113; O. Figes, DieTragödie eines Volkes. Die Epoche der russischen Revolution 1891–1924, Berlin 1998, 125-129; Hildermeier, Revolution, 32; R. Pipes, Die russische Revolution, Vol. 1: Der Zerfall des Zarenreiches, Berlin 1992, 142; G. M. Hamburg, Russian Political Thought, 1700–1917, in: D. C. B. Lieven (ed.), Imperial Russia, 116-144, h. 136-138; A. Walicki, The controversy over capitalism. Studies in the social philosophy of the Russian populists, Oxford 1969, 20-28, 50-56.

this particular case this perception was linked to a permanent impression of an essential threat emanating from the advanced West.[21] Not only since the defeat against Japan was there an awareness in Russia that it had fallen behind militarily and would have much to catch up on in this area also. These fears of a threat however were not directed against the West or Western Europe as a whole, but at most against single states and the German Reich in particular. This on the other hand was due to the state of foreign relations and its self-assessment: Throughout the entire nineteenth century Russia was considered to be an integral member of the European concert of powers, and in this sense it could not only feel on an equal footing with, but also part of Europe. Particularly the areas of economic and social policy stood in contradiction to this; here Western Europe continued to represent the advanced other – i.e. modernity as it had not (yet) been reached – in the perceptions of Russian politicians across party lines.[22]

It is worth noting that the Russian consensus over this matter between 1905 and 1914 also came to be mirrored abroad in Western Europe, for example in the British press. While Russia was at least occasionally (still) portrayed as an Asian power in a negative sense – and thus genuinely distinct from Western civilization – at the turn of the century, the view unto Russia as a European power, or a (re)Europeanized power by means of political reform, which lagged behind Great Britain in terms of its development yet was nonetheless proceeding along the same path of development, began to predominate after 1907.[23] Although this change in perspective was apparently mainly due to foreign policy interests (i.e. the newly forged alliance between Russia and Great Britain), it also correlated with the entire Russian political establishment's re-orientation towards the same theory of development (with only minor variations) since 1905.

Beyond this remarkable consensus, however, two issues remained unclear and highly controversial among the political protagonists of the Tsarist Empire: the speed at which Russia could and should reach the West's current stage of development, and, above all, which of the various Western political and social models embodied *actual* modernity. Hence the real question within the Russian context at the time was not *whether* the West indicated the path to modernity, but *which* West pointed in the right direction. This shall be illustrated below.

21 J.-E. Zürcher, Young Turk Perceptions of Europe as Threat and as Model: Paper presented at the Workshop *Historical and Contemporary Representations of Europe*, Orient Institut Istanbul, 7 June 2012.

22 W. C. Fuller, The Imperial Army, in: D. C. B. Lieven (ed.), Imperial Russia (note 20), 530–553, h. 540-543, 550-551; D. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, Russian foreign policy: 1815–1917, in: D. C. B. Lieven (ed.), Imperial Russia, Cambridge 2006, 554–574., h. 554-556, 566-574.

23 Cf. Christian Methfessel's article in this volume.

2. Which West?

a) Denmark as a Model Example and the Diversity of Arguments Drawing on the West: Debates Concerning Agrarian Legislation

Debates surrounding far-reaching agrarian reforms, motivated by growing peasant unrest in particular, had already begun in the run-up to the 1905 revolution, with the decisive involvement of former Finance Minister Witte.[24] They then gained considerable additional momentum after the outbreak of the revolution, which came to reveal the full extent of the discontent among the peasant population.[25] The agrarian question also featured prominently in the debates of the first Duma (in session from late April to early July 1906).[26] Two draft bills in particular were up for discussion here, namely those fielded by the leftist liberal Kadets and the agrarian socialist Trudoviks, who together held a majority in the first Duma – the so-called projects of the "42" and the "104". Both bills called for the dispossession of estate-owned land and its communalization via a national land fund, from which small farmers were to receive land for cultivation.[27] In the heated debates over these two draft bills, representatives from all parties came to invoke Western models of reference. Aside from general allusions to "Western Europe" and the "western states", they also made specific mention of Germany, France, England and Norway among others.[28]

Yet there was one particular country that stood out and was cited as the model example by advocates and opponents of the "42" and "104" alike: Denmark.[29] The exceedingly positive perception of Danish agriculture, the conditions for its peasants, the livestock and the agrarian economy at large also found its expression in various publications that appeared during this period.[30] This can in part be explained by the fact that Denmark

24 S. Iu. Vitte, Zapiska po krest'ianskomu delu Predsedatelia Vysochaishe uchrezhdennago Osobago Soveshchaniia o nuzhdakh sel'skokhoziaistvennoi promyshlennosti, Stats-Sekretaria S. Iu. Vitte, S. Peterburg 1904; Vysochaishe uchrezhdennoe Osoboe Soveshchanie o nuzhdakh sel'skokhoziaistvennoi promyshlennosti, Protokoly po Krest'ianskomu Delu. Zasedaniia s 8 dekabria 1904 goda po 30 marta 1905 goda, S. Peterburg 1905.

25 Taken together, the catalogues of the Russian National Library (St. Petersburg), the Lenin Library (Moscow) and the Finnish National Library (Helsinki) list 183 monographs on the agrarian question that were published in Russia in 1906 – compared to 46 in the previous year (1905).

26 The First Duma was dissolved by the Tsar barely 2 months after its inauguration: see P. Waldron, Between (note 6), 55-56.

27 The names of these bills simply referred to the number of deputies which had officially introduced them to the Duma (42 for the Kadet project, 104 for the Trudovik one). The differences between these draft proposals essentially concerned the amount of land to be left in the hands of private estate owners and how much compensation would be paid for dispossession: cf. Ju. M. Zubikov, Bor'ba politicheskikh partii po agrarnomu voprosu v Pervoi Gosudarstvennoi dume, in: Pervaia russkaia revoliutsiia 1905–1907 godov i problemy stanovleniia grazhdanskogo obshchestva v Rossii. Mezhvuzovskii sbornik nauchnych trudov, S. Peterburg 2006, 33-36, 34; St. F. Williams, Liberal Reform in an Illiberal Regime. The Creation of Private Property in Russia, 1906–1915, Stanford (CA) 2006, 123-132.

28 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, Sozyv I. Stenograficheskie otchety, S. Peterburg 1906, e.g. 520, 524-527, 568, 576, 722-724.

29 Ibid., 466, 604-605, 612, 722, 816, 884, 982.

30 Cf. E. Kingston-Mann, In search of the true West. Culture, Economics, and Problems of Russian Development, Princeton, NJ 1999, 158-160, 168-169.

held a top-tier position in agricultural statistics at the time: Due to the prevalence of three-field crop rotation in Russia, 30% of its arable land lay idle, as compared to 13% in France and a mere 7% in Denmark. Conversely, the average yield per desyatin of land in Russia was 33 puds of rye, whereas the yield in Germany was 56 puds and 101 puds in Denmark.[31] Progress was measurable, and Denmark appeared to be right at the top of the ladder of progress in agricultural terms while Russia lagged far behind. Opponents in the Duma were merely in disagreement over the question of the reasons behind the successes of Danish agriculture and its progressive nature. Some, such as the agrarian expert of the Kadets Mikhail Gertsenshtein, were of the opinion that Denmark's success was due to the fact that this was a state in which the land was *in peasant hands* and being cultivated by peasants on their own initiative. According to Gertsenshtein, the Danish example showed

> *that the peasant culture in particular has yielded outstanding results. […] Once the competition of cheap grain emerged, large estates – for example in Germany – suffered greatly, whereas Denmark began to flourish. […] Denmark is a country with peasant-owned land, and there is no large estate owner at the top, as they practically do not exist there; the peasant stands at the pinnacle of culture. […] Thus I am not alarmed if the peasant element really does become stronger in our country. […]*[32]

Conversely, opponents of the course propagated by the Kadets and Trudoviks strove not to surrender the Danish model of progress as a legitimizing resource to their adversaries without a fight. For example, Boleslav Ialovetskii, a Polish engineer from Vilnius province, basically agreed with the enthusiastically painted image of Danish agriculture, yet depicted it rather differently: "unfortunately" Gertsenshtein had failed to

> *point out that everything there [in Denmark] had proceeded according to entirely different principles than those proposed by the project of the 42 persons, not to mention the project of the 104 persons. […] At the beginning of the previous nineteenth century the entire Danish peasantry was still in terrible despair. […] And there, without a doctrine of the nationalization of land, without the forced dispossession of private land, the state came to the people's aid by providing loans for the* transition from communal field cultivation to individual cultivation *[…]. Thanks to the availability of loans, peasant land ownership expanded significantly at the expense of large estates, without any coercion from this or that side. […] Life itself had set the norms […], so that the rural population of Denmark is now one of the wealthiest, most highly educated and cultivated in all of Europe. God grant that Russia will come to experience this soon.*[33]

31 Cf. the corresponding figures and references in Stetskii's speech: Gosudarstvennaia Duma, Sozyv I, Otchety, 612. One desyatin amounted to roughly 1,09 hectares, one pud about 16kg. Denmark's top tier position at the time in terms of land productivity (outperformed only by Japan) has also been confirmed by current research: G. Federico, Feeding the World. An Economic History of Agriculture 1800–2000, Princeton 2005, 73.

32 See Rossiia. Gosudarstvennaia Duma, Sozyv I, Otchety, 466-467; M. Boiovich, Chleny Gosudarstvennoi Dumy (portrety i biografii). Pervyi Sozyv, 1906–1911g., Moscow 1906, 21.

33 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, Sozyv I, Otchety, 604-605; Boiovich, Chleny (note 32), 18.

This portrayal was also endorsed by Mikhail Gotovetskii, a Lithuanian peasant and lawyer:

> *We were referred to the example of the well-ordered, peasant country of Denmark here. But there is and never was any nationalization of land, neither in Denmark nor Europe at large. Denmark never attained its current wealth along the path that is being proposed to us here. No one there conceived of a different form of agriculture than one based on personal property and general lease laws. […]*[34]

Opponents of the projects of the "42" and "104" thus countered the perception of Denmark as a country whose agriculture was essentially in the hands of *peasants* with a view of Denmark as a country of *private landowners* where a peasant commune with communal land ownership no longer existed either.

These different characterizations of the Danish model of success, which in essence merely emphasized two different aspects that were not mutually exclusive, implied divergent imperatives for action in the given Russian case. Whoever considered it essential that the land was in the hands of peasants had to concentrate their efforts on providing the peasants with the greatest possible contingent of arable Russian land for cultivation – even by means of dispossessing estate owners if necessary, as envisioned by the projects of the "42" and the "104". Conversely, anyone who considered it decisive that the land in Denmark was *privately owned* had to flatly reject the dispossession of private estates and instead focus on separating as many peasants from the peasant commune as possible and making them private land owners. The differing interpretation of the Danish model and the differing evaluation of the draft bills at hand were thus mutually dependent. Hence one can clearly observe how the Danish model and other Western models were employed by various speakers as a legitimizing resource in their own respective interpretation, which served to support one's own political course in the agrarian question. This is also observable in the second Duma, albeit in a different shape.[35]

The agrarian and land question stood at the centre of the debates in the second Duma, even more so than in the first. Prime Minister Stolypin had initiated a far-reaching agrarian reform in November 1906, based on article 87 of the constitution,[36] which aimed at the gradual dissolution of the peasant land- and redistribution commune and the creation of a social class of land-owning and wealthy small-scale farmers.[37] In light of the government's efforts to create a fait accompli, it was up to the second Duma to position itself in this matter and possibly strive to still push through its own course. As in the first Duma, various draft bills were up for debate which envisioned the dispossession of

34 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, Sozyv I, Otchety, 884.

35 The second Duma convened from February 1907 until its dissolution by the Tsar in June of that same year.

36 Article 87 allowed the government to issue laws in urgent cases during the Duma's recess periods (which nonetheless required the Duma's subsequent approval to endure): A. Palme, Die russische Verfassung, Berlin 1910, 156-160.

37 Cf. in detail St. F. Williams, Liberal Reform (note 27), 138-179; R. Hennessy, The Agrarian Question in Russia, 1905–1907, Giessen/Marburg 1977, 133-138.

estate-owned land to the benefit of small-scale farmers. In the debates over these bills and Stolypin's reform, Russian backwardness (in agriculture), West-European progress, as well as the analogy between Western European and Russian development were the guiding themes. The Octobrist[38] Prince Dmitrii Sviatopolk-Mirskii was among the first speakers to point out that Russia's agriculture was *extremely backward* when compared to Western Europe as he defended the government's course. The peasant commune had also existed almost everywhere in Western Europe, he claimed, and successful innovations and the concomitant noticeable advances in productivity had set in at the very moment these communes had been dissolved. Moreover, the most essential innovations had been introduced by the private landowners there. It would thus be crucial not to weaken this class in Russia by means of dispossession, and instead focus on dissolving the peasant commune to the benefit of private landowners.[39] The delegate of the rightist faction Count Vladimir Bobrinskii also stressed that for the Russian people, the path to prosperity – "as in all civilized countries" – was not one that would lead to dispossessions, but to the dissolution of the obshchina instead.[40] His factional colleague Vasilii Shulgin proclaimed that all of human civilization had been built on the principle of private property. Anyone who sought to infringe upon it – i.e. in the form of dispossession – was deemed to be on the wrong track (which would ultimately end in the dispossession of even small tracts of land) and would destroy any incentive for personal initiative, with the result of general impoverishment. But even if – he conceded to his opponents as a possibility – socialism represented the future, it was *not up to Russia* to be the first to try it out. Russia, he claimed, was still at the very bottom of the developmental ladder, and thus needed to pass through much of what the western states had already experienced.[41]

It was, however, also possible to draw different conclusions from the general paradigm of progress and Russian backwardness. The Trudovik[42] Aleksandr Karavaev for instance called attention to the disparately higher mortality rate – particularly among peasants – in Russia as compared to the western states, which amounted to enormous losses in both human and economic terms. Yet according to Karavaev Russia lagged behind the Germans by about fifty years with regard to agricultural productivity. Karavaev argued that Russia could by no means afford these fifty years to catch up on this deficit in productivity, given the high mortality rate and the oppressive situation of the peasants. This being the case, however, the only remaining solution would be the enlargement of peasant land, which would only be possible by means of dispossessing large estate owners.[43] The Kadet Fedor Tatarinov even assumed that it would be a matter of "centuries"

38 Octobrists: rightist liberal party with the initially strongest faction in the Third Duma.

39 Rossiia. Gosudarstvennaia Duma, Sozyv 2, Stenograficheskie otchety, Tom 1, S. Peterburg 1907, 696-707.

40 Ibid., 1291-98.

41 Ibid., 1133-1137. For short biographical notes on Sviatopolk-Mirskii, Bobrinskii and Shulgin cf. M. Boiovich, Chleny Gosudarstvennoi Dumy (portrety i biografii). Vtoroi Sozyv, 1907–1912g., Moscow 1907, 13, 51, 358.

42 The delegates of the agrarian socialist Trudovik faction predominantly came from a peasant background. In the First and the Second Duma it was second in size only to the leftist liberal Kadet faction.

43 Gosudarstvennaia Duma, Sozyv 2, Tom 1, Otchety, 711-712, 717-719.

before Russia would reach the economic stage of development and productivity levels of the West-European countries. Like Karavaev, he too came to the conclusion that the enlargement of peasant land by means of dispossession would be the only feasible option in the short and medium term.[44]

Citing prominent western personalities also belonged to the repertoire of representatives from various parties when it came to legitimizing their own respective positions. For instance, in his plea for the dispossession of estate-owned land without compensation, the Social Democrat Iraklii Tsereteli chose the Prussian von Hardenberg as his key witness – Hardenberg had urged his king to adopt revolutionary ideas in 1807, arguing that the state would otherwise founder or be forced to accept them.[45] While a Social Democrat referred to the Prussian Chancellor, the Russian rightist Prince Aleksandr Urusov alluded to the German Social Democrat Karl Kautsky, who was said to have described raising the Russian peasant economy to the level of "civilized states" as a priority, without which the nationalization of land could not be a viable solution.[46] To counter Social Democratic and Socialist Revolutionary demands for a dispossession of all estate-owned land *without compensation* (and by violent means if necessary), the Kadet Andrei Shingarev invoked revolutionary France as a *negative model*, which was deemed to have paid for the temporary application of this principle with almost a century's worth of tremors sending shockwaves throughout the entire country.[47] Tsereteli subsequently sought to fend off this reference with an entirely different rendition of history, according to which it was the confiscation of estate-owned land that had helped France restore its power in the first place and secured the necessary support for the new order in the struggle against the old.[48]

This abundance of references to the West combined with a range of different types of argumentation (references to *positive western models*, to the fact that particular measures were being applied either *everywhere* in the West, throughout *most* of the West or (almost) *nowhere* in the West, referring to prominent western personalities as *key witnesses* or, finally, pointing out the *negative experiences* made by western states) illustrates the central status of representations of the West as a resource for legitimization among politicians from virtually all political affiliations in Russian domestic political debates during the examined timeframe. While this also holds true for the next case in point, the abovementioned case differs from it in a number of aspects: Despite the significance of the Danish model in the first Duma, the agrarian debates did not centre around *one single* country as a generally accepted main model throughout the period in question. Moreover, with all due dissent among the speakers of various parties and ideologies, they were nonetheless in agreement over one thing: The backwardness of Russian agriculture

44 Ibid., 1760-1761, 1769. On Karavaev and Tatarinov cf. Boivich, Chleny, Vtoroi Sozyv (note 41), 97, 218.
45 Rossiia. Gosudarstvennaia Duma. Sozyv 2, Stenograficheskie Otchety, Tom 2, S. Peterburg 1907, 1230-1235.
46 Duma, Sozyv 2, Otchety, Tom 1, 1812-1817.
47 Ibid., 1355-1356.
48 Duma, Sozyv 2, Otchety, Tom 2, 1225-1230. On Shingarev, Urusov and Tsereteli cf. Boiovich, Chleny, Vtoroi Sozyv (note 41), 53, 361, 468.

as compared to the West compelled political reforms, whichever direction these reforms may ultimately be aiming at.

b) Germany as a Norm for the Social Security State: Debates in the Field of Labour Legislation

Reform debates over labour legislation demonstrate that it was also possible to draw a different conclusion from the diagnosis of Russian backwardness, namely that Russia should not pursue reforms – at least not too quickly or too extensively. Already shortly after the outbreak of the 1905 revolution a commission under the Finance Minister Kokovtsov began drafting legislation that aimed at accommodating some of the workers' demands and thus taking the wind out of the sails of discontent. They entailed a statutory reduction of the maximum permitted working hours per day as well as the introduction of insurance schemes for workers – including accident, health, old-age and unemployment insurance.[49] The reforms under discussion encountered resistance among a sizeable portion of organized business interests. Their arguments varied, yet were essentially based on references to West-European states. In response to the ministry of finance's draft bill, which was already in circulation in spring 1905 and proposed cutting the maximum daily working hours from 11.5 to 10 hours, a commentary published by the *St. Petersburg Society for the Support of the Improvement and Development of Factory Industry* (which represented the interests of employers) argued that a reduction in working hours had only been possible in Germany and England as a consequence of industrial progress and a higher degree of "cultivation" and efficiency among the workers; these steps in development could thus only commence in this particular sequence in Russia.[50] Hence according to this logic, Russian backwardness in the aforementioned areas represented an argument against the reforms based on western models – for the time being.
As in the case of Kokovtsov's commission, the German model played a central role in subsequent government consultations under the aegis of the new Ministry for Trade and Industry.[51] From the perspective of major protagonists involved in the legislative process, Germany was a vanguard in many areas, particularly when it came to the question of workers' insurance. This also informed the arguments of the employers' associations against the government's draft bill for the introduction of health insurance scheme for workers in 1908.[52] In a statement addressed to the ministry in the late autumn of 1908,

49 On the first attempts cf. G. E. Snow, The Kokovtsov Commission: An Abortive Attempt at Labor Reform in Russia in 1905, in: Slavic Review, Vol. 31, N° 4 (Dec. 1972), 780-796.

50 See K zakonoproektu "O prodolzhitel'nosti i raspredelenii rabochago vremeni v promyshlennykh zavedeniiakh". Zapiska S. Peterburgskago Obshchestva dlia sodeistviia uluchsheniiu i razvitiiu fabrichno-zavodskoi promyshlennosti, S. Peterburg 1905, 6-7.

51 Cf. G. E. Snow, Kokovtsov Commission (note 49), 785; see Ministerstvo torgovli i promyshlennosti, Stenograficheskii otchet Osobago Soveshchaniia pri Ministerstve Torgovli i Promyshlennoti, pod predsedatel'stvom Ministra Torgovli i Promyshlennosti, Shtalmeistera D. A. Filosofova, dlia obsuzhdeniia zakonoproektov po rabochemu zakonodatel'stvu. 2 T. Zasedaniia 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 i 21 Dekabria 1906 g.; Zasedaniia 14, 25, 26 Fevralia, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12 Marta 1907 g., S. Peterburg 1906/1907.

52 One of still only very few examinations of the insurance legislation for workers during this time can be found in:

the *Society of Petersburg Industrialists and Manufacturers* argued that it was beyond comprehension why the draft bill, which otherwise drew on the German example, deviated so decisively from this model when it came to the issue of payable dues: While employers in Germany would have to contribute half as much as the workers – which in practice amounted to a maximum of 4 percent of an employee's wages –, the proposed law envisaged an employer's contribution amounting to 2/3 of what their employee's paid, in addition to complete coverage of medical expenses by the employer, which according to their calculations meant up to 7 percent of an employee's wage. In their view, there was nothing to justify this deviation from the German system.[53] According to this line of argumentation, Germany no longer merely represented a possible model for Russia's future development, but rather a *norm* in light of its previously unanimously confirmed progressiveness, which effectively challenged deviations from this model a priori. Characterizations of the German model as an established norm were even more prominent in the debates over the Ministry for Trade and Industry's proposals for a workers' accident insurance scheme in the third Duma in 1911.[54] Although no single party rejected the basic proposition of introducing such a scheme, the issue of which categories of workers should receive coverage was a major point of contention. The ministry's draft bill, which the responsible Duma commission had confirmed for the most part, set clear and narrow limits in this regard. The statutory accident insurance scheme was to (initially) affect only wage labourers in businesses with at least 20 employees – provided that machinery was employed in the factory – or 30 employees – if this was not the case.[55] This encountered harsh criticism from the Kadets, who demanded a significantly lower minimum, and even more so from the Trudoviks and Social Democrats, who advocated insurance for all workers without exception. In this case too, major protagonists drew upon the German model. During the second reading of the bill, the Trudovik Konstantin Petrov came to quote the advisor of the Duma commission and Octobrist Baron Evgenii Tizengauzen, who claimed that the proposal had been drafted "on the provisions of German legislation". And yet, declared Petrov, the latter did not feature anything resembling the limitations imposed by the proposal – at the very most, there was talk of a minimum size of ten workers per business (in the first insurance law of 1884). Thus the amendment introduced by the Kadets (which set a minimum of 16 workers per business) was said to be disappointing, because if anything, "it would have been better to take German legislation as an example and settle on the number 10". The government's bill on the other hand was wholly unacceptable, for the Germans "had introduced something wholly dif-

R. A. Roosa, Worker's Insurance and the Role of the Industrialists in the Period of the Third State Duma, in: Russian Review, Vol. 34, N°. 4 (Oct. 1975), 410-452.

53 RGIA, F. 150, op. 1, d. 600, l. 41-43: Zhurnal 8-go zasedaniia soveshchanija pri Obshchestve po zakonoproektu o strakhovanii rabochikh, 24-ogo oktjabrja 1908 goda.

54 The Third Duma convened in the autumn of 1907 and lasted until the summer of 1912.

55 Cf. I. I. Shelymagin, Zakonodatel'stvo o fabrichno-zavodskom trude v Rossii 1900–1917, Moscow 1952, 237.

ferent to what Bar. Tizengauzen and his kindred spirits are introducing here."[56] The Kadet Stepanov became even more explicit during his attack on the government project:

> *As I have already mentioned, our [draft] law for insurance is based on the German prototype. According to German law, the insurance covers almost all types of temporary labour; hence* positive proof *is required for the exclusion of industrial enterprises that are subject to German insurance laws.*[57]

The burden of proof was thus on the side of those who deviated from the German example as the *norm* for Russia. In Stepanov's view, the government had failed to provide the necessary proof thus far. The German model also provided an essential foundation for the arguments of the Social Democrat Andrei Predkal'n. Almost the entire German working population was included in the state's accident insurance scheme by now, which came to show that this was practically achievable.[58] Representatives from all political camps thus clearly treated the German model of the social security state as the *norm* in the third Duma as well, which showed Russia the way and as such warranted justification for deviations from this path.[59]

Just how sustainable the impact of this norm was in the Russian context – and how useful it was for arguments from a range of different political positions – can be evinced from another case in the summer of 1917, between the February and October revolutions. In March 1917 the provisional government convened a special committee working out of the newly created Ministry for Labour, comprised of officials from various ministries as well as employees' and employers' representatives and responsible for the formulation of new projects in the area of labour legislation.[60] Among the various draft bills that were discussed, a proposal by the Ministry of Labour for the introduction of unemployment insurance for industrial workers occupied a significant portion of the agenda. Around three years into an ongoing bitter war against Germany as the main enemy – and in light of vast amounts of publications and rhetoric charged with anti-German ressentiments[61] – it would have been reasonable to assume that Germany had forfeited its position as the role-model for the further development of Russian domestic policy. And in actual fact, it initially seemed to be absent in the opening statement of the Ministry for Labour's representative within said committee, Monoszon. He began by pointing out the existence of two different systems in the West, namely the English system – which made membership in the unemployment insurance scheme mandatory for certain categories of workers – and the so-called "Ghent system", under which insurance was voluntary and

56 Rossiia. Gosudarstvennaia Duma. Sozyv 3, Sessiia 4 (1910/11), Stenograficheskie otchety, Tom 1: Zasedaniia 1-41, S. Peterburg 1911, 170-174.

57 Ibid., 176-178. Italics by B. B.

58 Ibid., 210-211.

59 On Predkal'n, Tizengauzen, Petrov and Stepanov cf. M. Boiovich, Chleny Gosudarstvennoi Dumy (portrety i biografii). Tretii Sozyv, 1907–1912g., 6th edition, Moscow 1913, 158, 187, 232, 233.

60 See Vestnik Ministerstva Truda, N° 1-2 (Avgust 1917 g.), 10-13, 26-59; cf. N. V. Beloshapka, Vremennoe Pravitel'stvo v 1917 g.: Mekhanizm Formirovaniia i Funktsionirovaniia, Moscow 1998, 92-96.

61 For a detailed examination: H. F. Jahn, Patriotic Culture in Russia during World War I, Ithaca/ London 1995.

organized by the unions themselves. The government's proposal was said to combine the advantages of the "Ghent system" – most notably the principle of autonomous self-organization among the workers – with the advantages of the English system, which included mandatory unemployment insurance for certain categories of workers.[62] However, the Social Democratic workers' representative in the committee, Lur'e[63], would not content himself with these statements: He voiced his astonishment over the fact that the *German* system, which had been modified in the war, had been overlooked by the ministry. Monoszon promptly responded by explaining that the German system was a variant of the "Ghent system". In Lur'e's view, however, the ministry had ignored a decisive crucial advantage of what he continued to refer to as the "German" system that was absent in the government's draft legislation thus far. The presented proposal sought to introduce staggered insurance rates for workers of up to two percent of their wages, whereas in the new German system the state provided two-thirds of the total insurance rate while the remainder was paid for by the local communes, meaning that the workers themselves shouldered *none* of the cost. This system, which the German central government had only introduced as an option and which required the communes' approval prior to its implementation, had practically taken root in all of Germany within one year. Already *this* fact alone demonstrated that the system had proven itself. Conversely, as Lur'e stated for the record, it would be wholly unacceptable for Russian workers to forgo this accomplishment of the German system. It was not for nothing that Russia had already experienced a revolution and Germany had not.[64]

Thus, besides invoking a barely concealed threat of further revolution, this line of argumentation essentially rested on Germany as a norm in the realm of social legislation from which one would not be allowed to deviate. The ministry representative Monoszon came to employ it himself during the committee's next session, when he essentially based the limitation of unemployment benefits to a maximum of three months per year on the German example, where the according regulation was in place.[65] It seems clear in any case that Germany also retained its status as the embodiment of modernity with regard to labour legislation in 1917, and that representations of its social security system had accordingly not forfeited their function as a guiding resource of legitimization in the area of social legislation in Russia – even though this could well have been the case considering the given political and military situation.

62 RGIA, F. 32, op. 1, d. 1966, l. 7-22ob: Zasedanie Osobago Komiteta pri Ministerstve Truda, 23-go avgusta 1917 goda, l. 8ob-9.

63 Mikhail („Larin") Lur'e, originally a Menshevik, joined the Bolsheviks in August 1917: V. Kolodezhnyi, Iurii Larin, in: Shelokhaev, Valentin V. (ed.), Politicheskie partii Rossii. Konets XIX – pervaja tret' XX veka; entsiklopediia, Moscow 1996, 301-302.

64 RGIA, F. 32, op. 1, d. 1966, l. 10-10ob, 13ob.

65 4-e Zasedanie Osobago Komiteta pri Ministerstve Truda. 4-go Sentiabria 1917 goda, in: ibid., l. 33-40, l. 39ob.

3. On the Question of Consensus or Dissent Regarding the Western Orientation of Reforms

Was there indeed no dissent in the political reform discussions in Russia between 1905 and 1917 when it came to the question of whether progress had to lead Russia where the West already stood? To phrase the question differently: How far-reaching was the effectiveness of representations of the West as a resource for political action and legitimization, and – insofar as they had their limitations – where were their limits? First of all, it is worth pointing out that remarkably, barely anyone engaged in the *political* reform debates at the time came to argue that references to the West were of no relevance to Russian politics, as the circumstances in Russia were plainly different – an argument that theoretically would have been easily conceivable. This affirmative answer to the initial question, however, must be qualified in two respects. Firstly: When it came to two questions there were voices – particularly within liberal circles, which were especially receptive to reforms – that denied the West the role of the embodiment of modernity, at least in part. This regarded the fiercely debated question of a complete abolition of the death penalty in Russia at the time, as well as the question of equal rights – particularly voting rights – for women. It may not come as much as a surprise that particularly the representatives of the leftist liberal Kadets partially rejected the view unto Western Europe as the embodiment of modernity when it regarded both these questions, considering that their conceptions aimed at regulations – the abolition of the death penalty and legal equality for women – which did not exist in the countries in question.[66] Writing about this matter in 1906, Vladimir Nabokov, who later came to serve as a minister in the provisional government, pointed out that the overwhelming number of West-European states had yet to abolish the death penalty. He deemed this a "deplorable anachronism" [!], a remnant of the "old justice" and the "old barbarism", unworthy of civilized states.[67] During one of the first Duma's debates, Fedor Kokoshkin, another prominent Kadet, exclaimed that when it came to the question of women's rights, Western Europe was not only not ahead of Russia, but in some respects – this applied to France and Germany – even more backward than Russia.[68] It is however interesting that both politicians nonetheless ultimately located modernity in the West with regard to these questions: In the abovementioned article, Nabokov wrote that the "more sophisticated and honestly humane representatives of West-European thought" had "long-since recognized" the uncivilized and harmful nature of the death penalty.[69] Nabokov simply accorded the western opponents of the death penalty, who were in the minority, the status of being the actual and

66 The demand for a speedy introduction of women's suffrage was not undisputed within the party. After the joint resolution adopted at the 2. party congress however it became part and parcel of the Kadet's party programme: See Konstitutsionno-demokraticheskaia partiia (Partiia Narodnoi Svobody), Postanovleniia II-go S"ezda 5-11 ianvaria 1906 g. i Programma, S. Peterburg 1906, 5.

67 V. Nabokov, Otmena smertnoi kazni, in: Pravo 1906, 1901–1908, h. 1901, 1906.

68 F. F. Kokoshkin, Rechi F.F. Kokoshkina (partii Narodnoi Svobody), S. Peterburg 1907, 46-47.

69 V. Nabokov, Otmena (note 67), 1902.

better representatives of Western Europe and thus reclaimed "Western Europe" for his own side of the argument. Neither did Kokoshkin distance himself from the notion of a progressive Western Europe as such in his speech. He exclaimed to the plenum of the Duma that he did not fear the foreseeable objections from opponents of women's emancipation who would cite Western Europe as an example: "[…] we will refer to the western countries where the legal equality of women has already been established, and with dazzling successes."[70] Which specific countries he was referring to remained unaddressed. What is crucial at this point, however, is that although he denied individual western states – namely Germany and France – the status of progressiveness in this matter, this was not true of the West as such. Nevertheless, for the sake of providing a complete picture, it must be emphasized that between 1905 and 1917, there were also publicists and politicians in Russia who categorically rejected reforms according to western patterns. Aside from a number of Socialist Revolutionaries, they also included representatives of the extreme right in particular, chiefly organized in associations such as the *Union of the Russian People* [Soiuz Russkogo Naroda]. This organization propagated an extreme form of anti-Semitism, Great-Russian nationalism and the rejection of almost all innovations that followed the 1905 revolution and were being pursued by both the government and oppositional circles – in different directions.[71] For example, in a characteristic opinion piece published in one of the press organs of the *Union of the Russian People* in the spring of 1907, one could read the following:

> *The rotten, so-called progressive society, which also appears as the leader in the State Duma, credits itself with the role of the people's educator. It meddles with village life, which is holy, and subverts all healthy principles of Russian patriarchy. It seeks to inject its rottenness, its poison, into the holy stream of the spiritual life of the Russian peasantry with all its powers. For the sake of the* elusive sheen of the progress of civilization *it is prepared to sacrifice everything the Russian Orthodox has been educated towards [vospitalsya]. […]*[72]

Yet another article appearing in the same issue read:

> *God the Lord has given Russia its own wit, which has erected a mighty state architecture – the autocracy –, sanctified by the Orthodox Church and historically justified. It is* futile for the Russians to search for state-ideals in foggy England *while we have our glowing autocracy, and with it the autocrat, our salvation, our fortune, and not in the form of Octobrist […] autocracy, but in the real honest, unlimited Tsarist autocracy!*[73]

70 F. F. Kokoshkin, Rechi (note 68), 46.

71 Cf. G. Hosking, Russischer Nationalismus vor 1914 und heute: Die Spannung zwischen imperialem und ethnischem Bewußtsein, in: Die Russen. Ihr Nationalbewusstsein in Geschichte und Gegenwart, ed. by A. Kappeler, Köln 1990, 169–183., h. 172-173; A. Ascher, Russia in Disarray (note 7), 239-242.

72 Ieromonakh Iliodor, Krest'ianskaia mudrost', in: Za Tsaria i Rodinu. Organ Soiuza Russkago Naroda. Odessa, N° 50, 5-go aprelia 1907, 2-3, 3. Italics by B.B.

73 Razboiniki na zakonom osnovanii, in: Za Tsaria i Rodinu. Organ Soiuza Russkago Naroda. Odessa, N° 50, 5-go aprelja 1907, 1.

It should be noted that these comments did not imply that modernity was not to be located in the West. Rather, they can be seen as an expression of the rejection of progress per se and thus the concept of modernity in and of itself. Indeed, the protagonists of the *Union of the Russian People* also strove for changes, yet these changes were explicitly meant to lead back to a Slavophile, idealized state of the past, with unlimited autocracy and a direct relationship between the ruler and his people.[74] Thus the authors of the *Union of the Russian People* did not question whether the path to modernity was via reforms according to western examples, but whether embarking on this path was even desirable in the first place. However this stance effectively disqualified them from the perspective of most Russian political protagonists at the time. It is characteristic that despite all public attention and a supposedly enormous membership the *Soiuz Russkogo Naroda* – the biggest extreme right-wing party in Russia between 1905 and 1917 – failed to attain a status reaching beyond that of a marginal splinter group in the elected Duma. Its positions and tactics also met with little approval in government circles.[75]

This is not to say that these positions remained completely irrelevant. Nikolai II was known to sympathize with the positions of the "Union", and up until February 1917 he was in a position to block any reforms that were not to his liking.[76] Since half of the members of the State Council – which had to confirm all legislation – were personally appointed by the Tsar and could be replaced by him at any given time, it is not particularly surprising that there were also some sympathizers of the Union among those serving in this upper chamber. And indeed, the State Council in particular had proven itself to be an obstacle for reforms between 1906 and 1917.[77] The fact remains, however, that the Russian debates at the time were not about a reform path geared towards or beyond western patterns, but rather revolved around the alternative between stasis or reaction on the one hand, and reforms and modernization according to western models on the other. Even in the debates of the State Council over specific reform projects, conflicting interpretations of particular western models and arguments over the right conclusions to be drawn for the Russian case played an important role.[78] On the whole, opponents of reform may have been able to slow down, postpone or constrain certain reforms, yet given the previously mentioned pressure for reform as it was perceived from nearly all

74 D. C. Rawson, Russian Rightists and the Revolution of 1905, Cambridge/New York 1995, 63-67.

75 Prominent Union functionaries boasted of a membership of millions; yet in the first two, relatively democratically elected Dumas it supplied a mere 1-2 percent of the delegates; even after a new electoral law that gave the estate-owning nobility a disproportionate amount of clout, this number rose to just 11 percent in the third elected Duma: cf. ibid., 61-62, 167-168, 197-199, 221; on the attitude of the government ibid., 142-151; cf. as well G. Hosking, Nationalismus (note 71), 173-174; A. Ascher, Russia in Disarray (note 7), 241-242.

76 Cf. ibid.; D. C. Rawson, Russian Rightists (note 74), 142-143.

77 A. Korros, A Reluctant Parliament. Stolypin, Nationalism, and the Politics of the Russian Imperial State Council, 1906–1911, Lanham (et al.) 2002, 58-59, 62. A whole range of reform projects approved by the Duma and the government – such as in the area of self-administration, local jurisdiction and public education – ultimately failed due to the resistance of the State Council: cf. A. F. Smirnov, Gosudarstvennaia Duma Rossiiskoi Imperii 1906–1917. Istoriko-pravovoi ocherk, Cheliabinsk 2010, 371, 376-378, 390.

78 For one example see B. Beuerle, Step (note 3), 48-50.

sides they were ultimately unable to prevent it in the long run. The actual reforms that were adopted in the areas mentioned between 1905 and 1917 testify to this fact.

III Summary, Outlook and Conclusion

In summary it can be said that, from the perspective of those involved in the numerous reform discussions in Russia between 1905 and 1917, it was generally beyond dispute that the path to modernity was one paved by laws, establishments and institutions that were already to be found in Western Europe and the West by and large. Within this context, representations of Western Europe and the West could be employed as a resource for legitimization and political action in the domestic reform debates during this time. Yet this consensus neither implied unanimity nor a lack of ambiguity. Reform debates were particularly contentious when they concerned those questions which, in light of the apparent heterogeneity and ambiguity of the West, produced a diverse range of unambiguous answers: The question of which of the western states embodied the best – or rather actual – modernity in a certain field; how to interpret and explain the conditions and successes in a given western state and what concrete conclusions could be drawn from them for Russia; the speed at which Russia could and should proceed on the path to modernity; finally, and closely related to this, the question of whether laws and norms could lead the country into modernity, or whether they had to be preceded by the general progressive development of the country in a given area – such as labour productivity, for example. Behind the backdrop of Russia's generally acknowledged need for reform on the one hand and a virtually undisputed location of modernity in the West on the other, the answers to these aforementioned questions and the concomitant antagonistic representations of Western Europe had a profound impact on the shaping of Russian policy. Both the agrarian reforms ultimately implemented by Stolypin's government between 1906 and 1910 as well as the workers' insurance laws that came into effect in 1912 were undoubtedly decisively influenced by western models, regulations, theories and practices.[79]

Finally, for the sake of providing a brief outlook, representations of the West again came to play an important role as a resource for legitimization and political action in Russia during the 1990s. Compared to the early twentieth century, however, the situation was markedly different in two respects, which in turn were subject to change as the decade progressed. For one, proponents of western-oriented theories of monolinear universal development featured prominently in the contemporary discourse, yet as had been the case throughout most of the nineteenth century, they faced a neo-Slavophile or Eurasian movement which stresses the necessity of a distinct Russian path of development between Europe and Asia and tends to perceive the West as a threat first and foremost.

79 Cf. e.g. St. F. Williams, Liberal Reform (note 27), 5; R. A. Roosa, Workers' Insurance Legislation (note 52), 436, 439. A more detailed examination will be included in my dissertation.

The balance between these two political currents shifted over the course of the decade 1990s: Early in the decade, proponents of close socio-economic and political proximity to the West were clearly dominant among the political establishment, while those seeking to locate Russia between Europe and Asia and to whom a distinct Russian path of development is a necessity gained in public and political influence during the latter half of the 1990s.[80]

Furthermore, the United States now came to play a much more significant role in representations of the West than at the beginning of the century. The balance between the USA and Western Europe was also subject to change during the 1990s: While the United States initially assumed the position of the actual West and the leading model of modernity, this perception changes in the second half of the decade – due to fears of American global military and economic dominance, disappointed hopes for cooperation and the social dislocations caused by economic "shock therapy" – and becomes increasingly negative. Conversely, the EU is at the same time increasingly accorded the role of a "positive" West, to which Russia seeks at least partial alignment.[81]

In any case, questions concerning the nature of the "West", its significance for Russia, Russia's own position and the desirable options for the development of this large country – whether on the Western trail or on its own distinct path – are relevant to this day, and it can be safely assumed that they will continue to occupy Russia for the foreseeable future.

80 K. Lebedewa, Neoslawophile Tendenzen in der russischen Gegenwartskultur als Seismograph von Modernisierungskonflikten, in: Erhard Hexelschneider (ed.), Russland und Europa. Historische und kulturelle Aspekte eines Jahrhundertproblems. Leipzig 1995, 303–313; A. Kassianova, Russia: Still Open to the West? Evolution of the State Identity in the Foreign Policy and Security Discourse, in: Eurofpe-Asia Studies 53 (2001), 6 (Sept.), 821–839., h. 824-825, 829, 835; E. Kingston-Mann, In Search (note 30), 190-194.

81 See ibid.; A. Kassianova, Russia (note 80), 830, 833-836; J.-Ch. Romer, Russia and Europe: 1944–2004, in: M. A. Lipkin (ed.), Rossiia i zapad: istoricheskii opyt XIX–XX vekov. Moscow 2008, 57–59, S. 58-59.