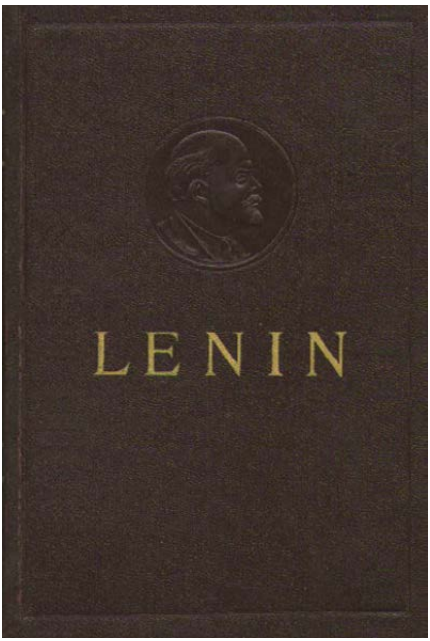
THE ECONOMIC CONTENT OF NARODISM AND THE CRITICISM OF IT IN MR. STRUVE'S BOOK

(THE REFLECTION OF MARXISM IN BOURGEOIS LITERATURE)

P. Struve, *Critical Remarks on the Subject of Russia's Economic Development*. St. Peteersburg, 1984[105]



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COLLECTED WORKS

VOLUME
1
1893 - 1894

Written: end of 1894-beginning of 1895

First published over the signature of K. Tulin in the miscellany entitled *Material for a Characterisation of Our Economic Development*. St. Petersburg, 1895

Published according to *Material for a Characterisation of Our Economic Development*.

МАТЕРІАЛЫ

КЪ ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКѢ

НАШЕГО ХОЗЯЙСТВЕННАГО РАЗВИТІЯ.

СБОРНИКЪ СТАТЕЙ.

С.-ПЕТЕРБУРГЪ
Типографія П. П. Сойкина, Стремянная ул., № 12
1895

Title page of the miscellany in which Lenin's *The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism of It in Mr. Struve's Book*, 1895, was published

Mr. Struve's book is a systematic criticism of Narodism —this word to be understood in its broad sense, as a theoretical doctrine that gives a particular solution to highly important sociological and economic problems, and as "a system of dogmas of economic policy" (p. VII). The very posing of such a problem would have made the book of outstanding interest, but of still greater importance is the standpoint from which the criticism is made. Of this the author in his Preface says the following:

"While adhering, on certain basic issues, to views that have been quite definitely established in literature, he (the author) does not consider himself bound in the least by the word and letter of any doctrine whatsoever. He is not infected with orthodoxy" (IX).

The contents of the book make it clear that these "views that have been quite definitely established in literature" are those of Marxism. The question arises: which, exactly, are the "certain basic" tenets of Marxism that the author accepts, and which are those he rejects? Why and to what extent? He gives no direct answers to these questions. That is why a detailed examination will be necessary in order to make clear exactly what there is in the book that may be classed as Marxist—which of the doctrine's tenets the author accepts and how consistently he adheres to them—and which of them he rejects, and what are the results when he does so.

The contents are exceedingly varied: the author gives us, firstly, an exposition of "the subjective method in sociology"

as accepted by our Narodniks, criticises it and sets against it the method "of historico-economic materialism." Then he gives an economic criticism of Narodism, firstly on the strength of "human experience" (p. IX) and, secondly, on the basis of the facts of Russia's economic history and present-day reality. A criticism of the dogmas of Narodnik economic policy is given in passing. The varied character of the contents (something quite inevitable when criticising a major trend in our public thought) determines the form in which the examination is made: we shall have to follow the author's exposition step by step, dwelling on each series of arguments.

Before, however, proceeding to examine the book, I consider it necessary to give a preliminary explanation in somewhat greater detail. The task of the present article is to criticise Mr. Struve's book from the viewpoint of one who "adheres to views that have been quite definitely established in literature" on *all* (and not merely on "certain") "basic issues."

These views have been expounded on more than one occasion for the purpose of criticism in the columns of the liberal and Narodnik press, and this exposition has abominably obscured them—has; indeed, distorted them by involving what has nothing whatever to do with them, namely, Hegelianism, "faith in the necessity of each country having to pass through the phase of capitalism" and much other purely *Novoye Vremya* nonsense.

It is above all the practical side of the doctrine, its application to Russian affairs, that has been badly distorted. Our liberals and Narodniks refused to understand that the starting-point of the Russian Marxist doctrine is a totally different concept of Russian reality, and by looking at that doctrine from the standpoint of their old views of this reality, reached conclusions that were not only absolutely absurd but that in addition levelled the most preposterous accusations at the Marxists.

It seems to me, therefore, that unless I define my attitude to Narodism exactly, it will be impossible to set about an examination of Mr. Struve's book. Furthermore, a prelimi-

nary comparison of the Narodnik and Marxist viewpoints is necessary to explain many passages in the book under review, which confines itself to the objective side of the doctrine and leaves practical conclusions almost entirely untouched.

The comparison will show us what points of departure Narodism and Marxism have in common, and in what they differ fundamentally. It will be more convenient to take the old Russian Narodism, since, firstly, it is immeasurably superior to that of today (as represented by publications such as *Russkoye Bogatstvo*) in consistency and forthrightness, and, secondly, it gives a fuller picture of the best aspects of Narodism, aspects which in some respects Marxism also adheres to.

Let us take one of the professions de foi* of the old Russian Narodism and follow the author step by step.

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* Creeds.—*Ed.*

CHAPTER I

A LINE-BY-LINE COMMENTARY ON A NARODNIK PROFESSION DE FOI

Volume CCXLII of *Otechestvenniye Zapiski** contains an unsigned article entitled "New Shoots in the People's Fields," which graphically sets forth the progressive aspects of Narodism as against Russian liberalism.

The author begins by saying that "now" it is considered "almost treachery" to protest against "those who emerge from the midst of the people and reach a higher level of society."

> "Not long ago a certain literary donkey kicked at *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* for displaying *pessimism towards the people*, as he expressed himself regarding a brief review of a book by Zlatovratsky which contained nothing pessimistic apart from pessimism towards usury and the corrupting influence of money in general; and when, later, Gleb Uspensky wrote a commentary to his latest articles (*Otechestvenniye Zapiski*, No. 11, 1878), the liberal bog heaved and surged, just as in the fairy-tale ... and all of a sudden, so many defenders of the people appeared that, verily, we were surprised to find that our people had so many friends.... I cannot but sympathise ... with the way of posing the problem of the beauteous countryside and of the attitude of the literary lads towards it, or, to put it better, not lads but old roués from among Messrs. the nobility and lackeys, and the young merchants.... To sing serenades to the countryside and "to make eyes at it" does not at all mean to love and respect it, just as pointing to its defects does not mean to be hostile towards it. Should you ask the very same Uspensky ... what is closest to his heart, where he sees the greatest guarantees for the future ... in the countryside or in the old-nobility and the new middle-class strata, can there be any doubt at all that he would say: 'The countryside.'"

This is a very typical passage. Firstly, it shows clearly the essence of Narodism: it is protest against serfdom (the

* 1879, No. 2, *Contemporary Review*, pp. 125-52.

old-nobility stratum) and bourgeoisdom (the new middle-class stratum) in Russia *from the peasant's, the small producer's, point of view*. Secondly, it shows at the same time that this protest is based on fantasy, that it turns its back on the facts.

Does the "countryside" exist somewhere *outside of* the "old-nobility" or "new middle-class" regimes? Was it not the "countryside" that representatives of both the one and the other built and are still building each after their own fashion? The countryside is in fact a "stratum" that is partly "old-nobility," and partly "new middle-class." Whichever way you look at the countryside, if you confine yourself to stating the actual situation (that is all that is at issue) and not to possibilities, you will not be able to find anything else, any third "stratum," in it. And if the Narodniks *do*, it is only because they cannot see the wood for the trees, the form of land *tenure* in the separate peasant communities prevents them from seeing the economic organisation of Russian social economy. This organisation turns the peasant into a commodity producer, transforms him into a petty bourgeois, a petty isolated farmer producing for the market. This organisation, therefore, makes it impossible to look *backwards* for "guarantees for the future" and makes it essential to look for them *ahead*. They should not be sought in the "countryside," where the combination of the "old-nobility" and "new middle-class" strata terribly worsens the position of labour and deprives it of the opportunity of fighting against the masters of the "new middle-class" order, for here the antithesis between their interests and those of labour is insufficiently developed. But they should be sought in the fully-developed stratum which is completely "new middle-class" and has entirely disposed of the blessings of the "old-nobility," has socialised labour, has brought to a head and clarified that social contradiction which, in the countryside, is still in an embryonic, suppressed condition.

Now we must indicate the theoretical differences existing between the doctrines that *lead* to Narodism and to Marxism, between the different *conceptions* of Russian reality and history.

Let us follow the author further.

He assures "spiritually indignant gentlemen" that Uspensky understands the relation between the poverty and the morality of the people

> "better than many admirers of the countryside, for whom ... the countryside ... is something like the liberal passport which all intelligent and practical bourgeois usually provide themselves with in an epoch like the present."

You, Mr. Narodnik, are wondering why something so lamentable and hurtful should take place—that a man who wants to represent the interests of labour should see that which he regards as "guarantees for the future" transformed into a "liberal passport." That future has to rule out the bourgeoisie—but the way in which you wish to arrive at this future, far from being given a hostile reception by the "practical and intelligent bourgeois," is accepted willingly, is accepted as a "passport."

Do you think such a scandalous thing would be possible if you were to point to the "guarantees for the future," not where the social contradictions inherent in the system dominated by the "practical and intelligent bourgeois" are still in an undeveloped, embryonic state, but where they are developed thoroughly, to nec plus ultra, where, consequently, one cannot confine oneself to palliatives or half-measures, where the desiderata of the working people cannot be utilised for one's own benefit, and where the issue is squarely put?

Do you not yourself say further on:

> "The passive friends of the people refuse to understand the simple thing that in society all active forces usually add up to two equally operating, mutually opposite ones, and that the passive forces which apparently take no part in the struggle, merely serve the force preponderant at the given moment" (p. 132).

Does not this description apply to the countryside, or is the countryside some specific kind of world devoid of these "mutually opposite forces" and struggle, a countryside that can be spoken of indiscriminately, without fear of playing into the hands of the "preponderant force"? Is it sound, since we are talking about struggle, to begin where the content of this struggle is cluttered up with a host of extraneous circumstances that prevent those mutually opposite forces from

being definitely and finally separated from one another, that prevent the chief enemy from being clearly seen? Is it not obvious that the programme advanced by the author at the end of his article—education, expansion of peasant land tenure, reduction of taxes—can have no effect on the one who is preponderant, while the last point of the programme—"organisation of people's industry"—presumes, does it not, that the struggle has not only taken place, but, furthermore, has already ended in victory? Your programme fights shy of the antagonism whose existence you yourself could not help admitting. That is why it holds no terrors for the masters of the "new middle-class stratum." Your programme is a petty-bourgeois dream. That is why it is only good enough to be a "liberal passport."

"People for whom the countryside is an abstract concept, and the muzhik an abstract Narcissus, even think badly when they say that the countryside should only be praised and be told that it is standing up splendidly to all influences destructive to it. If the countryside is placed in such a position that it must fight every day for a kopek, if it is skinned by the usurers, deceived by the kulaks, oppressed by the landlords, if it is sometimes flogged in the Volost offices, can this be without influence to its moral side?... If the ruble, that capitalist moon, sails to the forefront of the rural landscape, if all eyes, all thoughts and spiritual forces are focussed on it, if it becomes the aim of life and the yardstick of individual abilities, can the fact be hidden and can we say that the muzhik is such an altruist that he needs no money at all? If in the countryside there are visible tendencies towards conflict, if kulakdom is in full bloom and is striving to enslave the weakest peasants and turn them into labourers, to wreck the village community, etc., can we, I ask, conceal all these facts?! We may wish for a more detailed and comprehensive investigation of them, we may explain them to ourselves by the oppressive conditions of poverty (hunger drives people to theft, murder, and in extreme cases even to cannibalism), but we cannot conceal them at all. To conceal them means to defend the status quo, to defend the notorious laissez faire, laissez aller until the sad phenomena assume terrible proportions. To colour the truth is never worth while."

Once again, how fine is this description of the countryside and how petty the conclusions drawn from it! How well are the facts observed and how paltry the explanation, the understanding of them! Here again we see the gigantic abyss between the desiderata of the defence of labour, and the means of fulfilling them. Capitalism in the countryside,

so far as the author is concerned, is no more than a "sad phenomenon." Despite the fact that he sees the same sort of capitalism in the towns on a big scale, that he sees how capitalism has subordinated to itself not only all spheres of the people's labour but even "progressive" literature, which presents the measures of the bourgeoisie in the name and in behalf of the people, despite this, he refuses to admit that it is a matter of the specific organisation of our social economy, and consoles himself with dreams about its being merely a sad phenomenon called into existence by "oppressive conditions." And if, says he, one does not cling to the theory of non-interference, then these conditions may be eliminated. Yes, *if* ifs and ans! But Russia has never yet witnessed a policy of non-interference; there always has been interference ... for the benefit of the bourgeoisie, and only sweet dreams of "after-dinner tranquillity" can give rise to hopes of changing this without a "redistribution of the social force between the classes," as Mr. Struve puts it.

"We forget that our society needs ideals—political, civic and others—mainly so that, having acquired a stock of them, it may be able to think of nothing; that society seeks them not with youthful eagerness, but with after-dinner tranquillity, that society is not disillusioned in them with torments of the soul but with the lightness of a prince of Arcady. Such, at least, is the overwhelming majority of our society. Actually it requires no ideals because it is sated and is fully satisfied by digestive processes."

A superb description of our liberal-Narodnik society.

The question arises, who is more consistent now: the "Narodniks," who continue to fuss and bother with this "society," who regale it with a picture of the horrors of "oncoming" capitalism, of the "threatening evil,"* as the author of the article expressed it, who call on its representatives to leave the wrong road on to which "we" have deviated, etc.—or the Marxists, who are so "narrow" that they sharply fence themselves off from society and consider it necessary to address themselves exclusively to those who are not "satisfied" and *cannot be satisfied* with "digestive proc-

* Threatening what? The digestive processes? Capitalism not only does not "threaten" them, but, on the contrary, promises the most refined and dainty victuals.

esses," for whom ideals are a necessity, for whom they are a matter of daily life.

That is the attitude of a ladies' college damsel—continues the author. That

> "testifies to profound corruption of thought and feelings ... never has there been such decent, polished, such innocent and at the same time profound corruption. This corruption is entirely the property of our recent history, the property of middle-class culture" [i.e., of the bourgeois, capitalist order, to be more exact. K. T.*] "that has grown up on the soil of landlordism, the sentimentality ignorance and indolence of the nobility. The middle class have introduced their own science, their own moral code and their own sophisms into life."

One would have thought that the author had so well assessed the situation that he should have understood the only possible conclusion to be drawn. If it is all a matter of our bourgeois culture, there can be no other "guarantees for the future" except in the "antipode" of this bourgeoisie, because it alone has been totally "differentiated" from this "middle-class culture," is finally and irrevocably hostile to it and is incapable of any of the compromises out of which it is so convenient to fashion "liberal passports."

But no. One may still dream. "Culture" is certainly nothing but "middle- class," nothing but corruption. But this is only because it comes from the old landlordism (he himself has just admitted that this culture is a product of contemporary history, of that history, in fact, that destroyed the old landlordism) and from indolence—something, therefore, that is fortuitous and has no firm roots, etc., etc. Then come phrases that have no meaning other than turning one's back on the facts and sentimental dreaming that ignores the *existence* of "mutually opposite forces." Listen:

> "They (the middle class) have to instal them (science, the moral code) in the university chairs, in literature, in the courts and in other spheres of life." [Above we have seen that they *have already installed them* in such a profound "sphere of life" as the countryside. K. T.] "First and foremost, they do not find a sufficient number of people suitable for this, and of necessity address themselves to people of other traditions." [Is it the Russian bourgeoisie that "does not find people"?! This is

* K. T. (K. Tulin)—V. I. Lenin.—*Ed.*

not worth refuting, especially as the author refutes himself further on. K. T.] "These people have no knowledge of business" [the Russian capitalists?! K. T.], "their steps are uncertain, their movements clumsy "[their "knowledge of business" is sufficient for them to get tens and hundreds per cent profit; they are sufficiently "experienced" to practise the truck-system[106] everywhere, they are sufficiently astute to secure preferential tariffs. Only somebody who has no *immediate and direct* experience of oppression by these people, only a petty bourgeois could entertain such a fantasy. K. T.]; "they try to copy the West-European bourgeoisie, order books, study" [here the author has himself to admit the fantastic character of the dream he has now concocted about "middle-class culture" having grown up in Russia in the soil of *ignorance*. That is untrue. It is precisely the *middle-class culture* that brought culture and "education" to post-Reform Russia. "To colour the truth," to picture the enemy as impotent and devoid of foundation is "never worth while." K. T.]; "at times they become regretful about the past and at times uneasy about the future, because voices are heard from somewhere saying that the middle class are only the impertinent parvenus of the day, that their science will not bear criticism, while their moral code is no use at all."

Is it the Russian bourgeoisie that commits the sin of being "regretful about the past" and "uneasy about the future"?! You don't say! Don't some people like pulling their own legs by spreading such wholesale slander about the poor Russian bourgeoisie being embarrassed by voices proclaiming the "uselessness of the middle class." Is not the opposite the case: were not these "voices" "embarrassed" when they were given a good bawling out, is it not they who display "uneasiness about the future"?...

And gentlemen of this sort even express surprise and pretend they do not understand why they are called romantics!

"Yet we must save ourselves. The middle class do not ask, but order people, on pain of destruction, to go to work.* If you refuse, you will go without bread and will stand in the middle of the street, crying out, "Spare something for an ex-soldier!" or die of starvation altogether. And so work begins, you hear a squeaking, creaking, and clanking, there is a turmoil. The job is an urgent one that brooks no delay. Finally, the machine is set going. There seems to be less creaking and fewer strident sounds, the parts seem to work, all you hear is the din of something

* Note that, reader. When a Narodnik says that here, in Russia, "the middle class order people to go to work," that is the truth. But should a Marxist say that the capitalist mode of production prevails in Russia—then Mr. V. V. will set up a howl about his trying to "replace the democratic (sic!!) system by the capitalist."

clumsy. But that makes it all the more fearsome because the planks bend more and more, screws get loose and, look!—before you know where you are the whole thing may fall to pieces."

This passage is particularly typical in that it contains in graphic, laconic, and elegant form the line of argument which the Russian Narodniks like to clothe in scientific dress. Starting out from facts which are indisputable, which are beyond all doubt, and which prove the existence of contradictions under the capitalist system, the existence of oppression, starvation, unemployment, etc., they exert every effort to prove that capitalism is an exceedingly bad thing, is "clumsy" [cf. V. V., *Kablukov* (*The Workers in Agriculture*), and *partly* Mr. Nikolai—on], and "look, before you know where you are it may fall to pieces."

We are looking, we have been looking for many, many years, and see that this force, which orders the Russian people to go to work, keeps growing stronger and bigger, boasts to the whole of Europe about the might of the Russia *it* is creating, and is glad, of course, that "voices are heard" only about the need to hope that "the screws will get loose."

"Weak people are terror-stricken. 'All the better,' say reckless people. 'All the better,' say the bourgeoisie:—'the sooner we order new machinery from abroad, the sooner we prepare platforms, planks and other rough parts from our own material, the sooner we shall get skilled engineers.' In the meantime, the moral aspect of society is in a very bad way. Some people acquire a taste for the new activity and make frantic efforts, some lag behind and become disillusioned with life."

Poor Russian bourgeoisie! They make "frantic" efforts to appropriate surplus-value! and feel in a bad way in the moral sense! (Don't forget that a page earlier all this morality amounted to digestive processes and corruption.) It is clear that here there is no need for a struggle—and for a class struggle at that—against them; all that is needed is to chide them properly, and they will stop overdoing it.

"In the meantime practically nobody thinks of the people, yet, according to the rules of the bourgeoisie, everything is done for the people, on their account; yet all prominent public and literary people consider it their duty to hold forth on the people's welfare.... This coquettish liberalism has crushed all other trends and become predominant. In

our *democratic age* not only does Mr. Suvorin publicly 'confess his love for the people and say: I have always had but one love, and I shall have it till I die—that love is the people. I myself came from the people' (which in itself does not prove anything at all); even *Moskovskiye Vedomosti*[107] seems to have quite a different attitude to them ... and in its own way, of course, concerns itself with their well-being. At the present time there is not one single paper like the late *Vest*, i.e., openly unfriendly to the people. But the obviously unfriendly attitude was better because the enemy was then plainly visible, as on the palm of your hand: you could see in what way he was a fool, and in what way he was a knave. Now all are friends and at the same time enemies; everything is mixed up in a general chaos. The people, as Uspensky says, are, in fact, enveloped in a sort of fog in which the inexperienced person may go astray. Formerly they saw themselves faced with just outspoken lawlessness. Now they are told that they are as free as the landlord, they are told that they manage their own affairs, they are told that they are being raised from insignificance and being put on their feet, whereas running through all these manifestations of concern there is a thin but tenacious thread of endless deceit and hypocrisy.

There's no gainsaying that!

"At that time far from everybody was engaged in organising loan-and-savings societies that encouraged the kulaks and left the genuinely poor without credits."

At first one might have thought that the author understood the bourgeois character of credit and so was bound to give a wide berth to all such bourgeois measures. But the distinctive and basic feature of the petty bourgeois is to battle against bourgeoisdom with the instruments of bourgeois society itself. That is why the author, like the Narodniks in general, *corrects* bourgeois activity by demanding more extensive credits, credits for the genuinely poor!

"... they did not talk of the need for intensive farming, which is hindered by the redistribution of fields and by the village community (?); they did not dwell on the burden of the poll-tax and did not propose an income tax, keeping silent about indirect taxation and the fact that income tax is usually turned in practice into a tax on the very same poor people, they did not speak of the need for credits with which the peasants could purchase land from the landlords at abnormally high prices, etc.... The same is the case in society: there, too, the people have such a multitude of friends that you can only marvel.... Very likely the pawnbrokers and tapsters will soon start talking about love for the people...."

This protest against bourgeoisdom is superb; but the conclusions are paltry: the bourgeoisie reign supreme both in everyday life and in society. One would have thought that the thing to do is to turn away from society and go to the antipode of the bourgeoisie.

No, the thing to do is to propagate credits for the "genuinely poor"!

"It is difficult to decide who is more to blame for such a confused state of affairs—literature or society—and it is, moreover, quite useless. They say that a fish starts rotting at the head, but I attach no significance to this purely culinary observation."

Bourgeois society is rotting—that, then, is the author's idea. It is worth emphasising that this is the starting-point of the Marxists.

"Yet while we are flirting with the countryside and making eyes at it, the wheel of history is turning, spontaneous forces are at work, or to speak more clearly and simply, all sorts of tricksters are insinuating themselves into life and remaking it after their own fashion. While literature argues about the countryside, about the kind-heartedness of the muzhik and his lack of knowledge, while the publicists exhaust bucketfuls of ink on the village community and the forms of land tenure, while the tax commission continues its discussion on tax reform, the countryside will be utterly ruined."

There you have it! "While we are talking, the wheel of history is turning, spontaneous forces are at work."

What a howl, my friends, you would raise, were it I that spoke thus![108]

When Marxists speak of the "wheel of history and spontaneous forces," and explain specifically that the "spontaneous forces" are the forces of the rising bourgeoisie, Messrs. the Narodniks prefer to say nothing about whether or not the growth of these "spontaneous forces" is true and whether this fact has been rightly estimated; and they blather interminable asininities about those who dare to speak of "the wheel of history" and "spontaneous forces," calling them "mystics and metaphysicians."

The difference—and a very substantial one—between the above-cited admission of the Narodnik and the ordinary proposition of the Marxists is only this—for the Narodnik these "spontaneous forces" boil down to "tricksters" who

"insinuate themselves into life," whereas for the Marxist the spontaneous forces are embodied in the bourgeois *class*, which is a product and expression of social "life," which in its turn constitutes the capitalist social formation, and do not "insinuate themselves into life" by accident or from somewhere outside. The Narodnik, who keeps to the surface of credits, taxes, forms of land tenure, redistribution, improvements, and so forth, cannot see that the bourgeoisie are deeply rooted in Russia's production relations and for that reason soothes himself with childish illusions about their being no more than "tricksters." And, naturally, from *this* point of view it really will be absolutely incomprehensible where the class struggle comes in, when it is all a matter of merely eliminating "tricksters." Naturally, Messrs. the Narodniks answer the Marxists' emphatic and repeated references to this struggle with the totally incomprehending silence of one who sees only the "trickster" and not the class.

A class can only be fought by *another class*, and only by one that is already totally "differentiated" from its enemy, totally opposite to it, whereas the police alone, and in an extreme case "society" and the "state," are, of course, enough to fight the "tricksters."

We shall soon see, however, what these "tricksters" are like from the description given by the Narodnik himself, how deeply rooted they are and how universal their social functions.

Then, immediately after the above-quoted words about "passive friends of the people," the author continues:

"This is something worse than armed neutrality in politics, worse because in this case active aid is always rendered to the strongest. However sincere a passive friend may be in his sentiments, however modest and unobtrusive a position he may try to assume in everyday life, he will nevertheless injure his friends...."

"For individuals of greater or lesser integrity and who sincerely love the people,* such a state of affairs finally becomes intolerably

* How vague are the features which here distinguish the "passive friends"! Among them, to be sure, there are also people of "integrity" who undoubtedly "love the people sincerely." From the previous comparison it obviously follows that we should contrast to the passive friend the one who participates in the struggle of "mutually opposite" *social forces*. Hier liegt der Hund begraben (That's the skeleton in the cupboard.—*Ed.*).

repugnant. They become ashamed and disgusted to hear this wholesale and sugary confession of love that is repeated from year to year, repeated daily in offices, fashionable salons, and in restaurants over bottles of Clicquot, and is never translated into action. That is why they finally come to the sweeping denial of all this hotchpotch."

This description of the attitude of the former Russian Narodniks to the liberals would fit the attitude of the Marxists to the present-day Narodniks almost completely. The Marxists, too, now find it "intolerable" to listen to talk of aid for the "people" in the shape of credits, land purchases, technical improvements, artels, common tillage,* etc. They also demand a "sweeping denial" of all this liberal-Narodnik hotchpotch from individuals desirous of siding ... not with the "people," no, but with him whom the bourgeoisie order to go to work. They find it "intolerable" hypocrisy to talk of choosing paths for Russia, of misfortunes from "threatening" capitalism, of the "needs of people's industry," when in all spheres of this people's industry we see the reign of capital, a smouldering battle of interests, that one must not hide but expose—one must not dream that "it would be better without struggle,"** but must *develop* the stability, continuity, consistency, and, chiefly, ideological nature of that struggle.

"That is why certain civic canons finally appear, certain categorical demands for decency, demands that are strict and on occasion even narrow, and for this reason are particularly disliked by liberals in the grand style who love wide shady spaces and forget that the demands have a logical origin."

Superb wish! There is an undoubted need for demands that are "strict" and "narrow."

The trouble, however, is that all the superb intentions of the Narodniks have remained in the realm of "pious wishes." Despite the fact that they have recognised the need for such demands, despite the fact that they have had quite enough time to give effect to them, they have not yet drawn

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* G. Yuzhakov in *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, issue No. 7, 1894.

** Mr. Krivenko's expression (*Russkoye Bogatstvo* 1894, No. 10) in reply to Mr. Struve's phrase about "the stern struggle of social classes."

them up, they have steadily merged with Russian liberal society by a whole series of gradual transitions, and continue to do so to this day.*

Therefore, they have only themselves to blame if the Marxists now put forward demands *against* them that are really very "strict" and "narrow," demands for *exclusive* service to one class *exclusively* (the class that is "differentiated from life"), to its independent development and thinking, demands that they should make a complete break with the "civic decency" of the "decent" bourgeois of Russia.

"However narrow these canons may be on particular points, at any rate one cannot say anything against the following general demand: 'one of two things: either be real friends, or turn into open enemies!'

"We are now passing through an exceedingly important historical process, namely, that of the formation of a third estate. The selection of representatives is going on before our eyes, and the organisation of the new social force that is preparing to govern life is taking place."

Only just "preparing"? But who does "govern"? What other "social force"?

Surely not the one that was expressed in newspapers of the *Vest* type? That is impossible. We are not in 1894, but in 1879, on the eve of "the dictatorship of the heart";[110] the time when, to use the expression of the author of the article, "extreme conservatives have fingers pointed at them in the street," and are "loudly laughed at."

Surely not the "people," not the working population? A negative reply is provided by the whole of the author's article.

Can they still say after that: "preparing to govern"?! No, that force "finished preparing" ages ago and has been "governing" for ages; it is only the Narodniks who "are preparing"

* Certain naïve Narodniks, who in their simplicity do not understand that their words are directed against themselves, even boast of this:

"Our intelligentsia in general, and literature in particular," writes Mr. V. V. against Mr. Struve, "even the representatives of the most bourgeois trends, bear, so to speak, a Narodnik character" (*Nedelya*, 1894, No. 47, p. 1506).

Just as in everyday life the small producer merges with the bourgeoisie by a series of imperceptible transitions, so in literature the pious wishes of the Narodniks become a "liberal passport" for the receptacles of digestive processes, skimmers,[109] etc.

to select the best paths to be followed by Russia, and they will, presumably, spend their time getting ready until the consistent development of class contradictions sweeps aside, jettisons all those who fight shy of them.

"This process, which began in Europe much earlier than ours did, has come to an end* in many countries; in others it is still being held up by the debris of feudalism and by the resistance of the working classes, but the wheel of history is there, too, year by year breaking up these debris to an ever greater extent and paving the way for the new order."

That is the extent to which our Narodniks misunderstand the West-European labour movement! It "holds up" capitalism, you see—and, as "debris," it is placed on a par with feudalism!

This is clear proof that in respect of not only Russia, but also of the West, our Narodniks are incapable of understanding how one can fight capitalism by speeding up its development, and not by "holding it up," not by pulling it back, but by pushing it forward, not in reactionary, but in progressive fashion.

"In its general features this process consists of the following: between the nobility and the people a new social stratum is being formed of elements that descend from above and of elements that rise from below, who, as it were, are of equal relative weight, if one may so express oneself, these elements are welding themselves closely together, are joining forces, undergoing a profound inner change and beginning to change both the upper and the lower strata, adapting them to their requirements. This process is extremely interesting in itself, but for us it is of particularly great significance. For us a whole series of questions arise: does the rule of the third estate constitute a fatal and inevitable stage in the civilisation of each people?..."

What sort of rubbish is this?! Where does "fatal inevitability" come from, and what has it to do with the matter? Did not the author himself describe, and will he not in still

* What's the meaning of "has come to an end"? Does it mean that its end is visible, that a "new force" is assembling already? In that case it is coming to an end in Russia, too. Or that there the third estate is no longer growing?—that is wrong, because there, too, small producers still exist from whom come handfuls of bourgeoisie and masses of proletarians.

greater detail describe, the domination of the third estate in *our country*, in holy Russia, in the seventies?

The author apparently accepts the theoretical arguments behind which the representatives of our bourgeoisie have hidden themselves.

Now, what else is it but dreamy superficiality to accept such inventions at their face value? Not to understand that behind these "theoretical" arguments stand *interests*, the interests of the society that has now been so rightly assessed, the interests of the bourgeoisie?

Only a romantic can think that interests are to be combated by syllogisms.

"... cannot the state pass directly from one state to another without any of the somersaults that our over-prudent philistines see at every step, and without paying heed to the fatalists who see in history just fatal order, a consequence of which is that the domination of the third estate is as inevitable to the state as old age or youth is to man?..."

That's the kind of profound understanding the Narodniks have of our reality! If the state assists the development of capitalism it is not at all because the bourgeoisie possess material force enabling them to "send" the people "to work" and bend policy in their own will. Nothing of the sort! It is simply that the Vernadskys, the Chicherins, the Mendeleyevs and other professors hold wrong theories about a "fatal" order, and the state "takes heed" of them.

"... cannot, finally, the negative aspects of the advancing order be softened, somehow altered or the period of its domination shortened? Is the state really something so inert, involuntary and helpless that it cannot influence its own destiny and change it; is it really something like a spinning-top, released by providence, that moves only along a definite road, only for a certain time, and performs a certain number of revolutions, or like an organism of very limited will-power, is it really directed by something resembling a huge iron wheel which crushes every audacious person who dares to seek the nearest roads to human happiness?!"

This is a highly typical passage that shows with particular clarity *the reactionary, petty-bourgeois character* of the way in which the direct producers' interests have been and are being represented by the Russian Narodniks. Being hostile to capitalism, the small producers

constitute a transitory class that is closely connected with the bourgeoisie and for that reason is incapable of understanding that the large-scale capitalism it dislikes is not fortuitous, but is a direct product of the entire contemporary economic (and social, and political, and juridical) system arising out of the struggle of mutually opposite social forces. Only inability to understand this can lead to such absolute stupidity as that of appealing to the "state" as though the political system is not rooted in the economic, does not express it, does not serve it.

Is the state really something inert? the small producer asks in despair, when he sees that as regards *his* interests it really is remarkably inert.

No, we might answer him, the state can on no account be something inert, it always acts and acts very energetically, it is always active and never passive—and the author himself a page earlier described this vigorous activity, its bourgeois character, its natural fruits. The only bad thing is that he refuses to see the connection between the character it has and the capitalist organisation of the Russian social economy, and that he is, therefore, so superficial.

Is the state really a top, is it really an iron wheel? asks the Kleinburger, when he sees that the "wheel" turns in a direction quite different from what he would like.

Oh no, we might answer him—it is not a top, nor a wheel, nor the law of fate, nor the will of providence: it is moved by "living individuals," "through a lane of obstacles"* (such, for example, as the resistance of the direct producers, or the representatives of the stratum of the old nobility), by precisely those "living individuals" who belong to the preponderant social force. And so, in order to compel the wheel of history to turn in the other direction, one must appeal to "living individuals" against "living individuals" (i.e., against social elements who do not belong to the liberal professions, but who directly reflect vital economic

* Mr. N. Mikhailovsky, in Mr. Struve's book, p. 8: "The living individual with all his thoughts and feelings becomes a history-maker at his own risk. He and not some mystic force, sets aims in history and pushes events towards them through a lane of obstacles placed before him by the spontaneous forces of nature and of historical conditions."

interests), appeal to a class against a class. For this, good and pious wishes about "nearest roads" are highly inadequate; this requires a "redistribution of the social force among the classes," this requires that one becomes the ideologist not of the direct producer who stands apart from the struggle, but of the one who stands in the midst of heated struggle, who has already become totally "differentiated from life" of bourgeois society. This is the *only*, and hence the nearest "road to human happiness," a road along which one can not only soften the negative aspects of the existing state of things, not only cut its existence short by speeding up its development, but put an end to it altogether, by compelling the "wheel" (not of state, but of social forces) to turn in quite another direction.

"... We are interested only in the process of organising the third estate, in individuals, even, who emerge from the midst of the people and take their places in its ranks. These are very important individuals: they fulfil exceedingly important social functions, and the degree of the intensity of bourgeois order is directly dependent on them. No country where this order was installed could manage without them. If a country has none or insufficient of them, they have to be obtained from the ranks of the people, conditions have to be created in the life of the people to help them emerge and take shape, and then they have to be protected and assisted to grow until they get on their feet. Here we meet with direct interference in historical destiny by the most energetic individuals, who take advantage of circumstances and of the moment to serve their own interests. These circumstances consist mainly of the need for industrial progress (the replacement of handicraft production by manufacture and manufacture by factory production, the replacement of one system of farming by another, a more rational one), without which a country really cannot manage if it has a population of a certain density if it maintains international relations and if there is political and moral dissension conditioned both by economic factors and the growth of ideas. It is these changes, urgent in political life, that shrewd people usually connect with themselves and with a certain order; this order could undoubtedly be replaced, and always can be replaced, by another, if other people are wiser and more energetic than they have been hitherto."

So then, the author cannot but admit that the bourgeoisie perform "important social functions"—functions that can be generally expressed as: the subordination to themselves of the people's labour, the direction of it and the raising of its productivity. The author cannot but see that

economic "progress" is really "bound up" with these elements, i.e., that our bourgeoisie really are the vehicle of economic, or more exactly, technical progress.

Here, however, begins a radical distinction between the ideologist of the small producer and the Marxist. The Narodnik explains this *fact* (the connection between the bourgeoisie and progress) by asserting that "shrewd people" "take advantage of circumstances and of the moment to serve their own interests"—in other words, he considers this accidental and for that reason draws the following naïvely bold conclusion: "undoubtedly these people can always (!) be replaced by others" who will also provide progress, but not bourgeois progress.

The Marxist explains this fact by those social relations of people in the production of material values that take form in commodity economy, that convert labour into a commodity, subordinate it to capital and raise its productivity. He does not regard it as an accident, but a necessary product of the capitalist system of our social economy. He therefore sees a way out not in fairy-tales about what "undoubtedly can" be done by individuals who replace the bourgeois (the latter, bear in mind, have still to be "replaced"—and mere words or appeals to society and the slate are not enough), but in the development of the class contradictions of the present economic order.

Everybody understands that these two explanations are diametrically opposed to each other, that from them follow two mutually exclusive systems of action. The Narodnik, who considers the bourgeoisie an accident, sees no connection between them and the state, and with the credulity of a "simple-minded muzhik" appeals for aid precisely to the one who guards bourgeois interests. His activity boils down to the modest and precise, official liberal activity that is on a par with philanthropy, for it does not seriously affect the "interests" and holds no terror for them at all. The Marxist turns his back on this hotchpotch, and says that there can be no other "guarantees for the future" than the "stern struggle of economic classes."

It is also understandable that if these differences in systems of action follow directly and inevitably from differences in *explaining* the fact of the domination of our bour-

geoisie, the Marxist, when conducting a *theoretical dispute*, confines himself to proving the necessity and inevitability (under the given organisation of social economy) of this bourgeoisie (that was the case with Mr. Struve's book); and that if the Narodnik, avoiding the issue of these different methods of explanation, engages in talk about Hegelianism and about "cruelty towards the individual,"* this is merely a clear indication of his impotence.

"The history of the third estate in Western Europe is an exceedingly long one.... We, of course, shall not repeat all this history, despise the teaching of the fatalists; nor will the enlightened representatives of our third estate proceed, of course, to utilise the same means for achieving their aims as were resorted to previously, and will only take from them those that are most suitable and correspond to the conditions of place and time. To deprive the peasantry of the land and create a factory proletariat they will not, of course, resort to crude military force or the no less crude clearing of estates."

"Will not resort"...?!! Only among the theoreticians of sugary optimism can one meet such deliberate forgetfulness of past and present *facts* that have already said their "aye"—and rose-spectacled trustfulness that the future will, of course, yield "no." Of course that is false.

"... but they will resort to the abolition of communal landownership, to the creation of capitalist farmers a numerically small class of wealthy peasants,** and will, in general, resort to means that allow the economically weak to perish of himself. They will not now start setting up guilds but will organise credit, raw-material, consumers' and producers' associations which, with their promise of general happiness, will only help the strong to become still stronger, and the weak to become still weaker. They will not bother about the patrimonial court, but will bother about legislation to encourage assiduity, sobriety and education, which will be pursued only by the young bourgeoisie, since the masses will continue as hitherto to get drunk, will be ignorant and will work for others."

How well described are all these credit, raw-material, and miscellaneous other associations, all these measures for encouraging assiduity, sobriety and education, towards

* Mr. Mikhailovsky in *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, No. 10, 1894.

** That is being superbly put into effect even without the abolition of the village community which does not in the least eliminate the split among the peasantry—as has been established by Zemstvo statistics.

which such a touching attitude is displayed by our contemporary liberal-Narodnik press, including the *Russkoye Bogatstvo*. All that remains for the Marxist is to emphasise what has been said, to agree fully that *all this is mere representation of the third estate*, and, consequently, those who show tender concern for it are nothing more than *little bourgeois* people.

This quotation is a sufficient answer to the present-day Narodniks, who draw the conclusion from the contemptuous attitude of the Marxists to such measures that they want to be mere "spectators" and do nothing. True enough, they will never set their hands to bourgeois activity; as far as that is concerned they will always be "spectators."

"The role of this class (these offspring of the people—the petty bourgeoisie), which forms the outposts, the sharpshooters and vanguard of the bourgeois army, has been, unfortunately, of very little interest to historians and economists, whereas its role, we repeat, is an exceedingly important one. When the destruction of the village community and the alienation of the peasants' land took place, it was not done by the lords and knights alone, but by their own folks, i.e., again by offspring of the people, offspring endowed with practical shrewdness and a flexible spine, who had been awarded by the lord's grace, who had fished some capital out of troubled waters or had acquired it by plunder, individuals to whom the upper estates and the legislature stretched out their hands. They were called the most industrious, capable and sober elements of the people...."

This observation is a very true one as far as the facts go. Really, the alienation of the peasants' land was done mainly by "their own folks," by the petty bourgeois. But the Narodnik understands this fact unsatisfactorily. He does not distinguish two antagonistic classes, the feudal lords and the bourgeoisie, the representatives of the "old-nobility" and of the "new middle-class" systems, does not distinguish between different systems of economic organisation, does not see the progressive significance of the second class as compared with the first. That is the first point. Secondly, he attributes the rise of the bourgeoisie to plunder, to shrewdness, servility, etc., whereas small-scale farming based on commodity production makes a petty bourgeois of the most sober, hard-working peasant: he accumulates "savings" and by virtue of environmental relations they turn into *capital*. Read about this in the de-

scriptions of handicraft industries and peasant farming, in the works of our Narodnik men of letters.

"... They are not the sharpshooters and vanguard even, they are the main bourgeois army, the lower ranks, formed into units under the command of staff and senior officers, commanders of separate units and the General Staff, made up of publicists, speakers and scientists.* Without this army the bourgeoisie could have done nothing. Could the English landlords, who number less than 30,000 have been able to govern the hungry mass of tens of millions without the capitalist farmers?! The farmer is a real fighting man in the political sense and a little expropriating nucleus in the economic sense.... In the factories the role of the farmers is fulfilled by the foremen and assistant foremen, who get a very good wage not only for more skilled work, but for keeping a watch on the workers, for being the last to leave the bench for preventing the workers from putting forward demands for wage increases or for reduction of working hours, and for enabling the employers to say as they point at them: 'See how much we pay those who work and are of benefit to us'; by the shopkeepers, who maintain the closest relations with the employers and factory managements; by the office staff, all sorts of supervisors and suchlike small fry, in whose veins workers' blood still flows, but over whose minds capital has already taken complete control." [Quite true! K. T.] "Of course, the things we see in Britain are also to be seen in France, Germany and other countries." [Quite true! And in Russia, too. K. T.] "The only difference in some cases is in details, and even those in greater part remain unchanged. The French bourgeoisie, who at the end of last century triumphed over the nobility, or to put it better, who took advantage of the people's victory, produced from among the people a petty bourgeoisie that helped to fleece the people, and themselves fleeced the people and delivered them into the hands of adventurers.... At a time when in literature hymns were being sung to the French people, when their greatness, magnanimity and love of liberty were being lauded to the skies, when all this adulation was enveloping France in a cloud, the bourgeois cat was eating the chicken, disposing of it almost entirely and leaving only the bones for the people. The much vaunted people's land tenure turned out to be microscopic, measured in metres and often incapable even of covering taxation expenditure...."

Let us pause here.

Firstly, we would like to ask the Narodnik: who in our country "took advantage of the victory over serfdom," over

* And administrators and the bureaucracy, it should be added. Otherwise the reference to the composition of the "General Staff" will suffer from an impossible incompleteness—impossible in the conditions peculiar to Russia.

the "old-nobility stratum"? Not the bourgeoisie, of course? What was going on in our country among the "people" when "hymns," now quoted by the author, "were being sung in literature" about the people, love for the people, magnanimity, community peculiarities and qualities, the "social mutual adaptation and joint activity" within the village community, about Russia being a single artel, and the community being "all that is in the minds and actions of village folk," etc., etc., etc., hymns that continue to be sung to this day (though in a minor key) in the columns of the liberal-Narodnik press? The land, of course, was not taken from the peasantry; the bourgeois cat, of course, did not make a hearty meal of the chicken, did not dispose of it almost entirely; "the much vaunted people's land tenure" did not "turn out to be microscopic," it contained no excess of expenditure over income?* No, only "mystics and metaphysicians" are capable of asserting that, of considering it to be a fact, of making that fact the starting-point of their opinions about our affairs, of their activity, which is aimed not at seeking for "different paths for the fatherland," but at working along the present, now quite established, capitalist path.

Secondly. It is interesting to compare the author's *method* and the *method* of the Marxists. One can far better understand wherein they differ on the basis of specific judgements than by way of abstract thinking. Why does the author say of the French "bourgeoisie" that it triumphed at the end of last century over the nobility? Why is activity that consisted chiefly and almost exclusively of the activity of the intelligentsia, called bourgeois? And then, was it not the government that acted, depriving the peasantry of the land, and imposing heavy payments, etc.? Finally, these personalities surely spoke of their love for the people, of equality and universal happiness, as the Russian liberals and Narodniks did and are doing now? Under these circumstances can one see just the "bourgeoisie" in all this? Is not this view a "narrow" one, reducing political and ideological movements to Plusmacherei?** Just note, these are the same questions

* And not only "often," as in France, but as a general rule, the excess running not only into tens, but into hundreds per cent.

** Profit-hunting.—*Ed.*

as those with which the Russian Marxists are flooded when they say identical things about our peasant Reform (seeing it as differing merely in "details"), about post-Reform Russia in general. I speak here, I repeat, not of the factual correctness of our view, but of the *method* used in the given case by the Narodnik. He takes as his *criterion* the results ("it turned out" that the people's land tenure was microscopic, the cat "was eating" and "ate up" the chicken), and what is more—exclusively economic *results*.

The question arises: why does he apply this *method* only to France, and refuse to employ it for Russia, too? Surely, the method should be universal. If in France you seek for *interests* behind the activity of the *government* and the *intelligentsia*, why do you *not seek* them in holy Russia? If *there* your criterion raises the question of what the character of people's land tenure "*turned out*" to be, why is what it "may" turn out to be made the criterion *here*? If there, phrases about the people and its magnanimity, while the "chicken was being eaten," fill you with legitimate disgust, why do you not *here* turn your backs, as you would on bourgeois philosophers, on those who, while the "eating" undoubtedly exists and is recognised by you, can talk of "social mutual adaptation," the "community spirit of the people," the "*needs of people's industry*" and suchlike things?

There is only one answer. It is because you are an ideologist of the petty bourgeoisie, because your ideas, i.e., Narodnik ideas in general, and not the ideas of Tom, Dick, and Harry—are the result of their reflecting the interests and the viewpoint of the small producer, and not at all the result of "pure"* thought.

"But particularly instructive for us in this respect is Germany, which was late, as we were, with her bourgeois reform and for that reason made use of the experience of other nations, in the negative and not the positive sense, of course." The composition of the peasantry in Germany—says the author, paraphrasing Vasilchikov—was heterogeneous: the peasants were divided up according to their rights and the land they held, i.e., the size of their allotments. The entire process led to the formation of a "peasant aristocracy," an "estate of small landowners not of noble origin," to the transformation of the

* Mr. V. V.'s expression. See *Our Trends*, and also *Nedelya*, Nos. 47-49, 1894.

mass from "householders to unskilled labourers." "Finally the finishing touch was given, and all legal roads to an improvement of the workers conditions were cut off by the semi-aristocratic, semi-middle-class constitution of 1849, which gave the vote only to the nobility and the wealthy middle class."

An original way of arguing. The constitution "*cut off*" legal roads?! This again is a reflection of the good old theory of the Russian Narodniks, according to which the "intelligentsia" were invited to sacrifice "freedom," since, we are told, it would be of service to them alone, while the people would be surrendered to the "wealthy middle class." We are not going to argue against this stupid and reactionary theory, because it has been rejected by the contemporary Narodniks in general and our immediate opponents, Messrs. the publicists of *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, in particular. We must, however, note that by rejecting this idea, by taking a step towards openly recognising Russia's *existing* paths instead of palavering about the possibility of different paths, these Narodniks reveal their petty-bourgeois nature once and for all; their insistence on paltry, middle-class reforms, arising out of their absolute inability to understand the class struggle, places them on the side of the liberals against those who take the side of the "antipode," seeing in it the only creator, so to speak, of the good things in question.

"In Germany, too, there were many people at that time who only waxed enthusiastic over the emancipation, and did so for ten, twenty, thirty years and more; people who considered all scepticism, all dissatisfaction with the Reform playing into the hands of reaction and cursed the sceptics and the grumblers. The simple-minded among them imagined the people as a horse that had been set at liberty and could be put back into the stable again and could go once more into the mail-coach (something by no means always possible). But there were also knaves who flattered the people and who, pursuing another line on the quiet, tacked themselves on to these simpletons who were full of sincere love of the people, and could be tricked and exploited. Oh, those sincere simpletons! When civic struggle begins, by no means everybody is ready for it and by no means everybody has an aptitude for it."

Splendid words that give a good summary of the best traditions of the old Russian Narodism and that we can utilise to characterise the attitude of the Russian Marxists to

contemporary Russian Narodism. To make such use of them not much has to be changed—so *identical* is the process of capitalist development in both countries; so *identical* are the social and political ideas reflecting this process.

In our country, too, "progressive" literature is governed and guided by individuals who talk of "fundamental differences between our peasant Reform and that of the West," about the "sanction of people's (sic!) production," about the great "allotment of land" (land redemption is called that!!), etc., and who therefore await the dispensation by their superiors of a miracle called the "socialisation of labour," wait for "ten, twenty, thirty years and more," while the cat—of which we have spoken earlier—eats the chicken, looking with the tenderness of a sated and satisfied animal at the "sincere simpletons" who talk of the need to choose another path for the fatherland, of the harm of "threatening" capitalism, and of measures for assisting the people with credits, artels, common cultivation of the land and suchlike innocent patching. "Oh, those sincere simpletons!"

"And now we, too, and mainly our peasantry, are experiencing this process of the formation of a third estate. Russia is in this respect behind the whole of Europe, even behind its college companion, or to be more exact 'teacher-in-training,' Germany. The towns were the main breeding ground and ferment of the third estate everywhere in Europe. In our country the opposite is the case"—we have far fewer urban inhabitants.... "The chief cause of this difference is our people's system of land tenure, which keeps the population in the countryside. The increase in the urban population in Europe is closely bound up with the separation of the people from the land and with factory industry which, under capitalist conditions of production, requires cheap labour and a surplus of it. The European peasantry, driven out of the villages, went to earn a living in the towns, whereas our peasantry keep to the land as long as they possibly can. Land tenure by the people is the principal strategic point, the principal key to the peasant position, a key whose significance is perfectly well understood by the leaders of the middle class, and that is why they direct all their art and all their energy against it. This is the origin of all these attacks on the village community, this is the source of the great number of projects of a different kinds about the alienation of the peasants' land, for the sake of rational farming, for the sake of industrial prosperity, for the sake of national progress and glory!"

This shows clearly the superficiality of the Narodnik theory which, as a result of dreams about "different paths,"

quite wrongly assesses the real situation: it sees the "principal point" in such juridical institutions, which play no fundamental role, as the forms of peasant land *tenure* (community or household); it sees something peculiar in our small peasant economy, as though it is not the ordinary economy of small producers, of the same kind—as to the type of their political and economic organisation—as the economy of the West-European handicraftsmen and peasants, but some "people's" (?!) system of land tenure. According to the terminology established in our liberal and Narodnik press, the meaning of the word "people's" is one that rules out the exploitation of the one who works—so that by the definition he gives the author actually conceals the undoubted fact that in our peasant economy there is the very same appropriation of surplus-value, the very same work for others as prevail outside of the "community," and so opens the doors wide to sentimental and unctuous Pharisaism.

"Our present village community, land-poor and weighed down by taxation, is not much of a guarantee. The peasant had little land as it was, but now, as a result of the growing population and declining fertility, has still less, and the burden of taxation is not lessening; but increasing; there are few industries; there are still fewer local employments; life in the countryside is becoming so difficult that the peasants of entire villages go far away in search of employment, leaving only their wives and children at home. In this way entire uyezds become deserted.... Influenced by these hard conditions of life, on the one hand, a special class of people emerges from among the peasantry—the young bourgeoisie, who try to buy land on the side, each on his own, try to engage in other occupations—trade, usury, the organisation of workers' artels headed by themselves, to get all sorts of contracts and in similar petty business."

It is worth dwelling in great detail on this passage.

We see here, firstly, the statement of certain facts that can be expressed in a couple of words: the peasants are fleeing; secondly, an assessment of the facts (a negative one), and thirdly, an explanation of them from which there directly follows an entire programme, here not expounded, but well enough known (add land, reduce taxes; "raise" and "develop" peasant industries).

It must be emphasised that from the viewpoint of the Marxist both the *first* and the *second* are wholly and undoubtedly correct (except, as we shall see, that they are

expressed in an extremely unsatisfactory way). But the *third** is absolutely useless.

Let me explain this. The first is correct. The fact is correct that our village community is no guarantee, that the peasantry are abandoning the village, leaving the land; he should have said: are being expropriated because they possessed (on a private property basis) certain means of production and are losing them (among them land by special right, which, however, allowed land *redeemed* by the community to be also privately exploited). It is correct that handicraft industries "are declining", i.e., the peasants here too are being expropriated, are losing their means and instruments of production, are giving up domestic weaving and are leaving to work on railway construction jobs or hiring themselves out as bricklayers, unskilled labourers, etc. The means of production from which the peasants are freed pass into the hands of an insignificant minority, and serve as a source of exploitation of labour-power—*as capital*. That is why the author is right when he says that the owners of these means of production become a "bourgeoisie," i.e., a class which under the capitalist organisation of social economy holds in its hands the "people's" labour. All these facts are correctly stated and truly assessed for their exploiting significance.

But from the description given the reader has, of course, seen that the Marxist *explains* these facts in a totally different way. The Narodnik sees the causes of these things in that "there is little land," taxes are burdensome, and "earnings" are falling—i.e., in peculiarities *of policy*—land, taxation, industrial—and not in the peculiarities *of the social organisation of production*, an organisation from which the *given* policy inevitably follows.

There is little land—argues the Narodnik—and it is becoming less. (I do not even necessarily take the statement made by the author of the article, but the general proposition of the Narodnik doctrine.) Quite correct, but why do you merely say that there is *little* land, and not add that there is *little on sale*. Surely you are aware that

* That is why the theoreticians of Marxism, in combating Narodism, lay the stress on explanation and understanding, on the objective side.

our peasants are *redeeming* their allotments from the landlords. Why, then, do you concentrate your attention mainly on what there is *little* of, and not on what is *on sale*?

The very fact of sale, of redemption by purchase points to the domination of principles (the acquisition of the means of production for money) which, in any case, leave the peasants without the means of production whether few or many of them are sold. By ignoring this fact you ignore the capitalist mode of production on which basis alone the sale became possible. By ignoring this you take the side of that bourgeois society and turn into a plain political jobber who argues about whether much or little land should be on sale. You do not see that the very fact of the redemption by purchase proves that "*capital* has already taken complete control" over the "minds" of those in whose interests the "great" Reform was carried through, who themselves accomplished it; you do not see that it is the "capitalist moon" that casts the only light existing for all this liberal-Narodnik "society" which bases itself on the system created by the Reform speechifying on how to make various improvements in that system. That is why the Narodnik so savagely attacks those who adhere consistently to a basis that is different in principle. He raises a cry about their not being concerned about the people, about their wanting to take the land away from the peasants!!

He, the Narodnik, is concerned about the people, he does not want the peasant to lose his land, he wants him to have more of it (*sold* to him). He is an honest shopkeeper. True, he keeps silent about the fact that land is sold and not supplied gratis, but then, does anybody in the corner shops say that goods have to be paid for? As it is, everybody knows it.

It is understandable that he hates the Marxists, who say that we must address ourselves exclusively to those who are already "differentiated" from this shopkeepers' society, "excommunicated" from it, if one may use these highly characteristic petty-bourgeois expressions of the Messrs. Mikhailovskys and Yuzhakovs.*

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* Apart from ignoring and failing to understand the capitalist character of land redemption, Messrs. the Narodniks also modestly

Let us proceed. "There are few industries"—such is the Narodnik's viewpoint on handicraft industries. And again he is silent on the way the industries are organised. He complacently shuts his eyes to the fact that both the industries that are "declining" and those that "are developing" are similarly organised on capitalist lines, labour being totally enslaved to the capital of buyers-up, merchants, etc., and confines himself to petty-bourgeois demands for progressive measures, improvements, artels, etc., as though such measures can in any way influence the *fact* of the domination of capital. In the sphere of both agriculture and of manufacturing industry he accepts their existing organisation, and does not fight against the organisation itself, but against its various imperfections. As to taxes, here the Narodnik has refuted himself by bringing into sharp relief the basic characteristic feature of Narodism—the capacity for compromise. Earlier on he himself asserted that every tax (even income tax) would hit at the workers where a system of appropriating surplus-value exists—nevertheless, he does not in the least object to discussing with the members of liberal society whether taxes are large or small and to offering, with "civic decency," the appropriate advice to the Department of Taxes and Levies.

In short, the cause—in the Marxist's view—lies neither in policy, nor in the state, nor in "society," but in the present system of Russia's economic organisation; the point is not that "shrewd people" or "tricksters" fish in troubled waters, but that the "people" constitute two opposite, mutually exclusive, classes: "in society all active forces add up to two equally operating, mutually opposite ones."

"People who are interested in installing the bourgeois order, when they see the collapse of their projects,* do not stop at that:

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avoid the fact that side by side with the peasants' "land poverty" there are some very nice pieces of land in the possession of the representatives of the "old nobility" stratum.

* So then, the collapse of the project to abolish the village community means victory over those who want to "install the bourgeois order"!!

Having concocted a petty-bourgeois utopia about the "community," the Narodnik goes so far in his dreams as to ignore reality that he sees in the project against the community nothing less than the in-

they hourly repeat to the peasantry that the blame for everything lies with the community, collective responsibility, the redistribution of the fields, the whole system of the village community, which favour idlers and drunkards; they organise loan-and-savings societies for the prosperous peasants and busy themselves about small land credits for plot holders; in the towns they arrange technical, handicraft and various other schools, entrance to which is again available only to the children of well-to-do folk, whereas the mass are without schools; they help the rich peasants to improve their cattle by means of exhibitions, prize awards, supplying pure-bred sires on hire from depots, etc. All these petty efforts go to make up a considerable force that has a degenerating effect on the countryside and increasingly splits the peasantry into two."

The description of the "petty efforts" is a good one. The author's idea that all these petty efforts (which *Russkoye Bogatstvo* and our entire liberal and Narodnik press now uphold so zealously) signify, express and further the "new middle-class" stratum, the capitalist system, is quite a correct one.

This is precisely the reason for the Marxists' negative attitude to such efforts. And the fact that these "efforts" are undoubtedly the immediate desiderata of the small producers—proves, in their view, that their main thesis is correct that the representative of the idea of labour is not to be seen in the peasant, since he, being a petty bourgeois under the capitalist organisation of economy, takes, accordingly, the side of this system, adheres in certain aspects of his life (and of his ideas) to the bourgeoisie.

It will be worth while to utilise this passage to stress the following. The negative attitude of Marxists to "petty

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stalling of the bourgeois order, whereas it is simply political jobbery based on the already fully "installed" bourgeois system.

To him the most forceful argument against the Marxist is the question that he asks with an air of final triumph: just tell me, now, do you want to destroy the community or not, yes or no? For him the whole question is that of "installation." He absolutely refuses to understand that from the Marxist's viewpoint the "installation" is a long-established and irrevocable fact that will not be affected either by the destruction or the consolidation of the community—just as the domination of capital is the same in the community village and in a village consisting of individual peasant households.

The Narodnik tries to advance a profounder protest against "installation" by an apology for the installation. A drowning man clutches at a straw.

efforts" particularly evokes complaints from the Narodnik gentlemen. By reminding them of their forefathers we show that there was a time when the Narodniks took a different view of this, when they were not so eager and zealous in their compromises [although they did compromise even then, as the same article proves], when they—I will not say understood—but at least sensed the bourgeois character of all such efforts, and when the denial of them was condemned as "pessimism towards the people" by only the most naïve of liberals.

The pleasant intercourse of the Narodnik gentlemen with the latter, as representatives of "society," apparently yielded good fruit.

The fact that one cannot content oneself with the "petty efforts" of bourgeois progress by no means signifies absolute rejection of partial reforms. Marxists by no means deny that these measures are of some (albeit miserable) benefit; they can result in some (albeit miserable) improvement in the working people's conditions; they speed up the process of extinction of particularly backward forms of capital, usury, bondage, etc., they speed up their transformation into the more modern and humane forms of European capitalism. That is why Marxists, if they were asked whether such measures should be adopted, would, of course, answer: they should—but would thereupon explain their attitude in general to the capitalist system that is improved by these measures, would motivate their agreement by their desire to speed up the development of this system, and, consequently its downfall.*

"If we bear in mind that in this country, as in Germany, the peasantry are divided up according to rights and tenure, into various categories (state, appanage and former landlords' peasants, among them being those who received full allotments, medium and quarter lots, as well as manor serfs), that our community way of life is not the universal way of life; that in the south-west, among private landowners, we again meet with peasants owning draught animals, and footers,** market gardeners, farm labourers and *chinsh* peasants,[111]

* This refers not only to "technical and other schools," to technical improvements for peasants and handicraftsmen but also to "the extension of peasant land tenure and to "credit," etc.

** See p. 45 of this volume.—*Ed.*

some of whom possess 100 dessiatines and more, while others have not an inch of soil that in the Baltic gubernias the agrarian system is a perfect copy of the German agrarian system, etc., then we shall see that we too have a basis for a bourgeoisie."

One cannot but note here that fanciful exaggeration of the significance of the community from which the Narodniks have always suffered. The author expresses himself as though "community life" ruled out a bourgeoisie, ruled out the splitting up of the peasants! Now that is totally untrue!

Everybody knows that the community peasants are also split up according to rights and allotments; that in every village where the community is strong the peasants are again split up both "according to rights" (landless, allotment-holding, ex-manor serfs, paid-up allotment-holder, registered, etc., etc.) and "according to tenure": peasants who have rented out their allotments, who have been deprived of them for arrears in taxes or for not cultivating and letting them fall into neglect or who lease the allotments of others; peasants who own land in "perpetuity" or who "purchase a few dessiatines for several years"; lastly, homeless peasants, peasants owning no cattle, peasants owning no horses and those owning many horses. Everybody knows that in every village where the community is strong this economic fragmentation and commodity economy provide a basis for the full blossoming of usury capital, for bondage in all its forms. And the Narodniks continue telling sugary tales about something they call "community life"!

"Our young bourgeoisie is indeed growing by leaps and bounds, and is growing not only in the Jewish border areas, but in the heart of Russia. As yet it is difficult to express their number in figures, but when we look at the growing number of landowners, at the increasing number of commercial certificates, at the increasing number of complaints from the villages about the kulaks and the blood-suckers and other evidence,* there are grounds for thinking that their number is already considerable."

* To which should be added purchases with the aid of the Peasant Bank, "progressive trends in peasant farming" such as technical and agronomical improvements, introduction of improved implements, grass-growing, etc., the development of small-scale credits and organisation of a market for handicraftsmen, etc.

Quite true! It is this fact, that was true in 1879 and is still more true in 1895, that serves as one of the mainstays of the Marxist understanding of Russian reality.

Our attitude to this fact is equally negative; we are both agreed that it expresses phenomena opposed to the interests of the direct producers—but we *understand* these facts in quite different ways. I have already described the theoretical aspect of the difference above, and I shall now turn to the practical aspect.

The bourgeoisie, especially those of the countryside, are **still** weak in this country; they are only just coming into existence, says the Narodnik. Hence one can **still** wage a struggle against them. The bourgeois trend is still not very strong—therefore we can **still** turn back. It is not too late.

Only the metaphysical sociologist (who in practice becomes a cowardly reactionary romanticist) can argue that way. I shall not bother to say that the "weakness" of the bourgeoisie in the countryside is to be explained by the departure of their strong elements, their top-rankers, to the towns—that only the "rank and file" are in the villages, whereas in the towns we have the "general staff"—I shall not bother to speak of all these thoroughly obvious distortions of fact by the Narodniks. There is another mistake in this argument, one that makes it metaphysical.

We are faced with a certain social relation, a relation between the village petty bourgeois (the rich peasant, shopkeeper, kulak, blood-sucker, etc.), and the "labouring" peasant, labouring "for others," of course.

This relation exists—the Narodnik will not be able to deny its generally widespread character. But it is weak, says he, and for that reason may *still* be corrected.

History is made by "living individuals," we tell this Narodnik, offering him his own wares. It is, of course, possible to correct, to change social relations, but only when such action originates *from the people themselves whose social relations are being corrected or changed*. This is as clear as the clearest daylight. The question arises: can the "labouring" peasant change this relation? What does it consist of? Of the fact that two small producers operate under the system of commodity production, that this com-

modity economy splits them into "two," to one it gives *capital*, and the other it compels to work "for others."

How can our labouring peasant change this relation if he himself is half-rooted in what has to be changed? how can he understand that isolation and commodity economy are no good to him if he himself is isolated and works at his own risk and responsibility for the market? if these conditions of life evoke in him "thoughts and feelings" that are peculiar to one who works on his own for the market? if he is isolated by the very material conditions, by the size and character of his farm, and if by virtue of this his contradiction to capital is still so little developed that he cannot understand that he is faced by *capital* and not merely by "tricksters" and shrewd people?

Is it not obvious that one should turn to where *this same* (N. B.) social relation is *fully* developed, where those involved in this social relation, the immediate producers, are themselves fully "differentiated" and "excommunicated" from the bourgeois order, where the contradiction is already so far developed as to be self-evident, and where it is impossible to raise the problem like a dreamer, in half-hearted fashion? And when the immediate producers in these advanced conditions are "differentiated from life" of bourgeois society not only *in fact* but also *in their minds*—then the labouring peasantry, who are in backward and worse conditions, will see "how it is done," and will join with their fellow workers "for others."

"When people speak here of cases of peasants buying land, and explain that the peasantry buy land privately or as a whole community, they almost never add that purchases by the community are only rare and insignificant exceptions to the general rule of private purchases."

The author further quoted figures to show that the number of private landowners was 103,158 in 1861 and reached a total of 313,529 according to data for the sixties; he said that the explanation of this is that small proprietors of peasant origin were not included under serfdom but were included on the second occasion and continued:

"These are our young rural bourgeoisie, who immediately border on and are linked up with the small landed nobility."

True—is what we say to that—quite true, especially that about them ''bordering on" and being "linked up"! And that is why we class as petty-bourgeois ideologists those who attach serious importance (in the sense of the interests of the immediate producers) to "the extension of peasant land tenure," i.e., including the author, who on page 152 says just this.

That is why we consider as no more than political jobbers people who discuss the problem of purchases made privately and by the community as though "installing" the bourgeois order depended on it in the slightest degree. We place both the one and the other case in the bourgeois category, for purchase is purchase, money is money in both cases, i.e., the sort of commodity that only falls into the hands of the petty bourgeois,* irrespective of whether he is united with others by the community "for social mutual adaptation and joint activity" or is isolated by having a plot of land of his own.

"Incidentally, they (the young rural bourgeoisie) are not shown here to the full. The word 'blood-sucker' (*miroyed*) is not new in Russia, but it has never had the meaning it now has, it has never exerted such pressure on fellow villagers as it does now compared with the blood sucker of today, the old miroyed was a patriarchal sort of individual who was always subordinated to the community and was sometimes merely an idler who did not particularly hunt after profit. The word miroyed has now acquired a different meaning and, in the majority of gubernias, is merely a generic term that is relatively little used and has been replaced by such words as: kulak, welsher merchant, publican, cat-skinner, contractor, pawnbroker, etc. This splitting up of one term into several, into words, some of which are not new either, and some quite new or have not hitherto been current among peasants, shows first and foremost that a division of labour has taken place in the exploitation of the people, and that there has been an extensive development of rapacity and that it has become specialised. In almost every village and every hamlet there are one or several such exploiters."

Without a doubt the fact of the development of rapacity has been correctly noted. It is, however, to no purpose that the author, like all Narodniks, refuses despite all these facts to understand that this systematic, universal, regular (even with division of labour) kulak activity is a manifestation of capitalism in agriculture, is the domination of capital

* This does not refer, of course, to such money as merely serves for the acquisition of necessary articles of consumption, but to *free* money that can be saved for the purchase of means of production.

in its primary forms, capital which, on the one hand, engenders the urban, banking, and in general European, capitalism that the Narodniks consider to be something adventitious, and, on the other hand, is supported and fed by this capitalism—in a word that it is one of the aspects of the capitalist organisation of the Russian national economy.

In addition, the description of the "evolution" of the blood-sucker enables us to catch the Narodnik once again.

In the Reform of 1861 the Narodnik sees the sanction of people's production, discerns in it features that are fundamentally different from those of Western reform.

The measures that he now thirsts for amount equally to similar "sanction"—of the community, etc., and to similar "provisions of allotments" and means of production in general.

Why, then, Mr. Narodnik, did the Reform, which "sanctioned people's (and not capitalist) production," merely result in the "patriarchal idler" turning into a relatively energetic, lively, civilisation-adorned vulture? merely result in a change in the *form* of rapacity, as did the corresponding great reforms in the West?

Why do you imagine that the next steps in "sanctioning" (which are quite possible in the shape of an extension of peasant land tenure, migration to other areas, regulation of land rentings and other undoubtedly progressive measures—although they are bourgeois progressive measures)—why do you imagine that they will lead to something other than a further change in the *form*, a further Europeanisation of *capital*, its transformation from merchant's into productive, from medieval into modern?

It cannot be otherwise—for the simple reason that such measures do not in the least affect *capital*, i.e., that relation between people under which money, the product of *social* labour organised by commodity economy, is accumulated in the hands of some, while others have nothing but free "hands,"* free precisely of the product that is concentrated in the possession of the previous category.

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* *The masses* will, *as hitherto* ... work *for others*" (see article under discussion, p. 135): If they were not "free" (free de facto, though de jure they may even be "provided with an allotment"), this, of course, could not take place.

... "Of them (of these kulaks, etc.) the smaller fry possessing no capital usually attach themselves to the big merchants, who supply them with credit or instruct them to make purchases on their account; the more prosperous ones carry on independently, are themselves in touch with big commercial cities and ports, send waggonloads there in their own name and go themselves for goods required locally. If you travel on any railway line you will invariably meet in the 3rd (rarely in the 2nd) class dozens of people of this type on their way somewhere on business. You will recognise them by the specific clothes they wear, by their extremely bad manners, and by their boisterous laughter at some lady who asks them not to smoke or at a *muzhichok*"* [that's what it says: muzhichok. K. T.] who is on his way somewhere to get work and who is 'ignorant' because he understands nothing of commerce, and wears bast shoes. You will also recognise these people by their conversation. They usually talk about calf-hides, vegetable oils, leather, smelt, millet, etc., and you will hear cynical stories about the swindling they do and the way they fake their goods, about how 'strong smelling' salt beef was 'palmed off on a factory,' about how 'anybody can give tea a colour if you show him once,' about how you can add three pounds' weight of water to a sugar loaf in such a way that the customer won't notice anything,' etc. All this is spoken of with such frankness and impudence that you can easily see that the only reason why these people do not steal spoons from public dining-rooms and do not turn out station gas lamps is because they are afraid of landing in jail. Morally these people are below the most elementary standards, their morals are all based on the ruble and are limited to aphorisms, such as: trading means twisting; keep your eyes skinned; don't miss your chance, look for what you can easily lay your hands on; use the moment when nobody's looking; don't pity the weak; bow and scrape when necessary." An item is then quoted from a newspaper about how a publican and usurer named Volkov set fire to his house which he had insured for a big sum. This person "... is considered to be their most respected acquaintance by the local teacher and priest," one "teacher in return for wine, writes his legal letters for him." "The Volost Clerk promises to bamboozle the Mordovians for him." "A Zemstvo agent, at the same time a member of the Zemstvo Board, insures him his old house for 1,000 rubles," and so on. "Volkov is no isolated example, but a type. There is no locality without its Volkovs, where they tell you not only about similar fleecing and enslaving of the peasants, but also of cases of the same sort of fires...."

"... But what is the attitude of the peasantry to such people? If they are stupid, grossly heartless and petty like Volkov, the peasantry have no love for them, and rear them, because those people can play all sorts of dirty tricks on them, while they can do nothing in return; the homes of those people are insured, they have fast horses, strong locks, fierce dogs and connections with the local authorities.

* *Muzhichok*—a diminutive of muzhik, a peasant.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

But if those people are cleverer and more cunning than Volkov, if they give their fleecing and enslaving of the peasantry a decent form, if, while robbing them of a ruble, they make an ostensible reduction of a farthing, and if they do not begrudge an extra supply of vodka or a couple of buckets of millet for a burnt-out village, they are held in honour and respect and enjoy authority among the peasants as benefactors, as fathers of the peasant poor, who, no doubt, would be lost without them. The peasantry regard them as clever people, and even let their children be trained by them, considering it an honour for their boy to have a job in a shop, and fully confident that it will make a man of him."

I deliberately copied out the author's argument in great detail so as to cite a description of our young bourgeoisie made by an *opponent* of the proposition that the organisation of Russia's social economy is bourgeois. An examination of this description can clear up many points in the theory of Russian Marxism, in the character of the current attacks made on it by *contemporary* Narodism.

It would seem from the beginning of this description that the author understands how deeply-rooted this bourgeoisie is, understands its connections with the big bourgeoisie, to which the petty bourgeoisie "attaches itself," and its connections with the peasantry, who let their "children be trained" by them. The examples given by the author show, however, that he is far from adequately appraising the strength and stability of this phenomenon.

The examples he gives deal with crime, swindling, arson, etc. One gets the impression that the "fleecing and enslaving" of the peasantry is a matter of accident, the result (as the author expressed himself above) of severe conditions of living, of the "grossness of moral ideas," of obstacles to "making literature accessible to the people" (p. 152), etc.—in a word, that all this does not inevitably result from the present-day organisation of our social economy.

The Marxist adheres to this latter view; he asserts that all this is no accident at all, but a necessity, a necessity conditioned by the capitalist mode of production prevailing in Russia. Once the peasant becomes a commodity producer (and all peasants have already become such), his "morality" will inevitably be "based on the ruble," and we have no grounds for blaming him for this, as the very conditions of life compel him to catch this ruble by all sorts of trading

devices.* Under these conditions, without resort to any crime, servility, or falsification, the "peasantry" split into rich and poor. The old equality cannot hold out against the fluctuations of the market. This is not mere talk—it is a fact. And it is a fact that under these conditions the "wealth" of the few becomes *capital*, while the "poverty" of the masses compels them to sell their hands, to work for other people. Thus, from the Marxist's viewpoint capitalism has already taken firm root, taken definite shape not only in factory industry but also in the countryside and all over Russia in general.

You can imagine now how witty the Narodniks are when, in reply to the Marxist's argument that the cause of all these "unfortunate things" in the villages is not politics, land poverty, payments, or bad "personalities," but capitalism, that all this is *necessary* and inevitable where the capitalist mode of production exists, where the bourgeois class prevails—when in reply to this the Narodnik begins to howl that the Marxists want to deprive the peasantry of the land, that they "prefer" the proletarian to the "independent" peasant, that they display—as provincial ladies say and as Mr. Mikhailovsky does in reply to Mr. Struve—"contempt and cruelty" towards the "individual."

In this picture of the countryside, which is interesting because it has been drawn by an opponent, we see clearly the absurdity of the current objections made against the Marxists, how artificial they are—they avoid the facts, and forget their earlier statements—all in order to save, coûte que coûte,** the theories made up of dreams and compromises which fortunately no power is now able to save.

When they talk of capitalism in Russia the Marxists borrow ready-made schemes, dogmatically repeat propositions that are copied from quite different conditions. They make capitalist production in Russia, which is infinitesimal in development and significance (all told, 1,400,000 people are employed in our factories and works), cover the mass of the peasantry, who still own land. Such is one of the favourite objections raised in the liberal and Narodnik camp.

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* Cf. Uspensky.[112]

** At all costs.—*Ed.*

Now from that same picture of the countryside we see that when the Narodnik describes the way of life of the "community" and "independent" peasants, he cannot manage without this very category of the bourgeoisie derived from abstract schemes and alien dogmas, he cannot avoid stating that it is a village type and not an isolated case, that it is bound by the strongest ties to the big urban bourgeoisie, that it is also bound to the peasantry, who "let their children be trained by them," and from whom, in other words, this young bourgeoisie emerge. We see, consequently, that the young bourgeoisie grow within our "community," and not outside of it, that they are brought into existence by the very social relations that exist among the now commodity-producing peasantry; we see that not only "1,400,000 people," but the entire mass of Russian village folk work for *capital*, are "superintended" by it. Who is it that draws more correct conclusions from these facts, which are not stated by some "mystic and metaphysician," not stated by a Marxist, who believes in "triads," but by a Narodnik exceptionalist who is well able to appreciate the peculiarities of Russian life? Is it the Narodnik, when he talks of the choice of a better path, as though capital has not already made its choice—when he talks of the turn to another system expected from "society" and the "state," i.e., from such elements as have arisen only on the basis of this choice and *in support of it*?—or the Marxist, who says that to dream of different paths means to be a naïve romanticist, since reality shows most obviously that the "path" has already been chosen, that the domination of capital is a fact not to be evaded by reproaches and censures, a fact that only direct producers can reckon with?

Another current reproach. The Marxists consider large-scale Russian capitalism to be progressive. They thus prefer the proletarian to the "independent" peasant, favour the alienation of the land from the people and, from the viewpoint of a theory that makes its ideal the ownership of the means of production by the workers, favour the separation of the worker from the means of production, i.e., fall into an irreconcilable contradiction.

Yes, the Marxists do consider large-scale capitalism progressive—not, of course, because it replaces "independence" by dependence, but because it creates conditions for

abolishing dependence. As to the "independence" of the Russian peasant, it is a sugary Narodnik fairy-tale, and nothing else; actually it is non-existent. And the picture that has been cited (as well as all works about and investigations of the economic condition of the peasantry) also contains an admission of this fact (that actually independence is non-existent): the peasantry, like the workers, work "for others." This was admitted by the old Russian Narodniks. But they failed to understand the causes and character of this *lack* of independence, failed to understand that it is also *capitalist* lack of independence, differing from that of the towns in being less developed, and containing greater relics of medieval, semi-feudal forms of capital, and nothing more. Let us compare, say, the village depicted by the Narodnik with the factory. The only difference (as regards independence) is that in the former we see "small fry" and in the latter large, in the former exploitation singly, by semi-feudal methods—in the latter, exploitation of the masses, and what is more, purely capitalist exploitation of course, the latter is progressive: the very capitalism that is undeveloped in the village and, therefore, abounds in usury, etc., is developed in the factory; the very antagonism existing in the countryside is fully expressed in the factory; here the split is complete and the question cannot be posed in the half-hearted way that satisfies the small producer (and his ideologist), who is capable of upbraiding, reproaching and cursing capitalism, but not of abandoning the basis* of this capitalism, of abandoning his faith in its servants, of abandoning his roseate dreams about its being "better without struggle," as the splendid Mr. Krivenko said. *Here* dreams are not possible—and that alone is a tremendous step forward; here it is clearly evident which side possesses the strength, and there can be no talk of choosing the path, for it is clear that at first this strength has to be "redistributed."

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* To avoid misunderstanding let me explain that by "basis" of capitalism I infer the social relation that in various forms prevails in capitalist society and which Marx expressed in the formula: money—commodity—money with a surplus.

The measures proposed by the Narodniks *do not touch* on this relation, and do not affect either commodity production, which places

"Sugary optimism"—is the way Mr. Struve described Narodism, and it is profoundly true. What else is it but optimism when the complete domination of capital in the countryside is ignored, passed over in silence, pictured as something accidental, when all sorts of credits, artels, and common land cultivation are proposed, just as if all these kulaks, vampires, merchants, publicans, contractors, pawnbrokers, etc., as though all this "young bourgeoisie" did not already hold "every village" "in their hands." What else is it but sugary talk when people continue to talk of "ten, twenty, thirty years and more," of "better without struggle," at the very time when the struggle is already on, a smouldering struggle, it is true, unconscious, and not illumined by an idea.

"Cross over now to the towns, reader. There you will encounter the young bourgeoisie in still larger numbers and still greater variety. All who become literate and consider themselves suitable for more honourable activity, all who consider themselves worthy of a better fate than the miserable lot of the rank-and-file peasant, all, finally who under these conditions find no place in the countryside, now make their way to the towns...."

Nevertheless, the Narodnik gentlemen engage in sugary talk about the "artificial character" of urban capitalism, about its being a "hothouse plant," that will die of itself if not looked after, etc. One has only to take a plainer view of the *facts* to see clearly that this "artificial" bourgeoisie is simply the village blood-suckers who have settled in the towns, and who are growing quite spontaneously on soil illumined by the "moon of capitalism" which compels every rank-and-file peasant to buy cheaper and sell dearer.

... "Here you meet salesmen, clerks, petty tradesmen, pedlars, all sorts of contractors (plasterers, carpenters, bricklayers, etc.), conductors, senior porters, policemen, artel captains, owners of ferry-boats, eating- and lodging-houses, proprietors of various workshops, factory foremen, etc., etc. All these are the real young bourgeoisie, with

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money—the product of social labour—into the hands of private individuals, or the split of the people into paupers and owners of this money.

The Marxist turns to the most developed form of this relation to the form that is the quintessence of all the other forms, and shows the producer that the aim and object to follow is the abolition of this relation and its replacement by another.

all their characteristic features. Their code of morals is not a very broad one either: their entire activity is based on the exploitation of labour,* and their object in life is to acquire capital, big or small, with which stupidly to pass away their time....” “I know that many people rejoice when they look at them, see cleverness, energy and enterprise in them, consider them to be the most progressive elements among the people, see in them a straight and natural step forward in their country's civilisation, the unevenness of which will be smoothed out by time. Oh! I have long known that a top-rank bourgeoisie has been formed in this country out of educated people, merchants and nobles who either failed to sustain the crisis of 1861 and went under, or were caught by the spirit of the period; that this bourgeoisie has already formed cadres of a third estate and that all it lacks is precisely those elements from the people which it likes because it can do nothing without them....”

A loophole has been left here, too, for “sugary optimism”: the big bourgeoisie “lacks only” bourgeois elements from the people!! But where did the big bourgeoisie come from, if not from the people? Surely the author will not deny the ties between our “merchants” and the peasantry!

We see here a tendency to depict this rise of a young bourgeoisie as a matter of chance, the result of policy, etc. This superficiality in understanding things, incapable of seeing the roots of the phenomenon in the very economic structure of society, capable of giving a most detailed enumeration of the different representatives of the petty bourgeoisie, but incapable of understanding that the peasant's and the handicraftsman's small independent undertaking itself is not, under the present economic order, a “people's” undertaking at all, but a *petty-bourgeois* one—is highly typical of the Narodnik.

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* Not exact. What distinguishes the petty from the big bourgeois is that he works himself, as the categories enumerated by the author do. There is, of course, exploitation of labour, but more than mere exploitation.

One more remark. The object in life of those who are not satisfied with the peasant's lot is to acquire capital. This is what the Narodnik says (in his sober moments). The tendency of the Russian peasantry is not towards the community, but towards the petty-bourgeois system. That is what the Marxist says.

What is the difference between these two propositions? Is it not merely that the former constitutes an empirical observation of life while the latter generalises the facts observed (which express the real “thoughts and feelings” of real “living individuals”) and makes of them a law of political economy?

... "I know that many descendants of ancient families are now engaged in distilling and in running taverns, railway concessions, and in prospecting, have ensconced themselves on the boards of joint-stock banks, have even established themselves in the literary sphere and are now singing other songs. I know that many of the literary songs are extremely tender and sentimental, that they deal with the needs and desires of the people; but I also know that it is the duty of decent literature to lay bare the intention of offering the people a stone instead of bread."

What an Arcadian idyll! Only the "*intention*" as yet of offering?!

And how it harmonises: he "knows" that a bourgeoisie has "long" been formed—and still thinks that his task is to "lay bare the intention" of establishing a bourgeoisie!

And this is what is called "serenity of the spirit" when in sight of the already mobilised army, in sight of the arrayed "rank and file" united by a "long" established "general staff," people still talk of "laying bare intentions," and not of an already fully disclosed battle of interests.

... "The French bourgeoisie also identified themselves with the people and always presented their demands in the name of the people, but always deceived them. We consider the bourgeois trend taken by our society in recent years to be harmful and dangerous to the people's morals and well-being."

The petty-bourgeois character of the author is, I imagine, most clearly expressed in these sentences. He declares the bourgeois trend to be "harmful and dangerous" to the morals and well-being of the people! Which "people," respected Mr. Moralist? Those who worked for the landlords under the serfdom that fostered the "family hearth," "settled living" and the "sacred duty of labour,"* or those who subsequently went away to earn money to pay off land redemption fees? You are well aware that the payment of this money was the main and chief condition of the "emancipation," and that the peasant could only get this money from Mr. Coupon.[113] You yourself have described how this gentleman carried on his business, how "the middle class have introduced their own science, their own moral code and their own sophisms into life," how a literature has already been formed praising the "cleverness, enterprise and energy" of the bourgeoisie. Clearly,

* Terms used by Mr. Yuzhakov.

it all boils down to one form of social organisation being succeeded by another: the system of appropriating the surplus labour of tied-to-the-land serf peasants created feudal morality; the system of "free labour for others," for the owners of money, created bourgeois morality to replace it.

The petty bourgeois, however, is afraid to look things straight in the face, and to call a spade a spade. He turns his back on these undoubted facts, and begins to dream. He considers only small independent undertakings (*for the market*—he keeps a modest silence about that) to be "moral," while wage-labour is "immoral." He does not understand the tie—an indissoluble tie—between the one and the other, and considers bourgeois morality to be a chance disease, and not a direct product of the bourgeois order that grows out of commodity economy (which, in fact, he has nothing against).

So he begins his old-womanish sermon about its being "harmful and dangerous."

He does not compare the modern form of exploitation with the previous one, that of serfdom; he does not look at the changes that it has introduced into the relations between the producer and the owner of the means of production—he compares it with a senseless, philistine utopia, with the sort of "small independent undertakings" that, while being commodity economy, should not lead to what it actually does lead to (see above: "kulakdom is in full bloom, is striving to enslave the weakest, and turn them into farm labourers," etc.). That is why his protest against capitalism (as such, as a protest, it is quite legitimate and fair) becomes a reactionary lamentation.

He does not understand that, by replacing the form of exploitation which tied the working man to his locality with one that flings him from place to place all over the country, the "bourgeois trend" has done a good job; that, by replacing the form of exploitation under which the appropriation of the surplus product was tangled up in the personal relations between the exploiter and the producer, in mutual civic political obligations, in the "provision of an allotment," etc.,—by replacing this with a form of exploitation that substitutes "callous cash payment" for all that and

equates labour-power with any other commodity or thing, the "bourgeois trend" strips exploitation of all its obscurities and illusions, and that to do so is a great service.

Then, take note of the statement that the bourgeois trend has been taken by our society "in recent years." Only "in recent years"? Was it not quite clearly expressed in the sixties, too? Was it not predominant throughout the seventies?

The petty bourgeois tries to smooth things out here as well, to present the bourgeois features that have characterised our "society" during the entire post-Reform period as some temporary infatuation, fashion. Not to see the wood for the trees is the main feature of the petty-bourgeois doctrine. Behind the protest against serfdom and bitter attacks on it, he (the ideologist of the petty bourgeoisie) does not see bourgeois reality, the reason being that he fears to look straight at the economic basis of the system that has been built up while he has been shouting vociferously. Behind the talk in all advanced ("liberal-coquettish," p. 129) literature about credits, and loan-and-savings societies, about the burden of taxation, about the extension of landownership and other such measures of helping the "people" he only sees the bourgeois features of "recent years." Finally, behind the complaints about "reaction," behind the wailing about the "sixties" he totally fails to see the bourgeois features underlying all this, and that is why he merges increasingly with this "society."

Actually, during all these three periods of post-Reform history our ideologist of the peasantry has always stood and marched alongside "society," not understanding that the bourgeois features of this "society" rob his protest against them of all strength and inevitably doom him either to dream or indulge in miserable petty-bourgeois compromises.

Many people find this closeness of our Narodniks (who "in principle" are hostile to liberalism) to liberal society very touching, and Mr. V. V. (cf. his article in *Nedelya*, 1894, Nos. 41-49) continues to find it so even to this day. From this the conclusion is drawn that the bourgeois intelligentsia in this country are weak or maybe even non-existent, a point that these people connect with the absence of a basis for Russian capitalism. Actually,

however, the very opposite is the case. This closeness is a powerful argument against Narodism, a direct confirmation of its petty-bourgeois character. Just as in everyday life the small producer merges with the bourgeoisie by the fact of his isolated production of commodities for the market, by his chances of getting on in the world, and of becoming a big proprietor, so the ideologist of the small producer becomes a liberal when discussing problems of credits, artels, etc.; just as the small producer is incapable of fighting the bourgeoisie and hopes for such measures of assistance as tax reduction, land extension, etc., so the Narodnik places his trust in liberal "society" and its chatter, clothed in "endless deceit and hypocrisy," about the "people." If he occasionally abuses "society," he immediately adds that only "in recent years" has it become spoilt, but that generally speaking it is not bad in itself.

"*Sovremenniye Izvestia* [*Contemporary News*] recently made a study of the new economic class that has taken shape in this country since the Reform and gave the following good description of it: 'Modest and bearded, wearing well-greased top boots, the old-time millionaire, who humbled himself before a junior official, has rapidly turned into the European type of jaunty and even offhanded and haughty entrepreneur, occasionally wearing a very noticeable decoration and holding a high office. When you take a good look at these unexpectedly thriving people you notice with surprise that most of these luminaries are yesterday's publicans, contractors, stewards, etc. The new arrivals have enlivened, but not improved, urban life. They have introduced hustle into it, and extreme confusion of concepts. Increased turnover and capital requirements have intensified the feverish activity of the enterprises, which has turned into the excitement of a gamble. The numerous fortunes have been made overnight, have increased the appetite for profit beyond all bounds, etc....

"Undoubtedly, such people exert a most ruinous influence on public morals" [that's the trouble—the spoiling of morals, and not capitalist production relations at all! K. T.] "and while we do not doubt the fact that town workers are more corrupted than village workers, there is still less doubt, of course, that this is due to their being much more surrounded by such people, breathing the same air, and living the life that they established."

Clear confirmation of Mr. Struve's opinion about the reactionary character of Narodism. The "corruption" of the town workers scares the petty bourgeois, who prefers the "family hearth" (with its immorality and club rule),

"settled life" (accompanied by crushing oppression and savagery) and does not understand that the awakening of the man in "the beast of burden,"[114] an awakening of such enormous and epoch-making significance that all sacrifices made to achieve it are legitimate, cannot but assume tempestuous forms under capitalist conditions in general, and Russian in particular.

"The Russian landlord was distinguished for his barbarism, and required but a little scratching for the Tatar in him to be seen whereas the Russian bourgeois does not even need to be scratched. The old Russian merchant class created a realm of darkness, whereas now with the aid of the new bourgeoisie, it will create darkness in which all thought, all human feeling will perish."

The author is sadly mistaken. The past tense should be used here, not the future, and should have been used when those words were written, in the seventies.

"The hordes of new conquerors disperse in all directions and meet with no opposition anywhere or from anybody. The landlords patronise them and give them a welcome reception; the Zemstvo people give them huge insurance bonuses; school-teachers write their legal papers, the priests visit them, while District Clerks help them to bamboozle the Mordovians."

Quite a correct description! "far from meeting with opposition from anybody," they meet with support from the representatives of "society" and the "state," of whom the author gives a rough list. Hence—exceptionalist logic!—in order to change matters, we should advise the choosing of another path, advise "society" and the "state" to do so.

"What, however, is to be done against such people?"
... "To await the mental development of the exploiters and an improvement in public opinion is impossible from the viewpoint either of justice, or of the morals and politics which the state must adopt."

Please note: the state must adopt a "moral and political viewpoint"! This is nothing but phrase-mongering. Do not the representatives and agents of the "state" just described (from the District Clerks upwards) possess a "political" viewpoint [cf. above ... "many people rejoice ... consider them to be the most progressive elements among the people, see in them a straight and natural step forward in their country's civilisation"] and a "moral" one [cf. ibid.:

"cleverness, energy, enterprise"]? Why do you obscure the split in moral and political ideas which are just as hostile to those "whom the bourgeoisie order to go to work" as "new shoots" are undoubtedly hostile in life? Why do you cover up the battle of these ideas, which is only a superstructure to the battle of social classes?

All this is the natural and inevitable result of the petty-bourgeois viewpoint. The petty producer suffers severely from the present system, but he stands apart from the forthright, fully disclosed contradictions, fears them, and consoles himself with naïvely reactionary dreams that "the state must adopt a moral point of view," namely, the viewpoint of the morality that is dear to the small producer.

No, you are not right. The state to which you address yourselves, the contemporary, the present state *must* adopt the viewpoint of the morality that is dear to the top bourgeoisie, *must* because such is the distribution of strength among the existing classes of society.

You are indignant. You start to howl about the Marxist defending the bourgeoisie, when he admits this "must," this necessity.

You are wrong. You feel that the facts are against you, and so resort to trickery: to those who refute your petty-bourgeois dreams about choosing a path without the bourgeoisie by referring to the domination of the latter as a *fact*; to those who refute the suitability of your petty, paltry measures against the bourgeoisie by referring to their deep roots in the economic structure of society, to the economic struggle of classes that is the basis of "society" and the "state," to those who demand of the ideologists of the toiling class that they make a complete break with these elements and exclusively serve those who are "differentiated from life" in bourgeois society—to all these you attribute a desire to defend the bourgeoisie.

> "We do not, of course, consider the influence of literature to be quite powerless, but if it is not to be powerless it must, firstly, better understand its mission and not confine itself to merely (sic!!!) educating the kulaks, but must rouse public opinion."

There you have the petit bourgeois in the pure form! If literature educates the kulaks, it is because it badly un-

derstands its mission!! And these gentlemen are surprised when they are called naïve, and when people say of them that they are romantics!

On the contrary, respected Mr. Narodnik: the "kulaks"* educate literature—they give it ideas (about cleverness, energy, enterprise, about the natural step forward in their country's civilised development), they give it resources. Your reference to literature is just as ridiculous as if somebody, in full sight of two opposing armies, were to address to the enemy field marshal's aide the humble request to "act in greater harmony." That is just what it is like.

The same is true of the desire—"to rouse public opinion." The opinion of the society that "seeks ideals with after-dinner tranquillity"? That is the customary occupation of Messrs. the Narodniks, one to which they have devoted themselves with such splendid success for "ten, twenty, thirty years and more."

Try a little more, gentlemen! The society that delights in after-dinner slumber sometimes bellows—that very likely means that it is ready to act in harmony against the kulaks. Talk a little more with that society. Allez toujours.**

... "and secondly, it must enjoy greater freedom of speech and greater access to the people."

A good wish. "Society" sympathises with this "ideal." But since it "seeks" this ideal, too, with after-dinner tranquillity, and since it fears more than anything else to have this tranquillity disturbed ... it hastens very slowly, progresses so wisely that with every passing year it gets farther and farther behind. Messrs. the Narodniks imagine that this is an accident, and that their after-dinner slumber will soon end and real progress begin. So keep waiting!

"Nor do we consider the influence of education and training to be quite powerless, but we presume, first of all: 1) that education should be given to each and every person, and not merely to exceptional persons, taking them out of their environment and turning them into kulaks...."

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* This is too narrow a term. The more precise and definite term "bourgeoisie" should have been used.

** Keep going!—*Ed.*

"Each and every person" ... that is what the Marxists want. But they think this is unattainable under the present social and economic relations, because even if tuition is free and compulsory, money will be needed for "education," and only the "offspring of the people" have that. They think that here, too, there is no way out except "the stern struggle of social classes."

... "2) That public schools should be accessible not only to retired parsons, officials, and all sorts of good-for-nothings, but also to individuals who are really decent and sincerely love the people."

Touching! But surely those who see "cleverness, enterprise and energy" in the "offspring of the people," also assert (and not always insincerely) that they "love the people," and many of them are undoubtedly "really decent" people. Who will be the judge? Critically thinking and morally developed personalities? But did not the author himself tell us that you cannot influence these offspring with scorn?*

We again, in conclusion, meet with the same basic feature of Narodism which we noted at the very outset, namely, that it turns its back on the facts.

When a Narodnik gives us a description of the facts, he is always compelled to admit that reality belongs to capital, that our actual evolution is capitalist, that strength is in the hands of the bourgeoisie. This has now been admitted, for example, by the author of the article under review, who established the point that "middle-class culture" has been set up in this country, that the people are ordered to go to work by the bourgeoisie, that bourgeois society is occupied only with digestive processes and after-dinner slumber, that the "middle class" have even created bourgeois science, bourgeois morals, bourgeois political sophisms, and bourgeois literature.

Nevertheless, *all* Narodnik arguments are *always* based on the opposite assumption, viz.: that strength is not on the side of the bourgeoisie, but on the side of the "people." The Narodnik talks about the choice of the path (while at the same time admitting the capitalist character of the actual path), about the socialisation of labour (which is

* P. 151: "... do they not scorn in advance (take good note of the "in advance") those who might scorn them?"

under the "management" of the bourgeoisie), about the state having to adopt a moral and political point of view, and about its being the Narodniks who have to teach the people, etc.—as though strength were already on the side of the working people and their ideologists, and all that remained was to indicate the "immediate," "expedient," etc., methods of using this strength.

This is a sickening lie from beginning to end. One can well imagine that such illusions had a raison d'être half a century ago, in the days when the Prussian Regierungsrat[115] was exploring the "village community" in Russia; but now, after a history of over thirty years of "free" labour, it is either a mockery, or Pharisaism and sugary hypocrisy.

It is the basic theoretical task of Marxism to destroy this lie, however good the intentions and however clear the conscience of its author. The prime task of those who wish to seek "roads to human happiness" is not to hoodwink themselves, but to have the courage openly to admit the existence of what exists.

And when the ideologists of the toiling class have understood and felt this, then they will admit that "ideals" do not mean constructing better and immediate paths, but the formulation of the aims and objects of the "stern struggle of social classes" that is going on before our eyes in our capitalist society; that the measure of the success of one's aspirations is not the elaboration of advice to "society" and the "state," but the degree to which these ideals are spread in a definite class of society; that the loftiest ideals are not worth a brass farthing so long as you fail to merge them indissolubly with the interests of those who participate in the economic struggle, to merge them with those "narrow" and petty everyday problems of the given class, like that of a "fair reward for labour," which the grandiloquent Narodnik regards with such sublime disdain.

... "But that is not enough; intellectual development, as we unfortunately see at every step, does not guarantee man against rapacious proclivities and instincts. Hence, immediate measures must be taken to safeguard the countryside against rapacity; measures must be taken, above all, to safeguard our village community, as a form of public life that helps correct the moral imperfection of human nature. The village community must be safeguarded once and for all. But that, too, is not enough. The village community, under its present

economic conditions and tax burdens, cannot exist, and so measures should be taken to extend peasant ownership of land, to reduce the taxes, and to organise people's industry.

Such are the measures against the kulaks with which all decent literature must be at one about and stand for. These measures are, of course, not new; the point, however, is that they are the only ones of their kind, but far from everybody is as yet convinced of this." (End.)

There you have the programme of the grandiloquent Narodnik! From the description of the facts we have seen that a complete contradiction of economic interests is everywhere revealed—"everywhere" meaning not only in both town and country, both within and without the village community, both in factory and in "people's" industry, but also outside the bounds of economic phenomena—in both literature and "society," in the sphere of moral, political, juridical and other ideas. Our petty-bourgeois knight, however, sheds bitter tears and appeals for "immediate measures to be taken to safeguard the countryside." The petty-bourgeois superficiality of understanding, and the readiness to resort to compromise is perfectly evident. The countryside itself, as we have seen, constitutes a split and a struggle, constitutes a system of opposite interests—but the Narodnik does not see the root of the evil in the system itself, but in its particular shortcomings, and does not build up his programme to provide an ideological basis for the struggle that is now going on, but makes "safeguarding" the countryside against chance, illegitimate, extraneous "plunderers" his basis! And who, worthy Mr. Romantic, should take measures to safeguard? Should it be the "society" that is content with digestive processes at the expense of just those who should be safeguarded? Or the Zemstvo, Volost and all other sorts of agents who live off fractions of surplus-value and therefore, as we have just seen, offer assistance but not resistance?

The Narodnik finds that this is a lamentable accident, and nothing more—the result of a poor "understanding of the mission"; that it is sufficient to issue a call to "be at one and work as a team," for all such elements to "leave the wrong path." He refuses to see that in economic relations the Plusmacherei system has taken shape, a system under which only the "offspring of the people" can have the means

and the leisure for education, while the "masses" have "to remain ignorant and work for others"; the direct and immediate consequence is that only members of the former make their way into "society," and that it is only from this same "society" and from the "offspring" of the people that there can be recruited the District Clerks, Zemstvo agents and so on whom the Narodnik is naïve enough to consider as people standing *above* economic relations and classes, *over* them.

That is why his appeal to "safeguard" is directed to quite the wrong quarter.

He satisfies himself either with petty-bourgeois palliatives (struggle against the kulaks—see above about loan-and-savings societies, credits, legislation to encourage temperance, industry and education; extension of peasant land-ownership—see above about land credits and land purchase; tax reduction—see above about income tax), or with rosy, ladies' college dreams of "organising people's industry."

But is it not already organised? Have not all the young bourgeoisie described above already organised this "people's industry" after their own, bourgeois fashion? Otherwise how could they "hold every village in their hands"? How could they "order people to go to work" and appropriate surplus-value?

The Narodnik reaches the height of righteous indignation. It is immoral—he howls—to consider capitalism to be an "organisation" when it is based on the anarchy of production, on crises, on permanent, regular and ever-increasing mass unemployment, on the utmost deterioration of the conditions of the working people.

On the contrary. It is immoral to colour the truth, to picture the order that characterises the whole of post-Reform Russia as something accidental and incidental. That every capitalist nation is a vehicle of technical progress and of the socialisation of labour, but at the cost of crippling and mutilating the producer, is something that was established long ago. But to turn this *fact* into material for discussing morals with "society," and, closing one's eyes to the struggle going on, to murmur with after-dinner composure: "safeguard," "ensure," "organise"—means to be a romantic, and a naïve and reactionary romantic at that.

It will very likely seem to the reader that this commentary has no connection whatever with an analysis of Mr. Struve's book. In my opinion, only an external connection is missing.

Mr. Struve's book does not discover Russian Marxism at all. It merely introduces into our press for the first time theories that have taken shape and been stated previously.* This introduction was preceded, as has already been noted, by a furious criticism of Marxism in the liberal and Narodnik press, a criticism that confused and distorted matters.

Unless this criticism was answered, it was impossible, firstly, to approach the contemporary position of the problem; secondly, it was impossible to understand Mr. Struve's book, its character and designation.

The old Narodnik article was taken as the subject for reply because a principled article was required, and, moreover, one retaining at least some of the old Russian Narodnik precepts that are valuable to Marxism.

By means of this commentary we have tried to show the artificiality and absurdity of the current methods of liberal and Narodnik polemics. Arguments about Marxism being connected with Hegelianism,** with belief in triads, in abstract dogmas and schemes that do not have to be proved by facts, in the inevitability of every country passing through the phase of capitalism, etc., turn out to be empty blather.

Marxism sees its criterion in the *formulation* and theoretical *explanation* of the struggle between social classes and economic interests that is going on before our eyes.

Marxism does not base itself on anything else than the facts of Russian history and reality; it is also the ideology of the labouring class, only it gives a totally different explanation of the generally known facts of the growth and achievements of Russian capitalism, has quite a different understanding of the tasks that reality in this country places before the ideologists of the direct producers. That is why, when the Marxist speaks of the necessity, inevita-

* Cf. V. V. *Essays on Theoretical Economics*. St. Petersburg, 1895, pp. 257-58.[116]

** I am speaking, of course, not of the historical origin of Marxism, but of its content today.

bility, and progressiveness of Russian capitalism, he proceeds from generally established facts which are not always cited precisely because of their being generally established, because of their not being new; his explanation is different from the one that has been told and retold in Narodnik literature—and if the Narodnik replies by shouting that the Marxist refuses to face the facts, he can be exposed even by simply referring to any principled Narodnik article of the seventies.

Let us now pass to an examination of Mr. Struve's book.

CHAPTER II

A CRITICISM OF NARODNIK SOCIOLOGY

The "essence" of Narodism, its "main idea," according to the author, lies in the "theory of Russia's exceptional economic development." This theory, as he puts it, has "two main sources: 1) a definite doctrine of the role of the individual in the historical process, and 2) a direct conviction that the Russian people possess a specific national character and spirit and a special historical destiny" (2). In a footnote to this passage the author declares that "Narodism is characterised by quite definite social ideals,"* and adds that he gives the economic world outlook of the Narodniks later on in the book.

This description of the essence of Narodism, it seems to me, requires some correction. It is too abstract and idealistic; it indicates the prevailing theoretical ideas of Narodism, but does not indicate either its "essence" or its "source." It remains absolutely unclear why the ideals indicated were combined with a belief in an exceptional Russian development and with a specific doctrine of the role of the individual, and why these theories became "the most influential" trend in our social thought. If, when speaking of "the socio-

* Of course, this expression "quite definite ideals" must not be taken literally, that is, as meaning that the Narodniks "quite definitely" knew what they wanted. That would be absolutely untrue. "Quite definite ideals" should be understood as meaning nothing more than the ideology of direct producers, even though this ideology is a very vague one.

logical ideas of Narodism" (the title of the first chapter), the author was unable to confine himself to purely sociological questions (method in sociology), but also dealt with the Narodniks' views on Russian economic reality, he should have explained to us the essence of these views. Yet in the footnote referred to this is only half accomplished. The essence of Narodism is that it represents the producers' interests from the standpoint of the small producer, the petty bourgeois. In his German article on Mr. N.—on's book (*Sozialpolitisches Centralblatt*, 1893, No. 1), Mr. Struve called Narodism "national socialism" (*Russkoye Bogatstvo*, 1893, No. 12, p. 185). Instead of "national" he should have said "peasant" in reference to the old Russian Narodism, and "petty bourgeois" in reference to contemporary Russian Narodism. The "source" of Narodism lies in the predominance of the class of small producers in post-Reform capitalist Russia.

This description requires explanation. I use the expression "petty bourgeois" not in the ordinary, but in the political-economic sense. A small producer, operating under a system of commodity economy—these are the two features of the concept "petty bourgeois," Kleinbürger, or what is the same thing, the Russian *meshchanin*. It thus includes both the peasant and the handicraftsman, whom the Narodniks always placed on the same footing—and quite rightly, for they are both producers, they both work for the market, and differ only in the degree of development of commodity economy. Further, I make a distinction between the old* and contemporary Narodism, on the grounds that the former was to some extent a well-knit doctrine evolved in a period when capitalism was still very feebly developed in Russia, when nothing of the petty-bourgeois character of peasant economy had yet been revealed, when the practical side of the doctrine was purely utopian, and when the Narodniks gave liberal "society" a wide berth and "went among the people." It is different now: Russia's capitalist path of development is no longer denied by anybody, the break-up of the

* By the old Narodniks I do not mean those who backed the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*, for instance, but those who "were among the people."

countryside is an undoubted fact. Of the Narodniks' well-knit doctrine, with its childish faith in the "village community," nothing but rags and tatters remain. From the practical aspect, utopia has been replaced by a quite un-utopian programme of petty-bourgeois "progressive" measures, and only pompous phrases remind us of the historical connection between these paltry compromises and the dreams of' better and exceptional paths for the fatherland. In place of aloofness from liberal society we observe a touching intimacy with it. Now it is this change that compels us to distinguish between the ideology of the peasantry and the ideology of the petty bourgeoisie.

It seemed all the more necessary to make this correction concerning the real content of Narodism since Mr. Struve's aforementioned abstractness of exposition is his fundamental defect. That is the first point. And secondly, "certain basic" tenets of the doctrine by which Mr. Struve is not bound demand that social ideas be reduced to social-economic relations.

And we shall now endeavour to show that unless this is done it is impossible to understand even the purely theoretical ideas of Narodism, such as the question of method in sociology.

Having pointed out that the Narodnik doctrine of a special method in sociology is best expounded by Mr. Mirtov[117] and Mr. Mikhailovsky, Mr. Struve goes on to describe this doctrine as "subjective idealism," and in corroboration quotes from the works of the authors mentioned a number of passages on which it is worth while dwelling.

Both take as a corner-stone the thesis that history was made by "solitary fighting individuals." "Individuals make history" (Mirtov). Mr. Mikhailovsky is even more explicit: "The living individual, with all his thoughts and feelings, becomes a history-maker on his own responsibility. He, and not some mysterious force, sets aims in history and moves events towards them through a lane of obstacles placed before him by the elemental forces of nature and of historical conditions" (8). This thesis that history is made by individuals is absolutely meaningless from the theoretical standpoint. All history consists of the actions of individuals, and it is the task of social science to explain these actions,

so that the reference to "the right of interfering in the course of events" (Mr. Mikhailovsky's words, quoted by Mr. Struve on p. 8), is but empty tautology. This is very clearly revealed in Mr. Mikhailovsky's last effusion. The living individual, he argues, moves events through a lane of obstacles placed by the elemental forces of historical conditions. And what do these "historical conditions" consist of? According to the author's logic, they consist in their turn of the actions of other "living individuals." A profound philosophy of history, is it not? The living individual moves events through a line of obstacles placed by other living individuals! And why are the actions of some living individuals called elemental, while of the actions of others it is said that they "move events" towards previously set aims? It is obvious that to search for any theoretical meaning here would be an almost hopeless undertaking. The fact of the matter is that the historical conditions which provided our subjectivists with material for the "theory" consisted (as they still consist) of antagonistic relations and gave rise to the expropriation of the producer. Unable to understand these antagonistic relations, unable to find *in these latter* the social elements with which the "solitary individuals" could join forces, the subjectivists confined themselves to concocting theories which consoled the "solitary" individuals with the statement that history is made by "living individuals." The famous "subjective method in sociology" expresses nothing, absolutely nothing, but good intentions and bad understanding. Mr. Mikhailovsky's further reasoning, as quoted by the author, is striking confirmation of this.

European life, Mr. Mikhailovsky says, "took shape just as senselessly and immorally as a river flows or a tree grows in nature. A river flows along the line of least resistance, washes away whatever it can, even if it be a diamond mine, and flows around whatever it cannot wash away, even if it be a dunghill. Sluices, dams, outlet and inlet canals are built on the initiative of human reason and sentiment. Such reason and sentiment, it may be said, were absent (?—P. S.) when the present economic system in Europe arose. They were in an embryonic state, and their influence on the natural elemental course of things was insignificant" (9).

Mr. Struve inserts a mark of interrogation, but what

perplexes us is why he inserts it only after one word and not after all of them, so meaningless is this whole effusion! What nonsense it is to say that reason and sentiment were absent when capitalism arose! Of what does capitalism consist if not of definite relations between people—and people without reason and sentiments are so far unknown. And what an untruth it is to say that only "insignificant" influence of the reason and sentiment of "individuals living" at that time was brought to bear on the "course of things"! Quite the contrary. People in sound mind and judgement then erected extremely well-made sluices and dams, which forced the refractory peasant into the mainstream of capitalist exploitation; they created extremely artful by-pass channels of political and financial measures through which swept capitalist accumulation and capitalist expropriation that were not content with the action of economic laws alone. In a word, all Mr. Mikhailovsky's statements here quoted are so preposterously false that they cannot be attributed to theoretical mistakes alone. They are entirely due to the author's petty-bourgeois standpoint. Capitalism has already revealed its tendencies quite clearly; it has developed its inherent antagonism to the full; the contradiction of interests has already begun to assume definite forms, and is even reflected in Russian legislation, but the small producer stands apart from this struggle. He is still tied to the old bourgeois society by his tiny farm, and for that reason, though he is oppressed by the capitalist system, he is unable to understand the real causes of his oppression and consoles himself with illusions about the whole trouble lying in the fact that the reason and sentiment of people are still in an "embryonic state."

"Of course," continues the ideologist of this petty bourgeois, "people have always endeavoured to influence the course of things in one way or another."

But "the course of things" consists of nothing else but actions and "influences" of people, and so this again is an empty phrase.

"But they were guided in this by the promptings of the most meagre experience and by the grossest interests; and it is obvious that it was very rarely and only by chance that these guides could indicate the path suggested by modern science and modern moral ideas" (9).

This is a petty-bourgeois morality, which condemns "grossness of interests" because it is unable to connect its "ideals" with any immediate interests—it is a petty-bourgeois way of shutting one's eyes to the split which has already taken place and which is clearly reflected both in modern science and in modern moral ideas.

Naturally, the peculiarities of Mr. Mikhailovsky's reasoning remain unchanged even when he passes to Russia. He "welcomes with all his heart" the equally strange stories of a Mr. Yakovlev that Russia is a tabula rasa, that she can begin from the beginning, avoid the mistakes of other countries, and so on and so forth. And all this is said in the full knowledge that this tabula rasa still affords a very firm foothold for representatives of the "old-nobility" system, with its large-scale landed proprietorship and tremendous political privileges, and that it provides the basis for the rapid development of capitalism, with all its diverse "progress." The petty bourgeois faint-heartedly closes his eyes to these *facts* and flies to the realm of innocent daydreams, such as that "we are beginning to live, now that science has already mastered certain truths and gained some prestige."

And so, the class origin of the sociological ideas of Narodism is already clear from those arguments of Mr. Mikhailovsky's which Mr. Struve quotes.

We must object to a remark which Mr. Struve directs against Mr. Mikhailovsky. "According to his view," the author says, "there are no insurmountable historical tendencies which, as such, should serve on the one hand as a starting-point, and on the other as unavoidable bounds to the purposeful activity of individuals and social groups" (11).

That is the language of an objectivist, and not of a Marxist (materialist). Between these conceptions (systems of views) there is a difference, which should be dwelt on, since an incomplete grasp of this difference is one of the fundamental defects of Mr. Struve's book and manifests itself in the majority of his arguments.

The objectivist speaks of the necessity of a given historical process; the materialist gives an exact picture of the given social-economic formation and of the antagonistic relations to which it gives rise. When demonstrating the ne-

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cessity for a given series of facts, the objectivist always runs the risk of becoming an apologist for these facts: the materialist discloses the class contradictions and in so doing defines his standpoint. The objectivist speaks of "insurmountable historical tendencies"; the materialist speaks of the class which "directs" the given economic system, giving rise to such and such forms of counteraction by other classes. Thus, on the one hand, the materialist is more consistent than the objectivist, and gives profounder and fuller effect to his objectivism. He does not limit himself to speaking of the necessity of a process, but ascertains exactly what social-economic formation gives the process its content, *exactly what class* determines this necessity. In the present case, for example, the materialist would not content himself with stating the "insurmountable historical tendencies," but would point to the existence of certain classes, which determine the content of the given system and preclude the possibility of any solution except by the action of the producers themselves. On the other hand, materialism includes partisanship, so to speak, and enjoins the direct and open adoption of the standpoint of a definite social group in any assessment of events.*

From Mr. Mikhailovsky the author passes to Mr. Yuzhakov, who represents nothing independent or interesting. Mr. Struve quite justly describes his sociological arguments as "florid language" "devoid of all meaning." It is worth dwelling on an extremely characteristic (for Narodism in general) difference between Mr. Yuzhakov and Mr. Mikhailovsky. Mr. Struve notes this difference by calling Mr. Yuzhakov a "nationalist," whereas, he says, "all nationalism has always been absolutely alien" to Mr. Mikhailovsky, for whom, as he himself says, "the question of the people's truth embraces not only the Russian people but the labouring folk of the whole civilised world." It seems to me that behind this difference there is also visible the reflection of the dual position of the small producer, who is a progressive element inasmuch as he begins, to use Mr. Yuzhakov's unconsciously

* Concrete examples of Mr. Struve's incomplete application of materialism and the lack of consistency in his theory of the class struggle will be given below in each particular instance.

apt expression, "to differentiate from society," and a reactionary element inasmuch as he fights to preserve his position as a small proprietor and strives to retard economic development. That is why Russian Narodism, too, is able to combine progressive, democratic features in its doctrine with the reactionary features which evoke the sympathy of *Moskovskiye Vedomosti*. As to the latter features, it would be difficult, it seems to me, to express them more graphically than was done by Mr. Yuzhakov in the following passage, quoted by Mr. Struve.

"Only the peasantry has always and everywhere been the vehicle of the pure idea of labour. Apparently, this same idea has been brought into the arena of modern history by the so-called fourth estate, the urban proletariat. But the substance of the idea has undergone such considerable changes that the peasant would hardly recognise it as the customary basis of his way of life. The *right* to work, instead of the sacred *duty* of working, the duty of earning one's bread by the sweat of one's brow" [so that is what was concealed behind the "pure idea of labour"! The purely feudal idea of the "duty" of the peasant to earn bread ... so as to perform his services? This "sacred" duty is preached to the poor beast of burden that is browbeaten and crushed by it!!*]; "then, the separation and rewarding of labour, all this agitation about a fair reward for labour, as though labour does not create its own reward in its fruits"; ["What is this?" Mr. Struve asks, "sancta simplicitas, or something else?" Worse. It is the apotheosis of the docility of the labourer tied to the soil and accustomed to work for others for almost nothing]; "the differentiation of labour from life into some abstract (?!—P.S.) category depicted by so many hours of work in the factory and having no other (?!—P.S.) relation, no tie with the daily interests of the worker" [the purely petty-bourgeois cowardice of the small producer, who at times suffers very severely from the modern capitalist organisation, but who fears nothing on earth more

* The author—as befits a little bourgeois—is presumably unaware that the West-European toiling folk have long outgrown the stage of development in which they demanded the "right to work," and that they are now demanding the "right to be lazy," the right, to rest from the excessive toil which cripples and oppresses them.

than a serious movement against this organisation on the part of elements who have become completely "differentiated" from every tie with it]; "finally, the absence of a settled life, a domestic hearth created by labour, the changing field of labour—all this is entirely alien to the idea of peasant labour. The labour hearth, inherited from their fathers and forefathers; labour, whose interests permeate the whole of life and build its morals—love of the soil, watered by the sweat of many generations—all this, which constitutes an inalienable and distinguishing feature of peasant life, is absolutely unknown to the proletarian working class; and, therefore, although the life of the latter is a worker's life, it is built up on bourgeois morality (an individualist morality based on the principle of acquired right) or, at best, on abstract philosophical morality, but peasant morality has its basis in labour—in the logic of labour and its demands" (18). Here the reactionary features of the small producer appear in their pure form: his wretchedness, which induces him to believe that he is fated for ever to the "sacred duty" of being a beast of burden; his servility, "inherited from his fathers and forefathers"; his attachment to a tiny individual farm, the fear of losing which compels him to renounce even the very thought of a "fair reward" and to be an enemy of all "agitation," and which, because of the low productivity of labour and the fact of the labouring peasant being tied to one spot, turns him into a savage and, by virtue of economic conditions alone, necessarily engenders his wretchedness and servility. The breakdown of these reactionary features must unquestionably be placed to the credit of our bourgeoisie; the progressive work of the latter consists precisely in its having severed all the ties that bound the working people to the feudal system and to feudal traditions. It replaced, and is still replacing, the medieval forms of exploitation—which were concealed by the *personal* relations of the lord to his vassal, of the local kulak and buyer-up to the local peasants and handicraftsmen, of the patriarchal "modest and bearded millionaire" to his "lads," and which as a result gave rise to ultra-reactionary ideas—replacing them by the exploitation of the "European type of jaunty entrepreneur," exploitation which is impersonal, naked and unconcealed, and which therefore shatters absurd illusions and dreams. It has destroyed the old iso-

lation ("settled life") of the peasant, who refused to know, *and could not* know, anything but his plot of land, and has begun—by socialising labour and vastly increasing its productivity—to force the producer into the arena of social life.

With respect to Mr. Yuzhakov's argument here given, Mr. Struve says: "Thus Mr. Yuzhakov quite clearly documents the Slavophil roots of Narodism" (18); and later, summarising his exposition of the sociological ideas of Narodism, he adds that the belief in "Russia's exceptional development" constitutes a "historical tie between Slavophilism and Narodism," and that therefore the dispute between the Marxists and the Narodniks is "a natural continuation of the differences between Slavophilism and Westernism" (29). This latter statement, it seems to me, requires limitation. It is indisputable that the Narodniks are very much to blame for a jingoism of the lowest type (Mr. Yuzhakov, for instance). It is also indisputable that to ignore Marx's sociological method and his presentation of questions concerning the direct producers is, to those Russian people who desire to represent the interests of these direct producers, equivalent to complete alienation from Western "civilisation." But the essence of Narodism lies deeper, it does not lie in the doctrine of exceptional development nor in Slavophilism, but in representing the interests and ideas of the Russian small producer. This is why among the Narodniks there were writers (and they were the best of the Narodniks) who, as Mr. Struve himself admitted, had nothing in common with Slavophilism, and who even admitted that Russia had entered the same road as Western Europe. You will never understand Russian Narodism through the medium of such categories as Slavophilism and Westernism. Narodism reflected a fact in Russian life which was almost non-existent in the period of the rise of Slavophilism and Westernism, namely, the contradiction between the interests of labour and of *capital*. It reflected this *fact* through the prism of the living conditions and interests of the small producer, and therefore did so in a distorted and cowardly way, creating a theory which did not give prominence to the antagonism of social interests, but to sterile hopes in a different path of development. And it is our duty to correct this mistake of

Narodism, to show which social group can become the real representative of the interests of the direct producers.

Let us now pass to the second chapter of Mr. Struve's book.

The author's plan of exposition is as follows: first he outlines the general considerations which lead us to regard materialism as the only correct method of social science; then he expounds the views of Marx and Engels; and, finally, he applies the conclusions reached to certain phenomena of Russian life. In view of the particular importance of the subject of this chapter, we shall endeavour to analyse its contents in greater detail and to note those points which provoke disagreement.

The author begins with the entirely correct contention that a theory which reduces the social process to the actions of "living individuals," who "set themselves aims" and "move events," is the result of a misunderstanding. Nobody, of course, ever thought of ascribing to "a social group an existence independent of the individuals forming it" (31), but the point is that "the concrete individual is a product of all past and contemporary individuals, i.e., of a social group" (31). Let us explain the author's idea. History, Mr. Mikhailovsky argues, is made by "the living individual with all his thoughts and feelings." Quite true. But what determines these "thoughts and feelings"? Can one seriously support the view that they arise accidentally and do not follow necessarily from the given social environment, which serves as the material, the object of the individual's spiritual life, and is reflected in his "thoughts and feelings" positively or negatively, in the representation of the interests of one social class or another? And further, by what criteria are we to judge the *real* "thoughts and feelings" of *real* individuals? Naturally, there can be only one such criterion—the *actions* of these individuals. And since we are dealing only with social "thoughts and feelings," one should add: the *social actions* of individuals, i.e., *social facts*. "When we separate the social group from the individual," says Mr. Struve, "we understand by the former all the varied interactions between individuals which arise out of social life and acquire objective form in custom and law,

in morals and morality, in religious ideas" (32). In other words: the materialist sociologist, taking the definite social relations of people as the object of his inquiry, by that very fact also studies the real *individuals* from whose actions these relations are formed. The subjectivist sociologist, when he begins his argument supposedly with "living individuals," actually begins by endowing these individuals with such "thoughts and feelings" as he considers rational (for by isolating his "individuals" from the concrete social environment he deprived himself of the possibility of studying their *real* thoughts and feelings), i.e., he "starts with a utopia," as Mr. Mikhailovsky was obliged to admit.* And since, further, this sociologist's own ideas of what is rational reflect (without his realising it) the given social environment, the final conclusions he draws from his argument, which seem to him a "pure" product of "modern science and modern moral ideas" in fact only reflect the standpoint and interests ... of the petty bourgeoisie.

This last point—i.e., that a special sociological theory about the role of the individual, or about the subjective method, replaces a critical, materialist inquiry by a utopia—is particularly important and, since it has been omitted by Mr. Struve, it deserves to be dwelt on a little.

Let us take as an illustration the common Narodnik argument about the handicraftsman. The Narodnik describes the pitiable condition of this handicraftsman, the miserable level of his production, the monstrous way in which he is exploited by the buyer-up, who pockets the lion's share of the product and leaves the producer a few coppers for a 16 to 18 hour working day, and concludes that the wretched level of production and the exploitation of the handicraftsman's labour are an ugly side of the present system. But the handicraftsman is not a wage-worker; that is a good side. The good side must be preserved and the bad side destroyed, and for this purpose handicraft artels must be organised. Here you have the complete Narodnik argument.

The Marxist argues differently. Acquaintance with the condition of an industrial pursuit evokes in him, in addition

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* *Works*, Vol. III, p. 155, "Sociology Must Start with Some Utopia."

to the question of whether it is good or bad, the question of how the industry is organised, i.e., what are the relations between the handicraftsmen in the production of the given product *and why just these and no others*. And he sees that this organisation is commodity production, i.e., production by *separate* producers, connected with one another by the *market*. The product of the individual producer, destined for consumption by others, can reach the consumer and give the producer the right to receive another social product only after assuming the form of *money*, i.e., after undergoing preliminary social evaluation, both qualitatively and quantitatively. And this evaluation takes place behind the back of the producer, through market fluctuations. These market fluctuations, which are unknown to the producer and independent of him, are bound to cause inequality among the producers, are bound to accentuate this inequality, impoverishing some and putting others in possession of money=the product of social labour. The cause of the power of the money owner, the buyer-up, is therefore clear: it is that he alone, among the handicraftsmen who live from day to day, at most from week to week, possesses money, i.e., the product of earlier *social* labour, which in his hands becomes *capital*, an instrument for appropriating the surplus product of other handicraftsmen. Hence, the Marxist concludes, under such a system of social economy the expropriation and the exploitation of the producer are absolutely inevitable, and so are the subordination of the propertyless to the propertied and the contradiction between their interests which provides the content of the *scientific* conception of the *class struggle*. And, consequently, the interests of the producer do not, in any way, lie in reconciling these contradictory elements, but, on the contrary, in developing the contradiction and in developing the consciousness of this contradiction. We see that the growth of commodity production leads to such a development of the contradiction here in Russia, too: as the market widens and production grows, merchant capital becomes industrial capital. Machine industry, by finally destroying small, isolated production (it has already been radically undermined by the buyer-up), socialises labour. The system of Plusmacherei, which in handicraft production is obscured by the apparent independence of the hand-

icraftsman and the apparent fortuitousness of the power of the buyer-up, now becomes clear and is fully revealed. "Labour," which even in handicraft industry participated in "life" only by presenting the surplus product to the buyers-up, is now finally "differentiated from life" of bourgeois society. This society discards it with utter frankness, giving full fruition to its basic principle that the producer can secure the means of subsistence only when he finds an owner of money who will condescend to appropriate the surplus product of his labour. And what the handicraftsman [and his ideologist—the Narodnik] could not understand—the profound class character of the aforementioned contradiction—becomes self-evident to the producer. That is why the interests of the handicraftsman can be represented only by this advanced producer.

Let us now compare these arguments from the angle of their sociological method.

The Narodnik assures us that he is a realist. "History is made by living individuals," and I, he declares, begin with the "feelings" of the handicraftsman, whose attitude is hostile to the present system, and with his thoughts about the creation of a better system, whereas the Marxist argues about some sort of necessity and inevitability; he is a mystic and a metaphysician.

It is true, this mystic rejoins, that history is made by "living individuals"—and I, when examining why social relations in handicraft industry have assumed such a form and no other (you have not even raised this question!), in fact examined *how* "living individuals" *have made their history* and are still making it. And I had a reliable criterion to show that I was dealing with real, "living" individuals, with real thoughts and feelings: this criterion was that their "thoughts and feelings" had already found expression in actions and had created definite social relations. True, I never say that "history is made by living individuals" (because it seems to me that this is an empty phrase), but when I investigate *actual* social relations and their *actual* development, I am in fact examining the product of the activities of living individuals. But though you talk of "living individuals," you actually make your starting-point not the "living individual," with the "thoughts and feelings" actually

created by his conditions of life, by the given system of relations of production, but a marionette, and stuff its head with your own "thoughts and feelings." Naturally, such a pursuit only leads to pious dreams; life passes you by, and you pass life by.* But that is not all. Just see *what* you are stuffing into the head of this marionette, and what measures you are advocating. In recommending the artel as "the path suggested by modern science and modern moral ideas," you did not pay attention to one little circumstance, namely, the whole organisation of our social economy. Since you did not understand that this is a capitalist economy, you did not notice that *on this basis* all possible artels are nothing but petty palliatives, which do not in the least remove either the concentration of the means of production, including money, in the hands of a minority (this concentration is an indisputable fact), or the complete impoverishment of the vast mass of the population—palliatives which at best will only elevate a handful of individual handicraftsmen to the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie. From an ideologist of the working people you turn into an ideologist of the petty bourgeoisie.

Let us, however, return to Mr. Struve. Having shown the emptiness of the Narodniks' arguments regarding the "individual," he continues: "That sociology does indeed always strive to reduce the elements of individuality to social sources is corroborated by every attempt to explain any big phase in historical evolution. When the 'historical individual' or the 'great man' is referred to, there is always a tendency to represent him as the 'vehicle' of the spirit of a certain era, as the representative of his time—and his actions, his successes and failures, as a necessary result of the whole preceding course of affairs" (32). This general tendency of every attempt to *explain* social phenomena, i.e., to create a social science, "is clearly expressed in the doctrine that the class struggle is the basic process in social evolution. Since

* "Practice mercilessly curtails it" ("the possibility of a new historical path"); "it shrinks, one might say, from day to day" (Mr. Mikhailovsky, as quoted by P. Struve, p. 16). What shrinks, of course, is not the "possibility," which never existed, but illusions, And a good thing, too.

the individual had been discarded, some other element had to be found. The social group proved to be such an element" (33). Mr. Struve is absolutely right when he says that the theory of the class struggle crowns, so to speak, the general endeavour of sociology to reduce "the elements of individuality to social sources." Furthermore, the theory of the class struggle for the first time pursues this endeavour so completely and consistently as to raise sociology to the level of a science. This was achieved by the materialist definition of the concept "group." In itself, this concept is still too indefinite and arbitrary: religious, ethnographical, political, juridical and other phenomena may also be considered as criteria distinguishing "groups." There is no firm token by which particular "groups" in each of these spheres can be distinguished. The theory of the class struggle, however, represents a tremendous acquisition for social science for the very reason that it lays down the methods by which the individual can be reduced to the social with the utmost precision and definiteness. Firstly, this theory worked out the concept of the *social-economic formation*. Taking as its starting-point a fact that is fundamental to all human society, namely, the mode of procuring the means of subsistence, it connected up with this the relations between people formed under the influence of the given modes of procuring the means of subsistence, and showed that this system of relations ("relations of production," to use Marx's terminology) is the *basis* of society, which clothes itself in political and legal forms and in definite trends of social thought. According to Marx's theory, each such system of production relations is a specific social organism, whose inception, functioning, and transition to a higher form, conversion into another social organism, are governed by specific laws. This theory applied to social science that objective, general scientific criterion of repetition which the subjectivists declared could not be applied to sociology. They argued, in fact, that owing to the tremendous complexity and variety of social phenomena they could not be studied without separating the important from the unimportant, and that such a separation could be made only from the viewpoint of "critically thinking" and "morally developed" individuals. And they thus happily succeeded in transforming social

science into a series of sermons on petty-bourgeois morality, samples of which we have seen in the case of Mr. Mikhailovsky, who philosophised about the inexpediency of history and about a path directed by "the light of science." It was these arguments that Marx's theory severed at the very root. The distinction between the important and the unimportant was replaced by the distinction between the economic structure of society, as the *content*, and the political and ideological *form*. The very concept of the economic structure was exactly explained by refuting the views of the earlier economists, who saw laws of nature where there is room only for the laws of a specific, historically defined system of relations of production. The subjectivists' arguments about "society" in general, meaningless arguments that did not go beyond petty-bourgeois utopias (because even the possibility of generalising the most varied social systems into special types of social organisms was not ascertained), were replaced by an *investigation* of definite forms of the structure of society. Secondly, the actions of "living individuals" within the bounds of each such social-economic formation, actions infinitely varied and apparently not lending themselves to any systematisation, were generalised and reduced to the actions of groups of individuals differing from each other in the part they played in the system of production relations, in the conditions of production, and, consequently, in their conditions of life, and in the interests determined by these conditions—in a word, to the actions of *classes*, the struggle between which determined the development of society. This refuted the childishly naïve and purely mechanical view of history held by the subjectivists, who contented themselves with the meaningless thesis that history is made by living individuals, and who refused to examine what social conditions determine their actions, and exactly in what way subjectivism was replaced by the view that the social process is a process of natural history—a view without which, of course, there could be no social science. Mr. Struve very justly remarks that "ignoring the individual in sociology, or rather, removing him from sociology, is essentially a particular instance of the striving for scientific knowledge" (33), and that "individualities" exist not only in the spiritual but also in the physical world. The whole point is

that the reduction of "individualities" to certain general laws was accomplished for the physical realm long ago, while for the social realm it was firmly established only by Marx's theory.

Another objection made by Mr. Struve to the sociological theory of the Russian subjectivists is that, in addition to all the above-mentioned arguments, "sociology cannot *under any circumstances* recognise what we call individuality as a primary fact, since the very concept of individuality (which is not subject to further explanation) and the fact that corresponds to it are the result of a long social process" (36). This is a very true thought, and is all the more worthy of being dwelt en because the author's argument contains certain inaccuracies. He cites the views of *Simmel*, who, he declares, proved in his *Social Differentiation* the direct interdependence between the development of the individual and the differentiation of the group to which the individual belongs. Mr. Struve contrasts this thesis with Mr. Mikhailovsky's theory of the inverse dependence between the development of the individual and the differentiation ("heterogeneity") of society. "In an undifferentiated environment," Mr. Struve objects, "the individual will be 'harmoniously integral' ... in his 'homogeneity and impersonality.' A real individual cannot be 'an aggregate of all the features inherent in the human organism in general,' simply because such a fulness of content exceeds the powers of the real individual" (38-39). "In order that the individual may be differentiated, he must live in a differentiated environment" (39).

It is not clear from this exposition how exactly Simmel formulates the question and how he argues. But as transmitted by Mr. Struve the formulation of the question suffers from the same defect that we find in Mr. Mikhailovsky's case. Abstract reasoning about how far the development (and well-being) of the individual depends on the differentiation of society is quite unscientific, because no correlation can be established that will suit every form of social structure. The very concepts "differentiation," "heterogeneity," and so on, acquire absolutely different meanings, depending on the particular social environment to which they are applied. Mr. Mikhailovsky's fundamental error consists precisely in the abstract dogmatism of his reasoning, which en-

deavours to embrace "progress" in general, instead of studying the concrete "progress" of some concrete social formation. When Mr. Struve sets his own general theses (described above) against Mr. Mikhailovsky, he repeats the latter's mistake by abandoning the depiction and explanation of a concrete progress in the realm of nebulous and unfounded dogmas. Let us take an example: "The harmonious integrity of the individual is determined as to its content by the degree of development, i.e., differentiation of the group," says Mr. Struve, and puts this phrase in italics. But what are we to understand here by the "differentiation" of the group? Has the abolition of serfdom accentuated or weakened this "differentiation"? Mr. Mikhailovsky answers the question in the latter sense ("What Is Progress?"); Mr. Struve would most likely answer it in the former sense, on the grounds of the increased social division of labour. The former had in mind the abolition of social-estate distinctions; the latter, the creation of economic distinctions. The term, as you see, is so indefinite that it can be stretched to cover opposite things. Another example. The transition from capitalist manufacture to large-scale machine industry may be regarded as diminution of "differentiation," for the detailed division of labour among specialised workers ceases. Yet there can be no doubt that the conditions for the development of the individuality are far more favourable (for the worker) precisely in the latter case. The conclusion is that the very formulation of the question is incorrect. The author himself admits that there is also an antagonism between the individual and the group (to which Mr. Mikhailovsky also refers). "But life," he adds, "is never made up of *absolute* contradictions: in life everything is *mobile* and *relative*, and at the same time all the separate sides are in a state of constant interaction" (39). If that is so, why was it necessary to speak of absolute interrelations between the group and the individual, interrelations having no connection with the strictly defined phase in the development of a definite social formation? Why could not the whole argument have been transferred to the concrete process of evolution of Russia? The author has made an attempt to formulate the question in this way, and had he adhered to it consistently his argument would have gained a great deal. "It was only the division of labour—

mankind's fall from grace, according to Mr. Mikhailovsky's doctrine—that created the conditions for the development of the 'individual' in whose name Mr. Mikhailovsky justly protests against the modern forms of division of labour" (38). That is excellently put; only in place of "division of labour" he should have said "capitalism," and, even more narrowly, *Russian capitalism*. Capitalism is progressive in its significance precisely because it has destroyed the old cramped conditions of human life that created mental stultification and prevented the producers from taking their destinies into their own hands. The tremendous development of trade relations and world exchange and the constant migrations of vast masses of the population have shattered the age-old fetters of the tribe, family and territorial community, and created that variety of development, that "variety of talents and wealth of social relationships,"* which plays so great a part in the modern history of the West. In Russia this process has been fully manifested in the post-Reform era, when the ancient forms of labour very rapidly collapsed and prime place was assumed by the purchase and sale of labour-power, which tore the peasant from the patriarchal, semi-feudal family, from the stupefying conditions of village life and replaced the semi-feudal forms of appropriation of surplus-value by purely capitalist forms. This economic process has been reflected in the social sphere by a "general heightening of the sense of individuality," by the middle-class intellectuals squeezing the landlord class out of "society," by a heated literary war against senseless medieval restrictions on the individual, and so on. The Narodniks will probably not deny that it was post-Reform Russia which produced this heightened sense of individuality, of personal dignity. But they do not ask themselves what material conditions led to this. Nothing of the kind, of course, could have happened under serfdom. And so the Narodnik welcomes the "emancipatory" Reform, never noticing that he is guilty of the same short-sighted optimism as the bourgeois historians of whom Marx wrote that they regarded the peasant Reform through the clair-obscure of "emancipation," without observing that this "emancipation" only consisted

* K. Marx, *Der achtzehnte Brumaire*, S. 98, u.s.w.[118]

in the replacement of one form by another, the replacement of the feudal surplus product by bourgeois surplus-value. Exactly the same thing has happened in our country. The "old-nobility" economy, by tying men to their localities and dividing the population into handfuls of subjects of individual lords, brought about the suppression of the individual. And then capitalism freed him of all feudal fetters, made him independent in respect of the market, made him a commodity owner (and as such the equal of all other commodity owners), and thus heightened his sense of individuality. If the Narodnik gentlemen are filled with pharisaic horror when they hear talk of the progressive character of Russian capitalism, it is only because they do not reflect on the material conditions which make for those "benefits of progress" that mark post-Reform Russia. When Mr. Mikhailovsky begins his "sociology" with the "individual" who protests against Russian capitalism as an accidental and temporary deviation of Russia from the right path, he defeats his own purpose because he does not realise that it was capitalism alone that created the conditions which made possible this protest of the individual. From this example we see once again the changes needed in Mr. Struve's arguments. The question should have been made entirely one of Russian realities, of ascertaining what actually exists and why it is so and not otherwise. It was not for nothing that the Narodniks based their whole sociology not on an analysis of reality but on arguments about what "might be"; they could not help seeing that reality was mercilessly destroying their illusions.

The author concludes his examination of the theory of "individuals" with the following formulation: "To sociology, the individual is a function of the environment," "the individual is here a formal concept, whose content is supplied by an investigation of the social group" (40). This last comparison brings out very well the contrast between subjectivism and materialism. When they argued about the "individual," the subjectivists defined the *content* of this concept (i.e., the "thoughts and feelings" of the individual, his social acts) a priori, that is, they insinuated their utopias instead of "investigating the social group."

Another "important aspect" of materialism, Mr. Struve continues, "consists in economic materialism subordinating the idea to the fact, and consciousness and what should be to being" (40). Here, of course, "subordinating the idea" means assigning to it a subordinate position in the explanation of social phenomena. The Narodnik subjectivists do exactly the opposite: they base their arguments on "ideals," without bothering about the fact that these ideals can only be a certain reflection of reality, and, consequently, must be verified by facts, must be based on facts. But then this latter thesis will be incomprehensible to the Narodnik without explanation. How is that?— he asks himself; ideals should condemn facts, show how to change them, they should verify facts, and not be verified by them. To the Narodnik, who is accustomed to hover in the clouds, this appears to be a compromise with facts. Let us explain.

The existence of "working for others," the existence of exploitation, will always engender ideals opposite to this system both among the exploited themselves and among certain members of the "intelligentsia."

These ideals are extremely valuable to the Marxist; he argues with Narodism only on the basis of these ideals; he argues exclusively about the construction of these ideals and their realisation.

The Narodnik thinks it enough to note the fact that gives rise to such ideals, then to refer to the legitimacy of the ideal from the standpoint of "modern science and modern moral ideas" [and he does not realise that these "modern ideas" are only concessions made by West-European "public opinion" to the new rising force], and then to call upon "society" and the "state" to ensure it, safeguard it, organise it!

The Marxist proceeds from the same ideal; he does not compare it with "modern science and modern moral ideas, however,"* but *with the existing class contradictions*, and therefore does not formulate it as a demand put forward by

* Engels, in *Herrn E. Dührings Umwälzung der Wissenschaft* (*Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science* [*Anti-Dühring*]—*Ed.*) very aptly points out that this is the old psychological method of comparing one's own concept with another concept, with a cast of another fact, and not with the fact it reflects.[119]

"science," but by such and such a class, a demand engendered by such and such social relations (which are to be objectively investigated), and achievable only in such and such a way in consequence of such and such properties of these relations. If ideals are not based on facts *in this way*, they will only remain pious wishes, with no chance of being accepted by the masses and, hence, of being realised.

Having thus stated the general theoretical propositions which compel the recognition of materialism as the only correct method of social science, Mr. Struve proceeds to expound the views of Marx and Engels, quoting principally the works of the latter. This is an extremely interesting and instructive part of the book.

The author's statement that "nowhere does one meet with such misunderstanding of Marx as among Russian publicists" (44) is an extremely just one. In illustration, he first of all cites Mr. Mikhailovsky, who regards Marx's "historico-philosophical theory" as nothing more than an explanation of the "genesis of the capitalist system." Mr. Struve quite rightly protests against this. Indeed, it is a highly characteristic fact. Mr. Mikhailovsky has written about Marx many times, but he has never even hinted at the relation of *Marx's method* to the "subjective method in sociology." Mr. Mikhailovsky has written about *Capital* and has declared his "solidarity" (?) with Marx's economic doctrine, but he has passed over in complete silence the question—for example—of whether the Russian subjectivists are not following the method of Proudhon, who wanted to refashion commodity economy in accordance with his ideal of justice.* In what way does this criterion (of justice—justice éternelle) differ from Mr. Mikhailovsky's criterion: "modern science and modern moral ideas"? Mr. Mikhailovsky has always protested vigorously against identifying the method of social sciences with that of the natural sciences, so why did he not object to Marx's statement that Proudhon's method is as absurd as would be that of a chemist who wanted to transform metabolism in accordance with the laws of "affinity" instead of studying the "real laws of metabolism"? Why did he not object to Marx's view that the social process is a "process of

* *Das Kapital*, I. B. 2te Aufl. S. 62, Anm. 38.[120]

natural history"? It cannot be explained by non-acquaintance with the literature; the explanation evidently lies in an utter failure or refusal to understand. Mr. Struve, it seems to me, is the first in our literature to have pointed this out—and that is greatly to his credit.

Let us now pass to those of the author's statements on Marxism which evoke criticism. "We cannot but admit," says Mr. Struve, "that a *purely philosophical proof* of this doctrine has not yet been provided, and that it has not yet coped with the vast concrete material presented by world history. What is needed, evidently, is a reconsideration of the facts from the standpoint of the new theory; what is needed is a criticism of the theory from the angle of the facts. Perhaps much of the one-sidedness and the over-hasty generalisations will be abandoned" (46). It is not quite clear what the author means by "a purely philosophical proof." From the standpoint of Marx and Engels, philosophy has no right to a separate, independent existence, and its material is divided among the various branches of positive science. Thus one might understand philosophical proof to mean *either* a comparison of its premises with the firmly established laws of other sciences [and Mr. Struve himself admitted that even psychology provides propositions impelling the abandonment of subjectivism and the adoption of materialism], *or* experience in the application of this theory. And in this connection we have the statement of Mr. Struve himself that "materialism will always be entitled to credit for having provided a profoundly scientific and truly *philosophical* (author's italics) interpretation of a number (N.B.) of vastly important historical facts" (50). This latter statement contains the author's recognition that materialism is the only scientific method in sociology, and hence, of course, a "reconsideration of the facts" is required from this standpoint, especially a reconsideration of the facts of Russian history and present-day reality, which have been so zealously distorted by the Russian subjectivists. As regards the last remark about possible "one-sidedness" and "overhasty generalisations," we shall not dwell on this general, and therefore vague, statement, but shall turn directly to one of the amendments made by the author, "who is not

infected with orthodoxy," to the "over-hasty generalisations" of Marx.

The subject is the state. Denying the state, "Marx and his followers ... went ... too far in their criticism of the *modern state*" and were guilty of "one-sidedness." "The state," Mr. Struve says, correcting this extravagance, "is first of all the *organisation of order*; it is, however, the organisation of rule (class rule) in a society in which the subordination of certain groups to others is determined by its economic structure" (53). Tribal life, in the author's opinion, knew the state; and it will remain even after classes are abolished, for the criterion of the state is coercive power.

It is simply amazing that the author, criticising Marx from his professorial standpoint, does so with such a surprising lack of arguments. First of all, he quite wrongly regards coercive power as the distinguishing feature of the state: there is a coercive power in every human community; and there was one in the tribal system and in the family, but there was no state. "An essential feature of the state," says Engels in the work from which Mr. Struve took the quotation about the state, "is a public power distinct from the mass of the people" (*Ursprung der Familie* u.s.w., 2te Aufl., S. 84. Russ. trans., p. 109);[121] and somewhat earlier he speaks of the institution of the naucrary[122] and says that it "undermined the tribal system in two ways: firstly, by creating a public power (*öffentliche Gewalt*), which simply no longer coincided with the sum-total of the armed people" (ib., S. 79; Russ. trans., p. 105).[123] Thus the distinguishing feature of the state is the existence of a separate class of people in whose hands *power* is concentrated. Obviously, nobody could use the term "state" in reference to a community in which the "organisation of order" is administered in turn by *all* its members. Furthermore, Mr. Struve's arguments are still more unsubstantial in relation to the modern state. To say of it that it is "first of all (sic!?!) the organisation of order" is to fail to understand one of the most important points in Marx's theory. In modern society the bureaucracy is the particular stratum which has power in its hands. The direct and intimate connection between this organ and the bourgeois class, which dominates in modern society, is apparent both from history (the bureaucracy was the first political instrument of the bourgeoi-

sie against the feudal lords, and against the representatives of the "old-nobility" system in general, and marked the first appearance in the arena of political rule of people who were not high-born landowners, but commoners, "middle class") and from the very conditions of the formation and recruitment of this class, which is open only to bourgeois "offspring of the people," and is connected with that bourgeoisie by thousands of strong ties.* The author's mistake is all the more unfortunate because it is precisely the Russian Narodniks, against whom he conceived the excellent idea of doing battle, who have no notion that every bureaucracy, by its historical origin, its contemporary source, and its purpose, is purely and exclusively a bourgeois institution, an institution to which only ideologists of the petty bourgeoisie are capable of turning in the interests of the producer.

It is also worth while to dwell a little on the attitude of Marxism to ethics. On pp. 6-65 the author quotes the excellent explanation given by Engels of the relation between freedom and necessity: "Freedom is the appreciation of necessity."[125] Far from assuming fatalism, determinism in fact provides a basis for reasonable action. One cannot refrain from adding that the Russian subjectivists could not understand even such an elementary question as freedom of will. Mr. Mikhailovsky helplessly confused determinism with fatalism and found a solution ... in trying to sit between two stools; not desiring to deny the functioning of laws, he asserted that freedom of will is a fact of our consciousness (properly speaking, this is Mirtov's idea borrowed by Mr. Mikhailovsky) and can therefore serve as a basis of ethics. It is clear that, applied to sociology, these ideas could provide nothing but a utopia or a vapid morality which ignores the class struggle going on in society. One therefore cannot deny the justice

* Cf. K. Marx, *Bürgerkrieg in Frankreich*, S. 23, Leipzig, 1876, and *Der achtzehnte Brumaire*, S. 45-46. Hamburg, 1885).[124] "But it is precisely with the maintenance of that extensive state machine in its numerous ramifications" [referring to the bureaucracy] "that the *material interests* of the French bourgeoisie are interwoven in the closet fashion. Here it finds posts for its surplus population and makes up in the form of state salaries for what it cannot pocket in the form of profits, interest, rents and honorariums."

of Sombart's remark that "in Marxism itself there is not a grain of ethics from beginning to end"; theoretically, it subordinates the "ethical standpoint" to the "principle of causality"; in practice it reduces it to the class struggle.

Mr. Struve supplements his exposition of materialism by an evaluation from the materialist standpoint of "two factors which play a very important part in all Narodnik arguments"—the "intelligentsia" and the "state" (70). This evaluation again reflects the author's "unorthodoxy" noted above in regard to his objectivism. "If ... all social groups in general represent a real force only to the extent that ... they constitute social classes or adhere to them, then, evidently, 'the non-estate intelligentsia' is not a real social force" (70). Of course, in the abstract and theoretical sense the author is right. He takes the Narodniks at their word, so to speak. You say it is the intelligentsia that must direct Russia along "different paths"—but you do not understand that since it does not adhere to any class, it is a cipher. You boast that the Russian non-estate intelligentsia has always been distinguished for the "purity" of its ideas—but that is exactly why it has always been impotent. The author's criticism is confined to comparing the absurd Narodnik *idea* of the omnipotence of the intelligentsia with his own perfectly correct *idea* of the "impotence of the intelligentsia in the economic process" (71). But this comparison is not enough. In order to judge of the Russian "non-estate intelligentsia" as a special group in Russian society which is so characteristic of the whole post-Reform era—an era in which the noble was finally squeezed out by the commoner—and which undoubtedly played and is still playing a certain historical role, we must compare the ideas, and still more the programmes, of our "non-estate intelligentsia" *with the position and the interests of the given classes of Russian society.* To remove the possibility of our being suspected of partiality, we shall not make this comparison ourselves, but shall confine ourselves to referring to the Narodnik whose article was commented on in Chapter I. The conclusion that follows from all his comments is quite definite, namely, that Russia's advanced, liberal, "democratic" intelligentsia was a bourgeois intelligentsia. The fact of the intelligentsia being "non-estate" in no way precludes the class origin of its ideas. The

bourgeoisie has always and everywhere risen against feudalism in the name of the abolition of the social estates—and in our country, too, the old-nobility, social-estate system was opposed by the non-estate intelligentsia. The bourgeoisie always and everywhere opposed the obsolete framework of the social estates and other medieval institutions in the name of the whole "people," within which class contradictions were still undeveloped. And it was right, both in the West and in Russia, because the institutions criticised were actually hampering *everybody*. As soon as the social-estate system in Russia was dealt a decisive blow (1861), antagonism within the "people" immediately became apparent, and at the same time, and by virtue of this, antagonism became apparent within the non-estate intelligentsia—between the liberals and the Narodniks, the ideologists of the peasants (among whom the first Russian ideologists of the direct producers did not see, and, indeed, it was too early for them to see, the formation of opposed classes). Subsequent economic development led to a more complete disclosure of the social contradictions within Russian society, and compelled the recognition of the fact that the peasantry was splitting into a rural bourgeoisie and a proletariat. Narodism has rejected Marxism and has become almost completely the ideology of the petty bourgeoisie. The Russian "non-estate intelligentsia," therefore, represents "a real social force" *inasmuch as it defends general bourgeois interests*.* If, nevertheless, this force was not *able* to create institutions suitable to the interests it defended, if it was unable to change "the atmosphere of contemporary Russian culture" (Mr. V. V.), if "active democracy in the era of the political struggle" gave way to "social indifferentism" (Mr. V. V. in *Nedelya*, 1894, No. 47), the cause of this lies not only in the dreaminess of

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* The petty-bourgeois nature of the vast majority of the Narodniks' wishes has been pointed out in Chapter I. Wishes that do not come under this description (such as "socialisation of labour") hold a minute place in modern Narodism. Both *Russkoye Bogatstvo* (1893, Nos. 11-12, *Yuzhakov*'s article on "Problems of Russia's Economic Development") and Mr. V. V. (*Essays on Theoretical Economics*, St. Petersburg, 1895) protests against Mr. N.—on, who commented "severely" (Mr. Yuzhakov's word) on the outworn panacea of credits, extension of land tenure, migration, etc.

our native "non-estate intelligentsia," but, and chiefly, in the position of those classes from which it emerged and from which it drew its strength, in their duality. It is undeniable that the Russian "atmosphere" brought them many disadvantages, but it also gave them certain advantages.

In Russia, the class which, in the opinion of the Narodniks, is not the vehicle of the "pure idea of labour" has an especially great historical role; its "activity" cannot be lulled by tempting promises. Therefore, the references of the Marxists to this class, far from "breaking the democratic thread"—as is asserted by Mr. V. V., who specialises in inventing the most incredible absurdities about the Marxists—catch up this "thread," which an indifferent "society" allows to fall from its hands, and demand that it be developed, strengthened and brought closer to life.

Connected with Mr. Struve's incomplete appraisal of the intelligentsia is his not altogether happy formulation of the following proposition: "It must be proved," he says, "that the disintegration of the old economic system is inevitable" (71). Firstly, what does the author mean by "the old economic system"? Serfdom? But its disintegration does not have to be proved. "People's production"? But he himself says later, and quite justly, that this word combination—"does not correspond to any real historical system" (177), that in other words, it is a myth, because after "serfdom" was abolished in Russia, commodity economy began to develop very rapidly. The author was probably referring to that stage in the development of capitalism when it had not yet entirely disentangled itself from medieval institutions, when merchant capital was still strong and when the majority of the producers were still engaged in small-scale production. Secondly, what does the author regard as the criterion of this inevitability? The rule of certain classes? The properties of the given system of production relations? In either case it amounts to *recording the existence* of one or another (capitalist) system; it amounts to *recording a fact*, and under no circumstances should it have been transplanted to the realm of reflections about the future. Such reflections should have left the monopoly of the Narodnik gentlemen, who are seeking "different paths for the fatherland." The author himself says on the very next page that every state is "an

expression of the rule of definite social classes" and that "there must be a redistribution of the social force between various classes for the state to radically change its course" (72). All this is profoundly true and very aptly aimed at the Narodniks, and the question should accordingly have been put in a different way: the *existence* (and not the "inevitability of disintegration," etc.) of capitalist production relations in Russia must be proved; it must be proved that the Russian data also justify the law that "commodity economy is capitalist economy," i.e., that in our country, too, commodity economy is growing everywhere into capitalist economy; it must be proved that everywhere a system prevails which is bourgeois in essence, and that it is the rule of this class, and not the famous Narodnik "chance happenings" or "policy," etc., that lead to the liberation of the producer from the means of production and to his working everywhere for others.

With this let us conclude our examination of the first part of Mr. Struve's book, which is of a general character.

CHAPTER III

THE PRESENTATION OF ECONOMIC PROBLEMS BY THE NARODNIKS AND BY MR. STRUVE

After finishing with sociology, the author proceeds to deal with more "concrete economic problems" (73). He considers it "natural and legitimate" to start from "general propositions and historical references," from "indisputable premises established by human experience," as he says in the preface.

One cannot but note that this method suffers from the same abstractness noted at the beginning as being the main defect of the book under review. In the chapters we are now coming to (the third, fourth, and fifth), this defect has resulted in undesirable consequences of a twofold nature. On the one hand, it has weakened the definite theoretical propositions advanced by the author against the Narodniks. Mr. Struve argues *in general*, describes the transition from natural to commodity economy, points out that, as a rule, such and such happened on earth, and with a few cursory remarks proceeds to deal with Russia, applying

to it, too, the general process of the "historical development of economic life." There can be no doubt that it is quite legitimate to apply the process in this way, and that the author's "historical references" are absolutely necessary for a criticism of Narodism, which falsely presents history, and not only Russian history. These propositions should, however, have been expressed more concretely, and been more definitely set against the arguments of the Narodniks, who say that it is wrong to apply the general process to Russia; the Narodniks' particular way of understanding Russian reality should have been compared with the Marxists' *other* way of understanding *that same* reality. On the other hand, the abstract character of the author's arguments leads to his propositions being stated incompletely, to a situation where, though he correctly indicates the existence of a process, he does not examine what classes arose while it was going on, what classes were the vehicles of the process, overshadowing other strata of the population subordinate to them; in a word, the author's objectivism does not rise to the level of materialism—in the above-mentioned significance of these terms.*

Proof of this appraisal of the above-mentioned chapters of Mr. Struve's work will be adduced as we examine some of its most important propositions.

Very true is the author's remark that "almost from the outset of Russian history we find that the direct producers' dependence (juridical and economic) on the lords has been the historical accompaniment of the idyll of 'people's production'" (81). In the period of natural economy the peasant was enslaved to the landowner, he worked for the boyar, the monastery, the landlord, but not for himself,

* This relation between objectivism and materialism was indicated, incidentally, by Marx in his preface to his *Der achtzehnte Brumaire des Louis Bonaparte*. Marx, after mentioning that Proudhon wrote of the same historical event (in his *Coup d'état*), says the following of how the latter's viewpoint is opposed to his own:

"Proudhon, for his part, seeks to represent the coup d'état [of Dec. 2] as the result of an antecedent historical development. Unnoticeably, however, his historical construction of the coup d'état becomes a historical *apologia* for its hero. Thus be falls into the error of our so-called *objective* historians. I, on the contrary, demonstrate how the *class struggle* in France created circumstances and relationships that made it possible for a grotesque mediocrity to play a hero's part" (Vorwort).[126]

and Mr. Struve has every right to set this *historical fact* against the tales of our exceptionalist sociologists about how "the means of production belonged to the producer" (81). These tales constitute one of the distortions of Russian history, meant to suit the philistine utopia in which the Narodniks have always lavishly indulged. Fearing to look reality in the face, and fearing to give this oppression its proper name, they turned to history, but pictured things as though the producer's ownership of means of production was an "ancient" principle, was the "age-old basis" of peasant labour, and that the modern expropriation of the peasantry is therefore to be explained not by the replacement of the feudal surplus product by bourgeois surplus-value, not by the capitalist organisation of our social economy, but by the accident of unfortunate policy, by a temporary "diversion from the path prescribed by the entire historical life of the nation" (Mr. Yuzhakov, quoted by P. Struve, p. 15). And they were not ashamed to tell these absurd stories about a country which had but recently seen the end* of the feudal exploitation of the peasantry in the grossest, Asiatic forms, when not only did the means of production not belong to the producer but the producers themselves differed very little from "means of production." Mr. Struve very pointedly sets against this "sugary optimism" Saltykov's sharp rejoinder about the connection between "people's production" and serfdom, and about how the "plenty" of the period of the "age-old basis" "fell only" [note that!] "to the lot of the descendants of the leibkampantsi[127] and other retainers" (83).

Further, let us note Mr. Struve's following remark, which definitely concerns definite facts of Russian reality and contains an exceptionally true thought. "When the producers start working for a distant and indefinite and not for a local, exactly delimited market, and competition, the struggle for a market develops, these conditions lead to technical progress.... Once division of labour is possible,

* Even today it cannot be said to have ended altogether. On the one hand, we have the land-redemption payments (and it is well known that they include not only the price of the land, but also the redemption from serfdom); on the other hand, labour service by the peasants in return for the use of "cut-off lands," for example, are a direct survival of the feudal mode of production.

it has to be carried out as widely as possible, but before production is technically reorganised, the influence of the new conditions of exchange (marketing) will be felt in the fact of the producer becoming economically dependent on the merchant (the buyer-up), and socially this point is of decisive significance. This is lost sight of by our 'true Marxists' like Mr. V. V., who are blinded by the significance of purely technical progress" (98). The reference to the decisive significance of the appearance of the buyer-up is profoundly true. It is decisive in that it proves beyond doubt that we have here the capitalist organisation of production, it proves the applicability to Russia, too, of the proposition that "commodity economy is money economy, is capitalist economy," and creates that subordination of the producer to capital from which there can be no other way out than through the independent activity of the producer. "From the moment that the capitalist entrepreneur comes between the consumer and the producer—and this is inevitable when production is carried on for an extensive and indefinite market—we have before us one of the forms of capitalist production." And the author rightly adds that "if *handicraft* production is understood as the kind under which the producer, who works for an indefinite and distant market, enjoys *complete economic independence*, it will, I think, be found that in Russian *reality* there is none of this true handicraft production." It is only a pity that use is made here of the expression "I think," along with the future tense: the predominance of the domestic system of large-scale production and of the utter enslavement of the handicraftsmen by buyers-up is the all-prevailing *fact* of the actual organisation of our handicraft industries. This organisation is not only capitalist, but as the author rightly says, is also one that is "highly profitable to the capitalists," ensuring them enormous profits, abominably low wages and hindering in the highest degree the organisation and development of the workers (pp. 99-101). One cannot help noting that the fact of the predominance of capitalist exploitation in our handicraft industries has long been known, but the Narodniks ignore it in the most shameless fashion. In almost every issue of their magazines and newspapers dealing with this subject, you

come across complaints about the government "artificially" supporting large-scale capitalism [whose entire "artificiality" consists in being large-scale and not small, factory and not handicraft, mechanical and not hand-operated] and doing nothing for the "needs of *people's* industry." Here stands out in full relief the narrow-mindedness of the petty bourgeois, who fights for small against big *capital* and stubbornly closes his eyes to the categorically established fact that a similar opposition of interests is to be found in this "people's" industry, and that consequently the way out does not lie in miserable credits, etc. Since the small proprietor, who is tied to his enterprise and lives in constant fear of losing it, regards all of this as something awful, as some sort of "agitation" in favour of "a fair reward for labour, as though labour itself does not create that reward in its fruits," it is clear that only the producer employed in the "artificial," "hothouse" conditions of factory industry can be the representative of the working handicraftsmen.*

Let us deal further with Mr. Struve's argument about agriculture. Steam transport compels a transition to exchange economy, it makes agricultural production commodity production. And the commodity character of production unfailingly requires "its economic and technical rationality" (110). The author considers this thesis a particularly important argument against the Narodniks, who triumphantly claim that the advantages of large-scale production in agriculture have not been proved. "It ill becomes those," says the author in reply, "who base themselves on Marx's teachings, to deny the significance of the economic and technical peculiarities of agricultural production thanks to which small undertakings in some cases possess economic advantages over big ones—even though Marx himself denied the importance of these peculiarities" (111). This passage is very unclear. What peculiarities is the author speaking of? Why does he not indicate them exactly? Why does he not indicate where and how Marx expressed his

* "The entire process is expressed in the fact of petty production (handicraft) approximating to 'capitalism' in some respects, and in others to wage-labour separated from the means of production" (p. 104).

views on the matter and on what grounds it is considered necessary to correct those views?

"Small-scale agricultural production," continues the author, "must increasingly assume a commodity character, and the small agricultural undertakings, if they are to be viable *enterprises*, must satisfy the general requirements of economic and technical rationality" (111). "It is not at all a matter of whether the small agricultural enterprises are absorbed by the big ones—one can hardly anticipate such an outcome to economic evolution—but of the metamorphosis to which the entire national economy is subjected under the influence of exchange. The Narodniks overlook the fact that the ousting of natural economy by exchange economy in connection with the above-noted 'dispersal of industry' completely alters the entire structure of society. The former ratio between the agricultural (rural) and non-agricultural (urban) population is changed in favour of the latter. The very economic type and mental make-up of the agricultural producers is radically changed under the influence of the new conditions of economic life" (114).

The passage cited shows us what the author wished to say by his passage about Marx, and at the same time clearly illustrates the statement made above that the dogmatic method of exposition, not supported by a description of the concrete process, obscures the author's thoughts and leaves them incompletely expressed. His thesis about the Narodniks' views being wrong is quite correct, but incomplete, because it is not accompanied by a reference to the new forms of class antagonism that develop when irrational production is replaced by rational. The author, for example, confines himself to a cursory reference to "economic rationality" meaning the "highest rent" (110), but forgets to add that *rent* presupposes the *bourgeois organisation of agriculture*, i.e., firstly, its complete subordination to the market, and, secondly, the formation in agriculture of the same classes, bourgeoisie and proletariat, as are peculiar to capitalist industry.

When the Narodniks argue about the non-capitalist, as they believe, organisation of our agriculture, they pose the problem in an abominably narrow and wrong way, reducing everything to the ousting of the small farms by the

big, and nothing more. Mr. Struve is quite right in telling them that when they argue that way they overlook the general character of agricultural production, which can be (and really is in our country) bourgeois even where production is small-scale, just as West-European peasant farming is bourgeois. The conditions under which small-scale independent enterprise ("people's"—to use the expression of the Russian intelligentsia) becomes bourgeois are well known. They are, firstly, the prevalence of commodity economy, which, with the producers isolated* from one another, gives rise to competition among them, and, while ruining the mass, enriches the few; secondly, the transformation of labour-power into a commodity, and the means of production into capital, i.e., the separation of the producer from the means of production, and the capitalist organisation of the most important branches of industry. Under these conditions the small independent producer acquires an exceptional position in relation to the mass of producers—just as now *really independent* proprietors constitute in our country an exception among the masses, who work for others and, far from owning "independent" enterprises, do not even possess means of subsistence sufficient to last a week. The condition and interests of the independent proprietor isolate him from the mass of the producers, who live *mainly* on wages. While the latter raise the issue of a "fair reward," which is necessarily the gateway to the fundamental issue of a different system of social economy, the former have a far more lively interest in quite different things, namely, credits, and particularly small "people's" credits, improved and cheaper implements, "organisation of marketing," "extension of land tenure," etc.

The very law of the superiority of large enterprises over small is a law of commodity production alone and consequently is not applicable to enterprises not yet entirely drawn into commodity production, not subordinated to

* This, of course, refers to their being isolated *economically*. Community *landownership* does not eliminate this in the least. Even where the land re-allotments are "equalitarian" in the highest degree the peasant farms single-handed on his own strip of land; hence he is an isolated producer working on his own.

the market. That is why the line of argument (in which, by the way, Mr. V. V. also exercised himself) that the decline of the nobles' farms after the Reform and the renting of privately-owned land by the peasants refute the view of the capitalist evolution of our agriculture, merely proves that those who resort to it have absolutely no understanding of things. Of course, the destruction of feudal relations, under which *cultivation* had been in the hands of the peasants, caused a crisis among the landlords. But, apart from the fact that this crisis merely led to the increasing employment of farm labourers and day labourers, which replaced the obsolescent forms of semi-feudal labour (labour service); apart from this, the peasant farm itself began to change fundamentally in character: it was compelled to work for the market, a situation that was not long in leading to the peasantry splitting into a rural petty bourgeoisie and a proletariat. This split settles once and for all the issue of capitalism in Russia. Mr. Struve explains the process in Chapter V, where he remarks: "There is differentiation among the small farmers: there develops, on the one hand, an 'economically strong'" [he should have said: bourgeois] "peasantry, and, on the other—a proletarian type of peasantry. Features of people's production are combined with capitalist features to form a single picture, above which is clearly visible the inscription: here comes Grimy" (p. 177).

Now it is to this aspect of the matter, to the *bourgeois organisation* of the new, "rational" agriculture that attention should have been directed. The Narodniks should have been shown that by ignoring the process mentioned they change from ideologists of the peasantry into ideologists of the petty bourgeoisie. "The improvement of people's production," for which they thirst, can only mean, under such an organisation of peasant economy, the "improvement" of the petty bourgeoisie. On the other hand, those who point to the producer who lives under the most highly developed capitalist relations, correctly express the interests not only of this producer, but also of the vast mass of the "proletarian" peasantry.

Mr. Struve's exposition is unsatisfactory in character, is incomplete and sketchy; on account of this, when dealing

with rational agriculture, he does not describe its social and economic organisation, and, when he shows that steam transport replaces irrational by rational production, natural by commodity production, he does not describe the new form of class antagonism that then takes shape.

This same defect in the presentation of problems is to be observed in most of the arguments in the chapters under examination. Here are some more examples to illustrate this. Commodity economy—says the author—and extensive social division of labour "develop on the basis of the institution of private property, the principles of economic freedom, and the sense of individualism" (91). The progress of national production is bound up with the "extent to which the institution of private property dominates society." "Maybe it is regrettable, but that is how things happen in actual life, it is empirically, historically established coexistence. At the present time, when the ideas and principles of the eighteenth century are treated so light-heartedly—the mistake it made being in fact repeated—this cultural-historical tie between economic progress and the institution of private property, the principles of economic freedom, and the sense of individualism is too often forgotten. Only by ignoring this tie can one expect economic progress to be possible in an economically and culturally undeveloped society, without the principles mentioned being put into effect. We feel no particular sympathy for these principles and perfectly well understand their historically *transient* character, but at the same time we cannot help seeing in them a tremendous cultural force, of not only a negative, but also a positive character. Only idealism which, in its hypotheses, imagines it has no ties with any historical succession, can fail to see it" (91).

The author is quite right in his "objective" statement of "historical coexistences"; all the more pity that his argument is incompletely stated. One would like to say to him: complete the argument! reduce all these general propositions and historical notes to a definite period of our Russian history, formulate them in such a way as to show why and in precisely what way your conception differs from that of the Narodniks, contrast them with the reality that has to serve as the criterion for the Russian Marxist,

show the class contradictions that are concealed by all these examples of progress and of culture.*

The "progress" and the "culture" that post-Reform Russia brought in its train are undoubtedly bound up with the "institution of private property"—it was not only introduced for the first time in all its fulness by the creation of a new "contentious" civil process which ensured the same sort of "equality" in the courts as was embodied in life by "free labour" and its sale to capital; it covered the holdings both of the landlords, rid of all obligations and duties to the state, and of the peasants, turned into peasant *proprietors*; it was even made the basis of the political rights of "citizens" to participate in local government (the qualification), etc. Still more undoubted is the "lie" between our "progress" and the "principles of economic freedom" we have already heard in Chapter I from our Narodnik how this "freedom" consisted in liberating the "modest and bearded" gatherers of Russia's land from the need to "humble themselves to a junior police official." We have already spoken of how the "sense of individualism" was created by the development of commodity economy. By combining all these features of, Russia's progress, one cannot but reach the conclusion (drawn, too, by the Narodnik of the seventies) that this progress and culture were thoroughly bourgeois. Contemporary Russia is far better than pre-Reform Russia, but since all this improvement is wholly and exclusively due to the bourgeoisie, to its agents and ideologists, the producers have not profited by it. As far as they are concerned the improvements have only meant a change in the form of the surplus product, have only meant improved and perfected methods of separating the producer from the means of production. That is why the Narodnik gentlemen display the most incredible "flippancy" and forgetfulness when they address their protest against Russian capitalism and bour-

* Contra principia negantem disputari non potest (you cannot argue against one who denies principles.—*Ed.*)—says the author about an argument with the Narodniks. That depends on how these principia are formulated—as general propositions and notes, or as a *different understanding* of the *facts* of Russian history and present-day reality.

geoisdom to those who in fact were their vehicles and exponents. All you can say of them is: "they came unto their own, and their own received them not."

To agree with that description of post-Reform Russia and "society" will be beyond the capacity of the contemporary Narodnik. And to challenge it, he would have to deny the bourgeois character of post-Reform Russia, to deny the very thing for which his distant forefather, the Narodnik of the seventies, rose up and "went among the people" to seek "guarantees for the future" among the direct producers themselves. Of course, the *contemporary* Narodnik will possibly not only deny it, but will perhaps seek to prove that a change for the better has taken place in the relation under review; by doing so, however, he would merely show all who have not yet seen it, that he is absolutely nothing more than the most ordinary *little bourgeois* individual.

As the reader sees, I have only to round off Mr. Struve's propositions, to formulate them in another way, "to say the same thing, only differently." The question arises: is there any need for it? Is it worth while dealing in such detail with these additions and conclusions? Do they not follow automatically?

It seems to me that it is worth while, for two reasons. Firstly, the author's narrow objectivism is extremely dangerous, since it extends to the point of forgetting the line of demarcation between the old professorial arguments about the paths and destiny of the fatherland, so rooted in our literature, and a precise characterisation of the actual process impelled by such and such classes. This narrow objectivism, this inconsistency in relation to Marxism, is the main defect of Mr. Struve's book, and it will be necessary to dwell on it in particularly great detail, so as to show that it originates not from Marxism but from its inadequate application; not from the author seeing criteria of his theory other than reality, from his drawing other practical conclusions from the doctrine (they are impossible, I repeat, unthinkable unless you mutilate all its main tenets), but from the fact that the author has limited himself to one, the most general aspect of the theory, and has not applied it quite consistently. Secondly, one cannot but agree with the idea which the author ex-

pressed in his preface that before criticising Narodism on secondary issues, it was necessary "to disclose the very fundamentals of the disagreement" (VII) by way of a "principled polemic." But in order to ensure that the author's aim should not remain unachieved a more concrete meaning must be given to almost all his propositions, all his rather general remarks must be applied to the concrete problems of Russian history and present-day reality. On all these problems the Russian Marxists still have much to do to "reconsider the facts" from the materialist standpoint—to disclose the class contradictions in the activities of "society" and the "state" that lay behind the theories of the "intelligentsia," and, finally, to establish the tie between all the separate, endlessly varied forms of appropriating the surplus product in Russia's "people's" enterprises, and the advanced, most developed, capitalist form of this appropriation, which contains the "guarantees for the future" and now puts in the forefront the idea and the historical task of the "producer." Consequently, however bold the attempt to indicate the solution of these problems may seem, however numerous the changes and corrections that result from further, detailed study, it is none the less worth indicating specific problems, so as to evoke as general and broad a discussion of them as possible.

The culminating point of Mr. Struve's narrow objectivism, which gives rise to his wrong presentation of problems, is the way he argues about List, about his "splendid doctrine" concerning a "confederation of national productive forces," about the importance for agriculture of developing factory industry, and about the superiority of the manufacturing and agricultural state over the purely agricultural, etc. The author finds that this "doctrine" very "convincingly speaks of the historical inevitability and legitimacy of capitalism in the broad sense of the term" (123), and about the "cultural-historical might of triumphant commodity production" (124).

The professorial character of the arguments of the author, who rises, as it were, above all definite countries, definite historical periods, and definite classes, stands out here in particular relief. However you look at this argument—whether from the purely theoretical or from the practi-

cal aspect, such an assessment will be equally correct. Let us begin from the former. Is it not strange to think of being able to "convince" anybody at all of the "historical inevitability and legitimacy of capitalism" in a particular country by advancing abstract, dogmatic propositions about the significance of factory industry? Is it not a mistake to raise the problem in this way, so beloved of the liberal professors of *Russkoye Bogatstvo*? Is it not obligatory for a Marxist to reduce everything to ascertaining what is, and why it is so, and not otherwise?

The Narodniks consider capitalism in this country to be an artificial, hothouse plant, because they cannot understand the connection between it and the entire commodity organisation of our social economy, and fail to see its roots in our "people's production." Show them these connections and roots, show them that capitalism also dominates in its least developed and therefore worst form in people's production, and you will prove the "inevitability" of Russian capitalism. Show them that this capitalism, by raising labour productivity and socialising labour, develops and renders clear the class, social contradiction that has come into being everywhere in "people's production"—and you will prove the "legitimacy" of Russian large-scale capitalism. As to the practical aspect of this argument, which touches on the problem of commercial policy, the following may be noted. Although they stress primarily and most emphatically that the problem of free trade and protection is a capitalist problem, one of bourgeois policy, the Russian Marxists must stand for free trade, since the reactionary character of protection, which retards the country's economic development, and serves the interests not of the entire bourgeois class, but merely of a handful of all-powerful magnates, is very strongly evident in Russia, and since free trade means accelerating the process that yields the means of deliverance from capitalism.

The last section (XI) of the third chapter is devoted to an examination of the concept "capitalism." The author very rightly remarks that this word is used "very loosely" and cites examples of a "very narrow" and "very broad"

way of understanding it, but lays down no precise attributes of it; the concept "capitalism," despite the author's analysis, has not been analysed. Yet, one would have thought it should present no particular difficulty, since the concept was introduced into science by Marx, who substantiated it by facts. But here, too, Mr. Struve would not let himself be infected with "orthodoxy." "Marx himself," says he, "viewed the process of the transformation of *commodity* production into *commodity-capitalist* production as perhaps more precipitate and straightforward than it is in actual fact" (p. 127, footnote). Perhaps. But since it is the only view substantiated scientifically and supported by the history of capital, and since we are unacquainted with other views, which "perhaps" are less "precipitate" and "straightforward," we turn to Marx. The essential features of capitalism, according to his theory, are (1) commodity production, as the *general* form of production. The product assumes the form of a commodity in the most diverse social production organisms, but only in capitalist production is that form of the product of labour *general*, and not exceptional, isolated, accidental. The second feature of capitalism (2)—not only the product of labour, but also labour itself, i.e., human labour-power, assumes the form of a commodity. The degree to which the commodity form of labour-power is developed is an indication of the degree to which capitalism is developed.* With the aid of this definition we shall easily see our way among the examples of incorrect understanding of this term cited by Mr. Struve. Undoubtedly, the contrasting of the Russian system to capitalism, a contrast based on the technical backwardness of our national economy, on the predominance of hand production, etc., and so often resorted to by the Narodniks, is quite absurd, since capitalism exists both where technical development is low and where it is high; in *Capital* Marx repeatedly stresses the point that capital first subordinates production as it finds it, and only subsequently

* *Das Kapital*, II Band (1885), S. 93. The reservation must be made that in the passage referred to Marx gives no *definition* of capitalism. In general, he did not offer definitions. Here he only refers to the relation between commodity and capitalist production, the point dealt with in the text.[128]

transforms it technically. Undoubtedly, the German Hausindustrie and the Russian "domestic system of large-scale production" are capitalist-organised industry, for not only does commodity production dominate, but the owner of money also dominates the producers and appropriates surplus-value. Undoubtedly, when the Russian "land-holding" peasantry is contrasted to West-European capitalism—something the Narodniks are so fond of doing—that, too, merely shows a lack of understanding of what capitalism is. As the author quite rightly remarks, "peasant semi-natural economy" (124) is also to be found in some places in the West, but neither in the West nor in Russia does this do away with either the predominance of commodity production, or the subordination of the overwhelming majority of the producers to capital: before this subordination reaches the highest, peak level of development, it passes through many stages that are usually ignored by the Narodniks despite the very precise explanation given by Marx. The subordination begins with *merchant's* and *usury capital*, then grows into industrial capitalism, which in its turn is at first technically quite primitive, and does not differ in any way from the old systems of production, then organises manufacture—which is still based on hand labour, and on the dominant handicraft industries, without breaking the tie between the wage-worker and the land—and completes its development with large-scale machine industry. It is this last, highest stage that constitutes the culminating point of the development of capitalism, *it alone* creates the fully expropriated worker* who is as free as a bird, *it alone* gives rise (both materially and socially) to the "unifying significance" of capitalism that the Narodniks are accustomed to connect with capitalism in general, *it alone* opposes capitalism to its "own child."

The fourth chapter of the book, "Economic Progress and Social Progress," is a direct continuation of the third chapter, and covers that part of the book which advances data of "human experience" against the Narodniks. We shall

* The Narodniks always describe things as though the worker separated from the land is a necessary condition of capitalism *in general*, and not of machines industry alone.

have to deal here in detail, firstly, with the author's wrong view [or clumsy expression?] concerning Marx's followers and, secondly, with the way the tasks of the economic criticism of Narodism are formulated.

Mr. Struve says that Marx conceived the transition from capitalism to the new social system as the sudden downfall, the collapse of capitalism. (He thinks that "certain passages" in Marx give grounds for this view; as a matter of fact, it runs through *all the works* of Marx.) The followers of Marx fight *for reforms*. An "important correction has been made" to the viewpoint that Marx held in the forties: instead of the "chasm" separating capitalism from the new system, a "number of transitional stages" have been admitted.

We cannot under any circumstances admit this to be right. No "correction" whatever, either important or unimportant, has been made to Marx's viewpoint by the "followers of Marx." The fight for reforms does not in the least imply a "correction," does not in the least correct the doctrine of the chasm and sudden downfall, because this struggle is waged with a frankly and definitely admitted aim, that of reaching the "fall"; and the fact that this requires a "number of transitional stages"—from one phase of the struggle to another, from one stage to the next—was admitted by Marx himself in the forties when he said in the *Manifesto* that the movement towards the new system cannot be *separated* from the working-class movement (and, hence, from the struggle for reforms), and when he himself, in conclusion, proposed a number of practical measures.[129]

If Mr. Struve wanted to indicate the *development* of Marx's viewpoint, he was, of course, right. But then, this is not a "*correction*" to his views, but the very opposite—their *application*, their *realisation*.

Nor can we agree with the author's attitude towards Narodism.

"Our Narodnik literature," he says, "seized upon the contrast between national wealth and the well-being of the people, social progress and progress in distribution" (131).

Narodism did not "seize upon" this contrast, but merely *stated* the fact that in post-Reform Russia the same contradiction was to be observed between progress, culture,

wealth and—the separation of the producer from the means of production, the diminution of the producer's share in the product of the people's labour, and the growth of poverty and unemployment—as that which had led to this contrast being made in the West, too.

"...Owing to its humanity and its love for the people, this literature immediately settled the problem in favour of the well-being of the people, and as certain forms of people's economy (village community, artel) apparently embodied the ideal of economic equality and thus guaranteed the well-being of the people, and as the progress of production under the influence of increased exchange held out no promise for these forms, whose economic and psychological foundations it abolished, the Narodniks, pointing to the sad experience of the West in regard to industrial progress based on private property and economic liberty, countered commodity production—capitalism, with a so-called 'people's industry' that guarantees the well-being of the people, as a social and economic ideal for the preservation and further development of which the Russian intelligentsia and the Russian people should fight."

This argument clearly reveals the flaws in Mr. Struve's thesis. Narodism is depicted as a "humane" theory which "seized upon" the contrast between national wealth and the poverty of the people and "settled the problem" in favour of distribution, because the "experience of the West" "held out no promise" for the well-being of the people. And the author begins to argue against this "settlement" of the problem, forgetting that he is only arguing against the idealist and, moreover, naïve daydreams that are the cloak of Narodism, and not against its content, forgetting that he is committing a serious error by presenting the question in the professorial manner usually adopted by the Narodniks. As we have already stated, the *content* of Narodism reflects the viewpoint and the interests of the Russian small producer. The "humanity and love for the people" expressed in the theory derive from the downtrodden condition of our small producer, who has suffered severely both from the "old-nobility" system and traditions, and from the oppression of big capital. The attitude of Narodism towards the "West" and towards its influence

upon Russia was determined, of course, not by the fact that it "seized upon" this or that idea coming from the West, but by the small producer's conditions of life: he saw that he was up against large-scale capitalism which was borrowing West-European technique,* and, oppressed by it, built up naïve theories which explained capitalism by politics instead of capitalist politics by capitalist economy, and which declared large-scale capitalism to be something alien to Russia, introduced from outside. The fact that he was tied to his separate, small enterprise prevented him from understanding the true character of the state, and he appealed to it to help develop small ("people's") production. Owing to the undeveloped condition of class antagonisms characteristic of Russian capitalist society, the theory of those petty bourgeois ideologists was put forward as representing the interests of labour in general.

Instead of showing the absurdity of Narodniks' presentation of the problem and explaining their "settlement" of it by the material conditions of the small producer's life, the author himself, in his own presentation of the problem, betrays a dogmatism which reminds one of the Narodniks' "*choice*" between economic and social progress.

"The task of criticising the economic principles of Narodism ... is ... to prove the following:

"1) Economic progress is a necessary condition for social progress: the latter emerges historically from the former, and, at a certain stage of development, organic interaction between, interdependence of, these two processes should, and in fact does, manifest itself" (133).

Speaking generally, this is, of course, a perfectly true statement. But it indicates the tasks of criticising the sociological rather than the economic principles of Narodism: in essence, it is a different way of formulating the doctrine that the development of society is determined by the development of the productive forces which we discussed in chapters I and II. It is, however, inadequate for the criticism of the "*economic principles* of Narodism." The problem must be formulated more concretely, it must be reduced from progress in general to the "progress" of

* Cf. above-mentioned article in *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*.

capitalist society in Russia, to those errors in understanding *this* progress which gave rise to the ridiculous Narodnik fables about the tabula rasa, about "people's production," about Russian capitalism having no basis, etc. Instead of talk about interaction manifesting itself between economic and social progress, the definite symptoms of social progress in Russia of which the Narodniks fail to see *such and such* economic roots, must be shown (or at least indicated).*

"2) For that reason, the question of the organisation of production and of the level of labour productivity is one that takes precedence over the question of distribution; under certain historical conditions, when the productivity of the people's labour is extremely low, both absolutely and relatively, the predominant importance of the factor of production makes itself felt very acutely."

The author here bases himself on Marx's doctrine of the subordinate importance of distribution. As an epigraph to Chapter IV a passage is taken from Marx's criticism of the Gotha Programme[130] where he contrasts vulgar socialism to scientific socialism, which attaches no great importance to distribution, explains the social system by the way the *relations of production* are organised and considers that such organisation already includes a definite system of distribution. This idea, as the author quite justly remarks, runs through the whole of Marx's theory, and is extremely important for an understanding of the petty-bourgeois content of Narodism. But the second part of Mr. Struve's sentence greatly obscures this idea, particularly because of the vague term he uses, "the factor of production." Some confusion may arise as to the sense in which this term is to be understood. The Narodnik adopts the viewpoint of the small producer, whose explanations of the misfortunes he suffers are very superficial; for example, he is "poor," while his neighbour, the buyer-up, is "rich";

* It may be argued that I am running too far ahead, for did not the author say that he intended to proceed gradually from general problems to concrete ones, which he examines in Chapter VI? The point is, however, that the abstractness of Mr. Struve's criticism to which I refer, is a distinguishing feature of the *whole* of his book—of Chapter VI and even of the concluding part. What most of all requires correcting is his way of *presenting problems*.

the "authorities" only help big capital, etc.; in a word, his misfortunes are due to the specific features of distribution, to mistakes in policy, etc. What viewpoint does the author oppose to that of the Narodnik? The viewpoint of big capital, who looks down with contempt upon the miserable little enterprise of the peasant-handicraftsman and who is proud of the high degree of development of his own industry, proud of the "service" he has rendered by raising the absolute and relative low productivity of the people's labour? Or the viewpoint of its antipode, who is now living in relationships which are so far developed that he is no longer satisfied with references to policy and distribution, and who is beginning to understand that the causes lie much deeper, in the very organisation (social) of production, in the very system of social economy based on individual property and controlled and guided by the market? This question might quite naturally arise in the reader's mind, especially since the author sometimes uses the term "factor of production" side by side with the word "economy" (see p. 171: the Narodniks "ignore the factor of production to a degree that is tantamount to denying the existence of any system of economy"), and especially since, by comparing "irrational" with "rational" production, the author sometimes obscures the relationship between the small producer and the producer who has lost the means of production altogether. It is perfectly true that from the *objective point of view* the author's exposition is no less correct on account of this and that it is easy for anyone who understands the antagonism inherent in the capitalist system to picture the situation from the angle of the latter relationship. But, as it is well known that the Russian Narodnik gentlemen do not understand this, it is desirable in controversy with them to be more definite and thorough and to resort to the fewest possible general and abstract postulates.

As we tried to show by a concrete example in Chapter I, the difference between Narodism and Marxism lies *wholly in the character of their criticism of Russian capitalism*. The Narodnik thinks that to criticise capitalism it is sufficient to indicate the existence of exploitation, the interaction between exploitation and politics, etc. The Marxist thinks it necessary to explain and also to link together

the phenomena of exploitation as a system of certain relations in production, as a special social-economic formation, the laws of the functioning and development of which have to be studied objectively. The Narodnik thinks it sufficient, in criticising capitalism, to condemn it from the angle of his ideals, from the angle of "modern science and modern moral ideas." The Marxist thinks it necessary to trace in detail the classes that are formed in capitalist society, he considers valid only criticism made from the viewpoint of a definite class, criticism that is based on the precise formulation of the social process actually taking place and not on the ethical judgement of the "individual."

If, with this as our starting-point, we tried to formulate the tasks of criticising the economic principles of Narodism, they would be defined approximately as follows:

It must be shown that the relation between large-scale capitalism in Russia and "people's production" is the relation between a completely developed and an undeveloped phenomenon, between a higher stage of development of the capitalist social formation and a lower stage;* that the separation of the producer from the means of production and the appropriation of the product of his labour by the owner of money are to be explained, both in the factory and even in the village community, not by politics, not by distribution, but by the production relations that necessarily take shape under commodity economy, by the formation of classes with antagonistic interests which is characteristic of capitalist society;** that the reality (small production) which

* An analysis of the economic side should, of course, be supplemented by an analysis of the social, juridical, political, and ideological superstructures. The failure to understand the connection between capitalism and "people's production" gave rise among the Narodniks to the idea that the peasant Reform, state power, the intelligentsia, etc., were *non-class* in character. A materialist analysis, which reduces all these phenomena to the class struggle, must show concretely that our Russian post-Reform "social progress" has only been the result of capitalist "economic progress."

** A "reconsideration of the facts" of Russian economic realities, especially those from which the Narodniks obtain the material for their schoolgirl dreams, i.e., peasant and handicraft economy, should show that the cause of the producer's oppressed condition does not lie in distribution ("the muzhik is poor, the buyer-up is rich"), but

the Narodniks want to raise to a higher level, bypassing capitalism, already contains capitalism with its antagonism of classes and clashes between them—only the antagonism is in its worst form, a form which hampers the independent activity of the producer; and that by ignoring the social antagonisms which have already arisen and by dreaming about "different paths for the fatherland," the Narodniks become utopian reactionaries, because large-scale capitalism only develops, purges and clarifies the content of these antagonisms, which exist all over Russia.

Directly connected with the over-abstract formulation of the tasks of the economic criticism of Narodism is the author's further exposition, in which he seeks to prove the "inevitability" and "progressive character," not of Russian capitalism, but of West European. Without directly touching on the economic content of the Narodnik doctrine, this exposition contains much that is interesting and instructive. In Narodnik literature voices have been heard time and again expressing distrust towards the West-European labour movement. This was most strikingly expressed during the recent polemics of Messrs. Mikhailovsky and Co. (*Russkoye Bogatstvo*, 1893-1894) against the Marxists. We have seen no good from capitalism yet, Mr. Mikhailovsky wrote at that time.* The absurdity of these petty-bourgeois views is excellently proved by Mr. Struve's data, especially since they are drawn from the latest bour-

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in the very production relations, in the very social organisation of present-day peasant and handicraft economy. This will show that in "people's" production, too, "the problem of the organisation of production takes precedence over the problem of distribution."

* We must mention that in Mr. Struve's reply Mr. Mikhailovsky finds that Engels betrays "self-admiration" when he says that the dominating, overwhelming fact of modern times, which makes these times better than any other epoch and justifies the history of their origin, is the working-class movement in the West.

This positively atrocious reproach hurled at Engels is extremely typical of contemporary Russian Narodism.

These people can talk a lot about "people's truth," they know how to talk to our "society" and to reprove it for making a wrong selection of the path for the fatherland, they can sing sweetly about "now or never," and sing it for "ten, twenty, thirty years and more," but they are absolutely incapable of understanding the all-embracing significance of independent action by those in whose name these sweet songs have been sung.

geois literature, which can in no account be accused of exaggeration. The passages quoted by the author show that in the West everybody, even the bourgeois, realises that the transition of capitalism to a new social-economic formation is inevitable.

The socialisation of labour by capital has advanced so far that even bourgeois literature loudly proclaims the necessity of the "planned organisation of the national economy." The author is quite right when he says that this is a "sign of the times," a sign of the complete break-up of the capitalist system. He quotes extremely interesting statements by bourgeois professors and even by conservatives who are compelled to admit that which Russian radicals to this very day like to deny—the fact that the working-class movement was created by the material conditions brought into existence by capitalism and not "simply" by culture or other political conditions.

After all that has been said, it is hardly necessary for us to deal with the author's argument that distribution can make progress only if based on rational production. Clearly, the meaning of this postulate is that only large-scale capitalism based on rational production creates conditions that enable the producer to raise his head, to give thought and show concern both for himself and for those who, owing to the backward state of production, do not live in such conditions.

Just a word or two about the following sentence which occurs in Mr. Struve's book: "The extreme inequality of distribution, which retards economic progress, was not created by capitalism: capitalism inherited it" from the epoch which romantics picture as flowing with milk and honey (p, 159). That is true if all the author wanted to say was that unequal distribution existed even before capitalism, something Narodnik gentlemen are inclined to forget. But it is not true if it includes a denial that capitalism has increased this inequality. Under serfdom there was not nor could there be, that sharp inequality between the absolutely impoverished peasant or tramp, and the bank, railway, or industrial magnate, which has been created by post-Reform capitalist Russia.

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Let us pass to Chapter V. Here the author gives a general description of "Narodism as an economic philosophy." "The Narodniks," in Mr. Struve's opinion, are the "ideologists of natural economy and primitive equality" (167).

We cannot agree with this description. We shall not repeat here the arguments advanced in Chapter I, proving that the Narodniks are the ideologists of the small producer. In that chapter we showed exactly how the small producer's material conditions of life, his transitory, intermediate position between the "masters" and the "workers" lead to the Narodniks' failure to understand class antagonisms, and the queer mixture of progressive and reactionary points in their programme.

Here let us merely add that its former, i.e., progressive, side brings Narodism close to West-European democracy, and for that reason the brilliant description of democracy given over forty years ago in connection with events in French history can be applied to it in its entirety:

"The democrat, because he represents the petty bourgeoisie, that is, a *transition class*, in which the interests of two classes are simultaneously mutually blunted, imagines himself elevated above class antagonism generally. The democrats concede that a privileged class confronts them, but they, along with all the rest of the nation, form the *people*. What they represent is the *people's rights*; what interests them is the *people's interests*. Accordingly ... they do not need to examine the interests and positions of the different classes. They do not need to weigh their own resources too critically....* If in the performance their interests prove to be uninteresting and their potency *impotent*, then either the fault lies with pernicious sophists, who split the *indivisible people* into different hostile

* The Russian Narodniks are exactly the same. They do not deny that there are classes in Russia which are antagonistic to the producer, but they lull themselves with the argument that these "pirates" are insignificant compared with the "people" and refuse to make a careful study of the position and interests of the respective classes, to examine whether the interests of a certain category of producers are interwoven with the interests of the "pirate" thus weakening the former's power of resistance against the latter.

camps* ... or the whole thing has been wrecked by a detail in its execution, or else an unforeseen accident has this time spoilt the game. In any case, the democrat comes out of the most disgraceful defeat just as immaculate as he was innocent when he went into it, with the newly-won conviction that he is bound to win, not that he himself and his party have to give up the old standpoint, but, on the contrary, that conditions have to ripen to suit him" (ihm entgegenzureifen haben. *Der achtzehnte Brumaire*, *u.s.w.*, S. 39).[131]

The very examples which the author himself quotes prove that the description of the Narodniks as ideologists of natural economy and primitive equality is wrong. "As a *curiosity* it is worth mentioning," says Mr. Struve, "that to this day Mr. —on calls Vasilchikov a liberal economist" (169). If we examine the *real essence* of this designation we shall find that it is by no means curious. In his programme Vasilchikov has the demand for cheap and widespread credit. Mr. Nikolai—on cannot fail to see that in the capitalist society which Russian society is, credit will only strengthen the bourgeoisie, will lead to "the development and consolidation of capitalist relationships" (*Sketches*, p. 77). By the practical measures he proposes, Vasilchikov, like all the Narodniks, represents nothing but the interests of the petty bourgeoisie. The only thing that is curious about this is that Mr. —on, sitting as he does side by side with the *Russkoye Bogatstvo* publicists, has "to this day" not noticed that they are exactly the same type of little "liberal economists" as Prince Vasilchikov. Utopian theories easily reconcile themselves in practice with petty-bourgeois progress. This description of Narodism is still further confirmed by Golovachov, who admits that to distribute allotments to everybody is absurd and suggests that "cheap credits be provided for working folk." In criticising this "astonishing" theory, Mr. Struve calls attention to the absurdity

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* In the opinion of the Russian Narodniks the pernicious Marxists are to blame for artificially implanting capitalism and its class antagonisms in the soil in which the flowers of "social mutual adaptation" and "harmonious activity" bloom so beautifully (Mr. V. V., quoted by Struve, p. 161).

of the theory, but he appears not to have observed its petty-bourgeois content.

When speaking of Chapter V, we too cannot help dealing with Mr. Shcherbina's "law of average requirements." This is important in estimating Mr. Struve's Malthusianism, which stands out clearly in Chapter VI. The "law" is as follows: when you classify the peasants *according to allotment* you get very little fluctuation (from group to group) in the average magnitude of peasant family requirements (i.e., of expenditure on various needs); Mr. Shcherbina calculates this expenditure per head of the population.

Mr. Struve emphasises with satisfaction that this "law" is "tremendously important," since, he avers, it confirms the "well-known" law of Malthus that "the living standard and the reproduction of the population are determined by the means of subsistence they have at their disposal."

We cannot understand why Mr. Struve is so pleased with this law. We cannot understand how one can see a "law," and what is more, a "tremendously important" one, in Mr. Shcherbina's calculations. It is quite natural that where the manner of life of different peasant families does not differ very considerably we get averages that vary little if we divide the peasants into groups; particularly if, when making the division into groups, we take as the basis the size of the allotment, which is no direct index of a family's living standard (since the allotment may be leased out, or additional land may be rented) and is equally available to both the rich and the poor peasant possessing an equal number of taxable members in the family. Mr. Shcherbina's calculations merely prove that he chose a wrong method of classification. If Mr. Shcherbina thinks he has discovered some law here, it is very strange. It is equally strange to find confirmation of the law of Malthus here, as though one can judge of the "means of subsistence at the peasant's disposal" from the size of the allotment when one disregards the leasing out of land, "outside employments," the peasant's economic dependence on the landlord and the buyer-up. About this "law" of Mr. Shcherbina's (the way Mr. Shcherbina expounds this "law" indicates that the author attaches incredibly great importance to his average figures, which prove absolutely nothing) Mr. Struve says;

"'People's production' in the present case simply means production without the employment of wage labour. It is undoubted that where production is organised in that way the 'surplus-value' remains in the hands of the producer" (176). And the author points out that where labour productivity is low, this does not prevent the representative of such "people's production" living worse than the worker. The author is carried away by the Malthusian theory, and this has led him to formulate inexactly the proposition cited. Merchant's and usury *capital* subordinates labour to itself in every Russian village and—without turning the producer into a wage-worker—deprives him of as much surplus-value as industrial capital takes from the working man. Mr. Struve rightly indicated earlier on that capitalist production sets in from the moment the *capitalist* steps between the producer and the consumer, even though he buys the ready-made ware from the independent (apparently independent) producer (p. 99 and note 2), and it would be no easy job to find among the Russian "independent" producers those that do not work for a capitalist (merchant, buyer-up, kulak, etc.). One of the biggest mistakes of the Narodniks is that they do not see the very close and indissoluble tie between the capitalist organisation of Russian social economy and the absolute dominion of merchant's capital in the countryside. The author therefore is perfectly correct when he says that the "very combination of the words 'people's production' in the sense they are used by the Narodnik gentlemen does not fit in with any actual historical order. Here in Russia 'people's production' before 1861 was closely connected with serfdom, and then after 1861 there was a rapid development of commodity economy, which could not but distort the purity of people's production" (177). When the Narodnik says that the ownership of the means of production by the producer is the age-old basis of the Russian way of life, he is simply distorting history to suit his utopia, and does so by playing tricks with words: under serfdom means of production were supplied to the producer by the landlord *in order that* the producer could engage in corvée service for him; the allotment was a sort of wages in kind—the "age-old" means of appropriating the surplus product.

The abolition of serfdom did not mean the "emancipation" of the producer at all; it only meant a *change in the form* of the surplus product. While in, say, England the fall of serfdom gave rise to really independent and free peasants, our Reform immediately effected the transition from the "shameful" feudal surplus product to "free" bourgeois surplus-value.

CHAPTER IV

HOW MR. STRUVE EXPLAINS SOME FEATURES OF RUSSIA'S POST-REFORM ECONOMY

The last (sixth) chapter of Mr. Struve's book is devoted to the most important problem, that of Russia's economic development. Its theoretical contents are divided up into the following sections: 1) over-population in agricultural Russia, its character and causes; 2) the differentiation of the peasantry, its significance and causes; 3) the part played by industrial capitalism in ruining the peasantry; 4) private-landowner farming; the character of its development, and 5) the problem of markets for Russian capitalism. Before proceeding to examine Mr. Struve's line of argument on each of these problems, let us examine what he says about the peasant Reform.

The author voices his protest against the "idealistic" understanding of the Reform and points to the requirements of the state, which needed greater labour productivity, to *land redemption*, and to the pressure "from below." It is a pity the author did not make his legitimate protest a thorough one. The Narodniks explain the Reform by the development in "society" of "humane" and "emancipatory" ideas. This is an undoubted fact, but thus *to explain* the Reform means to slip into empty tautology and to reduce "emancipation" to "emancipatory" ideas. The materialist requires a special examination of the *content* of the measures effected to put those ideas into practice. History has never known a single important "reform," even though it has been of a class character, which has not had lofty words and lofty ideas advanced in its support. This is equally true of the peasant Reform. If we pay attention to the

actual content of the changes it has effected, we shall see that their character is as follows: some of the peasants were deprived of the land, and—this is the chief thing—the rest of the peasants, who retained part of their land, had to *redeem* it from the landlords, as though it was something to which they had absolutely no right, and what is more, to redeem it at an artificially high price. Not only here in Russia, but also in the West, such reforms were invested with theories about "freedom" and "equality," and it has already been shown in *Capital* that it was commodity production that provided the basis for the ideas of freedom and equality. At any rate, however complicated the bureaucratic machine that put the Reform into effect in Russia, however *apparently** distant it was from the bourgeoisie themselves, it remains an undoubted fact that only the *bourgeois system* could develop on the basis of *such* a reform. Mr. Struve is quite right in pointing out that the stock way of contrasting the peasant Reform in Russia to those in Western Europe is wrong: "it is quite wrong (*in so general a form*) to assert that in Western Europe the peasants were emancipated without the land, or, in other words, were deprived of the land by legislation" (196). I underscore the words "in so general a form," because separation of the peasants from the land by legislation was an undoubted historical fact wherever a peasant Reform was carried through, but it is not a universal fact, for in the West *part* of the peasants, when emancipated from feudal dependence, *redeemed* the land from the landlords, and are doing so in Russia. Only the bourgeoisie are capable of hiding the fact of *redemption* and of asserting that the "emancipation of the peasants with land** made a tabula rasa of Russia" (the words of a Mr. Yakovlev, "heartily welcomed" by Mr. Mikhailovsky—see p. 10 of P. Struve's work).

* Actually, as has already been indicated, this machine could only serve the bourgeoisie by virtue both of its composition and of its historical origin.

** To speak the truth one should say: make it possible for *part* of the peasants to *redeem part of their* allotment land from the landlords *at double the proper price*. And even the words "make it possible" are no good, because the peasant who refused such "provision of an allotment" was faced with the threat of a flogging at the Volost Administration offices.

I

Let us proceed to Mr. Struve's theory about the "character of over-population in agrarian Russia." This is one of the most important points in which Mr. Struve departs from the "doctrine" of Marxism for that of Malthusianism. The essence of his views, developed by him in his controversy with Mr. N.—on, is that over-population in agricultural Russia is "not capitalist, but, so to speak, simple over-population, that goes with natural economy."*

Since Mr. Struve says that his objection to Mr. N.—on "fully conforms with F. A. Lange's general objection to Marx's theory of relative over-population" (p. 183, footnote), we shall first turn to this "general objection" of Lange's and examine it.

Lange discusses Marx's law of population in his *Labour Problem*, Chapter V (Russian trans., pp. 14-78). He begins with Marx's main proposition that "every special historic mode of production has its own special laws of population, historically valid within its limits alone. An abstract law of population exists for plants and animals only."[132] Lange's comment is:

"May we be permitted to note firstly that, strictly speaking, there is no abstract law of population for plants and animals either, since abstraction is, on the whole, merely the extraction of the general from a whole number of similar phenomena" (143), and Lange explains in detail to Marx what abstraction is. Evidently, he simply did not understand the meaning of Marx's statement. In this respect Marx contrasts man to plants and animals on the grounds that the former lives in *diverse* historically successive *social organisms* which are determined by the system of social production, and, hence, distribution. The conditions for human reproduction are directly dependent on the structure of the different social organisms; that is why the law of population must be studied in relation to each organism separately, and not "abstractly," without

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* That is how it is formulated by Mr. Struve in his article in *Sozialpolitisches Centralblatt* (1893, No. 1 of October 2). He adds that he does not consider this view to be "Malthusian."

regard to the historically different forms of social structure. Lange's explanation that abstraction means to extract the general from *similar* phenomena turns right against himself: only the conditions of existence of animals and plants can be considered similar, but this is not so with regard to man, because we know that he has lived in organisationally different types of social association.

Having expounded Marx's theory of relative over-population in a capitalist country, Lange goes on to say: "At first sight it may seem that this theory breaks the lengthy thread that runs through the whole of organic nature up to man, that it explains the basis of the labour problem as though general investigations into the existence, reproduction and perfection of the human race were quite superfluous to our purpose, i.e., to an understanding of the labour problem" (154).*

The thread that runs through the whole of organic nature up to man is not at all-broken by Marx's theory, which merely requires that the "labour problem"—since it only exists as such in capitalist society—be solved not on the basis of "general investigations" into human reproduction, but on the basis of specific investigations of the laws of capitalist relations. Lange, however, is of a different opinion: "Actually, however," says he, "this is not so. Above all it is clear that factory labour from the very outset presumes *poverty*" (154). And Lange devotes a page and a half to proving this proposition, which is self-evident and does not advance us a single hair's breadth: firstly, we know that poverty is created by capitalism itself at a stage of its development prior to the factory form of production, prior to the stage at which the machines create surplus population; secondly, the form of social structure preceding capitalism—the feudal, serf system—itself created a poverty of its own, one that it handed down to capitalism.

* And what can these "general investigations" consist of? If they ignore the specific economic formations of human society, they will be mere banalities. And if they are to embrace several formations, it is obvious that they must be preceded by specific investigations of each separate formation.

"But even with such a powerful assistant [i.e., want], only in rare cases does the first employer succeed in winning over large numbers of workers to the new kind of activity. Usually what happens is the following. From the locality where factory industry has already won itself citizenship rights the employer brings with him a contingent of workers; to them he adds a few landless peasants,* who at the moment are workless, and the further supplementation of the existing factory contingent is done from among the *rising generation*" (156). Lange places the last two words in italics. Evidently, the "general investigations into the existence, reproduction and perfection of the human race" were expressed in precisely the postulate that the factory owner recruits new workers among the "rising generation," and not among decrepit old folk. The good Lange spends a whole page more (157) on these "general investigations" and tells the reader that parents try to give their children an assured existence, that the idle moralists are wrong in condemning those who try to work their way out of the condition into which they were born, that it is quite natural to try to arrange for children to earn their own living. Only after we have got over all these reflections, which may be in place in copybooks, do we get down to business:

"In an agrarian country where the soil belongs to small and big owners—provided that the tendency of voluntary birth-control has not firmly gripped the people's morals—there inevitably arises a constant surplus of hands and consumers who wish to exist on the products of the given territory" (157-58). This purely Malthusian proposition is put forward by Lange without offering any proof. He repeats it again and again and says: "In any case, even if such a country is thinly populated in the absolute sense, there are usually signs of relative over-population" and "on the market the supply of labour is *constantly in excess* and the demand insignificant" (158)—but all these

* By the way, where have these "landless peasants" come from? Very likely, Lange imagines, they are not the left-overs of the serf system, or the product of the rule of capital, but the result of the fact that "the tendency towards voluntary birth-control has not firmly gripped the people's morals" (p. 157)?

assertions are totally unsupported. Whence does it follow that a "surplus of workers" was really "inevitable"? Whence does the connection arise between this surplus and the absence in the people's morals of a tendency to voluntary birth-control? Ought he not, before arguing about the "people's morals," to take a glance at the production relations in which the people live? Let us imagine, for example, that the small and big proprietors to whom Lange refers were connected in the production of material values as follows: the small proprietors received allotments from the big landowners on which they could exist, and in return engaged in corvée service for the big landowners, cultivating their fields. Let us imagine, further, that these relations have been shattered, that humane ideas have turned the heads of the big proprietors to such an extent that they have "emancipated their peasants with land," i.e., have cut off approximately 20% of the allotment land of the peasants, and compelled them to pay for the remaining 80% a purchase price that has been raised 100%. Naturally, with such a guarantee against the "ulcer of the proletariat" the peasants still have to continue working for the big proprietors in order to exist, although they do not now work on the instructions of the feudal steward, as formerly, but on the basis of free contract—hence they snatch the work out of one another's hands, since they are no longer bound together, and each one farms on his own account. This way of snatching up work inevitably forces some peasants out: because their allotments have grown smaller and their payments bigger, they have become weaker in relation to the landlord, and so competition among them increases the rate of surplus product, and the landlord can manage with a smaller number of peasants. However much the tendency to voluntary birth-control becomes entrenched in the people's morals, the formation of a "surplus" is inevitable. Lange's line of argument, which ignores social-economic relations, merely serves as striking proof that his methods are useless. And apart from such arguments he gives us nothing new. He says that the factory owners willingly transfer industry into the depths of the countryside, because there "*the requisite amount of child labour is always ready to hand for any undertaking*" (161), without inves-

tigating what history, what mode of social production has created this "readiness" on the part of parents to place their children in bondage. The methods he uses are most clearly seen from the following of his arguments: he quotes Marx, who says that machine industry, by enabling capital to buy female and child labour, makes the worker a "slave-dealer."

"So that's what he's getting at?" cries Lange triumphantly. "But is it to be expected that the worker, whom want forces to sell his own labour-power, would so lightly sell his wife and children, if he were not impelled to take this step by want, on the one hand, and by temptation, on the other?" (163).

The good Lange has carried his zeal to the point of defending the worker against Marx, to whom he proves that the worker is "prompted by want."

... "And what, indeed, is this ever-growing want but the metamorphosis of the struggle for existence?" (163).

Such are the discoveries resulting from "general investigations into the existence, reproduction and perfection of the human race"! Do we learn anything at all about the causes of "want," about its political-economic content and course of development if we are told that it is the metamorphosis of the struggle for existence? Why, that can be said about anything you like—about the relation of the worker to the capitalist, the landowner to the factory owner and to the peasant serf, etc., etc. We get nothing but such vapid banalities or naïveties from Lange's attempt to correct Marx. Let us now see what Lange's follower, Mr. Struve, gives us in support of this correction, in discussing the specific problem of over-population in agrarian Russia.

Commodity production, begins Mr. Struve, increases the capacity of the home market. "Exchange exerts such an effect not only by the complete technical and economic reorganisation of production, but also in those cases where the technique of production remains at the former level, and natural economy retains its former dominant role in the general economy of the population. In that case, however, 'over-population' inevitably sets in after a brief revival; but if commodity production is to blame, it is only: 1) as the *exciter*, 2) as the complicating factor" (182). Over-pop-

ulation would set in without commodity economy: it is non-capitalist in character.

Such are the propositions advanced by the author. From the very outset one is struck with the fact that these propositions are just as unsubstantiated as those of Lange. The assertion is made that over-population is inevitable under natural economy, but no explanation is given of exactly what process gives rise to it. Let us turn to the facts in which the author finds confirmation of his views.

The data for 1762-1846 show that the population in general did not multiply so rapidly, the annual increase being from 1.07 to 1.5%. What is more, the increase was more rapid, according to Arsenyev, in the "grain-growing" gubernias. This "fact," concludes Mr. Struve, "is highly characteristic of the primitive forms of people's economy, where reproduction is directly dependent on natural fertility, a dependence which one can feel with one's hands, so to speak." This is the action of "the law of the correlation of the growth of the population with the means of subsistence" (185). "The wider the expanse of territory, and the higher the natural fertility of the soil, the greater is the natural growth of the population" (186). The quite unsubstantiated conclusion drawn is the following: the one fact that in the central gubernias of European Russia the growth of the population between 1790 and 1846 was smallest in Vladimir and Kaluga gubernias is made the basis for a whole law correlating the growth of the population with the means of subsistence. But can one judge of the population's means of subsistence from the "expanse of territory"? (Even if we were to admit that such few data enable us to draw general conclusions.) The "population," after all, did not divert to their own use the products of the "natural fertility" they had secured: they shared them with the landlords, with the state. Is it not clear that the different types of landlord farming—quitrent or corvée, the size of tributes and the methods of exacting them, etc.—exerted a far greater influence on the amount of "means of subsistence" available to the population than the expanse of territory, which was not in the exclusive and free possession of the producers? More than that. Irrespective of the social relations that were expressed in serfdom, the popu-

lation was bound together, even then, by exchange: "The separation of manufacturing industry from agriculture," rightly says the author, "i.e., the social, national division of labour, existed in the pre-Reform period, too" (189). The question, then, arises why should we presume that the marsh-dwelling Vladimir handicraftsman or cattle-dealer had a less abundant supply of "means of subsistence" than the rude tiller of Tambov with all his "natural fertility of the soil"?

Then Mr. Struve cites data about the decline in the serf population before the emancipation. The economists whose opinion he quotes attribute this to a "decline in living standards" (189). The author concludes:

"We have stopped to deal with the fact of the decline in the serf population before the emancipation, because, in our view, it throws clear light on the economic situation in Russia at that time. A considerable part of the country had ... the maximum population for the given technical-economic and social-juridical conditions: the latter were very unfavourable for any rapid increase as far as almost 40% of the population was concerned" (189). What has the Malthusian "law" of the correlation of population increase and means of subsistence to do with the matter, when the feudal social order directed these means of subsistence into the possession of a handful of big landowners, and passed over the mass of the population, the growth of which is under investigation? Can any value be attached, for example, to the author's argument that the growth in population was smallest either in the less-fertile gubernias where industry was poorly developed, or in the thickly populated and purely agricultural gubernias? Mr. Struve wishes to see in this a manifestation of "non-capitalist over-population," which was bound to have set in even without commodity economy, and which "corresponds to natural economy." But one might say with equal, if not greater, justice that this over-population corresponded to feudal economy, that the slow increase in the population was due most of all to the increased exploitation of peasant labour that resulted from the growth of commodity production on the landlords' farms, when they began using corvée labour to produce grain *for sale*, and not merely for their own needs, The author's

examples tell against him: they tell of the impossibility of constructing an abstract law of population, according to the formula about correlation of growth and the means of subsistence, while ignoring historically specific systems of social relations and the stages of their development.

Passing to the post-Reform period, Mr. Struve says: "In the history of the population following the collapse of serfdom we see the same basic feature as before the emancipation. The dynamics of population increase are directly dependent on the expanse of territory and the land allotment" (198). This is proved by a small table, which groups the peasants according to size of allotment, and shows that the greater the size of the allotment, the greater the increase in population. "*And it cannot be otherwise under natural*, 'self-consumer' ... economy that serves primarily to satisfy the direct needs of the producer himself" (199).

Truly, *if this were so*, if the allotments served primarily to satisfy the direct needs of the producer, if they were the only source of satisfying these needs, one could then, and only then, evolve a general law of population increase from these data. But we know that this is not the case. The allotments serve "primarily" to satisfy the needs of the landlords and the state: they are taken away from their owners, if these "needs" are not satisfied on time; payments are levied on the allotment in excess of the peasants' paying capacity. Further, they are not the peasants' only resources. A farming deficit—says the author—is bound to be reflected preventively and repressively on the population. Furthermore, outside employments, by diverting the adult male population, retard reproduction (199). But if the deficit from allotment farming is covered by renting land or by outside earnings, the peasant's means of subsistence may prove to be adequate enough for "energetic reproduction." Undoubtedly, such a favourable turn of events may be the lot of only a minority of the peasants, but, where no special examination is made of production relations existing within the peasantry, there is nothing to show that this growth proceeds evenly, that it is not called forth mainly by the prosperity of the minority. Finally, the author himself makes natural economy a condition of the demonstrability of his thesis, whereas after the Reform, on his own

admission, commodity production penetrated in a broad stream into the hitherto existing life. The author's data are obviously quite inadequate *for establishing a general law of reproduction*. More, the abstract "simplicity" of this law which presumes that the means of production in the society under review "serve primarily to satisfy the direct needs of the producer himself" gives absolutely wrong, and totally unsupported, treatment of highly complicated facts. For example, after the emancipation—says Mr. Struve—it was to the landlords' advantage to lease their land to the peasants. "Thus, the food area available to the peasantry, i.e., their means of subsistence, has increased" (200). To assign the whole of the rented land in this forthright way to the category of "food area" is quite unfounded and wrong. The author himself points out that the landlords appropriated the lion's share of the produce raised on their land (200), so that it is still a question whether such renting of land (on a labour-service basis, for example) has not worsened the conditions of the tenants, whether it has not placed obligations on them that have led, in the final analysis, to the food area declining. Further, the author himself points out that the renting of land is only within the capacity of the prosperous (216) peasants, in whose hands it serves as a means of expanding commodity farming rather than consolidating "self-consumer" farming. Even if it were proven that generally speaking the renting of land improved the position of the "peasantry," of what importance could that be when, to use the words of the author himself, the peasant poor have been ruined by renting land (216)—i. e., improvement for some meant worsening for others? Evidently in the peasant renting of land the old, feudal and the new, capitalist relationships intertwine; the author's abstract reasoning, which takes no account of either the one or the other, confuses matters instead of helping to achieve clarity about these relationships.

There remains one more reference by the author to data supposedly confirming his views. It is where he says that "the old word *land-poverty* is merely the term commonly used to express what science calls over-population" (186). The author thus based himself, as it were, on the whole of our Narodnik literature, which established the fact beyond doubt

that the peasant allotments were "inadequate," and which "fortified" thousands of times over their desire for the "expansion of peasant land tenure" with the "simple" argument: the population has increased; the allotments have been split up—naturally, the peasants are being ruined. However, this hackneyed Narodnik argument about "land-poverty" can hardly be of any scientific* value, it can hardly be of use for anything but "loyal speeches" in a commission dealing with the painless advance of the fatherland along the right road. In this argument the wood cannot be seen for the trees, the basic social-economic background of the picture cannot be seen for the outer contours of the object. The fact of a huge mass of land belonging to members of the "old-nobility" system, on the one hand, and the acquisition of land by purchase, on the other—such is the basic background under which every "expansion of land tenure" will be a miserable palliative. Both the Narodnik arguments about land-poverty, and the Malthusian "laws" about population increase being correlated to the means of subsistence are at fault in their abstract "simplicity," which ignores the given, specific social-economic relations.

This review of Mr. Struve's arguments leads us to the conclusion that his thesis—over-population in agrarian Russia is to be explained by reproduction not being correlated to the means of subsistence—is absolutely unproved. He concludes his arguments as follows: "And so, we are faced with a picture of natural-economic over-population complicated by commodity-economic factors and other important features inherited from the social structure of the feudal-epoch" (200). Of course, one can say that any economic phenomenon in a country undergoing a transition from "natural" to "commodity" economy is a "natural-economic" phenomenon complicated by "commodity-economic factors." The opposite can also be said: "a commodity-economic" phenomenon "complicated by natural-economic factors,"—but all this, far from giving a "picture," cannot give even

* That is to say, this argument is of no use whatever as an *explanation* of the ruin of the peasantry and of over-population, though the very fact of "insufficiency" is beyond argument, just as is its accentuation as a result of the growth of the population. What is needed is not a statement of the fact, but an explanation of its origin,

the slightest idea of *exactly how* over-population is created on the basis of the *given social-economic relations*. The author's final conclusion against Mr. N.—on and his theory of capitalist over-population in Russia reads: "Our peasants produce insufficient food" (237).

The peasants' agricultural work continues to this day to yield produce that goes to the landlords, who, through the medium of the state, receive redemption payments; peasant production serves as a constant object of merchant's and usury *capital* operations, depriving vast masses of the peasantry of a considerable part of their produce; finally, among the "peasantry" itself this production is distributed in so complicated a fashion that the general and average gain (renting) turns out to be a loss for the masses, and Mr. Struve cuts all this network of social relations, like a Gordian knot, with the abstract and totally unsupported solution: "production is insufficient." But no, this theory will not hold water at all: it merely encumbers that which is to be investigated, namely, production relations in peasant agricultural economy. The Malthusian theory pictures matters as though we are confronted by a tabula rasa, and not by feudal and bourgeois relations interwoven in the contemporary organisation of Russian peasant economy.

It goes without saying that we cannot be satisfied with merely criticising Mr. Struve's views. We must in addition ask ourselves the questions: what is the basis of his mistakes? And who of the contending parties (Mr. N.—on and Mr. Struve) is right in his explanation of over-population?

Mr. N.—on bases his explanation of over-population on the fact of masses of workers being "freed" because of the capitalisation of the peasant industries. And he merely cites data relating to the growth of large-scale factory industry, and disregards the parallel fact of the growth of handicraft industries, which expresses the deepening of the social division of labour.* He transfers his expla-

* It is a known fact that our handicraft industries have grown and that a mass of new ones have appeared since the Reform. The theoretical explanation of this fact and of the capitalisation of other peasant industries is also known it was given by Marx to explain the creation of the home market for industrial capital" [*Das Kapital*, 2. Aufl., S. 776 u. ff.].[133]

nation to agriculture, without even attempting to give an exact description of its social-economic organisation and the *degree of its development*.

Mr. Struve indicates in reply that "capitalist over-population in Marx's sense is closely connected with technical progress" (183), and since he, together with Mr.—on, finds that the "technique" of peasant "farming has made practically no progress" (200), he refuses to recognise the over-population in agricultural Russia to be capitalist, and seeks for other explanations.

Mr. Struve's remarks in reply to Mr. N.—on are correct. Capitalist over-population is due to *capital* taking possession of production; by reducing the number of necessary workers (necessary for the production of a given quantity of products) it creates a surplus population. Marx, speaking of capitalist over-population in agriculture, says the following:

"As soon as capitalist production takes possession of agriculture, and in proportion to the extent to which it does so, the demand for an agricultural labouring population falls absolutely, while the accumulation of the capital employed in agriculture advances, without this repulsion being, as in non-agricultural industries, compensated by a greater attraction. Part of the agricultural population is therefore constantly on the point of passing over into an urban, or manufacturing proletariat....* (Manufacture is used here in the sense of all non-agricultural industries.) This source of relative surplus population is thus constantly flowing. But the constant flow towards the towns presupposes, in the country itself, a constant latent surplus population, the extent of which becomes evident only when its channels of outlet open to exceptional width. The agricultural labourer is therefore reduced to the minimum of wages, and always stands with one foot already in the swamp of pauperism" (*Das Kapital*, 2 Aufl. S. 668).[134]

* Incidentally. Observation of this fact very likely gave Lange an excuse to concoct an amendment to Marx's theory, which he did not fully understand. When analysing this fact he should have made his starting-point the given (capitalist) mode of social production and followed its manifestation in agriculture; instead he took it into his head to invent all sorts of peculiarities in the "people's morals."

Mr. N.—on *did not prove* the capitalist character of over-population in agrarian Russia, because he did not connect it with capitalism in agriculture: confining himself to a cursory and incomplete reference to the capitalist evolution of private-landowner farming, he completely overlooked the bourgeois features of the organisation of peasant farming. Mr. Struve should have corrected this unsatisfactory feature of Mr. N.—on's exposition, which is of very great importance, for ignoring capitalism in agriculture, its domination, and at the same time its still weak development, naturally led to the theory of the absence or the contraction of the home market. Instead of reducing Mr. N.—on's theory to the concrete data of our agricultural capitalism, Mr. Struve fell into another error—he denied the capitalist character of over-population completely.

The invasion of agriculture by *capital* is characteristic of the entire history of the post-Reform period. The landlords went over (whether slowly or quickly is another matter) to hired labour, which became very widespread and even determined the character of the major part of peasant earnings; they introduced technical improvements and brought machines into use. Even the dying feudal system of economy—the provision of land to the peasants in return for labour service—underwent a bourgeois transformation due to competition among the peasants; this led to a worsening of the position of tenants, to severer conditions,* and, consequently, to a decline in the number of workers. In peasant economy the splitting up of the peasantry into a village bourgeoisie and proletariat was quite clearly revealed. The "rich" extended their tillage, improved their farms [cf. V. V., *Progressive Trends in Peasant Farming*] and were compelled to resort to wage-labour. All these are long established, generally recognised facts which (as we shall see in a moment) are referred to by Mr. Struve himself. Let us take as a further example the following

* See, for example, Karyshev (*Results of Zemstvo Statistical Investigations*, Vol. II, p. 266)—reference in the Rostov-on-Don Uyezd Abstract to the gradual reduction in the peasant's share in *skopshchina*.[135] Ibid. Chapter V, § 9—additional payments made in the form of labour by peasants engaged in share-cropping.

case, a usual one in the Russian village: a "kulak" has wrested the best slice of allotment land from the "village community," or more exactly, community members of the proletarian type, and is farming it with the labour and the implements of the very same "allotment-provided" peasants who have become enmeshed in debts and obligations and are tied to their benefactor—for social mutual adaptation and common action—by the strength of the community principles beloved of the Narodniks. His farm is better run, of course, than those of the ruined peasants, and far fewer workers are required than when this slice of land was held by several small peasant farmers. No Narodnik can deny that these are not isolated but common facts. Their theories are exceptionalist only in their refusal to call facts by their real name, in their refusal to see that these facts signify the *domination of capital in agriculture*. They forget that the initial form of *capital* has always and everywhere been merchant's, money capital, that capital always takes the technical process of production as it finds it, and only subsequently subjects it to technical transformation. They therefore do not see that by "upholding" (in words, of course—no more than that) the contemporary agricultural order against "oncoming" (?!) capitalism, they are merely upholding *medieval* forms of capital against the onslaught of its latest, purely bourgeois forms.

Thus, one cannot deny the capitalist character of overpopulation in Russia, just as one cannot deny the domination of capital in agriculture. But it is quite ridiculous, of course, to ignore the *degree of the development of capital*, as Mr. N.—on does; in his enthusiasm he presents it as almost completed and for that reason concocts a theory about the contraction or the absence of the home market, whereas actually, though capital is dominant, it is in a relatively very undeveloped form; there are still many intermediate phases before it reaches full development, before the producer is completely divorced from the means of production, and every step forward by agricultural capitalism means a *growth* of the home market, which, according to Marx's theory, is created precisely by agricultural capitalism—and which in Russia is not contracting, but, on the contrary, is taking shape and developing.

Further, we see from this albeit very general description of our agricultural capitalism* that it does not embrace *all* social-economic relations in the countryside. Alongside of it we still see feudal relations—in both the economic sphere (e.g., the leasing of cut-off lands in return for labour service and payments in kind—here you have all the features of feudal economy: the natural "exchange of services" between the producer and the owner of the means of production, and the exploitation of the producer by *tying* him to the land, and not separating him from the means of production), and still more in the social and the juridical-political sphere (compulsory "provision of allotment," *tying* to the land, i.e., absence of freedom of movement, payment of redemption money, i.e., the same quitrent paid to the landlord, subordination to the privileged landowners in the courts and administration, etc.); these relations also undoubtedly lead to the ruin of the peasants and to unemployment, an "over-population" of farm labourers tied to the land. The capitalist basis of contemporary relations should not hide these still powerful relics of the "old-nobility" stratum which have *not yet been destroyed* by capitalism precisely because it is undeveloped. The undeveloped condition of capitalism, "Russia's backwardness," considered by the Narodniks to be "good fortune,"** is only "good fortune" for the titled exploiters. Contemporary "over-population," consequently, contains feudal in addition to its basic capitalist features.

If we compare this latter thesis with Mr. Struve's thesis that "over-population" contains natural-economic features and commodity-economic features, we shall see that the former do not rule out the latter, but, on the contrary, are included in them: serfdom relates to "natural-economic," and capitalism to "commodity-economic" phenomena. Mr. Struve's thesis, on the one hand, does not exactly indicate precisely which *relations* are natural-economic and which commodity-economic, and, on the other hand, leads us back to the unfounded and meaningless "laws" of Malthus.

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* It will be dealt with in greater detail further on, taking the peasants and the landlords separately.

** Mr. Yuzhakov in *Russkoye Bogatstvo*.

These defects naturally gave rise to the unsatisfactory character of the following passage. "In what way," asks the author, "on what basis *can* our national economy be reorganised?" (202) A strange question, formulated again in a very professorial style, precisely as Messrs. the Narodniks are accustomed to put questions when they proclaim the unsatisfactory character of the present situation and select the best paths for the fatherland. "Our national economy" is a capitalist economy, the organisation and "reorganisation" of which is determined by the bourgeoisie, who "manage" this economy. Instead of the question of possible reorganisation, what should have been put is the question of the successive stages of the development of this bourgeois economy; and it should have been put from the viewpoint of precisely that theory in whose name the author so splendidly replies to Mr. V. V., who describes Mr. N.—on as an "undoubted Marxist," that this "undoubted Marxist" has no idea of the class struggle and of the class origin of the state. Had the author altered the manner of posing the question in the sense indicated it would have saved him from the confused arguments about the "peasantry" that we read on pages 202-04.

The author begins with the statement that the peasantry have insufficient allotment land, that even if they cover this insufficiency by renting land, "a considerable part of them" nevertheless *always* have a deficit; one cannot talk of the peasantry as a whole, for that means to talk of a fiction* (p. 203). And the conclusion directly drawn from this is:

"In any case, insufficient production is the *basic and dominating* fact of our national economy" (p. 204). This is quite unfounded and totally unconnected with what was said earlier: why is not the fact that the peasantry as one whole is a fiction, because antagonistic classes are taking shape within it, made the "basic and dominating fact"? The author draws his conclusion without any data, without any analysis of the facts relating to "insufficient production" [which, however, does not prevent a minority from becoming affluent at the expense of the majority], or to the splitting up

* "The main defect of Mr. Golubev's arguments in his fine articles is that he cannot rid himself of this fiction" (203).

of the peasantry—simply due to some prejudice in favour of Malthusianism. "Therefore," he continues, "an increase in the productivity of agricultural labour is a plain benefit and blessing to the Russian peasantry" (204). We are at a loss: the author has only just advanced against the Narodniks the serious (and to the highest degree legitimate) accusation of arguing about a "fiction"—the "peasantry" in general—and now he himself introduces this fiction into his analysis! If the relations within the ranks of this "peasantry" are such that a minority become "economically strong," while the majority become proletarians, if a minority expand their landownership and wax rich, while the majority always have a deficit and become ruined, how can one speak of the process in general being a "benefit and blessing"? Very likely the author wanted to say that the process is of benefit to both the one and the other section of the peasantry. But then, firstly, he should have examined the position of each group and have investigated it separately, and, secondly, in view of the antagonism existing between the groups he should have definitely established from *which* group's viewpoint reference is made to the "benefit and blessing." This example goes to confirm over and over again the unsatisfactory and incomplete character of Mr. Struve's objectivism.

Since Mr. N.—on holds an opposite view on this subject and asserts that an "increase in the productivity of agricultural labour* cannot serve to raise the national well-being if the goods are produced as commodities" (*Sketches*, p. 266), Mr. Struve now proceeds to refute this opinion.

Firstly, he says, the peasant who has been hit by the full weight of the contemporary crisis, produces grain for his own consumption; he does not sell grain, but buys extra supplies of it. For such peasants—and they constitute as much as 50% (one-horse and horseless) and certainly not less than 25% (horseless)—increased labour productivity is at any rate beneficial, despite the drop in the price of grain.

Yes, of course, an increase in productivity would be beneficial to such a peasant, if he could retain his farm and

* "However desirable and necessary" it "may be," adds Mr. N.—on.

raise it to a higher level. But the trouble is that the one-horse and horseless peasants do not enjoy these conditions. They are not able to retain their present farms, with their primitive implements, careless cultivation of the soil, etc., let alone improve their farming technique. Technical improvement is the result of the growth of commodity economy. And if, at the present stage of the development of commodity economy, even those peasants who have to buy extra supplies for themselves find it necessary to sell grain, then, at the following stage, such sales will be still more essential (the author himself recognises the need for a transition from natural to commodity economy), and the competition of peasants who have improved their farming methods will inevitably and immediately expropriate proletarians who are tied to the land and turn them into proletarians who are as free as birds. I have no wish to say that such a change will be of no benefit *to them*. On the contrary, once the producer has fallen into the clutches of capital—and this is an undoubtedly accomplished fact as regards the group of the peasantry under examination—complete freedom, which enables him to change masters, and gives him a free hand, is very much of "a benefit and a blessing" to him. But the controversy between Messrs. Struve and N.—on is not at all conducted around *such* considerations.

Secondly, continues Mr. Struve, Mr. N.—on "forgets that an increase in the productivity of agricultural labour is only possible by effecting changes in the *technique* and in the *system* of farming or crop growing" (206). Certainly, Mr. N.—on forgets that, but this consideration merely strengthens the thesis of the inevitability of the total expropriation of the economically weak peasants, the "proletarian type" of peasants. To effect technical improvements money resources must be available, but these peasants do not even possess enough food resources.

Thirdly, concludes the author, Mr. N.—on is wrong in asserting that a rise in the productivity of agricultural labour will compel competitors to lower prices. For such a price reduction—Mr. Struve rightly remarks—it is necessary that the productivity of our agricultural labour should not only catch up with that of Western Europe

[in that case we shall sell produce at the level of socially necessary labour], but even outstrip it. That objection is quite a sound one, but it tells us nothing whatever about which particular section of the "peasantry" will benefit from this technical improvement and why.

"In general, Mr. N.—on has no reason to fear an increase in the productivity of agricultural labour" (207). He does so, in Mr. Struve's view, because he cannot imagine agricultural progress except as the progress of extensive agriculture, accompanied by the ever-increasing elimination of workers by machines.

The author very aptly describes Mr. N.—on's attitude to the growth of agricultural technique with the word "fear"; he is quite right in saying that this fear is absurd. But his line of argument does not, we think, touch the basic error of Mr. N.—on.

While Mr. N.—on apparently adheres to the strict letter of the doctrine of Marxism, he none the less draws a sharp distinction between the capitalist evolution of agriculture and the evolution of manufacturing industry in capitalist society, the distinction being that he recognises the progressive work of capitalism with regard to the latter—the socialisation of labour—and does not do so with regard to the former. That is why he "does not fear" an increase in the productivity of labour with regard to manufacturing industry, but "does fear" it as regards agriculture, *although the social-economic aspect of the matter and the reflection of this process on the different classes of society are exactly the same in both cases*.... Marx expressed this point very strikingly in the following remark: "Philanthropic English economists like Mill, Rogers, Goldwin Smith, Fawcett, etc., and liberal manufacturers like John Bright and Co., ask the English landed proprietors, as God asked Cain after Abel, where are our thousands of freeholders gone? But where do *you* come from, then? From the destruction of those freeholders. Why don't you ask further, where are the independent weavers, spinners, and artisans gone?" (*Das Kapital*, I, S. 780, Anm. 237.)[136] The last sentence clearly identifies the fate of the small producers in agriculture with the fate of those in manufacturing industry, and emphasises the formation of the classes of bourgeois society

in both cases.* Mr. N.—on's chief error lies precisely in the fact that he ignores these classes, their formation among our peasantry, and does not set himself the aim of following, with the utmost precision, every successive stage in the development of the antithesis between those classes.

But Mr. Struve deals wish the problem quite differently. Far from correcting the error of Mr. N.—on that we have mentioned, he *himself repeats it*, arguing from the viewpoint of a professor standing *above* classes about the "benefit" of progress to the "peasantry." This attempt to rise above classes leads the author to extreme haziness in stating his points, a haziness so great that the following bourgeois conclusions may be drawn from them: in opposition to the undoubtedly correct thesis that capitalism in agriculture (as capitalism in industry) worsens the conditions of the producer, he advances the thesis of the "benefit" of these changes *in general*. This is the same as if someone were to argue about machines in bourgeois society and refute the romantic economist's theory that they worsen the conditions of the working people by proofs of the "benefit and blessing" of progress in general.

In reply to Mr. Struve's view the Narodnik will very likely say: what Mr. N.—on fears is not increased productivity of labour, but bourgeoisdom.

There is no doubt that technical progress in agriculture under our capitalist system is connected with bourgeoisdom, but the "fear" displayed by the Narodniks is, of course, quite absurd. Bourgeoisdom is a fact of actual life, labour is subordinated to capital in agriculture too, and what is to be "feared" is not bourgeoisdom, but the producer's lack of consciousness of this bourgeoisdom, his inability to defend his interests against it. That is why it is not the retardation of the development of capitalism that is to be desired, but on the contrary, its full development, its thorough development.

To show with as great detail and precision as possible the basis of the error committed by Mr. Struve in treating agriculture in capitalist society, let us try to depict (in

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* See particularly § 4 of Chapter XXIV: "Genesis of the Capitalist Farmer." Pp. 773-76.[137]

the most general outline) the process of the formation of classes together with the technical changes that gave grounds for the argument. In this connection Mr. Struve distinguishes strictly extensive agriculture and intensive, seeing the root of Mr. N.—on's misapprehensions in his refusal to recognise anything but extensive agriculture. We shall endeavour to prove that Mr. N.—on's *chief* error lies not in this, and that as agriculture becomes intensive the formation of the classes of bourgeois society is essentially identical with that taking place as extensive agriculture develops.

There is no need to say much about extensive agriculture, because Mr. Struve also admits that here the "peasantry" are ousted by the bourgeoisie. Let us merely note two points. Firstly, technical progress is evoked by commodity economy; to bring it about the proprietor must have free, surplus *monetary* resources [surplus in relation to his consumption and the reproduction of his means of production]. Where can these resources be got? Obviously from no other source than the conversion of the cycle: commodity—money commodity into the cycle: money—commodity—money with a surplus. In other words, these resources can be got exclusively from capital, *from merchant's and usury capital*, from the same "welshers, kulaks, merchants," etc., whom the naïve Russian Narodniks assign *not* to capitalism *but* to ''rapacity'' (as though capitalism is not rapacity! as though Russian reality does not show us the interconnection of all possible varieties of this "rapacity"—from the most primitive and primeval kulakdom to the very latest, rational enterprise!)* Secondly, let us note Mr. N.—on's strange

* Messrs. the Narodniks have another, very profound, method of covering up the roots of our industrial capitalism in "people's production," i.e., in "people's" usury and kulakdom. The kulak takes his "savings" to the state bank, his deposits enable the bank, by basing itself on the growth of the people's wealth, people's savings, people's enterprise people's solvency, to borrow money from the Englishman. The "state" directs the borrowed money to the aid of ... —what a short-sighted policy! what deplorable ignoring of "modern science" and "modern moral ideas"!—... *the capitalists*. The question now arises: is it not clear that if the state directed this money (of the capitalists) not to capitalism but to "people's production," — we here in Russia would have not capitalism but "people's production"!

attitude to this question. In the second note to page 233 he refutes V. Y. Postnikov, author of *Peasant Farming in South Russia*, who points out that machines have exactly doubled the working area of the peasant household, from 10 to 20 dessiatines per worker, and that for that reason the cause of "Russia's poverty" is "the small size of the peasant farm." In other words, technical progress in bourgeois society leads to the expropriation of the small and backward farms. Mr. N.—on objects: tomorrow technique may raise the working area three times over. Then the 60-dessiatine farms will have to be turned into 200- and 300-dessiatine farms. Such an argument against the thesis of our agriculture being bourgeois is as ridiculous as somebody setting out to prove the weakness and impotence of factory capitalism on the grounds that the steam-engine of today will have to be replaced "tomorrow" by the electric motor. "Nor is it known where the millions of released labourers get to"—adds Mr. N.—on, who sets himself up as judge of the bourgeoisie and forgets that the producer himself is the only one to judge them. The formation of a reserve army of unemployed is just as necessary a result of the use of machinery in bourgeois agriculture as in bourgeois industry.

And so, with regard to the development of extensive agriculture there is no doubt that technical progress under commodity economy leads to the transformation of the "peasant" into a capitalist farmer, on the one hand (understanding by farmer the entrepreneur, the capitalist in agriculture), and a farm labourer or day labourer, on the other. Let us now examine the case where extensive agriculture becomes intensive. It is from this process that Mr. Struve expects "benefit" for the "peasant." To prevent any argument about the suitability of the material we are using to describe this transition, let us make use of Mr. A. I. Skvortsov's* *The Influence of Steam Transport on*

* It is customary in our literature to regard him as a Marxist. There is just as little grounds for that as there is for placing Mr. N.—on among the Marxists. Mr. A. Skvortsov is also unacquainted with the theory of the class struggle and the class character of the state. His practical proposals in his *Economic Studies* are no different from ordinary bourgeois proposals. He takes a far more sober view of Rus-

Agriculture, who has earned such boundless praise from Mr. Struve.

In Chapter 3 of the fourth section of his book, Mr. A. Skvortsov examines the "change in agricultural technique under the influence of steam transport" in countries employing extensive and intensive farming. Let us take his description of this change in the *thickly-populated extensive countries*. One might think that central European Russia would fit into that category. Mr. Skvortsov foresees for such a country the changes that, in Mr. Struve's opinion, will inevitably take place in Russia too, namely, transformation into a country of intensive agriculture with developed factory production.

Let us follow Mr. A. Skvortsov (§§ 4-7, pp. 440-51).

A country of extensive* agriculture. A very considerable part of the population is engaged in agriculture. Uniformity of occupation leads to the absence of a market. The population is poor, firstly, because of the small size of the farms and, secondly, because of the absence of exchange: "requirements other than food, which is raised by the agriculturist himself, are satisfied exclusively, it can he said, by the products of primitive artisan establishments, known as handicraft industry in Russia."

The building of a railway raises the price of agricultural produce and, consequently, increases the purchasing power of the population. "Together with the railway the country is flooded with the cheap products of the manufactories and mills," which ruin the local handicraftsmen. This is the first cause of the "collapse of many farms."

The second cause of the collapse is crop failures. "Agriculture has also been conducted hitherto in a primitive

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sian reality than Messrs. the Narodniks do, but then on those grounds *alone* B. Chicherin and many others should also be regarded as Marxists.

* Mr. A. Skvortsov points out that by a country employing extensive agriculture a thinly-populated one is usually understood (footnote to page 439). He considers this a wrong definition and gives the following as the features of extensive farming: 1) considerable harvest fluctuations, 2) homogeneity of crops and 3) absence of home markets, i.e., of big towns where manufacturing industry is concentrated.

fashion, i.e., always in an irrational way and, consequently, harvest failures are no rare occurrence, but with the building of the railway line the rise in the price of the product, that formerly resulted from crop failure, either does not take place at all or in any case is considerably smaller. That is why the natural consequence of the very first crop failure is usually the collapse of many farms. The smaller the surpluses left from normal harvests and the more the population have had to count on earnings from handicraft industries, the more rapidly the collapse occurs."

In order to manage without handicraft industries and to guarantee oneself against crop failures by going over to intensive (rational) agriculture, the following are necessary: firstly, big monetary surpluses (from the sale of agricultural produce at higher prices), and, secondly, the intellectual force of the population, without which no increased rationality and intensity is possible. The mass of the population do not, of course, enjoy these conditions: they apply to a minority only.*

"The surplus population thus formed" [i.e., as a result of the "liquidation" of many farms ruined by the failure of handicraft industries and by the greater demands on agriculture] "will partly be swallowed up by the farms that emerge from this situation more happily and that are able to increase the intensity of production" (i.e., of course they will be "swallowed up" as wage-workers, farm labourers and day labourers. Mr. A. Skvortsov does not say that, maybe because he considers it too obvious). A great expenditure of human energy will be required, since the proximity of the market brought about by improved communications makes it possible to raise perishable produce, and "the latter, in most cases, entails a considerable expenditure of manpower." "Usually, however," continues Mr. Skvortsov, "the process of destruction proceeds much more rapidly than the process of improving the surviving farms, and part of the ruined peasants have to move, at least to the towns, if not right out of the country. It is this part that has con-

* "For such a country (with a population dense for the given level of economic efficiency) we must assume that on the one hand small surpluses, and, on the other, the population's low educational level force many farms into liquidation under the changed conditions" (442).

stituted the main contingent added to the population of European cities since the railways were built."

Further. "Surplus population means cheap hands." "The soil being fertile (and the climate favourable ...) all the conditions are created for the cultivation of plants and in general of raising agricultural produce that requires a large expenditure of labour-power per land unit" (443), especially since the small size of the farms ("although they will perhaps increase as compared with their former size") makes the introduction of machines difficult. "In addition to this, fixed capital will not remain unchanged, and first and foremost it is farm implements that will change their character." And apart from machines "the need for better cultivation of the soil will lead to the replacement of the former primitive implements by more up-to-date ones, and of wood by iron and steel. This transformation will lead of necessity to the establishment here of factories engaged in the production of such implements, for they cannot be produced even tolerably well by handicraft methods." The development of this branch of industry is favoured by the following conditions: 1) the need to get a machine or part of it rapidly; 2) ''hands are here in abundance, and they are cheap"; 3) fuel, buildings and land are cheap; 4) "the small size of the economic units leads to an increased demand for implements, for it is well known that small farms require relatively more equipment." Other kinds of industries also develop. "In general there is a development of urban life." There is a development, out of necessity, of *mining industries*, "since, on the one hand, a mass of free hands is available and, on the other, thanks to the railways and the development of the mechanised manufacturing and other industries there is an increased demand for the products of the mining industry.

"Thus, such a district, which before the railway was built was thickly populated and whose agriculture was extensive, turns more or less quickly into a district of very intensive agriculture with more or less developed factory production." Increased intensity is manifested by the change in the system of crop raising. The three-field system is impossible because of harvest fluctuations. A transition has to be made to a "crop rotation system," which does away

with harvest fluctuations. Of course, the *complete crop rotation system*,* which requires a very high level of intensity, cannot be introduced immediately. At first, therefore, *grain crop rotation* [proper succession of crops] is introduced; cattle-raising, and the *planting of fodder crops* are developed.

"Finally, therefore, our thickly-populated extensive farming district turns more or less rapidly, as railways develop, into one of highly intensive farming, and its intensity, as has been said, will grow primarily on account of an increase in variable capital."

This detailed description of the process of development of intensive farming shows clearly that in this case, too, technical progress under commodity production leads to bourgeois economy, splits the direct producers into the *farmer*, who enjoys all the advantages of intensive farming, improvement of implements, etc., and the *worker*, who with his "freedom" and his "cheapness" provides the most "favourable conditions" for the "progressive development of the entire national economy."

Mr. N.—on's chief error is not that he ignores intensive agriculture and confines himself to extensive agriculture, but his vapid lamentations about "us" going the wrong way to which he treats the reader, instead of analysing the class contradictions in the sphere of Russian agricultural production. Mr. Struve repeats this error by obscuring the class contradictions with "objective" arguments, and only corrects Mr. N.—on's secondary errors. It is all the more strange since he himself quite rightly chides this "undoubted Marxist" with failing to understand the theory of the class struggle. It is all the more regrettable since Mr. Struve, by that error, weakens the force of his quite correct idea that "fear" of technical progress in agriculture is absurd.

To finish with this problem of capitalism in agriculture, let us sum up what has been said. How does Mr. Struve pose the problem? He starts out from the a priori, unfounded explanation of over-population being the result of population increases not conforming to the means of subsistence;

* Its distinctive features are: 1) all the land is put under the plough; 2) fallow is eliminated as far as possible, 3) there is a regular succession of crops in the rotation; 4) cultivation is as thorough as possible; 5) cattle are kept in stalls.

then he points out that the production of food by our peasant is "inadequate," and settles the problem by arguing that technical progress is beneficial to the "peasantry," and that "agricultural productivity must be raised" (211). How should he have presented the problem had he been "bound by the doctrine" of Marxism? He should have *begun* with an analysis of the given production relations in Russian agriculture, and, after showing that the oppression of the producer is to be explained not by chance or by politics but by the domination of *capital*, which necessarily comes into being on the basis of commodity economy—he should then have shown how this capital destroys small production and what forms class contradictions assume in the process. He should then have shown how further development leads to capital growing from merchant's into industrial (assuming such and such forms under extensive farming, and such and such under intensive), developing and accentuating the class contradiction whose basis was firmly laid under its old form, and once and for all opposing "free" labour to "rational" production. It would then have been sufficient simply to contrast these two successive forms of bourgeois production and bourgeois exploitation, in order that the "progressive" character of the change, its "advantage" to the producer should be quite evident: in the first case the subordination of labour to capital is covered up by thousands of the remnants of medieval relations, which prevent the producer from seeing the essence of the matter and arouse in his ideologist's mind absurd and reactionary ideas about the possibility of expecting aid from "society," *etc.*; in the second case this subordination is quite free of medieval fetters, and the producer is enabled to engage in and understands the necessity for independent, conscious activity against his "antipode." Instead of arguments about a "difficult and painful transition" to capitalism we would have had a theory that not only spoke of class contradictions but also really disclosed them in each form of "irrational" and "rational" production, and of "extensive" and "intensive" farming.

The results we reach from our examination of the first part of Chapter VI of Mr. Struve's book, which is devoted to the "character of over-population in agrarian Russia," can be formulated as follows: 1) Mr. Struve's Malthusianism is

not supported by any factual data and is based on methodologically incorrect and dogmatic postulates. 2) Over-population in agrarian Russia is explained by the domination of capital and not by a lack of conformity between the increase in the population and the means of subsistence. 3) Mr. Struve's thesis about the natural-economic character of over-population is only true in the sense that the survival of feudal relations holds back agricultural capital in forms that are undeveloped and are therefore particularly hard for the producer. 4) Mr. N.—on did not prove the capitalist character of over-population in Russia because he did not investigate the domination of capital in agriculture. 5) Mr. N.—on's main error, repeated by Mr. Struve, is that he did not analyse the classes that come into being where bourgeois agriculture develops. 6) This ignoring of class contradictions by Mr. Struve naturally led to the fact that the quite correct thesis of the progressiveness and desirability of technical improvements was expressed in an extremely vague and unsatisfactory form.

II

Let us now pass to the second part of Chapter VI, which is devoted to the problem of the break-up of the peasantry. This part is directly and immediately connected with the previous part, and serves as additional material on the problem of capitalism in agriculture.

Indicating the rise in the prices of agricultural produce during the first 20 years following the Reform, and to the extension of commodity production in agriculture, Mr. Struve quite rightly says that "in the main it was the landowners and prosperous peasants who benefited" from it (214). "Differentiation among the peasant population had to increase, and its first successes relate to this epoch." The author cites the remarks of local investigators to the effect that the building of railway lines merely raised the living standard of the prosperous part of the peasantry, that the renting of land gives rise to a "regular battle" among the peasants, which always leads to the victory of the economically strong elements (216-17). He cites V. Postnikov's research, according to which the farms of the prosperous peasants are

already so far subordinated to the market that 40% of the sown area yields produce for sale, and, adding that at the opposite pole the peasants "lose their economic independence and, by selling their labour-power, are on the verge of becoming farm labourers," rightly concludes: "Only the penetration of exchange economy explains the fact that the economically strong peasant farms can derive benefit from the ruin of the weak households" (223). "The development of money economy and the growth of the population," says the author, "lead to the peasantry splitting into two parts: one that is economically strong and consists of representatives of a new force, of capital in all its forms and stages, and the other, consisting of semi-independent peasants and real farm labourers" (239).

Brief as they are, the author's remarks on this "differentiation" nevertheless enable us to note the following important features of the process under examination: 1) It is not confined just to the creation of property inequality: a "new force" is created—*capital*. 2) The creation of this new force is accompanied by the creation of new types of peasant farms: firstly, of a prosperous, economically strong type that engages in developed commodity economy, crowds out the peasant poor in the renting of land, and resorts to the exploitation of the labour of others;* secondly, of a "proletarian" peasantry, who sell their labour-power to capital. 3) All these phenomena have grown directly and immediately on the basis of commodity production. Mr. Struve himself has pointed out that without commodity production they were impossible, but with its penetration into the countryside they became necessary. 4) These phenomena (the "new force," the new types of peasantry) relate to the sphere of *production*, and are not confined to the sphere of exchange, commodity circulation: capital is manifested in agricultural *production*; the same is true of the sale of labour-power.

* Mr. Struve makes no mention of this feature. It is also expressed in the use of wage-labour, which plays no small part on the farms of the prosperous peasants, and in the operations of the usury and merchant's capital in their hands, which likewise deprives the producer of surplus-value. In the absence of this feature we cannot speak of "capital."

It would seem that these features of the process are a direct indication that we have to do with a purely capitalist phenomenon, that the *classes* typical of capitalist society, bourgeoisie and proletariat, are taking shape within the peasantry. Moreover, these facts bear witness not only to the domination of capital in agriculture, but also to capital having already taken a second step, if one may put it that way. From merchant's it turns into industrial capital, from a dominant force on the market into a dominant force in production; the class antithesis between the rich buyer-up and the poor peasant turns into the antithesis between the rational bourgeois employer and the free seller of free hands.

Even here Mr. Struve cannot get along without his Malthusianism; in his view only *one side* of the matter finds expression in the process mentioned ("only the progressive side"), but in addition to it he sees another, the "technical irrationality of all peasant economy": "in it expression is given, so to speak, to the retrogressive side of the whole process," it "levels" the peasantry, smooths out inequality, operating "in connection with the growth of the population" (223-24).

The only thing that is clear in this rather hazy argument is that the author prefers extremely abstract propositions to concrete statements, that he tacks on to everything the "law" that increases in population conform to the means of subsistence. I say "tacks on" because, even if we confine ourselves strictly to the facts cited by the author himself, we can find no indication of any concrete features of the process that do not fit in with the "doctrine" of Marxism and that require the recognition of Malthusianism. Let us go over this process once again: we start with natural producers, peasants more or less of one type.* The penetration of commodity production into the countryside makes the wealth of the individual peasant household dependent on the market, thus

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* *Working for the landlord*. This aspect is set aside, in order that the transition from natural to commodity economy may stand out in greater relief. It has already been said that the remnants of the "old-nobility" relations worsen the conditions of the producers and make their ruin particularly onerous.

creating inequality by means of market fluctuations and accentuating it by concentrating free money in the hands of some, and ruining others. This money naturally serves for the exploitation of the propertyless, turns into capital. Capital can exploit peasants in the grip of ruin as long as they retain their farms, and, letting them carry on as before, on the old, technically irrational basis, can exploit them by purchasing the product of their labour. But the peasant's ruin finally develops to such a degree that he is compelled to give up his farm altogether: he can no longer sell the product of his labour; all he can do is to sell his labour. Capital then takes charge of the farm, and is now compelled, by virtue of competition, to organise it on rational lines; it is enabled to do so thanks to the free monetary resources previously "saved"; capital no longer exploits the peasant farmer but a farm labourer or a day labourer. One can well ask: what are the two sides the author finds in this process? How does he find it possible to draw the monstrous Malthusian conclusion that "the technical irrationality of the farm, and not capitalism" [note the "and not"] "is the enemy that deprives our peasantry of their daily bread" (224). As though this daily bread ever went in its entirety to the producer, and was not divided into the necessary product and the surplus, the latter being acquired by the landlord, the kulak, the "strong" peasant, the capitalist!

One must, however, add that on the question of "levelling" the author gives some further explanation. He says that the "result of the levelling referred to above" is the "*decline* or *even the disappearance of the middle section of the peasant population* noted in many places" (225). Citing a passage from a Zemstvo publication which notes "a still greater increase in the distance separating the rural rich from the landless and horseless proletariat," he concludes: "The *levelling* in the present case is, of course, at the same time *differentiation*, but on the basis of *such* differentiation only *bondage* develops, which can be nothing more than a brake on economic progress" (226). And so it now turns out that the differentiation created by commodity economy should not be contrasted to "levelling," but to differentiation as well, only differentiation of *another kind*, namely,

bondage. But since bondage is a "brake" on "economic progress," the author calls this "side" "regressive."

The argument is based on extremely strange methods that are not Marxist at all. A comparison is made between "bondage" and "differentiation" as between two independent, special "systems"; one is praised for assisting "progress"; the other is condemned for being a brake on progress. What has become of Mr. Struve's demand for an analysis of class contradictions, for lack of which he so rightly attacked Mr. N.—on; of the theory of the "spontaneous process" of which he spoke so well? Why, this bondage which he has now demolished as retrogressive is nothing but the initial manifestation of capitalism in agriculture, of that very same capitalism which leads later to sweeping technical progress. And what, indeed, is bondage? It is the dependence of the peasant who owns his means of production, and is compelled to work for the market, on the owner of money—a dependence that, however differently it may express itself (whether in the form of usury capital or of the capital of the buyer-up, who monopolises marketing)—always leads to an enormous part of the product of labour falling into the hands of the owner of money and not of the producer. Hence, it is purely capitalist in essence,* and the entire peculiarity consists in the fact that this initial, embryonic form of capitalist relations is totally enmeshed in the feudal relations of former times: here there is no free contract, but a forced deal (sometimes by order of "those at the top," sometimes by the desire to keep their undertakings, sometimes by old debts, etc.); the producer is here tied to a definite place and to a definite exploiter: as against the impersonal charac-

* All the features are here present: commodity production as the basis; monopoly of the product of social labour in the form of money as the result the turning of this money into capital. I do not in the least forget that in some cases these initial forms of *capital* were encountered even before the capitalist system came into being. The point, however, is that in contemporary Russian peasant economy they are not isolated cases but the rule, the dominant system of relations. They have now linked up (through commercial deals and the banks) with large-scale factory machine capitalism and have thereby shown their tendency; they have shown that the representatives of this bondage are merely rank-and-file soldiers of the army of the bourgeoisie one and indivisible.

ter of the commodity deal that is peculiar to purely capitalist relations, here the deal always has the personal character of "aid," "benefaction,"—and this character of the deal inevitably places the producer in a position of personal, semi-feudal dependence. Such of the author's expressions as "levelling," "brake on progress," "regression," mean nothing but that capital first takes hold of production on the old basis, and subordinates the technically backward producer. The author's remark that the presence of capitalism does not entitle us "to blame it for all misfortunes" is true in the sense that our peasant who works for others suffers not only from capitalism, but also from the insufficient development of capitalism. In other words, among the huge mass of the peasantry there are now practically none who produce independently for themselves; in addition to work for "rational" bourgeois farmers we only see work for the owners of money capital, i.e., also capitalist exploitation, but exploitation which is undeveloped and primitive, and because of this it, firstly, worsens the conditions of the labouring peasant tenfold, involving him in a network of specific and additional encumbrances, and, secondly, prevents him (and his ideologist, the Narodnik) from understanding the class character of the "annoyances" inflicted on him and from regulating his activities in accordance with this character of the annoyances. Consequently, the "progressive side" of "differentiation" (to use the language of Mr. Struve), is that it brings into the light of day the contradiction hidden behind the bondage and deprives the former of its "old-nobility" features. Narodism, which stands for levelling out the peasants (before ... the kulak), is "regressive" because it desires to keep capital within those medieval forms that combine exploitation with scattered, technically backward production and with personal pressure on the producer. In both cases (in the case of "bondage" and of "differentiation") the cause of oppression is *capitalism* and the author's statements to the contrary, that it is "not capitalism" but "technical irrationality," that "it is not capitalism that is to blame for the poverty of the peasants," etc., merely show that Mr. Struve has been carried too far in his support of the correct idea that developed capitalism is to be preferred to undeveloped, and as a result of the abstractness of his propositions he has

contrasted the former to the latter not as two successive stages of the development of the given phenomenon, but as two separate cases.*

III

The author also lets himself get carried away in the following argument, when he says that it is not large-scale capitalism which causes the ruin of the peasantry. He enters here into a controversy with Mr. N.—on.

The cheap production of manufactured goods, says Mr. N.—on, speaking of factory-made clothing, has caused a reduction in their domestic production (p. 227 of Mr. Struve's book).

"Here the cart is put before the horse," exclaims Mr. Struve, "as can be proved without difficulty. The reduction in the peasant output of spinning materials led to an increase in the production and consumption of the goods of the capitalist cotton industry, and not the other way round" (227)

The author hardly puts the issue properly, hiding the essence of the matter under details of secondary importance. If we start from the fact of the development of factory industry (and Mr. N.—on makes precisely the observation of that fact his starting-point), we cannot deny that the cheapness of factory goods also speeds up the growth of commodity economy, speeds up the ousting of home-made goods. By objecting to this statement of Mr. N.—on's, Mr. Struve merely weakens his argument against that author, whose main error is that he tries to present the "factory" as something isolated from the "peasantry," as something that has come down upon them accidentally, from outside, whereas, in fact, the "factory" (both according to the theory that Mr. N.—on desires loyally to support, and according to

* On what grounds, the reader will possibly ask, does this relate only to Mr. Struve's being *carried away*? On the ground that the author quite definitely recognises capitalism to be the main background against which all the phenomena described take place. He quite clearly pointed to the rapid growth of commodity economy, to the splitting-up of the peasantry, and to the "spread of improved implements" (245), etc., on the one hand—and to the "separation of the peasants from the land, the creation of a rural proletariat" (238), on the other. He himself, finally, characterised it as the creation of a new force—*capital*, and noted the decisive importance of the appearance of the capitalist between the producer and the consumer.

the data of Russian history) is merely the final stage of the development of the commodity organisation of the entire social and, consequently, peasant economy. Large-scale bourgeois production in the "factory" is the direct and immediate continuation of petty-bourgeois production in the village, in the notorious "village community" or in handicraft industry. "In order that the 'factory form' should become 'cheaper,'" Mr. Struve quite rightly says, "the peasant has to adopt the viewpoint of economic rationality, on condition that money economy exists." "If the peasantry had adhered to ... natural economy ... no textile fabrics ... would have tempted them."

In other words, the "factory form" is nothing more than *developed* commodity production, and it developed from the *undeveloped* commodity production of peasant and handicraft economy. The author wishes to prove to Mr. N.—on that the "factory" and the "peasantry" are interconnected, that the economic "principles" of their organisation are not contradictory,* but identical. To do that he should have reduced the problem to that of peasant economic organisation, and opposed Mr. N.—on by the thesis that our small producer (the peasant-agriculturist and the handicraftsman) is a petty bourgeois. By posing the problem that way he would have transferred it from the sphere of arguments on what "should" be, what "may" be, etc., into the sphere of explaining *what is*, and *why it is that way, and not otherwise*. To refute this thesis the Narodniks would have either to deny generally-known and undoubted facts about the growth of commodity economy and the splitting-up of the peasantry [*and these facts prove* the petty-bourgeois character of the peasantry], or else to deny the elementary truths of political economy. To accept this thesis would mean to admit the absurdity of contrasting "capitalism" to the "people's system," to admit the reactionary character of schemes to "seek different paths for the fatherland" and address requests for "socialisation" to bourgeois "society" or to a "state" that is still half "old-nobility" in character.

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* The Narodniks said this openly and directly, but the "undoubted Marxist," Mr. N.—on, presents this same nonsense in vague phrases about a "people's system" and "people's production" garnished with quotations from Marx.

Instead, however, of beginning at the beginning,* Mr. Struve begins at the end: "We reject," says he, "one of the most fundamental postulates of the Narodnik theory of Russia's economic development, the postulate that the development of large-scale manufacturing industry ruins the peasant agriculturist" (246). Now that means, as the Germans say, to throw out the baby with the bath water! "The development of large-scale manufacturing industry" means and expresses the development of capitalism. And that it is capitalism which ruins the peasant is by no means a corner-stone of Narodism, but of *Marxism*. The Narodniks saw and continue to see the causes of the separation of the producer from the means of production in the policy of the government, which, according to them, was a failure ("we" went the wrong way, etc.), in the stagnancy of society which rallied insufficiently against the vultures and tricksters, etc., and not in that specific organisation of the Russian social economy which bears the name of capitalism. That is why their "measures" amounted to action to be taken by "society" and the "state." On the contrary, when it is shown that the existence of the capitalist organisation of social economy is the cause of expropriation this leads inevitably to the theory of the *class struggle* (cf. Struve's book, pp. 101, 288 and many other pages). The author expresses himself inexactly in speaking of the "*agriculturist*" in general, and not of the opposing classes in bourgeois agriculture. The Narodniks say that capitalism ruins *agriculture* and for that reason is incapable of embracing the country's entire production and leads this production the wrong way; the Marxists say that capitalism, both in manufacturing industry and in agriculture, oppresses the *producer*, but by- raising production to a higher level creates the conditions and the forces for "socialisation."**

* That is to say, beginning with the petty-bourgeois character of the "peasant agriculturist" as proof of the "inevitability and legitimacy" of large-scale capitalism.

** The rationalising of agriculture, on the one hand, which makes it for the first time capable of operating on a social scale, and the reduction *ad absurdum* of property in land, on the other, are the great achievements of the capitalist mode of production. Like all of its other historical advances, it also attained these by first complete ly impoverishing the direct producers" (*Das Kapital*, III. B., 2. Th. p. 157).[138]

Mr. Struve's conclusion on this point is as follows: "One of Mr. N.—on's cardinal errors is that he has completely transferred notions and categories from the *established* capitalist system to the contemporary economy of the peasant, which to this day is more natural than money economy" (237).

We have seen above that only Mr. N.—on's complete ignoring of the concrete data of Russian agricultural capitalism led to the ridiculous mistake of talking about a "contraction" of the home market. He did not, however, make that mistake because he applied all the categories of capitalism to the peasantry, but because he did not apply any *categories of capitalism* to the data on agriculture. The classes of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat are, of course, a most important "category" of capitalism. Mr. N.—on not only did not "transfer" them to the "peasantry" (i.e., did not give an analysis of exactly to what groups or sections of the peasantry these categories apply and how far they are developed), but, on the contrary, he argued in purely Narodnik fashion, ignoring the opposite elements within the "village community," and arguing about the "peasantry" in general. It was this that led to his thesis on the capitalist character of over-population, on capitalism as the cause of the expropriation of the agriculturist, remaining unproven and merely serving to build a reactionary utopia.

IV

In § VIII of the sixth chapter, Mr. Struve sets forth his ideas about private-landowner farming. He quite rightly shows how closely and directly the forms assumed by this sort of farming depend on the ruin of the peasants. The ruined peasant no longer "tempts" the landlord with "fabulous rental prices," and the landlord goes over to the employment of farm labourers. Extracts in proof of this are cited from an article by Raspopin, who analysed Zemstvo statistical data on landlord economy, and from a Zemstvo publication on current statistics which notes the "enforced" character of the increase in the cultivation of landlord estates on capitalist lines. In reply to Messrs. the Narodniks, who so willingly hide the fact of capitalism's present domi-

nation in agriculture beneath arguments about its "future" and its "possibility," the author makes a precise reference to the *actual situation*.

We must stop here just to deal with the author's estimation of this phenomenon, who calls it the "progressive trends in private-landowner farming" (244) and says that these trends are created by the "inexorable logic of economic evolution" (240). We fear that these quite correct propositions, by reason of their abstractness, will be unintelligible to the reader who is not acquainted with Marxism; that the reader will not understand—unless definite reference is made to the succession of such and such systems of economy, such and such forms of class antagonism—why the given trend is "progressive" (from the only viewpoint, of course, from which the Marxist can pose the problem, from the viewpoint of a definite class), why, exactly, is the evolution that is taking place "inexorable." Let us therefore try to depict this succession (at least in the most general outline) parallel to the Narodnik representation of the matter.

The Narodnik presents the process of the development of the economy of farm labourers as a transition from "independent" peasant farming to dependent farming, and, naturally, considers this to be regression, decline, etc. Such a picture of the process *is quite untrue in fact*, does not correspond to reality at all, and hence the conclusions drawn from it are also absurd. By presenting things in this optimistic way (optimistic in relation to the past and the present), the Narodnik simply *turns his back on the facts* established by Narodnik literature itself, and turns his face towards utopias and possibilities.

Let us start from pre-Reform feudal economy.

The main content of the production relations at that time was as follows: the landlord supplied the peasant with land, timber for building, the means of production in general (sometimes even the means of livelihood) for each separate household and, while letting the peasant gain his own livelihood, compelled him to work *all the surplus time* doing corvée service for him, the landlord. I underscore the words "all the surplus time" in order to note that there can be no question, under this system, of the peasant's

"independence."* The "allotment" with which the landlord "supplied" the peasant was nothing more than *wages in kind*, served wholly and exclusively for the exploitation of the peasant by the landlord, to "supply" the landlord with hands and actually never to provide for the peasant himself .**

Then, however, came the invasion of commodity economy. The landlord began to produce grain for sale and not for himself. This gave rise to intensified exploitation of peasant labour and then to difficulties with the allotment system, since it had become unprofitable for the landlord to supply members of the rising generation of peasants with allotments, and it was possible to settle accounts in money. It became more convenient to separate the peasants' land once and for all from that of the landlord (particularly if in the process part of the allotments were cut off and if they were redeemed at a "fair" price) and to use the labour of *the very same* peasants, placed in materially worse conditions and forced to compete with former manor serfs, "gilt-landers,"[139] the more prosperous former state, appanage peasants, etc.

Serfdom collapses.

The system of economy—now serving the market (and this is very important)—changed, but did not do so at once. New features and "principles" were added to the old. These new features consisted of the following: the supplying of the peasant with means of production was no longer made the basis of Plusmacherei, but, on the contrary, it was his "separation" from the means of production, his need of money; the basis was no longer natural economy, natural exchange of "services" (the landlord gives the peasant land, while the peasant provides the products of his surplus labour, grain, linen, etc.), but commodity, "free" money contract. It was this form of economy, which combined old and new features, that has been predominant in Russia since the Reform. The old-time methods of lending out land in return for work (farming in return for cut-off lands, for

* I confine myself *exclusively* to the economic aspect of the matter.

** That is why reference to the feudal "allotment of land" as proof of the means of production belonging to the producer "from time immemorial" is false through and through.

example) were supplemented by "winter hire"—the lending of money in return for work when the peasant is in particular need of money and sells his labour for a song, the lending of grain in return for labour service, etc. The social-economic relations in the former "patriarchal estate" were reduced, as you see, to the most ordinary *usurer's* deal: they consisted of operations quite analogous to the operations of the buyer-up in relation to the handicraftsmen.

There can be no doubt that this form of economy has become typical since the Reform, and our Narodnik literature has supplied superb *descriptions* of this particularly unattractive form of Plusmacherei combined with feudal traditions and relations, and with the utter helplessness of the peasant tied to his "allotment."

But the Narodniks refused, and still refuse, to see the precise economic basis of these relations.

The basis of domination is now not only the possession of the land, as in the old days, but also the possession of money, which the peasant is in need of (and money is a product of the social labour organised by commodity economy), and the "separation" of the peasant from the means of livelihood. Obviously, this is a capitalist, bourgeois relationship. The "new" features are nothing but the initial form of the domination of *capital* in agriculture, a form not yet freed of the "old-nobility" fetters, a form that has created the class contradiction peculiar to capitalist society, but has not yet finally established it.

With the development of commodity economy, however, the ground slips from under this initial form of the domination of capital: the impoverishment of the peasantry has now developed to the point of utter ruin, the point when the peasants have lost their implements, by which the feudal and the bonded forms of labour were maintained—and the landlord is thus compelled to go over to the use of his own implements, and the peasant to become a farm labourer.

That this transition has begun in post-Reform Russia is again an undoubted fact. This fact shows the line of development of the bonded form, which the Narodniks view in a purely metaphysical way—disregarding connections with the past, disregarding the urge to develop; this same fact shows the *further* development of capitalism, the further

development of the class contradiction that is peculiar to our capitalist society and that in the preceding epoch was expressed in the relation between the "kulak" and the peasant, and is now beginning to find expression in the relation between the rational farmer and the farm labourer and day labourer.

Now it is this latter change that evokes the despair and horror of the Narodnik, who begins to howl about "deprivation of the land," "loss of independence," "installation of capitalism" and the ills "threatening" as a result, etc., etc.

Look at these arguments impartially and you will see, firstly, that they contain a *falsehood*, even though a well-intentioned one, since the economy of farm labourers is not preceded by peasant "independence" but by other ways of handing the surplus product over to some one who takes no part in its production. Secondly, you will see the superficiality and the pettiness of the Narodnik protest, which make it vulgar socialism, as Mr. Struve aptly puts it. Why is this "installation" merely seen in its second form, and not in both forms? Why is the protest not directed against the basic historical fact that concentrated the means of production in the hands of "private landowners," instead of merely against one of the methods of utilising this monopoly? Why is the root of the evil not seen in production relations that subordinate labour far and wide to the owner of money, instead of merely in the inequality of distribution that stands out in such relief in the *latest* form of these relations? It is this basic circumstance—a protest against capitalism based on those same capitalist relations—that makes the Narodniks the ideologists of the petty bourgeoisie, who do not fear bourgeois reality, but merely its accentuation, which alone leads to a fundamental change.

V

Let us pass to the last point in Mr. Struve's theoretical arguments, namely, to the "problem of markets for Russian capitalism" (245).

The author begins his examination of the Narodnik-devised theory about there being no markets in this country, with the question: "What does Mr. V. V. understand by capi-

talism?" That question is a very relevant one, since Mr. V. V. (and all Narodniks in general) have always compared the Russian order of things with some "English form" (247) of capitalism and not with its basic features, which have a different appearance in each country. It is only a pity that Mr. Struve does not give a complete definition of capitalism, but points in general to the "domination of exchange economy" [that is one feature; the second is the appropriation of surplus-value by the owner of money, his domination over labour], to "the system we see in Western Europe" (247), "with all its consequences," with the "concentration of industrial production, capitalism in the narrow sense of the word" (247).

"Mr. V. V.," says the author, "did not go into an analysis of the concept 'capitalism,' but took it from Marx, who mainly had in view capitalism in the narrow sense, as the already fully established product of relations developing on the basis of the subordination of production to exchange" (247). One cannot agree with that. Firstly, had Mr. V. V. really taken his idea of capitalism from Marx, he would have had a correct idea of it, and could not have confused the "English form" with capitalism. Secondly, it is quite unfair to assert that Marx mainly had in view the "centralisation or concentration of industrial production" [that is what Mr. Struve understands by capitalism in the narrow sense!. On the contrary, he followed up the development of commodity economy from its initial steps, he analysed capitalism in its primitive forms of simple co-operation and manufacture—forms centuries apart from the concentration of production by machines—and he showed the connection between capitalism in industry and in agriculture. Mr. Struve himself narrows down the concept of capitalism when he says: "The object of Mr. V. V.'s study was the *first* steps of the national economy on the path from natural to commodity organisation." He should have said: the *last* steps. Mr. V. V., as far as we know, only studied Russia's post-Reform economy. *The beginning of commodity* production relates to the pre-Reform era, as Mr. Struve himself indicates (189-90), and even the *capitalist* organisation of the cotton industry took shape before the emancipation of the peasants. The Reform gave an impulse to the *final* development in this sense; it pushed the commodity form of labour-

power and not the commodity form of the product of labour to the forefront; it sanctioned the domination of capitalist and not of commodity production. The hazy distinction between capitalism in the broad and in the narrow sense* leads Mr. Struve apparently to regard Russian capitalism as something of the future and not of the present, not as something already and definitely established. He says, for example:

"Before posing the question: is it inevitable for Russia to have capitalism in the English form, Mr. V. V. should have posed and settled a different one, a more general and hence more important question: is it inevitable for Russia to pass from natural to money economy, and what is the relation between capitalist production sensu stricto and commodity production in general?" (247). That is hardly a convenient way of posing the question. If the present, existing system of production relations in Russia is clearly explained, then the problem of whether this or that line of development is "inevitable" will be settled eo ipso. If, however, it is not explained, then it will be insoluble. Instead of arguments about the future (arguments beloved of Messrs. the Narodniks) an *explanation* of the present should be given. An outstanding fact in post-Reform Russia has been the outward, if one may so call it, manifestation of capitalism, i.e., manifestation of its "heights" (factory production, railways, banks, etc.), and theoretical thought was immediately faced with the problem of capitalism in Russia. The Narodniks have tried to prove that these heights are something accidental, unconnected with the entire economic system, without basis and therefore impotent; and they have used the term "capitalism" in too narrow a sense, forgetting that the enslavement of labour to capital covers very long and diverse stages from merchant's capital to the "English form." It is the job of Marxists to prove that these heights are nothing more than the last step in the development of the commodity economy that took shape

* There is nothing to show what criterion the author uses to distinguish these concepts. If by capitalism in the narrow sense is meant only machine industry then it is not clear why manufacture should not be singled out, too. If by capitalism in the broad sense is meant only commodity economy, then there is no capitalism in it.

long ago in Russia and *everywhere*, in all branches of production, gives rise to the subordination of labour to capital.

Mr. Struve's view of Russian capitalism as something of the future and not of the present was expressed with particular clarity in the following argument: "So long as the contemporary village community exists, registered and consolidated by law, relations will develop on the basis of it that have nothing in common with the 'people's well-being.' [Surely not just "will develop"; did they not develop so long ago that the whole of Narodnik literature, from its very outset, over a quarter of a century ago, described them and protested against them?] "In the West we have several examples of the existence of individual farmsteads alongside of large-scale capitalist farming. Our Poland and our southwest territory belong to the same order of things. It may be said that in Russia, both the community villages and those consisting of individual farms approach this type, inasmuch as the impoverished peasantry remain on the land and levelling influences among them are proving stronger than differentiating influences" (280). Is it merely a matter of approaching, and not of already being that *type* at this very moment? To determine "type," one has, of course, to take the basic economic features of the system, and not legal forms. If we look at these basic features of the economy of the Russian countryside, we shall see the isolated economy of the peasant households on small plots of land, we shall see growing commodity economy that already plays a dominant role. It is these features that give content to the concept "small individual farming." We shall see further the same peasant indebtedness to usurers, the same expropriation to which the data of the West testify. The whole difference lies in the specific character of our juridical system (the peasants' civic inequality; forms of land tenure), which retains stronger traces of the "old regime" as a result of the weaker development of our capitalism. But these specific features do not in the least disturb the uniformity of *type* of our peasant system and that of the West.

Proceeding to deal with the theory of markets itself, Mr. Struve notes that Messrs. V. and N.—on are caught in a vicious circle: while the development of capitalism re-

quires the growth of the market, capitalism ruins the population. The author very unsuccessfully corrects this vicious circle with his Malthusianism, placing the blame for the ruin of the peasantry on the "growth of the population" and not on capitalism!! The mistake of the authors mentioned is quite a different one: capitalism not only ruins, but *splits* the peasantry into a bourgeoisie and a proletariat. This process does not cut down the home market, but *creates* it: commodity economy grows at both poles of the differentiating peasantry, both among the "proletarian" peasantry, who are compelled to sell "free labour," and among the bourgeois peasantry, who raise the technical level of their farms (machinery, equipment, fertilisers, etc. Cf. Mr. V. V.'s *Progressive Trends in Peasant Farming*) and develop their requirements. Despite the fact that this conception of the process is directly based on Marx's theory of the relation between capitalism in industry and in agriculture, Mr. Struve ignores it—possibly because he has been led astray by Mr. V. V.'s "theory of markets." This latter person, supposedly basing himself on Marx, has presented the Russian public with a "theory" claiming that in developed capitalist society a "surplus of goods" is inevitable; the home market cannot be sufficient, a foreign one is necessary. "This theory is a true one" (?!), declares Mr. Struve, "inasmuch as it states the fact that surplus-value cannot be realised from consumption either by the capitalists or by the workers, but presumes consumption by third persons" (251). We cannot agree with this statement at all. Mr. V. V.'s "theory" (if one may speak of a theory here) is simply that of ignoring the distinction between personal and productive consumption, the distinction between the means of production and articles of consumption, a distinction without which it is impossible to understand the reproduction of the aggregate social capital in capitalist society. Marx showed this in the greatest detail in Volume II of *Capital* (Part III: "The Reproduction and Circulation of the Aggregate Social Capital") and dealt with it vividly in Volume I as well, when criticising the thesis of classical political economy according to which the accumulation of capital consists only of the transformation of surplus-value into wages, and not into constant capital (means of production)

plus wages. To confirm this description of Mr. V. V.'s theory let us confine ourselves to two quotations from the articles mentioned by Mr. Struve.

"Each worker," says Mr. V. V. in his article "The Excess in the Market Supply of Commodities," "produces more than he consumes himself, and all these surpluses accumulate in few hands; the owners of these surpluses consume them themselves, for which purpose they exchange them within the country and abroad for the most varied objects of necessity and comforts; but however much they eat, drink or dance (sic!!)—they cannot dispose of the whole of the surplus-value" (*Otechestvenniye Zapiski*, 1883, No. 5, p. 14), and "to be more convincing" the author "examines the chief expenditures" of the capitalist, such as dinners, travelling, etc. We get it still more vividly in the article "Militarism and Capitalism": "The Achilles' heel of the capitalist organisation of industry is the impossibility of the employers consuming the whole of their income" (*Russkaya Mysl*, 1889, No. 9, p. 80). "Rothschild could not consume the entire increment to his income ... for the simple reason that this ... increment constitutes such a considerable mass of articles of consumption that Rothschild, whose every whim is satisfied as it is, would find himself in very great difficulties," etc.

All these arguments, as you see, are based on the naïve view that the capitalist's purpose is only personal consumption and not the accumulation of surplus-value, on the mistaken idea that the social product splits up into $v+s$ (variable capital+surplus-value) as was taught by Adam Smith and all the political economists before Marx, and not into $c+v+s$ (constant capital, means of production, and then into wages and surplus-value), as was shown by Marx. Once these errors are corrected and attention is paid to the circumstance that in capitalist society an enormous and ever-growing part is played by the means of production (the part of the social products that is used for productive and not personal consumption, not for consumption by people but by capital) the whole of the notorious "theory" collapses completely. Marx proved in Volume II that capitalist production is quite conceivable without foreign markets, with the growing accumulation of wealth and without any "third

persons," whose introduction by Mr. Struve is extremely unfortunate. Mr. Struve's reasoning on this subject evokes amazement, especially as he himself points to the overwhelming significance of the home market for Russia and catches Mr. V. V. tripping on the "programme of development of Russian capitalism" based on a "strong peasantry." The process of the formation of this "strong" (that is, bourgeois) peasantry that is now taking place in our countryside clearly shows us the rise of capital, the proletarianisation of the producer and the *growth of the home market*: the "spread of improved implements," for example, signifies precisely the accumulation of capital as means of production. On this problem it was particularly necessary, instead of dealing with "possibilities," to outline and explain the actual process expressed in the creation of a home market for Russian capitalism.*

With this we conclude our examination of the theoretical part of Mr. Struve's book, and can now try to give a general, comprehensive, so to speak, description of the main methods used in his arguments, and thus approach the solution of the problems raised at the outset: "Exactly what in this book may be assigned to Marxism?" "Which of the doctrine's (Marxism's) tenets does the author reject, supplement or correct, and with what results?"

The main feature of the author's arguments, as we noted from the start, is his narrow objectivism, which is confined to proving the inevitability and necessity of the process and makes no effort to reveal at each specific stage of this process the form of class contradiction inherent in it—an objectivism that describes the process in general, and not each of the antagonistic classes whose conflict makes up the process.

We understand perfectly well that the author had his grounds for confining his "notes" to just the "objective" and, what is more, the most general side; his grounds were, firstly, that in his desire to confront the Narodniks with the principles of hostile views, he set forth principia and

* As this is a very important and complicated problem, we intend to devote a special article to it.[140]

nothing more, leaving their development and more concrete examination to the further development of the controversy, and, secondly, we tried in Chapter I to show that *all* that distinguishes Narodism from Marxism is the *character of the criticism* of Russian capitalism, the different *explanation* of it—from which it naturally follows that the Marxists sometimes confine themselves just to general "objective" propositions, and lay emphasis exclusively on what distinguishes our understanding (*of generally-known facts*) from that of the Narodniks.

Mr. Struve, however, it seems to us, went too far in this respect. Abstractness of exposition frequently yielded propositions that could not but cause misunderstanding; the way the problem was posed did not differ from the methods current and dominant in our literature, the method of arguing in professorial style, from on high, about the paths and destiny of the fatherland and not about specific classes pursuing such and such a path; the more concrete the author's arguments, the more impossible did it become to explain the principia of Marxism and remain on the heights of general abstract propositions, the more necessary it was to make definite reference to such and such a condition of such and such classes of Russian society, to such and such a relation between the various forms of Plusmacherei and the interests of the producers.

That is why we thought that an attempt to supplement and explain the author's thesis, to follow his exposition step by step, so as to show the need for a *different* way of posing the problem, the need for a *more consistent* way of applying the theory of class contradictions, would not be out of place.

As to Mr. Struve's direct deviations from Marxism—on problems of the state, over-population, and the home market—sufficient has already been said about them.

VI

In addition to a criticism of the theoretical content of Narodism, Mr. Struve's book contains, among other things, several remarks relating to Narodnik economic policy. Although these remarks are given cursorily and are not devel-

oped by the author, we nevertheless must touch on them in order to leave no room for any misunderstanding.

These remarks contain references to the "rationality," progressiveness, "intelligence," etc., of the liberal, i.e., bourgeois policy as compared to the policy of the Narodniks.*

The author evidently wanted to contrast two policies that keep to the existing relations—and *in this sense* he quite rightly pointed out that a policy is "intelligent" if it develops and does not retard capitalism, and it is "intelligent" not because it serves the bourgeoisie by increasingly subordinating the producer to them [the way in which various "simpletons" and "acrobats" try to explain it], but because, by accentuating and refining capitalist relations, it brings clarity to the *mind* of the one on whom alone change depends, and gives him a free hand.

It must, however, be said that this quite true proposition is badly expressed by Mr. Struve, that owing to the abstractness peculiar to him he voices it in such a way that one sometimes wishes to say to him: let the dead bury the dead. In Russia there has never yet been a shortage of people who have devoted themselves, heart and soul, to creating theories and programmes that express the interests of our bourgeoisie, that express all these "urgent needs" of strong and big capital to crush small capital and to destroy its primitive and patriarchal methods of exploitation.

If the author had here also adhered strictly to the requirements of the Marxist "doctrine," demanding that exposition be reduced to the formulation of the actual process, and that the class contradictions behind each "intelligent," "rational"

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* Let us indicate some examples of these remarks: "If the state ... desires to strengthen small but not large landownership, then under the present economic conditions it cannot achieve this aim by chasing alter unrealisable economic equality among the peasantry, but only by supporting its viable elements, by creating an economically strong peasantry out of them" (240). "I cannot fail to see that the policy which is aimed at creating *such* a peasantry (namely, "economically strong adapted to commodity production") will be the only intelligent and progressive policy" (281). "Russia must be transformed from a poor capitalist country into a rich capitalist country" (250), etc., up to the concluding phrase: "Let us go and learn from capitalism."

and progressive policy be disclosed, he would have expressed the same thought differently, would have posed the question in another way. He would have drawn a parallel between those theories and programmes of liberalism, i.e., of the bourgeoisie, which have sprung up like mushrooms since the great Reform, and factual data on the development of capitalism in Russia. In this way he would have used the Russian example to show the connection between social ideas and economic development, something he tried to prove in the first chapters and that can only be fully established by a materialist analysis of Russian data. In this way he would have shown, secondly, how naïve the Narodniks are when they combat bourgeois theories in their publications, and do so as though these theories are merely mistaken reasoning, and do not represent the interests of a powerful class which it is foolish to admonish, and which can only be "convinced" by the imposing force of another class. In this way he would have shown, thirdly, which class actually determines "urgent needs" and "progress" in this country, and how ridiculous the Narodniks are when they argue about which "path" "to choose."

Messrs. the Narodniks have seized on these expressions of Mr. Struve's with particular delight, gloating over the fact that the unhappy way they have been formulated has enabled various bourgeois economists (like Mr. Yanzhul) and champions of serfdom (like Mr. Golovin) to seize upon some phrases torn out of the general context. We have seen in what way Mr. Struve's position, that has placed such a weapon into the hands of his opponents, is unsatisfactory.

The author's attempts to criticise Narodism merely as a theory that wrongly indicates the path for the fatherland,* led to the hazy formulation of his attitude to the "economic policy" of Narodism. This may be regarded as a wholesale denial of the policy, and not only of a half of it. It is, therefore, necessary to dwell on this point.

Philosophising about the possibility of "different paths for the fatherland" is merely the outer vestment of Naro-

* The author of *Critical Remarks* indicates the economic basis of Narodism (pp. 166-67), but in our view does so inadequately.

dism. But its content is representation of the interests and viewpoint of the Russian small producer, the petty bourgeois. That is why the Narodnik, in matters of theory, is just as much a Janus, looking with one face to the past and the other to the future, as in real life the small producer is, who looks with one face to the past, wishing to strengthen his small farm without knowing or wishing to know anything about the general economic system and about the need to reckon with the class that controls it—and with the other face to the future, adopting a hostile attitude to the capitalism that is ruining him.

It is clear from this that it would be absolutely wrong to reject the whole of the Narodnik programme indiscriminately and in its entirety. One must clearly distinguish its reactionary and progressive sides. Narodism is reactionary insofar as it proposes measures that tie the peasant to the soil and to the old modes of production, such as the inalienability of allotments, etc.,* insofar as it wants to retard the development of money economy, and insofar as it expects not partial improvements, but a change of the path to be brought about by "society" and by the influence of representatives of the bureaucracy (example: Mr. Yuzhakov, who argued in *Russkoye Bogatstvo*, 1894, No. 7, about common tillage as projected by a Zemsky Nachalnik and engaged in introducing amendments to these projects). Unconditional warfare must, of course, be waged against such points in the Narodnik programme. But there are also other points, relating to self-government, to the "people's" free and broad access to knowledge, to the "raising" of the "people's" (that is to say, small) economy by means of cheap credits, technical improvements, better regulation of marketing, etc., etc. That such general democratic measures are progressive is fully admitted, of course, by Mr. Struve, too. They will not retard, but accelerate Russia's economic development along the capitalist path, accelerate the establishment of a home market, accelerate the growth of technique and machine industry by improving the conditions of the

* Mr. Struve very rightly says that these measures might merely "bring to fruition the ardent dreams of certain West-European and Russian landowners about farm labourers who are strongly bound to the land" (279).

working man and raising the level of his requirements, accelerate and facilitate his independent thinking and action.

The only question that might here arise is: who indicates such undoubtedly desirable measures with greater accuracy and ability—the Narodniks or publicists like Skvortsov who has so much to say in favour of technical progress and to whom Mr. Struve is so extremely well disposed? It seems to me that from the Marxist viewpoint there can be no doubt that Narodism is absolutely to be preferred *in this respect*. The measures proposed by the Messrs. Skvortsov relate to the interests of the entire class of small producers, the petty bourgeoisie, in the same measure as the programme of *Moskovskiye Vedomosti* relates to those of the big bourgeoisie. They are designed not for all,* but only for certain of the elect, who are vouchsafed the attention of the authorities. They are, lastly, abominably crude because they presume police interference in the economy of the peasants. Taken all in all, these measures provide no serious guarantees and chances of the "productive progress of peasant economy."

The Narodniks *in this respect* understand and represent the interests of the small producers far more correctly, and the Marxists, while rejecting all the reactionary features of their programme, must not only accept the general democratic points, but carry them through more exactly, deeply and further. The more resolute such reforms are in Russia, the higher they raise the living standard of the working masses—the more sharply and clearly will the most important and fundamental (already today) social antagonism in Russian life stand out. The Marxists, far from "breaking the democratic thread" or trend, as Mr. V. V. slanderously asserts they do, want to develop and strengthen this trend, they want to bring it closer to life, they want to take up the "thread" that "society" and the "intelligentsia" are letting slip out of their hands.**

* That is to say, of course, for all *to whom* technical progress *is accessible*.

** In *Nedelya*, No. 47, 1894, Mr. V. V. writes: "In the post-Reform period of our history, social relations in some respects have approx-

This demand—not to discard the "thread," but, on the contrary, to strengthen it—is not the accidental result of the personal mood of some "Marxists" or other, but is necessarily determined by the position and interests of the class they wish to serve, is necessarily and unconditionally dictated by the fundamental requirements of their "doctrine." I cannot, for reasons that are easily understandable, pause here to examine the first part of this proposition, to characterise the "position" and "interests"; here, I think, matters speak for themselves. I shall only touch on the second part, namely, the relation of the Marxist doctrine to problems that express the "breaking thread."

The Marxists must *raise* these problems *differently* than Messrs. the Narodniks do. The latter pose the problem from the viewpoint of "modern science, modern moral ideas"; the matter is presented as though there are no profound causes of the failure to implement such reforms, causes contained within *production relations* themselves, as though the obstacle lies only in grossness of feelings, in the feeble "ray of reason," etc.; as though Russia is a tabula rasa on which nothing has to be done except properly outline the right paths. *That way of presenting the problem*, of course, guaranteed it the "purity" of which Mr. V. V. boasts, and which is merely the "purity" of ladies' college daydreams, of the kind that makes Narodnik reasoning so fit for armchair conversations.

The way these same problems are posed by the Marxists must necessarily be quite different.* Obliged to seek for the roots of social phenomena in production relations obliged to reduce them to the *interests* of definite classes, they must formulate these desiderata as being the "desires" of

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imated to those of Western Europe, with active democracy in the epoch of political struggle and with social indifferentism in the subsequent period." We tried to show in Chapter I that this "indifferentism" is no accident, but an inevitable result of the position and the interests of the class from which the representatives of "society" emerge and which in addition to disadvantages derives by no means unimportant advantages from contemporary relations.

* If they pursue their theory consistently. We have already said much about Mr. Struve's exposition being unsatisfactory precisely because of big failure to adhere to this theory with greatest strictness.

such and such social elements and meeting the opposition of such and such elements and classes. Such a way of posing the problem will absolutely eliminate the possibility of their "theories" being utilised for professorial arguments that rise *above* classes, for projects and reports that promise "splendid success."* That, of course, is just an indirect merit of the change of viewpoint referred to, but it is also a very great one, if we bear in mind how steep is the slope down which *contemporary* Narodism is slipping into the bog of opportunism. But the matter is not limited to mere indirect merit. If the same problems are posed in their application to the theory of class antagonism land this, of course, requires a "reconsideration of the facts" of Russian history and reality], then the replies to them will provide a formulation of the vital interests of certain classes; these replies will be intended for practical utilisation** by those interested classes and by them alone—these replies will, to use the splendid expression of a certain Marxist, break out of the "cramped chamber of the intelligentsia" towards those who themselves participate in production relations in their most highly developed and pure form, towards those who are most strongly affected by the "breaking of the thread," and who "need" "ideals" because they are badly off without them. Such a way of raising issues will instil a new stream of life into all these old problems—taxes, passports, migration, Volost boards of administration, etc.—problems that our "society" has discussed and interpreted, chewed over again and again, solved and re-solved, and for which it has now begun to lose all taste.

So then, no matter how we approach the problem, whether we examine the content of the system of economic relations prevalent in Russia and the various forms of this system in

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* Mr. Yuzhakov's expression.

** Of course, for *this* "utilisation" to take place a tremendous amount of preparatory work is required, and what is more, work that by its very nature goes unseen. *Before* this utilisation takes place a more or less considerable period may pass during which we shall say outright that there is no force capable of providing better paths for the fatherland—as against the "sugary optimism" of Messrs. the Narodniks who assert that such forces exist and that all that remains to be done is to advise them to "leave the wrong path."

their historical connection and in their relation to the interests of the working people, or whether we examine the problem of the "breaking of the thread" and the reasons for its "breaking," we arrive, in either case, at one conclusion, that of the great significance of the historical task of "labour differentiated from life," a task advanced by the epoch in which we live, that of the universal significance of the idea of this class.

NOTES

[105] The essay, *The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism of It in Mr. Struve's Book* (*The Reflection of Marxism in Bourgeois Literature*). *P. Struve: Critical Remarks on the Subject of Russia's Economic Development*, St. Petersburg, 1894, was written by V. I. Lenin in St. Petersburg at the end of 1894 and the beginning of 1895. It was the first of Lenin's works to be printed legally. In this essay Lenin continued the criticism of Narodnik views that he had begun in his previous writings, and gave a comprehensive criticism of the mistaken views of the legal Marxists. Lenin was the first to recognise the liberal-bourgeois nature of legal Marxism. As early as 1893, in his work *On the So-Called Market Question* Lenin not only exposed the views of the liberal Narodniks, but also criticised the legal Marxist outlook that was then emerging.

In the autumn of 1894 Lenin read a paper in the St. Petersburg Marxists' circle directed against Struve and other legal Marxists. This paper served as the basis for the essay *The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism of It in Mr. Struve's Book*. Lenin wrote the following in 1907 about his reading of the paper in the St. Petersburg Marxists' circle: "In this circle I read a paper entitled *The Reflection of Marxism in Bourgeois Literature*." As the heading shows, the controversy with Struve was here far sharper and more definite (as to Social-Democratic conclusions) than in the article printed in the spring of 1895. It was toned down partly because of censorship considerations and partly due to the "alliance" with legal Marxism for joint struggle against Narodism. That the "push to the left" then given to Mr. Struve by the St. Petersburg Social-Democrats was not entirely without result is clearly shown by Mr. Struve's article in the Miscellany which was burned (1895), and some of his articles in *Novoye Slovo* (*New Word*) (1897). *Preface to the Miscellany* "*Twelve Years*." (See present edition, Vol. 13.)

The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism of It in Mr. Struve's Book was printed (under the pen-name of *K. Tulin*) in the Miscellany entitled *Material for a Characterisation of Our Economic Development*. An edition of 2,000 copies of the Miscellany was printed in April 1895, but its circulation was banned by the tsarist government, which, after retaining the ban for a full year, confiscated the edition and had it burned. It only proved possible to save about 100 copies, which were secretly circulated among Social-Democrats in St. Petersburg and other cities.

Lenin's article was the most militant and politically acute in the Miscellany. The censor, in his report on *Material for a Characterisation of Our Economic Development*, dwells in particular detail on

Lenin's work. Pointing out that the contributors to the Miscellany put forward Marx's theory about the inexorable advance of the capitalist process, the censor stated that K. Tulin's article contained the most outspoken and complete programme of the Marxists.

At the end of 1907, Lenin included *The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism of It in Mr. Struve's Book* in Volume One of the Miscellany *Twelve Years*, and gave it the sub-heading "The Reflection of Marxism in Bourgeois Literature." The first volume of this Miscellany was published by the Zerno Book Publishers in the middle of November 1907 (the title-page is dated 1908). Of the three volumes intended for publication, the publishers succeeded in issuing only Volume One, and part one of Volume Two. Apart from the paper mentioned, Volume One contained the following works by Lenin: *The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats*, *The Persecutors of the Zemstvo and the Hannibals of Liberalism*, *What Is To Be Done?*, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*, *The Zemstvo Campaign and "Iskra's" Plan*, and *Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*. Volume One was confiscated soon after its appearance, but a considerable part of the edition was salvaged, and the book continued to circulate illegally. p. 333

[106] The *truck-system*—the system of paying the workers wages in the shape of goods and foodstuffs from the employer's shop. This system was an additional means of exploiting the workers, and was particularly widespread in Russia, in the areas where there was handicraft industry. p. 346

[107] *Moskovskiye Vedomosti* (*Moscow Recorder*)—a Russian newspaper of long standing, first issued in 1756 as a small sheet by Moscow University. From the 1860s it pursued a monarchist-nationalist line, its views being those of the most reactionary landlords and clergy. From 1905 onwards it was one of the principal organs of the Black Hundreds. Continued publication until the October Revolution of 1917.

Vest (*News*)—a reactionary feudalist newspaper that appeared in Russia in the 1860s and 1870s. p. 348

[108] Lenin quotes from I. A. Krylov's fable "The Wolf and the Shepherds." p. 349

[109] *Skimmers*—ironical expression repeatedly used by. M. Y. Saltykov-Shchedrin in his works to describe the bourgeois liberal press and its representatives. In Chapter V of *The Diary of a Provincial in St. Petersburg*, Saltykov-Shchedrin bitterly derides the liberals, and writes: "For want of real work to do, and by way of an innocent pastime they have established a learned literary society, "The Free League of Skimmers." Saltykov-Shchedrin describes the "duties" of this "League" as follows: "Not to miss a single contemporary problem, but to discuss everything in such a manner as to ensure that no result shall ever be achieved." p. 352

[110] *Dictatorship of the heart*—ironical term used to indicate the short-lived policy of flirting with the liberals pursued by the tsarist official Loris-Melikov. In 1880 he was first appointed chief of the Supreme Control Commission for combating "sedition," and then

Minister of Home Affairs. Loris-Melikov tried to base his policy on promises of "concessions" to the liberals and on ruthless persecution of revolutionaries. The revolutionary situation of 1879-80 gave rise to this balancing policy, the purpose of which was to weaken the revolutionary movement and to win over to tsarism the oppositional liberal bourgeoisie. After suppressing the revolutionary wave of 1879-1880, the tsar's government abandoned the policy of the "dictatorship of the heart" and hastened to issue a manifesto on the "inviolability" of the autocracy. In April 1881, Loris-Melikov had to resign. p. 352

[111] *Chinsh* peasants—those entitled to the hereditary possession of the land in perpetuity, and who had to pay a quitrent that rarely changed, known as chinsh. In tsarist Russia, the chinsh system operated mainly in Poland, Lithuania, Byelorussia, and the Black Sea littoral of the Ukraine. p. 370

[112] See, for example, Gleb Uspensky's stories and essays "From a Village Diary," "Cheque-Book," "Mid-Journey Letters," "Unbroken Ties," "Living Figures." p. 378

[113] *Mr. Coupon*— a term adopted in the literature of the 1880s and 1890s to indicate capital and capitalists. The expression "Mr. Coupon" was put in circulation by the writer Gleb Uspensky in his essays "Grave Sins." p. 383

[114] "*Beast of burden*"—the downtrodden poor peasant, exhausted by excessive toil, typified by M. Y. Saltykov-Shchedrin in his satirical tale *Konyaga* (literally—overworked nag). In this tale the author speaks allegorically of the "unmoving enormity of the fields" which shall keep man in bondage until he releases the "magic force" from captivity. At the same time Saltykov-Shchedrin derides the Narodniks' vulgar arguments that the "real labour" which the "konyaga" found for himself is the guarantee of the peasant's invulnerability, spiritual equilibrium, clarity and integrity. p. 387

[115] *The Prussian Regierungsrat* (*State Counsellor*)—refers to the German economist, Baron A. Haxthausen, who visited Russia in the 1840s. In his book *Studies of Internal Relations in Popular Life and Particularly of Rural Institutions of Russia*, Haxthausen gave a detailed description of the Russian village community, in which he saw a means of consolidating feudalism. He sang the praises of Russia under Tsar Nicholas I, considering it to be superior to Western Europe in that it did not suffer from the "ulcer of proletarianism." Marx and Engels showed the reactionary character of Haxthausen's conclusions, and his views were also severely criticised by A. I. Herzen and N. G. Chernyshevsky. p. 391

[116] Owing to the censorship, Lenin could make no direct reference to the Marxist works published by the Emancipation of Labour group. He refers the reader to V. V.'s (Vorontsov's) work *Essays on Theoretical Economics* (St. Petersburg, 1895), which, on pages 251-58, contains a lengthy extract from Plekhanov's article "Domestic Review," that appeared in the *Sotsial-Demokrat* (*Social-Democrat*), Book Two, August 1890. p. 394

[117] *Mirtov*—pseudonym of P. L. Lavrov (1820-1900); a Narodnik ideologist in the 1870s. Was a member of the Narodnik secret society Zemlya i Volya (Land and Liberty), and then of the Narodnaya Volya (People s Will) party. In the 1870s be advocated the need to "go among the people." Was the founder of the idealist subjective school in sociology. p. 397

[118] See K. Marx and F. Engels, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1958, p. 334. p. 414

[119] See F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow, 1959, p. 133. p. 416

[120] See K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1959, pp. 84-85, Footnote 2. p. 417

[121] See K. Marx and F. Engels, "Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State," *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1958, p. 272. p. 419

[122] *Naucrary*—small territorial districts in the ancient Athenian Republic. Naucraries were united in phyles. The collegium of naucrars (naucrary chiefs) conducted the finances of the Athenian State. It was the duty of each naucrary to build, equip, and man a warship and to provide two horsemen to meet the military needs of the state. p. 419

[123] See K. Marx and F. Engels, op. cit., in *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1958, p. 269. p. 419

[124] See K. Marx and F. Engels, "Civil War in France" and "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow. 1958, pp. 284, 516-17. p. 420

[125] See F. Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Moscow, 1959, p. 157. p. 420

[126] See K. Marx and F. Engels, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1958, p. 244. The book by Proudhon mentioned in the text is called *The Social Revolution Demonstrated by the Coup d'État*. p. 425

[127] *Leibkampantsi*, from Leibkompanie (personal bodyguard), the title of honour bestowed on the Grenadier Company of the Preobrazhensky Regiment in 1741 by Tsarina Yelizaveta Petrovna for having placed her on the Russian throne. They were given estates and all sorts of special privileges, while those of them who were not of noble origin were made hereditary nobles. The nickname Leibkampantsi was put in circulation by M. Y. Saltykov-Shchedrin in his *Poshekhon Tales*. p. 426

[128] See K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1957, pp. 116-17. p. 437

[129] See K. Marx and F. Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party, *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1958, pp. 53-54. p. 439

[130] *Gotha Programme*—the programme of the German Social-Democratic Party adopted in 1875 at the Gotha congress, where unity was established between the two German socialist parties that had previously existed separately; they were the Eisenachers (who were led by Bebel and Liebknecht, and were under the ideological influence of Marx and Engels), and the Lassalleans. The programme suffered from eclecticism, and was opportunist, since the Eisenachers made

concessions to the Lassalleans and accepted their formulations on vitally important points. Marx and Engels subjected the Gotha draft programme to withering criticism, for they regarded it as a considerable step backwards even as compared with the Eisenach programme of 1869. (See K. Marx and F. Engels, "Critique of the Gotha Programme," *Selected Works*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1958, pp. 13-48.) p. 442

[131] See K. Marx and F. Engels, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte", *Selected Works*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1958, pp. 278-79. p. 448

[132] See K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1959, p. 632. p. 453

[133] Lenin refers to Chapter XXX, Vol I, *Capital* (Reaction of the Agricultural Revolution on Industry. Creation of the Home Market for Industrial Capital). (See K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1959, p. 745.) p. 463

[134] K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1959, p. 642. p. 464

[135] *Skopshchina*—the name given in the southern parts of Russia to a type of rent in kind, on terms of bondage, the tenant paying the landowner *s kopny* (from the corn-shock) a portion of the harvest (a half, and sometimes more), and usually fulfilling miscellaneous labour services in addition. p. 465

[136] K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1959, p. 749, Footnote 2. p. 471

[137] K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1959, pp. 742-44. p. 472

[138] K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, Moscow, 1959, p. 604. p. 488

[139] *Gift-landers or gift-land peasants*, peasants who were formerly landlords' serfs and who, at the time of the Reform of 1861, by "agreement with their landlords received allotments gratis (without having to pay redemption money for them). The gift-lander received a miserable strip amounting in all to a quarter of the so-called "top" or "statutory" allotment established by law for the given locality. All the rest of the lands that had constituted the peasants' allotments before the Reform were seized by the landlord, who held his "gift-landers," forcibly dispossessed of their land, in a state of economic bondage even after serfdom was abolished. The "gift-land" allotment came to be known among the people as a "quarter," "orphan's," "cat's," or "gagarin" allotment (the last epithet being derived from the name of the initiator of the law on "gift-land" allotments, Prince P. P. Gagarin). p. 491

[140] Lenin deals with this problem in detail in his book *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* (1899). See present edition, Vol. 3. p. 499

THE LIFE AND WORK OF

V. I. LENIN

Outstanding Dates

(*1870-1894*)

1870

April 10 (22 new style)	Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (Lenin), born in Simbirsk (now Ulyanovsk).

1879

August 16(28)	Lenin is accepted into Simbirsk classical Gymnasium.

1886

January 12(24)	Ilya Nikolayevich Ulyanov, Lenin's father, dies.

1887

March 1(13)	Lenin's elder brother Alexander Ilyich Ulyanov, is arrested for participating in an attempt on the life of Alexander III.
May 8(20)	Alexander Ulyanov and other participants in the attempt are executed.
June 10(22)	Lenin graduates Simbirsk Gymnasium, winning a Gold Medal.
End of June	The Ulyanov family moves to Kazan.
August 13(25)	Lenin enters Kazan University.
September-November	Lenin participates in a revolutionary students' circle in Kazan.
December 4(16)	Lenin participates in a students' rally in Kazan University.
December 5(17)	Lenin is arrested for participation in the students' revolutionary movement.

December 7(19)	Lenin is expelled from the university and exiled from Kazan to the village of Kokushkino, under the secret surveillance of the police.

1888

September 23 (October 5)	Lenin's application for permission to go abroad "to continue my education" is rejected by Police Department.
Beginning October	of Lenin receives permission to return from Kokushkino village to Kazan, where the Ulyanov family settle.
Autumn	Lenin studies K. Marx's *Capital*, and joins a Marxist circle organised by N. Y. Fedoseyev.

1889

May 3-4(15-16)	Lenin moves from Kazan to a hamlet near the village of Alakayevka, Samara Gubernia.
June 14(26)	Lenin is informed of the rejection of his application to go abroad "for treatment."
July 13(25)	N. Y. Fedoseyev and members of the Marxist circles he organised in Kazan are arrested. Among the arrested are members of the circle to which Lenin had belonged.
October 11(23)	Lenin moves from the hamlet near Alakayevka village to Samara.

1890

End of 1889-1890	In Samara Lenin continues his study of Marx and Engels, translates *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*, which is subsequently read in illegal circles in Samara (no copy of the translation remains). Lenin becomes acquainted with A. P. Sklyarenko and engages in Marxist propaganda among the youth of Samara.
May 17(29)	Lenin receives permission to sit for the final examinations at the Law Faculty of St. Petersburg University as an external student.
End of August (beginning of September)	Lenin's first visit to St. Petersburg in connection with the examinations at St. Petersburg University.

August 26-September 1 (*Sept. 7-13*)	On his way to St. Petersburg Lenin stops in Kazan.
October 24 (*November 5*)	Lenin leaves St. Petersburg to return to Samara.
	1891
April 4-24 (*April 16-May 6*)	Lenin sits for the final examinations at the Law Faculty of St. Petersburg University (spring session).
May 17 (*29*)	Lenin leaves St. Petersburg for Samara.
Summer-beginning of September	Lenin lives in Samara and at the hamlet near the village of Alakayevka.
September 16 (*28*)-*November 9* (*21*)	Lenin sits for the last of the examinations at St. Petersburg University (autumn session).
November 12 (*24*)	Lenin returns from St. Petersburg to Samara.
	1892
January 14 (*26*)	Lenin receives a University Graduation Diploma, First Class, from the Head Office of the St. Petersburg Educational District.
January 30 (*February 11*)	By decision of the Samara Circuit Court Lenin is entered on the rolls of Junior Barristers.
July 23 (*August 4*)	Lenin granted the right to practise law.
Summer of 1892-winter of 1892-1893	Lenin writes papers criticising the views of the Narodniks, and reads them at meetings of illegal circles. These papers constitute the preparatory material for work *What the "Friends of the People" Are*.
	1893
Spring-Summer	First circle of Samara Marxists (including A. P. Sklyarenko and A. K. Lalayants) is formed. Lenin is central figure in the circle. He prepares and reads the paper (article) entitled *New Economic Developments in Peasant Life* (on V. Y. Postnikov's Book).
End of August (*beginning of September*)	On his way from Samara to St. Petersburg Lenin stops at Nizhni-Novgorod and makes the acquaintance of local Marxists.

August 31 (*September 12*) — Lenin arrives in St. Petersburg.

September 3 (*15*) — Lenin is registered as Junior Barrister to M. F. Wolkenstein.

September 25 (*October 7*) — Lenin travels to Vladimir for a meeting with N. Y. Fedoseyev which does not take place because Fedoseyev was still not released from prison.

Autumn — In St. Petersburg Lenin joins a Marxist circle of Technological Institute students (S. I. Radchenko, V. V. Starkov, P. K. Zaporozhets, G. M. Krzhizhanevsky and others), and at a circle meeting criticises G. B. Krasin's paper "The Market Question." Lenin writes the paper "On the So-Called Market Question," which he reads to the Marxist circle.

Autumn and Winter 1893- — Lenin establishes contact with progressive workers of St. Petersburg factories (V. A. Shelgunov, I. V. Babushkin and others). Lenin's speeches strongly impress participants in Marxist circles of St. Petersburg. His exceptionally profound knowledge of Marxist theory, his ability to apply Marxism constructively to Russia's economic and political situation, his fervent and unshakable belief in the victory of the workers' cause, his outstanding organisational talent—all this makes Lenin the recognised leader of the St. Petersburg Marxists.

1894

Beginning of January — Lenin comes to Moscow for the winter holidays.

January 9 (*21*) — At an illegal meeting in Moscow Lenin opposes the Narodnik V. V. (V. P. Vorontsov), subjecting his views to annihilating criticism.

January — Lenin visits Nizhni-Novgorod and reads a paper at the local Marxist circle on V. V.'s book *The Destiny of Capitalism in Russia*.

Lenin returns to St. Petersburg where he leads the St. Petersburg group of Social-Democrats and the central workers' circle, and conducts workers' classes outside the Nevskaya Toll gates and in other parts of the city.

March-June — Lenin writes *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight the Social-Democrats*, the first part of which appeared that spring.

First half of the year	In a Marxist circle in St. Petersburg, Lenin reads a paper in which he critically analyses the book by the Narodnik N. Karyshev *Peasant Rentings of Non-Allotment Land*.
June 14 (26)	Lenin leaves for Moscow to spend the summer with relatives. He also visits Samara.
July	The second edition of part one of *What the "Friends of the People" Are* appears in St. Petersburg.
August 27 (September 8)	Lenin returns from Moscow to St. Petersburg.
End of August (first half of September)	The first edition of part two and the third edition of part one of Lenin's *What the "Friends of the People" Are* appear (in Gorki, Vladimir Gubernia).
September	The first edition of part three and the fourth edition of part one of Lenin's *What the "Friends of the People" Are* appear in St. Petersburg.
October	Lenin reads *What the "Friends of the People" Are* to the members of a St. Petersburg Marxist circle.
Autumn	At a meeting of a St. Petersburg Marxists' circle Lenin reads his paper "The Reflection of Marxism in Bourgeois Literature" in which he severely criticises the bourgeois distortions of Marxism in Struve's book *Critical Remarks on the Subject of Russia's Economic Development*.
After December 24 (after January 5)	Assisted by the worker I. V. Babushkin, Lenin drafts a leaflet to the workers of the Semyannikov factory dealing with the unrest there. This is the first leaflet issued by Russian Marxists.
End of 1894-beginning of 1895	Lenin writes *The Economic Content of Narodism and the Criticism of It in Mr. Struve's Book*.