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ABSTRACT

This article examines Soviet thinking about authoritarian modernization through the life and thought of Georgii Mirskii, a noted expert on Arab politics. Mirskii was a regular adviser and speechwriter for the Soviet Central Committee, and was also followed by the KGB for his criticism of Stalin. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Mirskii looked to the example of Egyptian leader Gamal Abdul Nasser to develop a theory of military-led modernization. This article examines how Mirskii's faith in the ability of Third World militaries to function as modernizing forces changed over time. The course of military politics in the Third World during the 1970s and 1980s, when military coups proliferated, bringing to power violent and self-interested regimes, disabused Mirskii of any faith in military modernization. Examining Mirskii's thought not only sheds light on the ideas that motivated Khrushchev-era Soviet foreign and development policy, it also provides an illuminating comparison for better-studied theories of authoritarian modernization in the United States.

KEYWORDS

Soviet Union; economic development; authoritarian modernization

'Is Nasser a Communist?' Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev asked *New York Times* columnist James Reston in 1957. 'Certainly not. But nevertheless we support Nasser'.¹ For the Soviet Union, a superpower committed at least rhetorically to Marxism–Leninism, Gamal Abdel Nasser was a problem. Not, of course, because of his foreign policy. The Kremlin was happy to see the Egyptian leader buck the demands of the world's capitalist powers by annexing the Suez Canal, once the central artery of the British Empire, in mid-1956. Moscow was delighted when, several months later, Nasser became a hero to anti-imperialists worldwide by defending the canal from a joint British-French-Israeli assault. The Suez Crisis split Washington and London, and distracted international attention from the Soviet Union's own neocolonial invasion of Hungary that same month. From Moscow's perspective, Nasser offered much to like.²

Yet, Nasser presented one obvious problem to the Soviet Union: not his foreign policy but his political ideas and, more importantly, the social base of his political power. As Khrushchev told Reston, 'the leaders of the Arab countries are very remote from Communist ideas. In Egypt, for instance, many Communists are held in prison. The leaders of the Arab countries are nationalists'. The enemy-of-my-enemy principle explains many alliances in international politics, but countries usually prefer to bolster self-interest with claims to share loftier ideals, too. Khrushchev told Reston that anti-imperialism united

Nasser's Egypt with the Soviet Union: 'They are against colonial slavery and they stand for the consolidation of their political and economic independence. We do not conceal the fact that our sympathies are on the side of the peoples who are fighting for their independence'. But Khrushchev, who was at that time promoting a new policy of 'peaceful coexistence', also sought to reassure his American readers that 'we do not pursue any objectives but one, that the peoples be freed from colonial dependence. We know that you cannot inculcate communism with a bayonet'.³

Some of Khrushchev's own advisers, however, were not so sure. Khrushchev's decision to send arms to Nasser, and his broader reorientation of Soviet foreign policy, set off a revolution in Soviet thinking about the Third World. Stalin had mostly ignored Asia, Africa and Latin America because he believed that conditions in these countries were not ripe for socialism and because he faced more pressing problems in Europe. Khrushchev changed this. He viewed newly independent countries as a place where world socialism and the Soviet Union could gain influence.⁴ Achieving this, however, required fresh thinking about how a country could become socialist. The urban working class in most Third World countries was small and politically marginal, creating a dilemma for a theory in which the proletariat is supposed to lead the revolution. Soviet scholars began considering ways in which other vanguard classes could promote non-capitalist development that might lead, over time, to socialism. One leading Soviet expert, Georgii Mirskii, gained prominence for suggesting that a 'military intelligentsia' that came to power via a coup could serve as an agent of non-capitalist modernization.⁵ He saw Nasser's Egypt as a country that might benefit from the right sort of military rule.

Mirskii was an expert on the Arab world, and was in many ways an unlikely proponent of military-led modernization programs. He was a cosmopolitan intellectual, fluent in Arabic as well as several European languages. He was a creative thinker, whose willingness to express contrarian views caused the KGB to ban him from visiting the Middle East or the West. And he was a vigorous anti-Stalinist, strongly opposing violence and repression in Soviet politics. His interest in military-led modernization programs was in part an effort to create a 'non-capitalist path' to socialism that would avoid the brutality of Stalinist methods. His goal was 'socialism without *kolkhozes*', he told me before his death in early 2016, referring to the Soviet collective farms whose creation was accompanied by mass famine in the late 1920s and early 1930s.⁶ Mirskii hoped that a government led by revolutionary colonels, as Nasser had formed in Egypt, could provide Third World countries a path to modernity that was less violent than Stalinist (or Maoist) methods, but more egalitarian than capitalism.

This article will examine Mirskii's development of the Soviet theory of military-led modernization, based on his published works, archival documents from the institute where Mirskii worked for several decades and interviews with him and with former colleagues. Mirskii's thinking was influential in the upper echelons of the Soviet leadership. His articles were regularly printed in the Soviet Union's leading publications. In addition to working as a senior researcher at the Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Mirskii also served as a regular consultant to the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party on foreign policy, especially on questions of the Arab World. He wrote speeches, reports and interviews for Soviet leaders from Mikhail Suslov to Andrei Gromyko, Nikita Khrushchev to Leonid Brezhnev.⁷ Though Mirskii never served as a decision-maker, there

were few Soviet intellectuals with better access to the Central Committee's foreign policy apparatus over such a long period.⁸

1. Military modernization in Cold War context

Khrushchev may have claimed that 'you cannot inculcate communism with a bayonet', but the period we now know as the Cold War was a half-century marked by repeated attempts to spread political ideas by force. Arne Westad has written of the Cold War as a clash between 'the empire of liberty' and 'the empire of justice'.⁹ Democracy was something that both sides claimed to value, and neither saw military rule as a good. But in many instances, both the US and USSR found reason to back military rule when it supported other aims.

For the United States, there were two main reasons why military rule seemed at times appealing during the Cold War. First, there were many well-armed enemies of pro-American governments abroad, so military rule sometimes appeared the only means of keeping friendly groups in power. Second, after decolonization, Washington found it difficult to promote governance by 'modern' groups in 'traditional' societies, so sometimes an iron fist was required if Washington's preferred policies were to be implemented.¹⁰ The first rationale for military rule — fear of revolutionaries and other social and political forces that opposed pro-American regimes — was present in nearly every region. Left-wing and nationalist guerilla movements emerged in many countries in the 1950s, a trend that continued throughout the Cold War. Faced with enemies willing to use force to overthrow pro-American governments, many US analysts argued that these regimes were justified in using force to defend themselves.¹¹ If, as social conflict intensified, Washington was left with a choice between a military dictatorship and a revolutionary regime, choosing the later was often believed to be the moral choice. As Jeane Kirkpatrick famously argued in 'Dictatorships and Double Standards', her *Commentary* article published in 1979, 'there is a far greater likelihood of progressive liberalization and democratization in the governments of Brazil, Argentina, and Chile than in the government of Cuba; in Taiwan than in the People's Republic of China; in South Korea than in North Korea; in Zaire than in Angola'.¹²

The broader issue was that Third World countries, most American analysts believed, generally lacked the social structures needed for democratic government. US president John F. Kennedy's speechwriter Arthur Schlesinger argued that America's task was to inspire a 'middle class revolution where the processes of economic modernization carry the new urban middle class into power and produce, along with it, such necessities of modern technical society as constitutional government, honest public administration, a responsible party system, a rational land system and an efficient system of taxation'.¹³ What, then, should be done with countries that lacked a sufficiently large urban middle class, and thus also lacked the preconditions for constitutional government? Most of the Third World was populated by peasant farmers, whose presence in society, American social scientists had demonstrated, was not correlated with democracy. Was it better to trust government of these countries to the whims of the uneducated peasant masses? Or might a competent military government provide adequate tutelage until the urban middle classes developed sufficient political strength for responsible rule? From Pakistan to

South Korea, military rule was often seen as a tolerable outcome, particularly when it was accompanied by economic modernization.¹⁴

An additional reason for Western analysts to support military rule was the dilemma of industrialization. Everyone recognized that Third World countries needed capital if they were to industrialize. Accumulating capital for industrialization, however, was no easy task. Some could come from foreign aid or from foreign investment. But despite Third World countries' attempts to emphasize their importance in Cold War competition, the scale of aid from rich to poor countries was marginal as a share of total cross-border capital investment.¹⁵ Private capital in the form of foreign investment had the potential to play a bigger role. But attracting capital depended on Third World countries' ability to convince capital holders in the West that their countries offered high returns on investment. Despite the low wages of Third World countries — which should have offered opportunities to compete with high wage manufacturers in the West — net private capital flows from rich to poor countries were small considering the scale of the need.¹⁶

Most Third World leaders looking to industrialize concluded that foreign capital flows were too fickle to rely on. Most US economic advisers believed that this was a sensible choice. Capital could be mobilized domestically, too, after all, which is how Britain accumulated capital for its own industrial revolution in the early nineteenth century. But accumulating capital at home meant increasing savings by deferring present consumption. This was no easy matter. As Walt Rostow explained in his manifesto *The Stages of Economic Growth*, 'the rise in the rate of investment — which the economist conjures up to summarize the transition — requires a radical shift in the society's effective attitude' toward a range of phenomena, from technical progress, to investment mechanisms, to organizational leadership.¹⁷ 'Agriculture must yield up a substantial part of its surplus income to the modern sector', either via higher taxation or voluntary increases in investment.¹⁸

During the take off stage, Rostow noted, 'real output per capita' must rise, but 'whether real consumption per capita rises depends' on a variety of factors. It may not rise for some time.¹⁹ Such a thesis may have been economically accurate, but the idea of rising investment and output without immediate increases in consumption was not easy to implement, especially in poor societies where consumption levels were already low. Deferring consumption in a democracy, therefore, proved difficult. Autocracies such as South Korea and Taiwan not coincidentally proved able to sustain high savings and investment rates during the 1960s and 1970s.²⁰ This, too, motivated support for military modernization in the West.²¹

Given the Soviet Union's authoritarian political system, it is perhaps less surprising that Moscow was also interested in military-led modernization during the 1960s and 1970s. True, the Red Army had a prime place in the Soviet domestic political hierarchy, and was showered with resources that let it compete with the United States.²² But when Georgii Mirskii began writing about the role of the military in Third World politics, setting forth a theory of army-led modernization, his goal was not to replicate the USSR's authoritarian political system abroad. At home, he was a critic of authoritarian politics and an advocate of reducing repression. Abroad, Mirskii saw military-led modernization as a method that, under the right circumstances, could help Third World countries avoid violence — most notably, the type of violence that had accompanied Soviet industrialization, when the Soviet Union sparked a disastrous famine in the late 1920s and early 1930s when it

attempted to 'defer consumption' in agricultural regions and use the funds to invest in urban industry. The cost of Soviet industrialization policy was millions of unnecessary deaths. Mirskii hoped that more rational military governments might avoid the violence that marked Soviet industrialization.

2. Georgii Mirskii and the non-capitalist path

'In all forms of transition to socialism', declared Khrushchev at the 20th Party Congress in 1956, 'the absolute and decisive condition is the political leadership of the working class'.²³ But just as American social scientists struggled to explain how bourgeois democracy could emerge in countries too poor to sustain a large bourgeoisie, so too the Soviet Union had to reckon with the future of proletarian democracy in countries that, by Soviet definitions, were stuck in the feudal stage. The academics charged with explaining how this would happen were drawn from the country's growing ranks of *vostokovedy*, or orientalists. (Neither Edward Said-inspired sensitivities nor geographical realities prevented Soviet scholars from describing the territory stretching from North Africa to Japan as 'the East'.)

Beginning in the mid-1950s, the Soviet Union began investing in a class of officials and academics who could help the Kremlin understand the dozens of new countries emerging from colonial rule.²⁴ Before then, the Soviet Union had only sporadically dabbled in anti-imperialist politics, focusing mostly on China.²⁵ Decolonization, however, made necessary a clearer understanding of politics in the region that would come to be known as the Third World. The East was awakening, quipped Soviet leader Anastas Mikoian, but Soviet scholars were still asleep.²⁶ Not for long. IMEMO, the Institute of World Economics and International Relations, was created in 1956. The Africa Institute was founded in 1959, followed by an Institute of Latin America in 1961.²⁷ Soon, the Soviet Union was producing hundreds of well-trained experts in international politics each year, fluent in foreign languages, ready to work as diplomats, academics, trade representatives, journalists and spies.

One such young *vostokoved* was Georgii Mirskii, who had enrolled at the Institute for Oriental Studies in the late 1940s, hoping to become a diplomat. He chose to study Arabic because there were many Arabic-speaking countries, maximizing his chances of a foreign placement. The son of a Jewish father and a Lutheran mother, Mirskii was born in Moscow in 1926. His family was neither privileged nor well-off, living in a collective apartment with five other families. Yet, by Soviet standards Mirskii had a lucky childhood, growing up on a side street just off Patriarch Ponds, not far from Mikhail Bulgakov, whose *Master and Margarita* is set in the neighborhood. Mirskii was lucky, too, to survive the war. He was too young to join the army, but he and his mother spent the conflict in Moscow, struggling like the rest of the city to dodge German bombs and find enough food.²⁸

The end of the war brought economic reconstruction, and Stalin's death less than a decade later brought the thaw. For the child of a Jew at the time of the Doctors' Plot, and for a young academic whom the KGB was already keeping tabs on, it is easy to understand why Stalin's death in 1953 came as a relief.²⁹ Like many intellectuals of his generation, Mirskii was a great believer in Nikita Khrushchev, whom he associated with energy, ambition and (compared to Stalin) liberal politics.³⁰ 'We young people were terribly excited', Mirskii later wrote. 'New times were coming'.³¹ Yet the thaw was only a partial, halting liberalization. Khrushchev had his predecessor, Lavrentiy Beria, shot. Stalin was critiqued but not

condemned. The KGB tried to recruit Mirskii when he was a student, and when he declined, he says, to work with them, he was permanently banned from visiting non-socialist countries — even the Arab countries on whose politics he would soon become the USSR's leading expert.³²

Stalin was dead, in other words, but the battle with Stalinism continued. This was not only a matter for domestic politics. In foreign policy, too, the question of Stalin's legacy persisted. In relations with the United States, Khrushchev promoted a new policy of 'peaceful coexistence', scrapping the idea that war with capitalists was inevitable.³³ In relations with Third World countries, Stalin's legacy was also being reassessed. Take economic modernization. Stalin had moved the Soviet Union from farm to factory rapidly and with great violence. Peasants were forced off their farms and onto collectives. Millions died in famine, and the country forged an industrial base with remarkable speed.³⁴ Must Third World countries follow a similar path to reach socialism?

Mirskii and his colleagues did not think so.³⁵ Scholars at IMEMO, the institute where Mirskii worked, promoted the concept of the 'non-capitalist path of development'. Newly-decolonized countries, these experts argued, need not directly copy Soviet experience to avoid capitalist development. Capitalist elements could persist so long as the government was run by the left and society was developing in a socialist direction. Even to 'orthodox' experts who were committed to Stalinist practice, the non-capitalist path made sense, given its similarities to Lenin's New Economic Policy of the 1920s, a period when the Soviet Union tolerated private farming and private trade as a means of economic stabilization.³⁶ To Soviet scholars and officials critical of Stalinist practice, the non-capitalist path had one great virtue: Third World countries could avoid the horrors of Stalinist collectivization.

Even though Soviet propaganda at home and abroad celebrated the creation of collective farms as a great triumph of socialism, private attitudes were more conflicted than the official line suggested. Before collectivization, the Soviet Union had been a country of peasants, and peasants were the great victims of collectivization. Their suffering could be denied, but it could not be concealed. Urban residents saw the millions of peasants who were driven off their farms in the 1930s. Mirskii worked with such people during the war. Their complaints were straightforward: collectivization had punished the most responsible and capable peasants (labelling them 'kulaks'); benefitted 'loafers' and 'drunks'; and led to harassment by young Communist Youth League (Komsomol) members who cared little and knew nothing about farming.³⁷ The country achieved socialism, and millions starved in the process. Mirskii was not alone in wondering whether Lenin's New Economic Policy could have lasted longer, or whether there was a path, as he put it, to 'socialism without kolkhozes'.³⁸

3. Mirskii on Nasser and the role of the army

What did 'socialism without kolkhozes' mean in practice? No one was sure. The rapid end of the British and French Empires from the late 1940s through the 1960s gave rise to dozens of different political experiments in the newly free countries. Some of the new political movements called themselves socialists, others nationalists, many both. Nearly all the new states were given political institutions that, on paper, looked something like the governmental structure in the West. Yet, behind rhetoric about socialism and newly-created

parliaments and judiciaries were societies that looked far different from either the capitalist powers or their great socialist rival. In most of Asia and Africa (as well as much of Latin America, which was often grouped in the 'Third World') living standards were far lower than in Europe or the USSR. In many countries, three quarters or more of the population lived in the countryside; the most common occupation was subsistence farming at a level often just above starvation.³⁹ In the West, Social theorists believed that democracy required an educated, urbanized middle class.⁴⁰ In the Soviet Union, social theory presented the urban proletariat as a motive force for social progress. The Third World had neither.

Yet, though they lacked large quantities of the two social groups that Soviet and American social theorists believed drove modernity, Third World countries' politics were remarkably vital in the period that immediately followed independence.⁴¹ Because of his language training, Georgii Mirskii focused primarily on Arabic speaking countries.⁴² During the 1950s and 1960s, most of the Persian Gulf remained politically dormant, but from Iraq through Algeria, the rest of the Arab world was in motion, as kings were toppled, states forged, networks of local notables upturned, colonialists and neocolonialists chased out and military rule declared. In Syria, the military toppled the government in 1949, setting off a string of coups that would continue until the Baath Party took power in 1963. Jordan's right-wing King Hussein leaned heavily on his Bedouin troops to maintain power, because his family's installation by the British several decades earlier was a weak source of legitimacy in a nationalist age.⁴³

Yet it was Egypt, where Colonel Gamal Abdul Nasser consolidated power in the early 1950s as the colonial-era regime crumbled, that seemed a bellwether not only for the fate of the Arab world but also of the Third World more generally. To Mirskii, Nasser not only proved that a colonel could mobilize the masses to oust the imperialists and their local puppets. He also demonstrated that a military regime need not be a tool of the right.⁴⁴ Mirskii wrote about Nasser repeatedly, both in his books and in multiple articles.⁴⁵ As Mirskii studied Egypt, he realized that Nasser was not the only example of a progressive military regime. Often, of course, military takeovers were an attempt to crush popular politics. At other times, though, militaries overthrew the *ancien regime*, nationalized big business, cast out colonialists and adopted a foreign policy sympathetic to the USSR. Several such experiments took place in the Middle East: not only Nasser's Egypt, but also Baathist regimes in Syria and Iraq seemed, at least in their early stages, to have some left-wing characteristics.⁴⁶ Burma's Ne Win was another military leader who appeared during the early 1960s to be supportive of leftist politics.⁴⁷

What factors determined whether a military regime would adopt a right-wing or a left-wing tack? Mirskii believed this question was central to any assessment of the fate of socialism in the Third World, and he decided to tackle it in his second (*doktorskaia*) thesis, 'The Political Role of the Army in Developing Countries', which he defended in 1967. He later published the research as a book, *The Army and Politics in Asian and African Countries*.⁴⁸

The book took as its starting point the divide between Third World countries undertaking capitalist development, and those on the socialist-oriented 'non-capitalist path'. In the former — ranging from Nigeria to Thailand — Mirskii viewed the army as a right-wing political force, either a tool of the bourgeoisie, or a constituent part of the ruling class. Yet, in countries with 'progressive' governments guiding their countries along the

non-capitalist path, military rule often had a different political valence. The view of the army as a right-wing tool was a standard trope in Marxist–Leninist political thought, and which matched Moscow’s experience watching nineteenth and early twentieth-century European history. Historical examples of left-wing military governments were harder to come by. But Mirskii believed the Third World provided a new set of historical circumstances. He supplied the theory that explained why a military regime in the Third World might be a progressive force.

The key to understanding military regimes, Mirskii argued, is to realize that there are multiple types, constructed from different social forces, with different levels of class consciousness.⁴⁹ Mid-century American theorists of the military and society such as Morris Janowitz argued that civilian control of the military depended on the number of connections between military and civil society. Soldiers with deep connections to a broad swath of a democratic society were more amenable to civilian control than armies without such connections, Janowitz suggested.⁵⁰ Mirskii adopted a similar theory: the connections between the military and potentially revolutionary social classes could provide the basis for a progressive, even revolutionary army. Mirskii cited Janowitz and several other American scholars of civil–military relations in making the case that an army’s class make up shaped its political outlook.⁵¹

Not content with grouping all military regimes together, Mirskii divided them into four categories

- (1) Armies of partial colonies (Turkey, Iran, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Thailand)
- (2) Former colonial armies now under the control of independent governments (India, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Egypt)
- (3) Armies that emerged from independence struggles (Burma, Indonesia, Algeria)
- (4) Armies created after independence (most of Africa)⁵²

Mirskii suggested, sensibly enough, that armies with different histories and social structures might play different political roles. Armies set up by colonial powers were likely to be more conservative than those forged in anti-colonial wars. This was only partly explained by the armies’ history and culture. More important was their social make-up. In much of the Third World, Mirskii argued, ‘in contrast to Europe, officers were not and are not representatives of aristocratic circles’.⁵³ It depended, of course, on the country. In some cases, colonial armies drew from a specific region or ethnic group, which may have made the officers privileged and thus relatively conservative. But in much of the Third World, Mirskii argued, the army drew in recruits and officers from the lower rungs of society. ‘For the son of a peasant’, Mirskii noted, ‘army service was not only something honorable, it also opened new perspectives for social mobility’.⁵⁴ Staffed as it was by traditionally oppressed classes, given the right circumstances, this could make the army a potentially revolutionary force.

One dilemma that Mirskii recognized was that, even if the ranks of the army were included (incorrectly, in Mirskii’s view) into the proletariat, Third World countries’ working classes were still far too small to serve as the basis for socialist revolution. Yet, Lenin had long before recognized that a vanguard party, full of activists and intelligentsia, could drive forward the revolution by organizing oppressed groups and inspiring greater class consciousness.⁵⁵ The military, Mirskii argued, could play a similar function. Officers

themselves constituted a 'military intelligentsia', which could play a progressive role.⁵⁶ The 'colonels' revolutions' that several countries experienced were no accident: in the 1960s, generals were commonly holdovers from the colonial area, whereas colonels were younger, having joined the army while their countries were beginning to cast off colonial rule. The struggle for independence forged the political consciousness of the colonels of the 1950s and 1960s. What better basis for a progressive vanguard?

Given the backwardness of Third World societies, Mirskii believed that military regimes were one of the few institutions with a chance of leading a progressive modernization effort. The army was 'the most modern institute of society' in many Third World countries, Mirskii argued. Armies were also 'an important nationwide institute in government', in a region with few other such national structures.⁵⁷ The officers themselves constituted a national social and intellectual elite. 'The minds of the officers', Mirskii wrote, were undergoing the same 'process as most intellectuals' — a strengthening national identity and a growing desire to modernize their country.⁵⁸ In fractious and backwards Asian and African countries, no other institution had the national reach and political perspective to lead modernization efforts.

The best example of this process, Mirskii believed, was Egypt. His analysis of Egyptian politics largely followed the Soviet mainstream, but his innovation was to generalize from it a theory of leftist military rule. Upon seizing power in the early 1950s, Egypt's military had supported progressive measures, helping to push the old bourgeoisie out of politics and empower small farmers.⁵⁹ Farming was not collectivized (a positive decision, in Mirskii's view, though he could not write this) but the government invested in heavy industry and began economic planning. Mirskii believed an 'evolution toward scientific socialism' was already visible.⁶⁰ Egypt was not the only example of a left-military regime, in Mirskii's view, and he devoted chapters of his book to analyzing Syria and Burma, too. But when Mirskii began his research in the mid-1960s, Nasser's Egypt provided the best example of the revolutionary potential of military rule.

How can we as historians know that Mirskii's book is representative of his views? And how can we know that our interpretations today reflect the meaning he intended? Such interpretive questions are relevant in any intellectual history, but they are made more complex by the Soviet Union's censorship and its official devotion to theory. First, there is a wide category of beliefs that Mirskii could not have published, such as opposition to collectivization in the USSR. Second, within the context of Soviet academia and of the consulting role he played with the government, Mirskii faced powerful incentives not to deviate from norms about political theory, lest he lose valuable status and perks. Yet, we have access to two type of sources that verify Mirskii's sincerity in his belief of the progressive potential of military rule: interviews with him and his colleagues, and archival documents from the debate by other academics when Mirskii submitted an earlier version of the book as his second (*doktorskaia*) dissertation. In such an environment, with only two dozen professors in attendance and notes of the discussions not intended for widespread distribution, there was no formal censorship. Self-censorship was present, but participants could — and did — speak more freely.⁶¹ Professors often disagreed, including on key ideological issues.⁶²

At the defense of Mirskii's dissertation, twenty-five academics from the Soviet Union's international research institutes participated. The defense was presided over by Nikolai N. Inozemtsev, the director of IMEMO, where Mirskii worked. Inozemtsev was a friend and

mentor of Mirskii's. As was standard, the dissertation defense included a formal assessment by official opponents, and the author was also subjected to questioning from the assembled professors. The faculty praised Mirskii's work for the quality of its research, its 'anti-dogmatism', and for the author's use of Marxism 'not as an icon' but 'as a method'.⁶³

Yet, Mirskii's Marxist method also sparked debate among the established scholars, some approving of his class interpretation of the army, others disagreeing, others misunderstanding his purpose. Mirskii's search for 'socialism without kokhozes' was not unique. Many of the Soviet Union's orientalists — and many of the officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the party apparatus with whom they interacted — hoped to promote a similar outcome in the Third World. Thus, the idea of a 'non-capitalist path' spread widely across the Soviet Union's research institutes, eventually affecting its policy-making process. But Soviet analysts differed on the question of which class was best placed to lead a country down the non-capitalist path in the absence of a revolutionary proletariat. Some hoped that government bureaucracies could lead the process of economic development in a non-capitalist way. Others placed their faith in a revolutionary intelligentsia.⁶⁴ Mirskii was unique in suggesting that sections of the military could be both sufficiently left-wing and sufficiently powerful to promote the non-capitalist path.

This claim inspired vigorous pushback from some of Mirskii's colleagues. A. B. Reznikov, an expert in Indonesian politics and scholar at the Institute of the International Worker's Movement, rose to praise Mirskii's conclusion that the government can act independently of a society's dominant class.⁶⁵ Many people think that Marx and Engels wrote that 'the army is either a weapon of the landowners or a weapon of the petite bourgeoisie', Reznikov explained. But Mirskii's analysis showed that 'the government could play an independent role', as Marx and Engels had foreseen.⁶⁶ The size of government had grown sharply since the time of most of Marx and Engels' writings, Reznikov pointed out, giving it space to act independently. The military was the government institution most able to carve out a role 'independent' of other class forces — perhaps even in contradiction to a society's dominant class.⁶⁷ The political independence of the military from the dominant class was key to Mirskii's argument that the military could play a progressive political force in societies dominated by conservative elements.

Reznikov was not convinced that this divergence between army and society happened often in practice. The country he studied, Indonesia, had just suffered a bloody purge in which the military killed communists and alleged communists in the thousands.⁶⁸ In Indonesia, Reznikov pointed out, 'the army acts like the officers'; so long as the officers held to a conservative line, so too would the common soldiers.⁶⁹ Mirskii agreed, but argued that mid-level officers had more revolutionary potential that was often believed. 'What is a soldier in a developing country?' asked Mirskii in his official response. 'The son of a peasant, a person who left the most terrible poverty'.⁷⁰ Surely such people, having developed sufficient class consciousness, had revolutionary potential.

Other critics at the dissertation defense questioned Mirskii's claim that the army could operate independently of other class forces, regardless of its orientation. A. G. Mileikovskii, a specialist at IMEMO and one of the official opponents of Mirskii's dissertation, doubted that Nasser's coup in Egypt represented a progressive political movement, given that 'the main marker of a revolution is mass participation', while in Egypt 'mass participation was minor'.⁷¹ The official response from V. V. Volsky, the director of the Latin America Institute, doubted the existence of left-wing coups, arguing that 'the difference between simply

nationalist and left-nationalist' was practically indistinguishable.⁷² An additional critic 'underscored that Mirskii's thesis that the army represents its own military-political institution [korporatsiia], and not a weapon of a specific class, is debatable'.⁷³

Yet, Mirskii stood by his claim: the military could act independently of the dominant class, and under the right circumstances it could be a progressive force. 'In his work the 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte', Mirskii reminded his critics at the defense, 'Marx wrote: 'On top of the authentic classes of society, Bonaparte had to create an artificial caste', which was integral to the preservation of the regime.'⁷⁴ 'The army certainly has its own interests', Mirskii explained, 'but it undeniably acts in the interests of some sort of social-economic orientation'.⁷⁵

Mirskii's conclusion about the revolutionary potential of armies remained controversial among theorists. The book on which his dissertation was based was published only with help from his friend Karen Brutents, an official in International Department who worked with Third World governments and who supported Mirskii's conclusions.⁷⁶ Yet, Mirskii's optimism about seemingly leftist military regimes in the Third World also fit the times: the Soviet Union was looking to support anti-imperialist politics, and during the 1950s and 1960s, many Soviet experts and policy-makers were optimistic about the fate of what they called the newly-free countries. Modernization and development really was possible, but social change sometimes needed an impulse to get started. Once these processes began, they might even be irreversible — and countries that in the 1950s and 1960s were dominated by peasant agriculture and feudal politics could develop modern social structures, economies and political systems. Without such modernization, socialism would be impossible. Yet all signs, many Soviet analysts believed, pointed toward the eventual success of progressive politics in the Third World. At the Aswan Dam in 1964, Khrushchev himself declared publicly to Nasser that Egypt — governed by a clique of colonels — was 'building socialism'.⁷⁷

4. Mirskii's loss of faith in military modernization

Yet, even as Mirskii promoted the idea of progressive military regimes, the course of Third World politics piled up evidence against his thesis.⁷⁸ Across Asia, Africa and Latin America, dozens of coups occurred, few of which fit Mirskii's theory. Often the coups brought right-wing political forces to power; often they lacked a defined political ideology and were motivated by desires for personal aggrandizement. From a socialist perspective, it was hard to find optimistic examples. The coup most closely watched in the USSR was that which toppled Chilean socialist Salvador Allende in 1973. Allende had raised Soviet hopes that a Marxist could take power via peaceful means in an electoral democracy. Particularly, for Soviet intellectuals who opposed authoritarian methods but remained committed Marxists, Allende seemed to be perfect evidence that the Kremlin could back democracy abroad while remaining true to its revolutionary goals. When Allende was toppled in a bloody coup led by Chilean General Augusto Pinochet, these dreams were dashed.

The course of Third World politics created a dilemma for Mirskii's theory. On the one hand, the number of coups and military takeovers increased markedly during the time he researched his *doktorskaia dissertatsiia* and eventually published his book. Their results did not confirm the thesis that coups could be progressive. Many of the coups in the Third World, as in Ghana and Mali, toppled rulers that were sympathetic to the USSR.

Meanwhile, the military governments that Mirskii hoped might prove progressive, such as Nasser's Egypt and Ne Win's Burma, were increasingly difficult to distinguish in their domestic policies from more ideologically conservative regimes. On the other hand, Soviet policy was increasingly tending toward more active support of military movements and regimes, such as the Derg in Ethiopia.⁷⁹ Yet, the USSR's shift toward backing military regimes was far less connected with dreams of progressive social transformation than was Mirskii's vision of government by reformist left-wing colonels. The Derg, for example, requested economic as well as military aid from the USSR. Moscow supplied the guns, but Andropov warned his counterparts to keep realistic goals for economic modernization or social transformation. 'It is one thing to proclaim socialism as one's goal, and it is quite another to build it'.⁸⁰ This was a very different sentiment than Mirskii's optimistic support for Nasser.

Yet, driven by the course of Third World politics, Mirskii himself began to question his initial optimism. Six years after defending his dissertation on the army's potential progressive role in Third World politics, Mirskii rose at a discussion at IMEMO to discuss the lessons of the coup in Chile.⁸¹ The Chilean coup was notable, he argued, because 'For the first time in history, in Chile there was a peaceful transition to socialism. For the first time in history in Chile a Marxist-Communist, Salvador Allende, was elected to the post of president'. Unlike most other Third World coups, the military toppled a regime that had begun a 'socialist proletarian revolution'.⁸²

It was understandable why the coup occurred, Mirskii believed. The problem was not that Allende 'excessively forced revolutionary transformations' as his critiques on the right argued. Nor was the problem that he failed to 'take decisive measures' such as arming the population to resist the military.⁸³ The true problem was that 'the most important part of the bourgeois governing machine – the apparatus of force – remained untouched. Government that does not have armed forces, an army, retaliatory organs, a system of government security — that is government on paper'.⁸⁴ And the army remained dead-set against Allende's revolutionary agenda. Experts from capitalist countries believed that 'there would be no coup, because that was not Chilean-style, the army was different, etc. Nonsense', Mirskii insisted. 'The generals of a professional bourgeois army are a privileged elite of society, either the sons of large landholders and capitalists, or connected by many threats to the bourgeois elite of society'.⁸⁵ No wonder they opposed the coup.

Did this contradict Mirskii's earlier theory about the potentially revolutionary nature of the military? Not entirely, he claimed. He had always insisted that the military's 'caste solidarity' was a powerful force, and it played a major role in Chile.⁸⁶ No less important was the political attitude of soldiers. As elsewhere, Chilean soldiers were 'sons of peasants and workers' but they were also 'members of a privileged group' — the army. It is possible to arouse the class consciousness of soldiers, but never guaranteed. In Chile, the political work had not been done. The army remained on the right.⁸⁷

The conclusion that Mirskii drew from the Chilean experience, however, seemed to tack in an opposite direction from his previous work. He had few qualms about the onset of military rule in Egypt, in part because it was difficult to call the pre-coup regime a democracy. The choice was between two different types of non-representative regimes, and Mirskii believed the military type under Nasser more effectively spoke to the aspirations of the masses. Chile was different. Its democracy was working, even for the left. 'When right wing forces saw that the people were on the side of Allende', Mirskii argued, 'they

understood that only one forced remained, and that if they waited until [the election] in 1976 they would have lost completely'. Hence, the coup. But Mirskii underscored that democracy was worth defending even for committed socialists, even after the disastrous experience in Chile. 'We must not fall into a panic and say that the entire conception of a peaceful path to socialism is ruined and only armed uprisings remain'.⁸⁸

Indeed, the fate of other armed uprisings that Mirskii had previously supported no longer looked like appealing models. The military regimes that appeared to Mirskii to have a progressive political orientation in the early 1960s looked rather different by the 1970s and 1980s. By the 1980s, Mirskii's hope that military regimes might lead to progressive outcomes had evaporated. His final scholarly work on the subject, *The Role of the Army in the Political Life of Third World Countries*, took a decidedly pessimistic view of military rulers. Mirskii began the book by listing the dozens of coups that occurred in the Third World, from Algeria to Afghanistan, Sierra Leone to Somalia.⁸⁹ African countries were particularly vulnerable to coups because of its weak political institutions, he argued, but Asia and Latin America had seen plenty of coups too.⁹⁰

As in his previous work, Mirskii continued to emphasize the importance of the social and political basis of a country's military in understanding the ramification of a coup. As before, he noted that the army could constitute a 'military intelligentsia', particularly in its ability to promote ideas of nationalism throughout the country. As before, it is this capacity which gives the army its 'progressive potential'. But unlike his work in the 1960s, Mirskii no longer had optimism in such a path. Maybe the military had progressive potential in a theoretical sense, but 'whether it worked or not — that's a different question', he now wrote.⁹¹

The painful reality Mirskii faced was not only that armed forces had proven wholly incapable of acting as modernizing forces. Third World governments of all types appeared to have failed. The 'non-capitalist path' — which once seemed to offer hope of a non-communist progressive politics in the Third World — had not delivered. There were three reasons why: the strength of social and cultural traditions, the prevalence of corruption and the reality that Third World militaries had not banished these first two vices, they had intensified them.

Culture and traditions were not a focus of Soviet development thinking during the immediate post-decolonization period. True, backwards social practices would have to be overcome in the process of modernization — but there was little doubt that urbanization, economic development and education would sweep away centuries-old oppressive practices associated with religion, caste and rural life.⁹² By the 1980s, though, Soviet certainty that economic development would erode traditions had faded. Now, Soviet economists feared traditions were restraining economic growth.⁹³ As Mirskii wrote, 'We underestimated the influence of the low level of social consciousness, the prevalence of traditional beliefs, tribalism, castes, clans, patron-client relations'.⁹⁴

Particularly, in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution in 1979 — which at first appeared to include leftist elements, before veering toward the Islamic right — the continued political potency of religion was impossible to ignore. For one thing, 'Oriental and African religions do little to familiarize people with private business activity', which inhibits modernization of these societies.⁹⁵ Yet, religion was also used as a tool in Third World politics, Mirskii argued, particularly in the Middle East. He cited Iran and Saudi Arabia as two such examples. Military regimes were no less capable of using religion to bolster their

authority, and repeatedly turned to religion as a legitimizing tool. In Pakistan, for example, a policy of 'Islamization' was used to bolster a military regime.⁹⁶

The Third World's style of 'eastern capitalism' — apparently less effective than its Western variant — was, in Mirskii's view, one reason that Third World politics remained distressingly feudal in nature.⁹⁷ Yet, the problem was not simply that Third World countries failed to develop their economies. It was also that, when governments sought to boost growth by playing a bigger role in the economy, they often ended up fueling corruption. Mirskii was not the only Soviet analyst to notice the role played by corruption in Third World politics, but it helped discredit to him the notion that military regimes could be a progressive force.

Other Soviet analysts such as Karen Brutents and Nodari Simoniia had promoted a theory of the 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie'.⁹⁸ Like Mirskii's innovative claim from the mid-1960s that an army need not necessarily reflect the interests of society's dominant class, Brutents, Simoniia and the other theorists of the 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie' proposed that a government structure could also have independent interests. The self-interest of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie was most evident, these scholars believed, in the corruption that infested nearly every government in the Third World.

As Mirskii reflected on the fate of Third World military coups, he found plentiful evidence that militaries faced similar problems with corruption and self-dealing. The first chapter in his book from the 1980s was titled 'Generals, Bureaucrats, Businessmen' — as if it was difficult to tell the three groups apart.⁹⁹ This was a common phenomenon, Mirskii showed. Nigeria's army was famed for its corruption. Burma's army — once believed to be a potentially progressive force — had dropped its political program and instead sought to get rich. Turkey's army was involved in business. The Thai army's 'corruption reached fantastic levels'. Indonesia's military had become 'a new trading bourgeoisie'.¹⁰⁰

After a quarter-century of independent post-colonial rule — and after dozens of coups across Asia, Africa and Latin America — whatever optimism that revolutionary colonels had inspired in the mid-1950s was wholly extinguished. The reality, he concluded, was that all coups are launched in their own interest, rather than in pursuit of the public interest.¹⁰¹ Corruption was the norm; 'scandal followed scandal'.¹⁰² Even Nasser was just 'one man' in a system not otherwise amenable to progressive transformations.¹⁰³ By the 1970s, it was difficult to see anything optimistic in the military-led system that Nasser constructed.¹⁰⁴ Whatever the faults of the Third World's civilian regimes — authoritarian or semi-feudal, capitalist or neo-colonialist — they were generally no worse than the military juntas, whatever leftist slogans the Third World's revolutionary colonels waved. In any case, anti-imperialism was the only genuine and widespread political conviction among most Third World military regimes. Twenty-five years after most of the European empires had retreated or collapsed, anti-imperialism was hardly a firm basis for a progressive agenda. The types of politics that had emerged from Third World militaries — authoritarian, religious and right-wing — were, to Mirskii, far from inspiring.¹⁰⁵

Perhaps the failure of authoritarian modernization should have been more predictable, particularly for an intellectual as learned as Mirskii. How was it that a leading anti-Stalinist was at willing during the 1950s and 1960s to tolerate, perhaps even celebrate, the potential of rule by colonels in the Third World? A key reason was his lived history: in Mirskii's life, the Red Army won World War II, while Stalin's Communist Party purged, deported and murdered hundreds of thousands. The Red Army was hierarchical, to be sure, but it was

no less democratic than the party. The army had saved the country from Nazism, whereas the party was long dominated by a man that Mirskii considered to be little better from Hitler.¹⁰⁶

To a leading liberal-minded intellectual at the height of Soviet power, the need for credible alternatives to the Stalinist model was a serious dilemma. Mirskii was never a dissident on the model of Andrei Sakharov, but he paid a personal and professional price for his opposition to Stalinism and its later manifestations in Soviet politics. He was interrogated by the KGB and his travels were restricted. American social scientists might hypothesize about alternatives to democracy in underdeveloped countries; Mirskii had lived through one, and he knew they came in multiple varieties. Given the realistic set of choices in Third World politics, this survivor of Stalinism believed during the 1950s and 1960s that in certain circumstances, military rule might be the optimal available path for achieving independence and development.

Notes

1. Nikita Khrushchev, interview by James Reston, *New York Times*, 10 Oct. 1957. This work was supported by the Institute for New Economic Thinking. I would like to thank Nikolay Avhimovich, Jakub Madej, Anastasia Posnova and Danila Smirnov for research assistance, as well as to the two reviewers of this article for insightful and useful comments.
2. Yevgeny Primakov, *Russia and the Arabs: Behind the Scenes in the Middle East from the Cold War to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 2009); Walter Z. Laqueur, *The Soviet Union and the Middle East* (New York: Praeger, 1959); Rami Ginat, *The Soviet Union and Egypt, 1945–1955* (London: Routledge, 1994); H el ene Carr ere d'Encausse, *La politique sovi etique au Moyen-Orient* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1975).
3. Khrushchev, interview by James Reston, 10 Oct. 1957.
4. Robert J. McMahon (ed), *The Cold War in the Third World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Moscow's Third World Strategy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990); Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *Khrushchev's Cold War: The Inside Story of an American Adversary* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007); Jeremy Friedman, *Shadow Cold War: The Sino-Soviet Competition for the Third World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015); William Taubman, *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004), ch. 13–19; Elizabeth Kridl Valkenier, *The Soviet Union and the Third World* (New York: Praeger, 1983).
5. E.g. Georgii Mirskii, *Armiia i politika v stranakh Azii i Afriki* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Nauka, 1970).
6. Interview with Georgii Mirskii, Moscow, 29 May 2015.
7. Georgii Mirskii, *Zhizn v trekh epokakh* (Moscow: Letnii Sad, 2001), 179.
8. On the role of advisers in the Soviet foreign policy apparatus, see Oded Eran, *Mezhdunarodniki: An Assessment of Professional Expertise in the Making of Soviet Foreign Policy* (Tel Aviv: Turtledove, 1979).
9. Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), ch. 2–3.
10. The literature on 'modernization' and 'development' in US policy and theory is now extensive. See, e.g. Michael E. Latham, *The Right Kind of Revolution: Modernization, Development, and U.S. Foreign Policy from the Cold War to the Present* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011); David C. Engerman, 'The Romance of Economic Development and New Histories of the Cold War', *Diplomatic History*, xxviii (2004), 23–54; id., 'Learning from the East Soviet Experts and India in the Era of Competitive Coexistence', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, xxxiii (2013), 227–38; Daniel Immerwahr, *Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015); Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America's Cold War Battle against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard

- University Press, 2010); Joseph Morgan Hodge, 'Writing the History of Development', parts 1–2 *Humanity* vii (2016), 1.
11. South Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam are three key examples; see, e.g. Edward Miller, *Misalliance: Ngo Dinh Diem, the United States, and the Fate of South Vietnam* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).
 12. Jeane Kirkpatrick, 'Dictatorships and Double Standards', *Commentary*, lxxviii (1974), 34–45.
 13. Quoted in Westad, *Global Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 35.
 14. Gregg Brazinsky, *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Dennis Kux, *The United States and Pakistan, 1947–2000: Disenchanted Allies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).
 15. This was despite the hopes of Walt Rostow and others; see Walt Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
 16. Robert E. Lucas, 'Why Doesn't Capital Flow from Rich to Poor Countries?', *The American Economic Review*, lxxx (1990), 92–6.
 17. Rostow, *Stages*, 20.
 18. *Ibid.*, 24.
 19. *Ibid.*, 39–40.
 20. E.g. Victor Koschmann, 'Modernization and Democratic Values: The 'Japanese Model' in the 1960s', in David C. Engerman et al. (ed), *Staging Growth: Modernization, Development, and the Global Cold War* Engerman et al. (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003).
 21. On military modernization in practice see, e.g. Bradley R. Simpson, *Economists with Guns: Authoritarian Development and U.S.-Indonesian Relations, 1960–1968* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008); Thomas C. Field, *From Development to Dictatorship: Bolivia and the Alliance for Progress in the Kennedy Era* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014); Juan Gabriel Valdes, *Pinochet's Economists: The Chicago School in Chile* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Gregg Brazinsky, *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).
 22. On the military industrial complex's role in Soviet politics see Chris Miller, *The Struggle to Save the Soviet Economy* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2016).
 23. *XX s'ezed Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza*, i, 40, quoted in Jerry Hough, *The Struggle for the Third World: Soviet Debates and American Options* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2010), 157.
 24. The literature on Soviet development expertise is now growing; see, e.g. Alessandro Landolo, 'The Rise and Fall of the 'Soviet Model of Development' in West Africa, 1957–64', *Cold War History*, xii (2012), 683–704; Ragna Boden, 'Cold War Economics: Soviet Aid to Indonesia', *Journal of Cold War Studies*, x (Summer 2008), 110–28; Timothy Nunan, *Humanitarian Invasion: Global Development in Cold War Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Jeremy Friedman, *Shadow Cold War: The Sino-Soviet Competition for the Third World* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2015); Sergey Mazov, *A Distant Front in the Cold War: The USSR in West Africa and the Congo, 1956–1964* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010); David Engerman, 'Learning from the East: Soviet Experts and India in the Era of Competitive Coexistence', *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, xxxiii (2013), 227–38; Oscar Sanchez-Sibony, *Red Globalization: The Political Economy of the Soviet Cold War from Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). There is also an older literature that is still useful, including Marshall Goldman, *Soviet Foreign Aid* (New York: Praeger, 1967); Stephen Clarkson, *The Soviet Theory of Development: India and the Third World in Marxist-Leninist Scholarship* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978).
 25. Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemerrier-Quelquejay, *Sultan Galiev, le père de la révolution tiers-mondiste* (Paris: Fayard, 1986); Bulent Gokay, *Soviet Eastern Policy and Turkey: 1920–1991* (London: Routledge, 2006), ch. 2–3; Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, *Muslim National Communism in the Soviet Union* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).
 26. Quoted in Eran, *Mezhdunarodniki*, 75.
 27. *Ibid.*, book 2, part 1.

28. For more on the experience of the war, see Robert W. Thurston and Bernd Bonwetsch (eds), *The People's War: Responses to World War II in the Soviet Union* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2000).
29. Mirskii, *Zhizn*, 162.
30. Denis Kozlov and Eleonory Gilburd, 'The Thaw: Soviet Society and Culture during the 1950s and 1960s' *The Thaw: Soviet Society and Culture during the 1950s and 1960s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013); Ludmilla Alexeyeva and Paul Goldberg, *The Thaw Generation: Coming of Age in the Post-Stalin Era* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993); Stephen V. Bittner, *The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw: Experience and Memory in Moscow's Arbat* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).
31. Mirskii, *Zhizn*, 156.
32. *Ibid.*, 162. Our understanding of Mirskii's relationship with the KGB is complicated by the one-sided sources. The main account is Mirskii's own memoir; the KGB archives are not accessible. Petr Cherkasov follows Mirskii's account of the 'delo IMEMO', when several analysts at the institute were fired after a KGB investigation, and Mirskii was transferred to a different position and critiqued by the party; see Cherkasov, *IMEMO: Portret Na Fone Epokhi* (Moscow: Ves' Mir, 2004), 512. Several of Mirskii's colleagues at IMEMO, such as Evgenii Primakov, are believed to have had a multifaceted relationship with the KGB which included simultaneously advising the KGB on foreign questions and shielding domestic critics from KGB investigations. It is possible that Mirskii's relationship is more complicated than he lets on in his memoirs.
33. Vladislav M. Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Gorbachev* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), ch. 4.
34. Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Robert C. Allen, *Farm to Factory: A Reinterpretation of the Soviet Industrial Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).
35. Though the applicability of socialist or non-capitalist development in the Third World was a manner of long-running debate; for a more pessimistic view, see, e.g. the defense of V. M. Koltontai's dissertation, 15 June 1966, ARAN f. 1978, o. 1, d. X, l. 162; the defense of R. A. Ulianovskiy's dissertation, 10 April 1964, ARAN f. 1978, o. 1, d. 157, *passim*.
36. Hough, *Struggle*, 156–165.
37. Mirskii, *Zhizn*, 53–54.
38. Interview with Georgii Mirskii, Moscow, 29 May, 2015.
39. E.g. Angus Maddison, *The World Economy: Historical Statistics* (Paris: OECD, 2006).
40. E.g. Barrington Moore, *The Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966).
41. On Mirskii's belief in the revolutionary potential of third world states, even those without large proletariats, see Mirskii's comments on 'Problemy razvitiya novykh revolyutsionnykh sil v sovremennuyu epokhu', 28 Jan. 1970, ARAN f. 1978, o. 1, d. 3–I. 90.
42. Early publications, some of which were primarily of propagandistic rather than analytical value, include G. I. Mirskii, *Bagdaskii pakt – orudie lolonializma* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'svo Politicheskoi Literatury, 1956); G. I. Mirskii and L. Stepanov, *Asia and Africa: A New Era* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960); G. I. Mirskii, *Problems of the National-Liberation Movement* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1971).
43. On these transformations, see, for example, D. K. Fieldhouse, *Western Imperialism in the Middle East, 1914–1958* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
44. As Mirskii repeatedly asserted in private discussions of Soviet academics; see, e.g. ARAN f. 1978, o. 1, d. 112, l. 83.
45. E.g. Mirskii, 'Novaia Revoliutsiia' v OAR', *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnaia otnoshenie*, i (1969), 38–48.
46. E.g. Fedchenko and Kotlov, 'Irak na puti natsionalnogo vrozozhdeniia', *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnaia otnoshenie*, vii (1959), 44–55.
47. Iu. Gavrilov, 'Ekonomicheskie preobrazovanie v Birme', *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnaia otnoshenie*, iv (1965), 55–67; G. Klimko, 'Problemy ekonomicheskogo razvitiia birmy', *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnaia otnoshenie*, v (1961), 105–10.

48. Mirskii, *Azii i Afriki*.
49. Mirskii had previously played a major role in pushing Soviet scholars and policy analysts to treat class differentiation in a more complicated manner; see, id. 'Tvorcheskii marksizm i problemy natsionalnoi osvoboditelnoi revoliutsii', *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnaia otnoshenie*, ii (1963), 63–68; id. and T. Pokataeva, 'Klassy i klassovaia borba v razvivaiushchikhsia stranakh', *Mirovaia ekonomika i mezhdunarodnaia otnoshenie*, ii (1966), 39–49.
50. See Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (New York: Free Press, 1964); and Janowitz, *The Military in the Political Development of New Nations* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967).
51. Mirskii, *Armiia i politika*, 14.
52. *Ibid.*, 6.
53. *Ibid.*, 13.
54. *Ibid.*, 8.
55. The classic statement of this is V. I. Lenin, 'What is to be done', (1902).
56. Mirskii, *Armiia i politika*, 4.
57. *Ibid.*, 9.
58. *Ibid.*, 10.
59. E.g. *ibid.*, 38, 40.
60. *Ibid.*, 86.
61. Interview with Nodari Simoniia, Moscow, 13 March 2016.
62. Evidence of this is widespread in IMEMO archives.
63. 'Stenogramma zashchiti dissertatsii na soiskanie uchenoi stepeni doktora istoricheskikh nauk Mirskim G. I. na temu 'Politicheskaiia rol' armii v razvivaiushchikhsia stranakh', 20 Nov. 1967, ARAN f. 1978, o. 1, d. 223, l. 4, 12.
64. Hough, *Struggle for the Third World*, ch. 6.
65. 'Pamyati Aleksandra Borisovicha Reznikova', *Narody Azii I Afrik*, (1981), 247–250; 'Pamyati tovarishcha', *Aziya I Afrika segodnya*, (1981), 64.
66. 'Stenogramma zashchiti dissertatsii na soiskanie uchenoi stepeni doktora istoricheskikh nauk Mirskim', l. 4–5.
67. *Ibid.*, l. 6.
68. E.g. A. B. Reznikov, *Indoneziia v period 'Napravlaemoi demokratii'* (Moscow: Institut Vostokovedenii, 1969).
69. 'Stenogramma', l. 8.
70. *Ibid.*, l. 30.
71. *Ibid.*, l. 43–44.
72. *Ibid.*, l. 54.
73. *Ibid.*, l. 60.
74. *Ibid.*, l. 31. Mirskii offers a similarly spirited defense of Nasser on different occasions; see ARAN f. 1978, o. 1, d. 112, l. 83.
75. 'Stenogramma zashchiti dissertatsii na soiskanie uchenoi stepeni doktora istoricheskikh nauk Mirskim'.
76. Mirskii, *Zhizn*, 183–84.
77. John Waterbury, *The Egypt of Nasser and Sadat: The Political Economy of Two Regimes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 16. On the Cold War politics of the dam, see E. Bishop, 'Talking Shop: Egyptian Engineers and Soviet Specialists at the Aswan High Dam' (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1997).
78. Soviet academic and analytical literature covered this trend extensively; see, e.g. A. F. Shul'govskii *Armiia i politika v Latinskoi Amerike* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Nauk, 1979). Mirskii's second major book, *Tretii mir: obshchestvo, armiia, vlast'* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Nauk, 1976) also covers similar themes.
79. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out.
80. Robert G. Patman, 'Soviet-Ethiopian Relations', in Margot Light (ed), *Troubled Friendships: Moscow's Third World Ventures* (London: British Academic Press, 1993), 120.
81. 'Ob urokakh sobytii v Chili', 10 Oct. 1973, ARAN f. 1978, o. 1., d. 391, *passim*.

82. ARAN f.1978, o. 1, d. 391, l. 143. This was a common Soviet interpretation of the Chilean coup; see, e.g. 'Vooruzhennie sily v sisteme voenno-fashistkoi diktatury', in *Armiia i politika v Latinskoi Amerike* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Nauk, 1979), 479–93.
83. ARAN f. 1978 o. 1, d. 391, l. 144.
84. *Ibid.*, l. 153.
85. *Ibid.*, l. 154.
86. *Ibid.*, l. 156.
87. *Ibid.*, l. 158.
88. *Ibid.*, l. 171.
89. Georgii Mirskii, *Rol' armii v politicheskoy zhizni stran tretogo mira* (Moscow: Nauka, 1989), 3. See also G. I. Mirskii, 'Istoricheskie korni avtoritarnikh tendentsii I factory, sposbstuviushchie ikh sokhraneniuiu', in *Avtoritarizm i demokratiia v tretem mire* (Moscow: Akademiia Nauk, 1991), 139–69.
90. Mirskii, *Rol' armii*, 5.
91. *Ibid.*, 6.
92. Mirskii delivers a self-critique on this point in *Rol' armii*, 9.
93. I will explore this theme in a forthcoming essay, 'Nodari Simoniia and the Role of Traditions in Soviet Development Thinking'. Mirskii cites these scholars in *Rol' armii*, 17, 20, *passim*.
94. *Rol' armii*, 23, cf. *ibid.*, p 9.
95. *Rol' armii*, 14.
96. *Ibid.*, 70.
97. *Ibid.*, 24.
98. Fedor Burlatsky, *The State and Communism* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964); Burlatsky, *The Modern State and Politics* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978); See, for example, Karen Brutents, *Tridstat let na staroi ploshad* (Moscow, 1998), 202, 214; Brutents, *The Newly Free Countries in the Seventies* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1983) 56; Brutents, *Nesbyvsheesya* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye Otnoshenii, 2005), 169. See also my forthcoming paper, 'The 'Bureaucratic Bourgeoisie' and the Soviet Union's Loss of Faith in State-led Economic Development'. Mirskii was a friend of both Brutents and Simoniia; interview with Nodari Simoniia, Moscow, 13 March 2016; Mirskii, *Zhizn*, 175–82.
99. Mirskii, *Rol' armii*, 27.
100. *Ibid.*, 42–43, 50, 54, 58, 82–83.
101. *Ibid.*, 46.
102. *Ibid.*, 41.
103. *Ibid.*, 21.
104. Waterbury, *Egypt of Nasser and Sadat*.
105. *Rol' armii*, 154.
106. Mirskii, *Zhizn' v trekh epokhakh*, 72.

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