THE GROWTH OF CITIES IN PRE-SOVIEI RUSSIA

by

DAVID J. M. HOOSON

SLAVIC AND EAST EUROPEAN SERIES

Center for Slavic and East European Studies
Institute of International Studies
University of California
Berkeley, California  94720
Reprint No. 305
The Growth of Cities in Pre-Soviet Russia

DAVID J. M. HOOSON

In spite of the unprecedented speed and volume of urbanization of the U.S.S.R. since the late 1920s, it is only in the present decade that the urban population has begun to outnumber the rural on the national scene. At the outset of the present century, and even in 1926, more than 80 per cent of the people of Russia were living in rural areas—much the same situation as prevails over most of southern Asia today—and a considerable proportion even of the town-dwellers were in reality peasants.

However, while city life only involved a small minority of the people of pre-Soviet (or say, pre-1928) Russia directly, it is clear that the cities had an importance in the country out of all proportion to their population. As in other predominantly rural societies they were centres of innovation as well as power. Even more pertinent to the understanding of the increasingly urban geographical pattern of the Soviet Union is the fact that most of the important cities of today have their roots in the pre-Soviet period.

These roots, and their varying rates and conditions of growth, form the subject of this essay, which is intended to complement the study of the phenomenal spread of urbanization in the Soviet planned period, by Professor Chauncy D. Harris in the present volume. Most attention will be directed to the last half-century of Tsarist Russia, partly because of the paucity of accurate information before then but mainly because this period saw a remarkable resurgence in economic activity, territorial expansion and city growth. It will obviously be necessary to delve back into earlier periods in search of the origins of particular cities, as well as carry over to the first decade of Soviet rule, before the Five-year plans were imposed.

As in the case of much of the work of Professor Gilbert, my old tutor whom I wish to honour here, the emphasis will be on the changing historical and regional contexts of city growth and will conclude with individual studies of some of the cities which possess particular significance. The emphasis will be placed on ‘situation’ (or relative location) rather than the details of site, and no attempt will be made to discuss the internal differentiation of functions or the morphology of particular cities.
The Growth of Cities in Pre-Soviet Russia

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Before the industrial, urban and transport revolutions of the second half of the nineteenth century, the towns of Russia were small—only St. Petersburg and Moscow had come to contain more than 100,000 people—and most of them had been founded several centuries earlier.

The early period

Before the Slavs had made themselves felt in the forests of European Russia cities of considerable importance had risen and fallen within the area of the present Soviet Union. These were in the southern dry zone on the margins of the great ancient civilizations of China, India, and the Near East. They included Afrosiab, the precursor of Samarkand, in the third millennium B.C., and oasis cities like Khiva, in Middle Asia, route-centres such as Tiflis in Transcaucasia and the Greco-Roman colonies on the northern Black Sea coast.¹

The first Russian or Slavic towns made their appearance in the three or four centuries of relatively stable conditions preceding the traumatic Mongol invasion of 1240, which laid waste most of them. In the first stage it was the availability of good farming land, then coupled with good fishing, which determined the formation of the first pockets of relatively dense settlement, separated by large stretches of forest or swamp, and thus the location of the towns.² The latter early assumed the role of military and administrative bases for the local rulers, with a fortified kremlin, usually on higher ground, around which the 'suburbs' (posads) of the artisans huddled, with the beginnings of the concentric pattern, with radial streets, so typical of many of the long-established Russian cities today, such as Moscow, Smolensk or Nizhni Novgorod (Gorky).

These towns were therefore scattered through the wooded steppe and the better parts of the mixed forests, along a south-west–north-east axis from the upper Dniester to the confluence of the Volga and Oka rivers. They were hemmed in by the Poles, Lithuanians, Swedes and Germans of the Baltic approaches on the north-west and by the open steppe with its nomadic tribes on the south-east. When commerce became all-important, those towns which found themselves on the main converging river routes,

¹ More detail on some of these towns, by one of the leading Soviet archaeologists, may be found in A. L. Mongait, Archaeology in the U.S.S.R. (translated and adapted by M. W. Thompson), Penguin, 1961.
² On these towns, see M. Tikhomirov, 1959, The Towns of Ancient Rus. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow.
such as Kiev, Novgorod or Smolensk, were enabled to expand rapidly in size, wealth and influence. On the other hand, those like Rostov and Suzdal, which were sited away from the major river-routes, inevitably declined under the competition, even though they had previously built up much power and wealth.

Kiev was the earliest ('Mother') of the Russian cities (probably founded in the ninth century) and in the early thirteenth century, on the eve of the Mongol invasion, was apparently much the most populous of them. It is also the only one of the dozen or so largest towns of that day which has regained a position among the largest of the Soviet Union at present (and this to some extent as a result of its ancient symbolic significance).

The rise of Muscovy and the Empire

The fall of Kiev was followed by a northerly shift in the centre of gravity of the Russian people to the forest region between the upper Volga and the Oka and led to the gaining of supremacy by Moscow, which was centrally placed within this world. During the long drawn-out expansion of Moscow's dominions from the fifteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries, many new types of towns grew up. Gradually, as the security of the state became established, the old pattern of 'Kremlins' and wooden fortifications gave way to administrative centres with stone buildings, central square and cathedral. However, the new settlements along the middle and lower Volga and later in Siberia and the Kazakh steppes, following on the defeat of the Kazan Tatars in the mid-sixteenth century, still had to be stockaded against the forays of the remaining nomads.

The eighteenth century, ushered in with Peter the Great's reforming presence, saw the appearance of many new types of towns in the Russian realm. The most spectacular of these was the planned foundation of St. Petersburg in 1703 as the new capital, on previously unoccupied land and for a deliberate national purpose—precursor of other cases from Washington D.C. to Brasilia. Such was the preferential treatment lavished on it by the Tsars that by the end of the century it had become as large as Moscow, which for several centuries had been the beneficiary of a growing and rich Empire. New mining cities were also founded in the Urals, while the older textile towns of the upper Volga underwent notable expansion in the early nineteenth century.

Some novel types of cities became incorporated into the Russian Empire following its westward and southward conquests, such as medieval trading cities of the Baltic like Riga, partly Jewish cities like Vilna or later 'Asian' cities like Tiflis and Tashkent, on to which the
Russians grafted their own 'quarters'. In the open steppe lands bordering the Black Sea ('New Russia') ports like Odessa sprang up, as well as regional centres for the new farmlands and the resort cities of the Black Sea coast and the 'spas' of the North Caucasus.

Thus the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries saw a remarkable diversification of the types and functions of cities within the boundaries of the Russian Empire, while the ancient and modern capitals—Moscow and St. Petersburg—had come to stand out as very much larger than the rest. With the final ebb of the nomads, some cities had been re-founded after the long hiatus following the Mongol invasion. In general, as far as can be determined, however, the growth of cities had not been particularly vigorous—certainly not compared with what came after. The importance of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries lay in the immense broadening of the geographical scope and variety of the Empire. Firstly, the majority of the Russian peasants had come to live on the long-coveted black-earth of the southern part of European Russia, instead of on the much poorer forest soils to the north. Secondly, the beginnings of modernization and industrialization, especially in metals and textiles, under Peter the Great and his successors, had created at least some foundations on which to build later. Thirdly, there was the widespread incorporation of diverse non-Russian peoples, some with a long urban tradition, in the Baltic region, Transcaucasia and Turkestan. A broad stage was set for a general acceleration in the growth of Russian cities.

**The period of rapid urbanization**

In the middle of the nineteenth century, agrarian feudalism still reigned and the cities still counted for relatively little in the life of the Russian people. Only one in ten of them lived in towns of any sort and there were still only two cities of over 100,000 inhabitants in the country (excluding Poland). The radical nature of the subsequent change is indicated by the fact that by 1913 the two had become 25, or over 30 if Siberia, Caucasus and Turkestan were included, while Moscow and St. Petersburg had each reached about two million. The cities had by then become divorced from the country to an unprecedented extent and reflected the new locus of power and innovation, the influence of the railways and the building of industrial foundations.

Soon after the mid-century some powerful and significant events signalled and precipitated the entry of Russia into its industrializing and modernizing phase—notably the disastrous Crimean War and the
emancipation of the serfs. Before then Russian industry had been technically backward and, except for some of the iron and textile industries, largely organized on a handicraft and cooperative (artel) basis. The lack of mobility of labour and capital, poor communications and lack of contact with, and confidence in the outside world, all inhibited the kind of urban-industrial development which was going on in Western Europe. For instance, at the time of the Crimean War there was only one important rail line in the country—and that just opened—from St. Petersburg to Moscow.

The sixties and seventies saw some policy changes which had far-reaching effects on industrial and urban growth. The notable ones were currency reform, encouragement of the entry of foreign capital and technicians, lowering of tariffs and—largely stimulated by these—a massive programme of railway building in European Russia. However the really remarkable pace of growth began in 1892 with the appointment of Sergei Witte as minister of finance and communications, and lasted, through some vicissitudes, right up to the end of the Tsarist era. The most spectacular geographical change during this period was the threading of railways across Siberia to the Pacific, to Middle Asia and the Caucasus, as well as the filling out of the European Russian network from the White Sea to the Black Sea and the Baltic to the Caspian. All this had the effect of re-strengthening the nodal situation of Moscow and secondly of enabling the rapid development of heavy industry in the Southern Ukraine to take place. Incidentally these developments were mutually stimulating, e.g. over half of all the finished metal goods produced in the Ukraine in 1898 consisted of rails. Russian industrial production as a whole doubled in the decade following 1892 and had almost doubled again by the First World War. Non-agricultural freight had become much more important than agricultural on the railways and all this reflected the growing importance of the cities. They were however full of peasants at one remove—a situation like that of England a century or so before—although a skilled proletariat was also gradually becoming divorced from the direct ties of interest with the villages. As elsewhere the cities were the centres of change—both peaceful and violent—and their location and relative growth were sensitive indicators of changing geographical values.

2 A lively account of this remarkable man and his times is T. H. Von Laue, 1963, Sergei Witte and the Industrialization of Russia, Columbia University Press.

4 Ibid., p.66.
THE PATTERN OF CITY GROWTH 1870–1926

The last half century of Tsarist rule saw not only the spectacular growth of particular cities but also the rapid multiplication of the numbers of sizeable cities on the map of Russia. Whereas there were estimated to be only 15 cities of over 50,000 in the Russian Empire in 1870, there were a hundred such cities by the eve of the First World War. In both years exactly one-third of these cities were over 100,000, with two-thirds between 50,000 and 100,000; by contrast it may be noted that today in the Soviet Union the numbers of cities in each category are about equal.

Before considering the course of city growth in Russia after 1870, we should remind ourselves of two points: (a) that the basic shift of peasant population from north to south within European Russia had been effected before that date, (b) that we will restrict our attention to cities with over 50,000 inhabitants at each period (which means that our purview takes in no more than one in ten of the total Russian population).

In a relative sense the late seventies and early eighties were rather a slack period between the more hectic periods of the sixties and nineties. In the sixties railways had been pushed southward to link Kiev, Kharkov and the new Black Sea ports as well as the Baltic, to Central Russia. The map of cities for 1885 (Fig. 52) still seems to be weighted towards the north and centre of European Russia, compared with the pattern with which we are familiar in the Soviet Union today. St. Petersburg was appreciably larger than Moscow, and had grown more quickly since 1870. Kiev and Kharkov had grown more rapidly than any of the other sizeable cities of the country, more than doubling in the preceding decade, but they were still no larger than Kazan or Riga—much smaller cities today. The towns of Vilna (Vilnius) and Kishinev, with their predominantly Jewish populations, had also been larger than Kiev and Kharkov in 1870 but had thenceforth begun relatively to decline. Odessa, though still much the largest city south of Moscow, was also experiencing a slowdown compared with its previous and subsequent growth rates, but smaller cities recently touched by the railways such as Rostov, Voronezh and Orël, and

1 The only official population census taken for the whole of the Russian Empire was in 1897, and the first Soviet census in 1926. Figures for other years used in this chapter, and particularly as the basis for the maps, have been derived from local government estimates. These have been reproduced in part in the various volumes of the Statesman's Yearbook from 1872 to 1916 and have been checked here against other authoritative Russian sources of the time, such as F. P. Semënov, Geografichesko-Statisticheski Sbornik Rossiskoi Imperii (5 vols., Moscow 1863–85) and, for the Soviet period F. Lorimer, The Population of the Soviet Union, Geneva (League of Nations), 1946.
Volga towns like Astrakhan, Samara (Kuybyshev) and Nizhnii Novgorod (Gorky) had received a new lease of life. Baku had not yet made its appearance as a place of importance, however, whilst to the east of the Volga-Caspian the only city in the Russian Empire to exceed 50,000 was Tashkent, the newly acquired centre for Russian Turkestan.
The Growth of Cities in Pre-Soviet Russia

The end of the century

The vigorous development of railways and industry and the further economic extensions to the south and east, associated with Witte's direction of affairs, had made some impact on the pattern of city growth by the census of 1897 (Fig. 53). The most remarkable growth was experienced by Yekaterinoslav (Dnepropetrovsk) on the Dnieper bend and Baku on the

Fig. 53. City growth in European Russia, 1883–1897.
The Growth of Cities in Pre-Soviet Russia

Caspian, each of which trebled its population in the fourteen years, the former becoming a rail-river junction between the newly developing coal and iron workings, and the latter reflecting its meteoric rise to become the world's most important oil producer at the time.

St. Petersburg, with one and a quarter million people as against Moscow's million, continued to benefit not only from its capital status but also its port function at a time of growing international trade. Odessa's experience of almost doubling its population (to reach 400,000) during this short period reflects this too, as does the rapid growth of Riga and its outport (Liepaja), and Rostov-on-Don.

Administrative centres for the newly settled margins of the country, such as Yekaterinodar (Krasnodar), Orenburg and Irkutsk (Fig. 54), and non-Russian colonial areas, such as Tashkent and Tiflis (Tbilisi), also grew rapidly. The ultimate boundaries of the Russian empire had more or less been reached in Middle Asia by 1897, while the Trans-Siberian railway had crossed the Ob, on its way to the Pacific.

The eve of the First World War

The momentum begun in the early nineties was carried on, even accelerated, during the last two decades of Tsarist rule. By its conclusion railways connected all parts of the country, from Archangel and Murmansk to Tashkent and Baku; and from Poland to Vladivostok. A modernized iron and steel industry had got under way in the Ukraine and the agricultural base had been greatly extended in Siberia.

In some ways this strengthening of the internal economy and increasing nodality produced by the railways probably benefited important inland regional and administrative centres more than the ports. For the first time, perhaps, since its foundation as the Tsar's capital, St. Petersburg failed to grow at quite as rapid a pace as Moscow, from 1897 to 1913, though it can hardly be said to have stagnated, having by 1913 a population of over two millions, with Moscow slightly less (Fig. 55). Kiev grew at a faster rate than any other town, from 250,000 to 620,000 in those sixteen years or nearly three times as rapidly as Odessa, and may have reflected the sudden coming-of-age of the Ukraine in agriculture, industry, trade and also nationalism and to be, like Rome, symbolizing the link between an ancient past and a vibrant present. Other cities which at least doubled their populations in this period were the cotton textile town of Ivanovo (this was the single most important industry in Russia in 1913), Baku, Tomsk in Siberia and Vladivostok on the Pacific (Fig. 56). In fact this was a buoyant period for city growth everywhere—no city in Russia registered
a decrease, as some did in the preceding period and many did in the succeeding one. Even a country town like Berdichev, which had stagnated for most of the second half of the nineteenth century, gained by 45 per cent during this decade and a half before the First World War.6

6 Only the major cities can be mentioned here. For a comprehensive and scholarly study of the smaller towns at this period, see V. P. Semenov Tian-Shansky, 1910, Gorod i Derzhava v Evropskoi Rossi. Zapisiki Imperatorskago Russkago Geograficheskago Obshchestva po Otdel'nosti Statistikii, 10, No. 2. St. Petersburg.
The impact of war, revolution and the early Soviet years

The effect of the few years following 1917 on many of the cities of the new Soviet Union was nothing short of catastrophic. The gradual recovery which took place between the ending of the Civil War in 1921 and the census of 1926 masked the full depths of the earlier years. For instance, Leningrad’s population reportedly dropped from 2½ millions in 1917 to 700,000 in 1920 (when many wooden houses on the outskirts were torn down and used for fuel)7 and then climbed to 1½ millions by 1926. Although the planned developments of the Soviet period had not begun by 1926, the widely divergent fortunes of particular cities in the first decade after the revolution already presaged in important ways the changing values and orientation of later Soviet policies.

In general—and there was much that was chaotic in this period, to say the least—there was a marked tendency for cities near the new truncated western boundary, seaports and some of the older regional centres, to show the greatest losses (Fig. 57). Leningrad, as it had become named, bore the greatest loss in an absolute sense, being less populous by over half a million in 1926 than it had been thirteen years before. By contrast, Moscow, having regained its capital status after two centuries, had quickly become larger than Leningrad, beginning the differentiation which by today has made it twice the size of its former rival. Kiev, which had grown phenomenally in the last thirty years of Tsarism with the Ukrainian economic and cultural upsurge, declined sharply after the revolution and civil war (in which it was occupied for a time by the Poles) whereas Kharkov, which had grown less quickly before the revolution, was made the capital of Soviet Ukraine and experienced sudden acceleration of its population and industry. Odessa, the wonder-city of nineteenth-century ‘New Russia’, lost heavily after the Revolution with the collapse of international trade, while Rostov-on-Don, the port city more intimately connected with the developing Donets coal and steel complex, grew vigorously. The cotton textile city of Ivanovo, north-east of Moscow was severely depopulated after having been among the fastest-growing towns of the late nineteenth century, while more favoured engineering cities like Gorky (formerly Nizhni Novgorod) and Stalino (formerly Yuzovka), or oil-cities like Baku and Grozny, doubled their populations in this early Soviet period. Some older regional centres like Kazan, Tiflis or even Tomsk and Krasnoyarsk in Siberia declined, while newer centres such as Novosibirsk (formerly Novonikolayevsk) and Khabarovsk grew rapidly.

Fig. 57. City growth and losses in European Russia, 1913-1926.

Fig. 58). Cities along the Baltic coast, most notably Riga, which had trebled its population in the three decades before 1913 as an integral part of the Russian trade system, as well as such cities as Vilna and Kishinev, were placed outside the Soviet Union. Altogether this was a period of profound changes in the fortunes of many cities, often disrupting and deflecting the patterns of growth established in the late Tsarist era and constituting an uncertain transition phase on the way to the infinitely greater changes to come.
THE LOCATION OF SOME SIGNIFICANT CITIES

At this point it seems desirable to step aside from the chronology of the growth of Russian cities in general in the immediately pre-Soviet decades and consider, in particular, the origin and location of some of the more important cities whose names have recurred in the narrative. Although local site advantages may have their significance in respect of the precise locating of a city, the wider situation, or relative location, in the context of the other significant settlements of each period, normally looms much larger in the quest for an explanation of its changing fortunes. Apart from a few industrial cities based on a mineral resource, virtually all the cities which were most prominent in the geography of the last fifty years of Tsardom, and are so today, had their origins in the eighteenth century at least, and in many cases several centuries before.

Moscow and St. Petersburg

These two cities are obviously the most important of the pairs which will be discussed here. In some ways they represent fundamentally orientations, much as do Peking and Shanghai in the history of China: the old Russian, inward-looking Moscow and the deliberately planted St. Petersburg, 'window on the West'. Although Moscow had enjoyed undisputed leadership among Russian cities for at least three centuries beforehand, such was the power of the Tsar Peter and of his new orientation that in a few decades of the eighteenth century St. Petersburg had overtaken Moscow in numbers of population and kept its lead right up to the Bolshevik Revolution. Thenceforth, significantly enough, Moscow regained its capital status and rebuilt its supremacy in most other respects.

Moscow's original rise to power in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was contingent on the following geographical circumstances. (a) Since the Mongol invasion in the previous century had ruled out Kiev and other centres in the better soil of the wooded steppe zone for Slavic settlement, most of the Russian population had come to be located between the upper Volga and the Oka. (b) Within this Russian river-orientated world, Moscow had a more favourable combination of centrality and accessibility than any other city. (c) As the Muscovite horizon broadened, it was found that the original nodality within a limited world was transferrable to the whole river network of European Russia. This favoured the concentration of trade, industry, population and military power and created a Moscow-centred network, with railway eventually superseding river, through which the later military and economic expansion of the Empire was
largely organized, even during the period of St. Petersburg's tenure as capital.

St. Petersburg, on the other hand, had none of these attributes of slow, organic growth and nodal position in the country. From its foundation in 1703, it was a more artificial phenomenon, symbolising the successful outcome of Russia's long struggle for an outlet on the Baltic and her intention of entering thenceforth into the modernizing world of Western Europe. These ideas transcended the unattractive bleakness of the chosen site, the cost of cutting water-links with the Volga and its separation from the bulk of the Russian population. It became Russia's premier seaport at the time of the country's greatest expansion of international trade and suffered deeply when this dimension, as well as the capital function, was cut off after the Revolution.

Kiev and Kharkov

Within the Ukrainian context these two cities display somewhat similar contrasts to those of Moscow and Leningrad. Kiev—the ancient 'Mother of Russia', built on a defensive high bank of the Dnieper, depending on a far-flung trading network of rivers and now, after many vicissitudes, once again the capital of the Ukraine. Kharkov—not on a navigable river, but the product essentially of the age of the railway and Western-stimulated heavy industry, came to be a rival to Kiev from both the political and economic points of view. They are both in the fertile wooded steppe but, although this was an important factor in the rise of ancient Kiev, it was its position just below the confluence of several river routes leading from the Baltic to the Mediterranean which mainly determined the extent of its size and wealth. When the great riches of the Ukraine were fully developed in the nineteenth century, Kiev was rejuvenated with its aura of ancient greatness, as the 'Rome' of this new entity. Kharkov, on the other hand, 'found itself' when the main rail route from Moscow to the new Donets coal and steel base and the Black Sea, passed through it.

Odessa and Rostov-on-Don

Both of these ports were founded in the late eighteenth century in 'New Russia' and each of them trebled its population over the last three decades of the Tsarist era. However, although they are of roughly the same size today, Odessa was three times as large as Rostov at the beginning of this century. The difference may be generally explained by the fact that, before the industrial and energy developments in the Donets basin and
Baku in the late nineteenth century, Odessa’s situation was more suitable for taking full advantage of the first flush of New Russia’s activity in respect of large-scale wheat farming and the expansion of international trade. The port was wisely sited between the Dnieper-Bug and Dniester estuaries, thereby avoiding their considerable problems of silting and icing. The wheat hinterland was very accessible, first by caravans of oxcarts and, after 1866, by the railways, and so were the world’s sea-lanes, including eventually the Suez Canal, which stimulated industries based on tropical raw materials. With the easterly shift of the economy in the late nineteenth century, Rostov was able to take advantage of a focal situation between the Caucasus, the Volga, Central Russia and the industrializing Ukraine, and of its site at the lowest practicable bridging point on the Don. It was thus much better able than Odessa to maintain its resilience in the new climate of national self-sufficiency rather than an international economy, which followed the Bolshevik Revolution.

Tiflis (Tbilisi) and Tashkent

These are ancient cities, both probably about fifteen centuries old, which possessed situations focal and dominant enough within their respective worlds—Transcaucasia and Middle Asia (Turkestan)—to make them attractive as administrative centres for their Russian conquerors in the nineteenth century. Each had trebled its population in the three decades up to 1913 because of this, an influx of Russians and a lowering of the death-rate. Most fundamentally, a perusal of maps of population and transport show both cities to be at an optimum point of accessibility to most of the important population clusters of their somewhat self-contained and isolated regions.

Some other cases

Space does not allow for similar individual commentary on all the cities which deserve it. However, several others of particular significance should at least be mentioned at this point. (a) The Old Baltic port of Riga at the mouth of the Western Dvina, which quickly became a thriving outlet for Central Russia in the nineteenth century and then, after the Revolution, found itself cut off from its erstwhile hinterland. (b) The largely Jewish and non-Russian cities of the western margins, such as

---

Kishinev and Vilna (Wilno) which periodically lost population through pogroms and emigration (Kishinev was actually smaller in 1913 than it had been in 1883) and which were placed outside the U.S.S.R. after the Revolution. (c) The new industrial cities of the Ukraine, notably Yekaterinoslav (Dnepropetrovsk) and Yuzovka (later Stalino and Donetsk), as well as Siberian cities like Novonikolayevsk (Novosibirsk) and the Caspian oil city of Baku, were the precursors, in particular and as to type, of the 'all-Soviet' cities to come. They were the ones which grew at a faster rate than any others in the country in the first quarter of the present century. (d) We may contrast some established Russian cities in the densely peopled rural belt of the wooded steppe, such as Orel and Berdichev; smaller ports like Kherson and Nikolayev which were overshadowed by Odessa; or the old Tatar stronghold of Kazan, which displayed a stagnant quality at a time of generally rapid increase of most of the country's cities.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Earlier in this essay the growth of cities was analysed according to a series of short-term periods between 1870 and 1926. By way of summary we will now consider the cumulative growth pattern for the last thirty years of Tsarism, first by themselves and then with the addition of the first Soviet decade—always keeping in mind the limited reliability of the estimates which we have to use.

The last three Tsarist decades

In broad terms, about half of the Russian cities doubled their population between 1883 and 1913 (Fig. 59, p. 274), a quarter trebled or more, while the other quarter failed to double. The 'average' cities included St. Petersburg and Moscow, and most of the others in this category were within their orbit, i.e. the longer-settled Baltic, Northwest and Central regions, together with Volga towns such as Samara, Saratov and Astrakhan.

The cities which at least trebled their population during this period may be grouped into three categories: (a) the large ports of Odessa, Riga and Rostov-on-Don, reflecting the increasing buoyancy of Russia's international trading; (b) the ancient administrative centres of regions which were being rejuvenated in terms of economic development and which were well-placed within their regions—notably Kiev, Tiflis and Tashkent; (c) purely industrial cities, such as Yekaterinoslav, Yuzovka,
Ivanovo, Baku, and several others in the Urals, Siberia or the Kuban. The cities which showed a slower-than-average growth (less than 50 per cent over the period) were in the somewhat crowded rural wooded-steppe zone, such as Kazan, Penza, Orel, Berdichev and Kishinev—the latter not having gained population at all over the period.

The effect of adding the first Soviet decade

It is interesting to note the net effect which the convulsions of war, revolution and their aftermath had on the cumulative city growth pattern between 1883 and 1926. Not surprisingly, the newer industrial cities such as Yekaterinoslav (renamed Dnipropetrovsk), Yuzovka (renamed Stalino) and Novonikolayevsk (renamed Novosibirsk) figured even more prominently in the group which at least trebled their populations than they did in the purely Tsarist period. Nizhni Novgorod (renamed Gorky) joined this group, while Rostov-on-Don enhanced its position within it. Kiev, Tashkent and Tiflis also retained their positions in this rapid-growth category, even though the latter had slipped slightly. Moscow, Kharkov and Samara (Kuybyshev) enhanced their growth-rate-positions compared with the pre-war period, while Leningrad, Odessa and such places as Vitebsk and Minsk suffered a sharp relative decline. Others, such as Riga, Kishinev and Vilna, were excluded altogether from the young Soviet state and grew rather slowly in the interwar period. Some cities, e.g. Orel, Berdichev and Kherson, were smaller in 1926 than they had been in 1883.

In general, in accordance with changing internal and external policies, the ports and some of the smaller cities in rural areas declined while those in the heavy industrial areas of the south and east, as well as Moscow, enhanced their relative standing. This was a straw in the wind for some of the powerful trends in city growth which came later, in the Soviet planned period.

Changes in size-rank since 1913

As we look back, 50 years after the Bolshevik Revolution, it is interesting to note what has happened to the hierarchy of cities in the drastic reshuffle of the Soviet period. In some respects, the order appears rather more

10 Kharkov, which one would expect to be in this category, apparently experienced a considerably slower growth than the average for its group. However, it may be that the 160,000 estimate for 1883 was unusually inaccurate since (a) it indicated a trebling of population since 1870, a faster growth than any other city of the time, and (b) the estimates for various points in the 1880s and 90s were later shown to be almost certainly too high. For example the estimate for 1893 was 196,000 whereas the official 1897 census registered 170,000.
FIG. 59. Growth of cities in European Russia, 1883–1913. Tashkent roughly trebled its population over this period. 1883 population shown only where a city had over 40,000 then. constant than one might expect, involving hardly more radical changes than have occurred in the United States over this period, for example, Moscow and Leningrad are still far larger than any other city, even though they have sharply reversed their status vis-à-vis each other. Other cities whose ranking now is much the same as it was in 1913 include Kiev, Kharkov, Minsk, Voronezh, Kazan, Kalinin (Tver) and, in Asiatic Russia, Tashkent, Irkutsk and Krasnoyarsk.
The Growth of Cities in Pre-Soviet Russia

The cities which have moved up the ladder most strikingly are (a) those industrial centres which were still very young in 1913, such as Yuzovka (Donetsk), Novonikolayevsk (Novosibirsk), or Chelyabinsk; or (b) old towns rejuvenated by engineering industries, notably Nizhnii Novgorod (Gorky); or (b) focal points—from an administration or transport point of view—of newly developing areas, such as Alma Ata, Khabarovsk or Samara (Kuybyshev.) There have also been the entirely new Soviet industrial towns, such as Karaganda, Magnitogorsk, Komsomolsk—to mention only the most famous.

These latter have had the effect, amongst others, of causing many of the older cities to slip rapidly down in the national order of size compared with 1913. The most sharply declining of these are in the agricultural parts of the northern Ukraine and the western marshlands of European Russia, such as Vitebsk, Kremenchug, Zhitomir, Berdichev, Orel and Smolensk. Some, like Vilnius (Vilna) and Kishinev, have regained more resilience lately through being capitals of Republics—a major stimulant to city growth in the Soviet era—but are still well below their 1913 national ranking.

Other types of cities which are now relatively much less important than they were in 1913 are (a) the textile cities of Ivanovo and Yaroslavl and the old iron centre of Tula; (b) large ports like Odessa and Riga and small ones such as Kherson and Liepaja; (c) the Volga cities of Saratov and especially Astrakhan; (d) some of the older cities in Siberia, such as Tomsk, Omsk and Chita. Even Rostov-on-Don and Dnepropetrovsk (Yekaterinoslav) are down slightly—perhaps because of the war and the relative decline of the Ukraine on the national scene since the 1930s.

Growing significance of the past?

The complicated and massive growth of cities in the Soviet period is obviously outside the scope of this essay. However although there are new stars in the Soviet urban firmament, the great majority, whether or not they are getting brighter or dimmer, were there in the Tsarist era, with an already developed personality and momentum. While there may be little future for some of them (Berdichev, for instance, is much the same size as it was in 1870) it seems likely that the individual potential for growth of most of the older cities is still great. The extreme emphasis on heavy industry, neglect of the consumer and planned movements to new centres of coal and steel in the Urals and Siberia, which characterized the Stalin period, have now been reversed to a significant extent. The present tendencies towards expansion of international trade, more attention to
D. J. M. Hooson

consumer goods with a high demand for skilled labour, a greater mobility of labour owing to more affluence, education and freedom of movement and an increased interest—economic and otherwise—in Europe, should favour the renewed growth of such cities as Odessa, Leningrad and Riga, for example. Thus, quite apart from its intrinsic interest, to gain some understanding of the pre-Soviet roots may now be becoming even more necessary to the appreciation of the geographical processes at work in the Soviet cities of today and tomorrow.
INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

DAVID E. APTER,
Director

IVAN VALLIER,
Associate Director

The Institute of International Studies publishes reprints in Comparative International, African, Chinese, Japanese, Latin American, Middle Eastern, Population, South Asian, Southeast Asian, and Slavic and East European Studies. A complete list of such reprints may be obtained from the Institute.

Recent titles in the Reprint Series include:


Monographs published by the Institute include:

Research Series

1. The Chinese Anarchist Movement, by Robert A. Scalapino and George T. Yu. ($1.00)
2. Enigma of the Five Martyrs, by T. A. Hsia. ($1.00)
5. Mexico and Latin American Economic Integration, by Philippe C. Schmitter and Ernst B. Haas. ($1.00)
6. Local Taxation in Tanganyika, by Eugene C. Lee. ($1.00)
7. Birth Rates in Latin America: New Estimates of Historical Trends, by O. Andrew Collver. ($2.50)

Politics of Modernization Series

1. Spanish Bureaucratic-Patrimonialism in America, by Magali Sarfatti. ($1.75)
2. Civil-Military Relations in Argentina, Chile, and Peru, by Liisa North. ($1.50)
3. Notes on the Process of Industrialization in Argentina, Chile, and Peru, by Alcira Leiserson. ($1.50)

Population Monograph Series

1. Return Migration to Puerto Rico, by José Hernández-Alvarez. ($2.00)
3. New Life Tables for Latin American Populations in the Nineteenth and