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# FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIA EDUCATION IN RUSSIA IN THE PERIOD FROM THE 18th CENTURY UP TO THE BEGINNING OF THE 20th CENTURY: A RETROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS

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### Abstract

**Purpose**: Analysis of the formation and development of media education in Russia during the  $18^{th}$  – early  $20^{th}$  centuries. The main emphasis is placed on the formation of media education in Russia at the beginning of the  $20^{th}$  century.

**Methodology:** The methodology is based on an interdisciplinary approach, which was implemented using the content analysis of scientific publications on the topic of research; generalization and analysis of empirical-static data; comparative historical analysis of objectively observed trends and patterns in the formation in Russia at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century of the prototype of the modern media educational environment.

**Results**: From a historical point of view, media education is the process of studying the impact of mass media on public consciousness, perception of reality, as well as on the ability of individuals or social groups to use media educational technologies as part of an increment of individual and collective knowledge;

Media education, representing a new area for interdisciplinary research, is of high practical value to society. This value lies in teaching people new ways of understanding, processing and critically perceiving information.

**Application**: The introduction of media educational technologies in the scientific and educational sphere will allow for better preparation of students and citizens in general for life in the modern information society.

**Novelty/originality**: The article demonstrates that media education is not the result of the transition from an industrial to a post-industrial information society (as is commonly accepted now), but the result of experience that allows for qualified use of mass media (both traditional and modern) for social, economic, scientific and other interactions and in some cases – promotion of the state ideology in the collective consciousness.

Keywords: Media Education, Russia, Mass Media, Content Analysis, Communication Research, Information Industry.

# INTRODUCTION

The subject-matter of the paper is an attempt to answer the questions which are as follows: What is the reason for the country's economic growth? What factors does economic development depend on? These questions remain relevant to the science of economics for several decades, but at the same time, practically the same questions were asked by researchers, scholars, and publicists in previous centuries. Distinguished scholars in the past, such as A. Smith, I. Schumpeter (2008), N. Kondratev (2002), S. Kuznets (1953) and modern scholars (Akaev, 2013; Hirooka, 2006) were trying to define the idea describing the essence of the nation's welfare and national wealth.

Much of a country's welfare lies in the domain of media. In this paper, much attention is paid to media education. The concept of media education emerged in the middle of the 20th century in the USA. Initially, this concept was known under the name of "visual literacy". The first media educators believed that the school should teach children the nonverbal method of communication, i.e. visual methods. Therefore, it is possible to say that this concept stimulated an increased interest in photography, advertising, comics, and later at a higher level of development of visual literacy – in video, television, cinema (Zaznobina, 2000).

The further spread of the idea of media education was also associated with other types of media communication, i.e. advertising, radio, press, the Internet. In this respect, it is possible to talk about media education in relation to various types of media texts.

The focus of the paper is on the Russian media education. The initial stage of domestic media education, similarly to foreign, emerged as the field of audiovisual arts. The theme of the first works on media education, which appeared in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century, was centered on the educational role of cinema. Following the cinema and motion picture films that appeared in the 19th century, the first scientific films about various physical and biological phenomena, e.g. human blood circulation or telegraph arrangement, etc. emerged in Russia.



### **METHODS**

The paper presents the economic analysis of statistical data given in research papers related to the period of the 18th and the beginning of the 20th century. First of all, in the study, the main emphasis is laid on the data published in the works of German statistician and political economist Otto Gubner (1869). These data demonstrate not only the economic and social indicators of the state and development of the Russian Empire but also reflect the administrative structure of the country during its transition from the feudal to the capitalist formation. To compare, other data from different countries are given by means of illustration.

In addition, in the work, there are a lot of historical data published in the works of Russian authors, for example, P.P. Melgunov (1905), M.I. Tugan-Baranovskii (1997), A.S. Lappo-Danilevskii (1890), N.K. Krupskaya (1959), S.O. Kamenev (1926), I. I. Menzhinskaya (1927), S. Kuznets (1953), other researchers and scientists who described this and subsequent historical periods (Mavor, 1925; Gregory, 2014; Dudin, Ivashchenko, Frolova and Abashidze, 2017; Dudin, Bezbakh, Frolova and Galkina, 2018; Floud, 1984).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The current research discovered several important findings. There is much evidence that the difficult development of Russian media education reflected the global development of the media, as well as the specific features of the economic, political, cultural and Russian national component. Media education in the Russian Federation appeared as a response to social needs regarding the development of information space. The genesis of Russian media education began from the time when home wall newspapers began to be created in the 19th century. Right now Russian media education corresponds to the modern conceptual features of the media information worldview.

According to A. Fedorov, a well-known author of works on media education, it is possible to observe three main areas of media education. The main sectors of media education are as follows: the sector for the preparation of intended specialists, e.g. journalists, directors, scriptwriters, filmmakers, actors, film critics, etc.; the sector for the instruction of intended media educators in higher education institutions; The sector of media education in comprehensive educational institutions and universities. In this sector media instruction acts as general education for students, this type of education may be also integrated into traditional subjects or function autonomously (Fedorov, 2001: 38).

The term "media education" emerged in Russian scientific discourse in the 60s-70s of the 20th century. A distinguished Russian scholar I.A. Fateeva stressed the much earlier appearance of the term "media education technologies" compared to the immediate emergence of the concept of "media education". The first ideas of media educational institutions in the Russian Federation appeared at the end of the 18th century. This happened long before the developments of the theoretic approaches to media education abroad and in Russian schools and publishing institutions. Of course, they cannot be fully considered as media education projects, but individually, they became a contributing factor in the achievement of the main goals, which are currently being set up by media education specialists. Such goals are to educate conscious members of society who are capable of analyzing the events around them, characterized by the presence of social activity, the ability to make responsible decisions.

The appearance of newspapers and magazines, as a prototype of media education projects, was associated with the period of the end of the 18th century. Students of privileged educational institutions, such as the Ground Cadet Corps in St. Petersburg, the Noble Guesthouse at the Imperial Moscow University, the Tsarskoye Selo Lyceum, produced their first student publications in Russia. The first appearance of poems and reflections of future well-known public figures, military professionals and poets happened at that time.

The first half of the 19th century was characterized by the appearance in educational institutions of an increasing number of literary circles that issued their own literary magazines and almanacs, most often in handwritten form. According to the researcher I.B. Balashova, their influence was experienced by a number of subsequently famous writers (<u>Balashova</u>, 2007). And by the beginning of the 20th century, the phenomenon of educational publications became very noticeable, therefore the Ministry of Education had to solve the problem of controlling the local educational leadership over them, to actualize the cultural interests of students and prevent them from immersing into the political sphere. This was due to serious factors which were as follows: circles and communities often became propaganda centers for populist ideas that were banned, and later the ideas developed into ideological platforms for a social democratic movement in educational institutions. While their publications are usually given an illegal form, they were informants that distributed wrong ideas (Lebedeva, 2014: 11).

The beginning of the history of educational cinema is attributed to 1896 when the first cinema sessions were held in Russian schools. Since 1900, the Ministry of Education had raised the issue of using films for educational purposes and was actively pursuing a policy of transforming public education. During those years, the country was providing financial support for schools to acquire projection devices and films. Educational institutions were receiving films from specially organized cinema councils. Simultaneously film museums with extensive film libraries were created. It was this time when the first articles and books about the instructional and educational role of cinema appeared.

The appearance and mass distribution of cinema almost immediately attracted the attention of those public and scientific organizations that had previously paid little or no attention to the introduction of cinema into the cultural and educational





process. Only at a certain stage, this initiative was supported by official state structures. The authorities approved and created the departments supplying educational institutions with popular science films. Experts launched the production of domestic visual aids.

The use of projection technology had been known in Russia long before the advent of cinema. In educational institutions there was a long-term practice of working with a "magic lantern", the forerunner of a slide projector. The magic lantern was also used when reading popular lectures. Interestingly, many early film screenings emerged under the guise of educational or popular science activities targeting the propaganda of technical innovations. The propaganda was complemented by the so-called "T pictures". A perfect example is the popular scientific presentations by P.V. Döring (1900). In addition to the demonstration of a cinema film, they also included a series of pictures presented with the help of a projector. The names of these projections were as follows: "Polar Expedition of Dr. F. Nansen", "Andree and his expedition in a balloon to the North Pole", "East India" (accompanied by reading), "The spread of civilization by Russians in Central Asia" and others. There were also special children's performances. They were often attended by pupils of urban schools and colleges accompanied by their teachers. The organizers also offered charity sessions for the pupils of orphanages. Such meetings became a regular practice from the first years of stationary cinema houses. For such events, the program was carefully selected and included the best movies from genre films, comic films and fairy plays.

By the time of P.V. Döring's presentations, the history of real educational film screenings in Russia had totaled more than ten years. According to the book by E. Samuylenko and L. N. Nikonov "Cinema and Its Enlightening Role", twice published before October 1917, "as soon as cinema appeared in Russia, the Permanent Commission on Technical Education of the Imperial Russian Technical Society arranged in a special part of Saint-Petersburg named "Salt Town" sessions called "live photography" which were organized for schoolchildren. The sessions took place during two winters of 1896–1897 and 1897–1898. The sessions' programs also included the first films of Lumiere brothers. Some film presentations were accompanied by the lectures of V.I. Sreznevski and I.I. Kovalsky who used a special device of "live photography". There was much evidence that the lectures and demonstrations were a huge success, the lecture halls were always full of people." Then, with the development of cinema, such shows ceased to be popular, although they were still held (Sirotin, 2009: 20).

Since 1908, "scientific cinema" appeared in Russian regions. The opinion of supporters of scientific cinema was almost unanimous, "live photography opening up for us a new field of influential ideas, with the rational management of the business, would be the first assistant of the school ... Unfortunately, a huge number of pictures ... had no instructional or educational value. Meanwhile, cinema makes it possible to discuss geography, history, the best works of literature, various branches of economic activities ... If any of the cinema makers from such Russian towns as Penza specialized in that sort of serious and enlightening films, definitely, his success would be inevitable".

Meanwhile, intelligent cinema in Russia found increasing support from the masses and government institutions. As reported in one newspaper dated May 16, 1910, the Council of the Ministry of Public Education approved the proposal of the trustee of the Moscow school district to introduce their cinematographic apparatuses in all secondary schools of the Ministry of Education. The films for public presentation had to be provided on a special list and approved by the Council. In early 1911, the question of the distribution of cinema in schools was also considered by the Moscow City Government, which determined the expenditures for these purposes. However, the development of democratic educational cinema was still hampered by the insecurity and high cost of cinema equipment and the lack of a sufficient number of popular science films.

The events of 1917 led to fundamental changes in the entire Russian state system, including the education system. After the revolution, the new leaders of the country restored (rather than created anew) the already relatively well-developed organization of the "enlightenment" cinema. School and children's film shows of various nature, gradual cinema introduction to countries and villages, film lectures were used by the Bolsheviks and the Soviet government. Private schools were eliminated. The ideas of the aesthetic education of V.S. Solovyov, N.A. Berdyaev and other outstanding scientists of Russia were already unacceptable for the new "revolutionary consciousness". They were replaced by the ideas of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the values of the class struggle. The majority of the country's population was illiterate, so it was necessary to find an effective means of propaganda and agitation, which the cinema succeeded to offer (Chelysheva, 2014: 67).

People of those times reacted to educational films ambiguously. Some people considered it a fashionable hobby, some of them - a way to stupefy people, and some - a means to unite people of different ages. Nevertheless, every year interest in film making among the opposing sides was on the rise, and the process of film education developed until 1917.

In 1917-1918 the idea of using cinema solely for the purpose of public education was the basis for the nationalization of cinema companies by the Soviet authorities. On August 17, 1919, as reported in the Golos Pravdi (Voice of Truth) newspaper of August 9, the out-of-school department of the People's Commissariat of Education decided to organize a Day of Soviet Propaganda throughout Russia dedicated to ... "the widespread mass propaganda of out-of-school education". The newspaper provided some figures by means of illustration. They were as follows: in the first half of 1918, when the power had already passed into the hands of the Soviets, the estimate of expenditures on public education amounted to 466 million rubles. It was 2.5 times more than in 1917. In the second half of the year, it increased by 12



times compared to 1917, and in the first half of 1919 it was already about 4 billion rubles, i.e., the cost of public education was one of the largest public costs in the young Soviet country. At the same time, more than 50 million rubles were spent on out-of-school education, i.e. the organization of libraries, village reading rooms, people's houses and universities, workers' clubs, etc. (Sirotin, 2009: 23).

After 1917, the authorities sought to subordinate the audience to the ideology of the state. Priority was given to the practical aspects of media education based on the Marxist theory of the press, which was limited to the strict subordination of the press to party committees that ensured the ideology of the newspapers. The addressee (reader, listener, viewer) had to perceive the information in accordance with the ideology of the ruling party.

It was at this time that the state recognized the important role of the mass media and propaganda in education and upbringing, and revealed its potential for shaping the type of personality necessary for building socialism. The role of the press in raising such a personality, in the formation of the "revolutionary activity of the masses", was described in detail in the writings of the leader of the Soviet state, V. I. Lenin. The development of the social activity of the working people largely depended on how the press performed the functions of a collective agitator, propagandist, and organizer.

The turbulent revolutionary years of the 20th century suspended the history of Russian media education, but only for a few years. Since 1919, a new round of its formation began. It was the time when the first film school in the world appeared in the USSR (now it is known under the Russian name of VGIK which encompasses the idea of all-Russian State Institute of cinematography). At the same time, Soviet leaders established the Higher Institute of Photography and Photographic Engineering. Each institution has influenced both the production and distribution of films and the preparation of film professionals.

It is a well-known fact that in Russia for a long time media education was under ideological pressure and access to films, TV shows, books, newspapers, etc. was hampered by censorship motives. However, it has existed in Russia for nearly 90 years. The appearance of the first works on media education, dedicated to the educational role of cinema, corresponds to the beginning of the 20th century. The events of 1917 in Russia resulted in the entire change of the state system, including the system of education. Since most people in the country were illiterate, it was necessary to find easy and effective propaganda tools. It was decided to use the cinema industry as such a tool (Chelysheva, 2014: 67).

The upheavals of the socio-political form, which were caused by the October Revolution in 1917, had a tremendous impact on the development of Russian education. As a result, the Soviet government urgently needed to resolve the issue of a radical transformation of the educational system, the bases of which were the new principles of the country's socio-political life. As a result, in the 1920s, networks of film clubs, film and photo studios, and children's and young journalists' societies began to emerge. The Soviet government established the Soviet Cinema Society of Friends. It was involved in school cinema issues and scientifically interpreted the problems associated with film education. Groups of young students published newspapers, magazines and other mass media press. The main components of media education in the country in the 1920s were cinema clubs, the network of "young journalists" circles and photo studios for amateur photographers.

Since 1925, the work of the Soviet Cinema Society of Friends was intensified. The Society opened its branches in many places. Society activists sought to purchase cameras for filming the local chronicles. At that time, about 50 Society's branches functioned in the capital of Russia (Ilichev and Nashchekin, 1986). Cinema and photo media education programs were distributed in regular educational institutions at that time.

Schools on the outskirts of Moscow, in November-December 1926, conducted a questionnaire about the frequency of cinema-going among students. The survey indicated that 88 % of students attended cinema more or less systematically, with 13 % of students attending cinema at least 8 times a month or more, up to 24 times a month (Sirotin, 2009: 27).

In 1927, cinema experts decided to introduce a children's film work course to the program of pedagogical technical schools. It was officially launched in 1927. The Capital Institute of extracurricular work set itself with the task to develop organizational forms, content, and methods of mass work with children in cinema, to study children's needs, to create cinema schools, the networks of cinemas for children with special staff called film educators (Menzhinskaya, 1927: 5).

Also, this period is characterized by the parallel development of media education for schoolchildren and young people using press materials. Journalists developed numerous newspapers and magazines organizing a variety of young journalists' unions and school associations. "Young journalists" and "children's journalists" were trained by professional journalists to work with the text.

In the early 20s staff members started to produce wall newspapers in many schools, universities, industrial enterprises, army units, and collective farms. Such wall newspapers were a part of amateur creative activity; they were made in most cases on a paper sheet and, as a rule, targeted the themes of holidays or current events. Amateur art, often practiced in an individual form, was linked to a social institution. There were significant changes in the form of the wall newspaper. The proliferation of wall newspapers as a mass cultural phenomenon in Russia was associated with the general democratization of the print sphere in the era of the New Economic Policy (NEP). During this period, there were no general requirements for the design of wall newspapers, despite the requirements to put into the headline of the





newspaper the words that later became a very good slogan "Workers of all countries, unite!" Another important requirement was to provide the name of the issuing organization, and the editorial board.

In May 1924, the 13th Congress of the All-Soviet Union Communist Party took place. At this Congress, communists discussed the organization of wall newspapers. This discussion resulted in the period of holding numerous wall newspapers' country contests at the levels of cities, republics, all-Union level, etc. After this, the wall newspaper format became very popular in the USSR. It was practiced in students' groups, labor teams, military units.

The wall newspaper materials reflected the struggle for the fulfillment of production tasks and socialist obligations, for strengthening labor discipline, the high level of academic performance and communist education of students, for improving results in the political and military training of troops. The production of the wall newspaper was carried out by the editorial board elected at the general meeting, which was headed by the editor. The editorial board used the materials of rural journalists, workers, and young reporters. Millions of people were composing the materials about life in villages. Methodical assistance and vocational training of amateur reporters were provided by the magazine "Workers' and Peasants' Correspondent", which for a long period of time was published by the editors of the newspaper "Pravda" ("Truth").

As far as the sphere of education is concerned, it is necessary to say that in the early years of the Soviet Union, there was a huge discussion of the concept of "new Soviet textbook". The media education sphere also required new methodological literature.

Regarding media magazines, it is necessary to say that the first "textbook magazines" appeared in the USSR in an effort to provide schoolchildren with current information on the production success of the first five-year plan. They also described the experience of the children's communist movement in schools (Senkina, 2012: 34). Their task was to expand the framework of the old academic educational books and to bring into the educational process a living, breathing the energy of revolution, socialist reality. In the editors' preface to the first edition of the "Soviet school new textbook" series of bulletins, it was said that "upbringing in Soviet Russia ceases to be a study activity and becomes a school of independent initiatives, a school of active labor experience."

The famous communist C.O. Kamenev emphasized the idea that "along with the workbook, for the school, for the pioneer unit one should adopt the most mobile, dialectically constructed press — a weekly children's newspaper or a monthly children's magazine. Together with the editors, the teacher would certainly be able to arrange the content of the newspaper in such a way that it corresponded to the working plans of the school "(Kamenev, 1926: 19). This idea related not only to children's and youth literature, but it also concerned the publication of educational magazines and newspapers.

The first issue of the textbook magazine entitled "Young shock-workers" was published in 1930 in Leningrad with a publication of 100,000 copies. The issue told about the history and successes of the Putilov factory, the construction of tractor plants in Stalingrad, Chelyabinsk, Kharkov, Rostov-on-Don, etc. Further, the publication of "Young shockworkers" has grown to 500,000 copies. In the same year the magazine "Young builders of Siberia" began to appear in Novosibirsk. Khabarovsk issued the magazine "Red Lighthouse", Moscow started publishing the magazine "School brigade", Simferopol released the magazine "The young shock-workers of Crimea".

Consequently, media education was an integral part of the education system of the USSR in the 1920s. The USSR government tried to maintain the relationship with people, with the Soviet population, to influence the general spirit in a new country. Media gave the Soviet government the ability to use the tools in various working forms with students and pupils.

The 30s were characterized by a rare change in the situation. At that time, many undertakings of domestic media education were subject to liquidation. Various creative activities were blocked. However, exclusive propaganda events, the practical activities of photography circles and the issue of wall newspapers were functioning since they turned completely into the ideological mouthpieces of the Communist Party.

The theorist and practical pedagogical educator N.K. Krupskaya, who was the head of a special educational body in the 1920s, claimed that, in her opinion, there were some harmful tendencies in art forms. According to her opinion, "the class enemy uses the art for his own purposes; art does not reduce but increases the harm of such a book. We do not need a book that distorts reality and gives wrong guidelines." (Krupskaya, 1959: 410).

Nevertheless, the teachers of Soviet Russia demanded the active use of funds to prepare a new person. At the same time, educational ideologists clearly understood the prospects for the development of media and actively involved them in working with children. Therefore, any forms of creativity, diversity, pluralism, the ambiguity of assessments were recognized as ideologically and politically harmful and ineffective in propaganda work related to the various types of media.

The USSR required such technologies that could be used for campaigning purposes in accordance with the tasks of managing the consciousness of the people masses.





According to the famous Soviet communist S.T. Shatskii, who wrote about the importance of agitation and propaganda work in the village, "the people who come from the city, the newspapers, magazines, and radio, waking up a thought, create ever-increasing demands in the society. In the village, everything seems to be all gray and annoying. Therefore, it is necessary to pay special attention to these developing demands of a new life in the village and to use them to deepen the propaganda, our social and political work in the countryside ... By all means, we must bring to life the bright colors targeting the emotions of the peasants" (Shatskii, 1964: 55).

As far as the history of media education in Russia is concerned, it is critical also to mention the special movement of workers-peasants' correspondents. It emerged with the establishment of Soviet power in Russia and in fact became the first truly conscious experience in the formation of mass media education. And although the activities of proletariat, peasants, and intellectuals were amateur, they demonstrated to the youth the ability of non-professionals to act in print, on radio and on television. Their materials dealt with topical issues of the day.

Thus, one can see that the creation of a new education system was based on both the decree separating the church from the state and the decree on the elimination of illiteracy.

So, the first works on the use of cinema and the press in the educational process appeared in Russia in the early 20th century. It is no coincidence that the period 1900-1917 was considered as the stage of the birth and formation of Russian media education.

The turbulent revolutionary years of the 20th century suspended the history of Russian media education, but only for a few years. Since 1919, a new round of its formation began. It was the time when the first film school in the world appeared in the USSR (now it is known under the Russian name of VGIK which encompasses the idea of all-Russian State Institute of cinematography). At the same time, Soviet leaders established the Higher Institute of Photography and Photographic Engineering. Each institution has influenced both the production and distribution of films and the preparation of film professionals. In the 20s these measures resulted in the emergence of a network of film clubs, film and photo studios, circles of young and children's correspondents, cadets, children journalists. Another important development was the creation of the Soviet Cinema Society of Friends dealing with school cinema; scientific understanding of the problems of film education; the emergence of newspapers and magazines and other multi-editioned press created by groups of students. The film school has been preparing and is still preparing a wide sector of specialists in the field of cinematography. In the same year, the Higher Institute of Photography and Photographic Engineering were opened in St. Petersburg.

It is worth noting that junior journalist' clubs were organized in each school. Each palace of pioneers, film clubs, as well as a film fan and photo studios, played an important role in the cultural life of society. In the 30s, the situation changed dramatically. The totalitarian regime began to take root in the country, and thus the values of media education were canceled because all manifestations of creativity were persecuted.

The study of media culture in Russia on cinematographic material, the material of radio and press, in the period from 1919 to 1934, indicated certain functions which were as follows: the ideological function of propaganda (media were used as a powerful ideological tool); the function of enlightenment (media were used as a textbook).

However, until the period from 1924 to 1925, only agitational films were produced in Russia. The launch of educational films was planned abroad. However, these abroad films were given without any foreign "alien" ideology (<u>Chelysheva</u>, 2014).

The 20s and 30s of the 20th century were characterized by the gradual acquisition of a pronounced collectivist character by the media education. At that time, mass media education was increasingly important. For example, the most numerous organizations in the cultural area of Russia was the Soviet Cinema Society of Friends. Since 1919, professional media educators began to be prepared in the country.

In the late 20s, a noticeable increase in censorship control over almost all media outlets was recorded. Firstly, there was the task of mastering cinema and photographic equipment, the ability to carry out filming, the manufacture of "light" publications, etc.

## **CONCLUSION**

When summarizing the results of this article, it can be noted that the quality of economic growth and the overall development of a socio-economic society in various contexts (historical and modern) is determined by the factors which are as follows: the presence of human and natural capital resources together with the abilities to work in an intensive mode and to use the resources in a rational form. Of much value are the political structure and the features of the government. The statistical data serve as a perfect justification for this thesis. The current study indicated that considerable natural and human capital resources did not always guarantee the country's dominance in the global economy. There is much evidence that the Russian empire in the period under study was one of the economically significant countries in Europe and occupied a serious place in the development of media education.



In this article, it was not possible to consider the issues of a quantitative assessment of indicators of socio-economic development of countries in a historical retrospective. These questions will be revealed in further publications and studies on the history of the countries' economies.

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