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WINTER 1966-67/VOL. V, NO. 3

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IASP TRANSLATIONS FROM ORIGINAL SOVIET SOURCES

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Historiography: American-Soviet Exchange

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M. Ia. Gefter and V. L. Mal'kov

A REPLY TO AN AMERICAN SCHOLAR

Note by Editors of Voprosy istorii

Professor Arthur Mendel of the University of Michigan has addressed himself to Soviet historians, through the instrumentality of the Institute of Soviet-American Relations, with a request to reply to a number of questions pertaining to the historical theory of Marxism. It appears to us to be useful to familiarize readers with the questions sent by the American scholar and the responses to it provided by members of the staff of the USSR Academy of Sciences' History Institute's Sector for Development of the Methodology of History.

Questions from Arthur Mendel*

1. The chief point of Soviet argumentation in debate with our historians is over the denial by the latter of "conformity to law" in history [zakonomernost']. How would you explain the concept "conformity to law"?

* The text of the questions was composed by A. Mendel in the Russian language.

2. As a result of the limitations placed upon the role of the economic factor in history, the general concept of "conformity to law" does not seem too clear to us. I have in mind the frequent employment of Engels' letter to J. Bloch and various quotations from the writings of Lenin and Marx, which stress the influence of political and ideological factors. Judging from this, politics and ideology are sometimes more influential than the economic factor. In such instances, would it not be correct to use these aspects of social development rather than the economic factor as the criteria for the objective study of history? How is one to be guided in making the choice? Is there some sort of meta-"conformity to law" [meta-zakonomernost'], or do various criteria for "conformity to law" exist?

3. Is it not true that your methods of studying history and of selecting data are more or less similar to our own? I say this because of all that you have stated with respect to the reciprocal relations between various factors in history, and also in view of the fact that stress is presently placed upon concrete facts and a more objective approach to the sources is demanded.

4. Many of our historians share your rejection of neopositivism, relativism, and the religious interpretations of history, do not reject the possibility of objective knowledge, exclude transcendental influence, and even focus their attention upon material relations. Where does one find that higher criterion which would enable one to make a choice between these interpretations and yours?

5. There is something unclear in the Soviet concepts about the interrelationships between general laws and concrete facts. On the one hand, it is contended, especially in recent years, that the Marxist laws are based entirely on the facts; but, on the other hand, it is stated that these laws operate as a criterion for the selection and classification of these facts.

6. It is often stated that the Russian Revolution of 1917 is the main proof of the Marxist theory of history. But at the same time reference is made to the particular conditions causing that revolution, and Lenin's correct evaluation of these particularities is considered as evidence of his superiority over the Mensheviks. Thus it would seem that the general theory of Marxism was proved by an exception.

7. If the only and objectively correct theory of "conformity to law" [zakonomernost'] is the Soviet theory, how is one to explain the existence of various Soviet approaches to basic problems in that case — for example: to the problem of the role of leaders and peoples; to the problem of the relationship of the superstructure and the base; to the problem of the relationship of the generalization and individual, concrete facts?

8. To us the concept of the class origin of social thought seems incompatible with your belief in the objective, scientific validity of your own theory of history and society, particularly when this theory so obviously coincides with the interests of your society.

9. With regard to that same question, I am interested in the Marxist concept of ideology, especially the tendency often to elevate relative and transitory ideals to the level of universals and eternal, as well as the opinion that these ideals are reflections of material and transitory conditions. When one studies Soviet society with

the aid of these concepts, it seems that the ideal of communism and the reliance upon economic factors are ideological reflections of the contemporary tasks that your society faces. Is this interpretation correct?

10. For us the concept of objectivity is hardly consistent with the demand for partisanship [partiinost'] in the study of history. The difficulty does not lie in the demand of service to society. Many among us share your conviction that the historian should turn to the past in order to help in the solution of current problems. But partisanship, it seems, has a second meaning: the historian must promote a dedication to the country and to the party and an enmity toward their foes. Obviously, the effort to satisfy this demand can sometimes lead to distortion. There is a contradiction here. In order to understand the lessons of history and to use them as a guide in future actions, rigorous objectivity is necessary, but propagation of desired ideas among the people, especially among the youth, sometimes requires the distortion of history. I would say that only those who do not believe in the possibility of scientifically utilizing history, i.e., those who deny this possibility, can demand from historians service to society in the second sense — that of service to propaganda.

11. With the development of Soviet sociology as the science of the basic laws of social development, what role is left for historical materialism?

12. Do contradictions exist between the concepts of Marxism and other theories, such as cybernetics, in explaining social actions and developments?

13. Are traces of the Stalin period still to be found in the social sciences?

14. What are the main methodological problems now being discussed by Soviet historians?

A Reply to Arthur Mendel

Some Introductory Remarks

Professor Mendel's list encompasses a broad range of questions. It touches upon many basic problems of historical knowledge. An exhaustive

reply would require too much space. Moreover, these are not new questions. Merely to list only the more important writings on these subjects would probably take a whole volume. These very questions have more than once been the subjects of debate between Marxists and their ideological opponents as well as with scholars who, while not taking a hostile position toward Marxism, do not, however, accept its fundamental postulates and often have a very imprecise notion of the Marxist conception, having become acquainted with it not from the primary sources but from paraphrases or pseudocritical studies.

It seems to us that A. Mendel, too, in seeking to identify and obtain an exact idea of the viewpoint held by Soviet scholars, is guided in many instances by doubts and by preconceptions that might have disappeared long ago if an unprejudiced study of the Marxist literature had been undertaken, but that survive not, of course, merely due to someone's ill-will, but as a result of factors with deep roots — social and epistemological. On the other hand, the questions posed in the list submitted by our American colleague are, in our view, quite suggestive in the sense that they reflect not merely his personal concern, but an incomparably broader interest in the conformities to law of human development, and in the nature of historical knowledge. Is the only issue here really that the "chief point," as Mr. Mendel states, lies in the dispute between Marxists and their opponents? Perhaps no less a role in this is played by the spirit of the times, the influence of the vast changes altering and changing the face of our world before the eyes of our generation, and, moreover, altering it precisely in that general direction whose essence was discovered and explained for the first time by the founding fathers of historical materialism. Finally, is it not the fact of the matter that efforts to engage in a study of the past without an idea of the law-governed development of society inevitably result in the loss of a scientific basis?

We do not know whether Professor Mendel thinks thus. But admissions of this type are encountered ever more frequently in the pages of historical journals, discussions, and books, and

in classrooms in the West, stimulating an interest in the Marxist historical conception. We would hope that our necessarily brief replies to the list of questions posed by the American professor will satisfy this interest at least in some small measure.

Inasmuch as a number of the questions posed by A. Mendel are repetitive in essence and even in the literal sense, we have deemed it desirable to group the responses by subject headings.

I

Answers to questions 1 through 4. Here we see the following basic problems: a) the concept of "conformity to law" [zakonomernost'], b) the interaction of economic and other "factors" in social development, c) the problem of the objective criterion in the study of history, and d) the relationship between the historical theory of Marxism and the conceptions of non-Marxist philosophy of history.

The concept of conformity to law [zakonomernost'] is one of the most fundamental in historical materialism. But it was not invented by Marxists: it has existed for millennia, ever since the time when concepts holding that the conditions under which men live are eternal were replaced (at first in the confused and cloudy form of mythology) by the idea of development in history, understood not merely as the flow of events but as change in the state of men and nations. The more fluid the world became, the more acute were the social conflicts in its depths, and the more persistently did thought in the realm of philosophy of history seek the general meaning of the changes, the connections, between the external immediate occasion for events and their more remote and hidden causes, including those of a material and economic nature. The separate fragments gradually merged into a picture of the motion of mankind, a picture of progress, in which advanced thought — to the degree to which it was liberated from religious dogmas and providentialist views — perceived the real earthly process, the implementation of "natural law." But

it was precisely at this point that an obstacle arose that seemed insuperable. If social life depends entirely upon conditions existing external to man (the natural geographic environment, etc.), then how can one reconcile and render compatible the historical activity of men moved by specific and far from coincident interests, strivings and desires with the dominance of the iron necessity embodied in nature and circumstances? If the motive force of progress is ideas, the mental activity of men, then what, in turn, gives rise to ideas?

As early as in Rousseau, we see an attempt to find a way out of this vicious circle, when he said that man is a "machine" that can "start itself." However, neither he nor any other of the thinkers of the pre-Marx era were able to explain how man could "start" himself, and even less how the numerous operations of this type caused the motion of society as a whole, combining and leveling out the diverse impulses and actions. But for the science of history that was the decisive question: its existence would be deprived of meaning if it would exclude from its range of vision the impelling motives of each historical act or deed. Yet could history have become a science if it did not learn to uncover the impelling motives of the impelling motives themselves, i.e., the universal objective causes of particular and individual phenomena?

There remains the indisputable fact that it was precisely Marxism that answered the questions posed by its precursors, and that it was able to do so not only because it adduced most impressive proofs of the law-governed character of historical development, but also because the very concept of conformity to law [zakonomernost'] was given an incomparably deeper and qualitatively new content.

The reply given by Marxists may be formulated most concisely as follows: it is not abstract "history" but living man who is the genuine builder of the social structure; however, he does not erect this structure in accordance with his arbitrary will. Men make history by overcoming the resistance of nature, the outside world surrounding them, seeking to subordinate it to themselves, and thus to satisfy their needs,

primarily material; and a genuine science of society has the function of explaining how the production and reproduction of the life directly at hand determine the character of men's social relations and all the forms of men's activity, including the most complex and subtle. It is no accident that Marx's discovery is compared to Darwin's. In the realm of society, Marx did the same as Darwin, and more: he discovered the mechanism of self-motion of human history, having demonstrated that "the metabolism between man and nature," while being primary and the basis of everything, in turn follows a course that is in one way or another dependent upon the social form of production, i.e., it must itself be explained by the development of society. Whereas, in a certain sense, labor created man, had man as a social being not existed, the distinctively human form of labor could not have arisen: a contradiction that exists not only in thought but in real history. There was, obviously, some initial "point" (measured in many millennia) during which the first acts of work of the ancestors of contemporary man bore a semi-instinctive character. The question as to the time and specific characteristics of the turning point separating basically biological evolution from basically social is one that science has not yet fully explained. However, from the time that this turning point occurred, the motion of mankind has flown within those more general limits of which Marx had spoken; but when we speak of production, it is always of production at a definite level of social development — under the dominance of a specific type of relationship among men, arising in the process of social labor.

Of course, even after the formulation of Marx's idea of historical conformity to law (in the 1840's), vast difficulties remained in the identification of the particular forms of material production and in the concrete analysis of systems of social relationships of production. It is worth remembering that Marx and Engels essentially rediscovered — only in the 1860's to 1880's — an entire era in history, and its lengthiest, the era of the universal diffusion of primitive communal society, subsequent to the

findings of G. Maurer, M. Kovalevskii, and many others who had investigated the vestiges of archaic communal organization under the conditions existing in various countries of Asia, Europe, and America, and particularly after the famous work of Lewis Morgan. But once the guiding thread existed, the way out of the labyrinth was found — toward knowledge of the unity in the diversity of social life, continuity in historical development, and the qualitatively unique nature of each stage therein. The concept of the socio-economic system (the totality of production relationships, dominant under given conditions, and the social institutions and forms of consciousness corresponding to them) — a concept that since Marx's time has become firmly established in scientific sociology, that embodies within itself simultaneously the statics and dynamics of the historical process, making it possible to see the independent social organisms in particular societies and, at the same time, the links in the chain of historical development, the stages in the law-governed progress of mankind — it is in this (and only in this sense) that Marxists envisage world history as a sequence of socio-economic systems, one replacing the other. Marxism did the most important job: it equipped historical knowledge with a method of scientific investigation, making it possible to discover both the need for given social relationships and the objective logic underlying changes in them that lead to the need for other social relationships, another system, which must inevitably grow out of the preceding one by negating it.

What is it but this discovery of the inherently revolutionary nature of the course of development of society that makes the materialist concept of history unacceptable in the eyes of spokesmen for opposing currents of social thought, even though they are far from unanimous in deciding frankly to proclaim apologia for the existing systems as their guiding principle? Marx himself foresaw an explosion of "outrage" over the fact that he had blasphemously torn the veil from the secret of history. He wrote: "When the inner connection is grasped, all theoretical belief in the permanent necessity of existing conditions breaks down before their prac-

tical collapse. Here, therefore, it is in the unquestioned interest of the ruling classes to perpetuate this unthinking confusion." (1)

But perhaps Marx erred and underestimated the scholarly conscientiousness and capacity for penetration of his opponents. Alas, he proved right. This was given most authoritative testimony by, for example, Edward Hallett Carr in his lectures on the philosophy of history, delivered in 1961 at Cambridge. Carr said: "In the nineteenth century, British historians with scarcely an exception regarded the course of history as a demonstration of the principle of progress: they expressed the ideology of a society in a condition of remarkably rapid progress. History was full of meaning for British historians so long as it seemed to be going our way; now that it has taken a wrong turning (Carr's reference will certainly be clear to all — Authors), belief in the meaning of history has become a heresy. After the First World War, Toynbee made a desperate attempt to replace a linear view of history by a cyclical theory — the characteristic ideology of a society in decline. Since Toynbee's failure, British historians have for the most part been content to throw in their hands and declare that there is no general pattern in history at all." (2)

It makes sense to adduce yet another contemporary testimony with respect to the consequences engendered by the "liberation" from such "prejudices" as the idea of historical laws, propagandized by subjective idealist philosophy (especially its extremely irrational trends). "The result of this was," writes P. Zagorin, "that the historian felt his work on the whole to be deprived of rational justification. . . . Incapable of persuasively validating his claims to true knowledge, he surrendered to skepticism, in the light of which he was able to continue his work only on the basis of an act of faith." (3) [Retranslated.]

This is the alternative advanced by the very development of the science, demanding that the historian make a choice if he is concerned with knowing truth. No doubt one may attempt to escape this choice and even to declare that one stands above the "extremes" of materialism,

on the one hand, and subjectivist and relativist views, on the other. It is no accident that we see in bourgeois scholarship such a great and typical attraction to pluralist thinking, and to the conceptions regarding the development of society as the result of the simultaneous, parallel action of mutually independent "factors," of which the economic is one among many. Pluralism appears to its proponents to be all-encompassing and objective. Is this truly the case?

Certainly, historical research presupposes a more or less autonomous study of the various spheres of the life of society over the entire course of an epoch, or even of several. However, our concern here is with something else. The question is that of the method of reconstructing a picture of history in its entirety, in accordance with its own nature. From this viewpoint, the various autonomous studies are merely a preliminary stage in the solution of a higher problem, and the effectiveness of these studies depends to a vast degree upon the breadth of the historian's field of vision, upon how integrally he is successful in discovering the place of the individual and the special in the overall picture of the motion of history and, along with this, in "incorporating" this universal in his analysis of the particular. In any case, one can hardly dispute the fact that recognition of the existence of a multiplicity of factors does not in itself explain history, for the old question remains unresolved: what is it that combines the various factors into a definite interconnected and developing system, giving to historical motion an integrity and direction not dependent upon the views of the historian, and how does it do so? This is apparently why Professor Mendel, having tipped his hat to pluralism, poses the question of the possible existence of a "meta-conformity to law" [meta-zakonomernost']. Well, we shall not argue over terms, inasmuch as acceptance of a "meta-conformity to law" is equivalent to recognition of the need of a monist view, which may be either theological (in the broad sense, including all forms of absolute idealism) or materialist, taking the latter to mean not metaphysical, vulgar, "linear" materialism, but precisely and solely dialectical materialism.

It is not for the first, nor certainly for the last, time that our opponents attempt to see a contradiction between the Marxist thesis of the primacy of economics and the repeated statements of Marxists with respect to the vast and sometimes decisive role of politics and ideology in the social practice of man. However, this is a false contradiction, as the proponents of Marxism have never identified historical progress with the automatic motion of the economy. Moreover (as we stated at the very outset), they do not at all understand the economy in impersonal terms, abstracted from human acts of initiative — in the first place, those of masses of the population, entities and communities of human beings, in which classes play the decisive role during the larger part of history. Herein lies the chief distinction between Marxism and other schools and trends, which, although, in A. Mendel's words, they exclude "transcendental influence and even focus their attention upon material relations," nevertheless understand these material relationships in purely economic and even in purely technological terms.

We recognize that economic materialism may be a step forward for a given scholar and even a midway station leading to a consistently materialist world view. In the special field of economic history, members of this broad and highly diverse current have provided valuable concrete studies on more than one occasion. But not uncommonly or, to be more precise, not less often this same view and method have been and are a sort of response to Marxism, a form of "defusing" it by the acceptance only of those postulates of historical materialism that make it possible to grant and affirm that which is, the necessity of the present system of relationships, the existing process, by which most often they mean capitalism (contemporary structures such as the "theory of economic growth" are by no means new in this respect: the Russian legal Marxists and other schools of academic socialism may well claim priority in this regard). Economic materialists of this type have for a long time been termed "objectivists," reference being to their claim to dispassionateness and neutrality in their research. Leaving aside now

the question of the class roots of this claim, we note only that in the gnosiological plane, the objectivist is precisely inadequately objective, objective in a limited sense in that, constructing models of progress in the form of a sequence of technological revolutions torn out of the general context of history, he disregards both their social prerequisites and their social consequences. He forgets that the chief and most dynamic productive force has always been not the implements of labor themselves, but those that created and employed them — the laboring masses — and that over the course of many centuries “economic growth” occurred through a succession of forms of property and modes of appropriation of the labor of others, i.e., it was anything in the world but an idyll of economic evolution. But if this evolution occurs so cruelly and mercilessly, paid for by an incalculable number of human lives, is it not obvious that the resistance to these conditions and the struggle to change them are not merely a “supplement” to the picture of economic progress, but a necessary and most important part thereof? If one disregards this, is it possible to understand why mankind, starting from its infancy, has never marked time for any lengthy period, and why, in order to preserve the fruits of civilization (as Marx once put it [4]), to hold on to the level previously attained, it had of necessity to move forward along the road of social renovation which, in turn, could be nothing but the resultant of diverse social, political, and ideological conflicts comprising the living fabric of history?

Here we approach one of the most profound problems in the philosophy of history (which has engaged men’s minds since ancient times). This is the problem of possibility and actuality in the historical process, examined from the standpoint of its conformity to law [zakonomernost’]. The vulgar materialist, willy-nilly, unavoidably comes to the position of fatalism, which preaches the predestination of history — a view having nothing in common with Marxism. For Marxism, the recognition of necessity and the rigorously conditioned nature of social development does not at all mean that mankind can do nothing but march along a road plotted beforehand and sub-

missively bow its head to the inexorable laws of history. True, men are not free in choosing the direction in which society is developing; but, in addition to the general direction of progress, there is also the matter of its form: it may occur at an earlier or a later time, more or less consistently, at greater or lesser costs and sacrifices. “The choice” of form is the realization of one of a series of law-governed possibilities inherent in actuality, whose socio-economic foundation not only conditions the political and intellectual processes, but is changed under their influence.

Only with this dialectical approach to the process of development can a materialist explain the activity of men in history without abandoning his world view and at the same time without “yielding” this problem (as was always the case before Marx) to representatives of idealist thought. Let us recall, for example, the remarkably profound words of Hegel: “In existence, development is motion forward from the imperfect to the perfect, wherein the former is not to be regarded merely as imperfect but as something that at the same time contains its own opposite, the so-called perfect, as an embryo, as a tendency. In precisely the same fashion, possibility points, at least by reflection, to something of a kind that must become actual and, more precisely, to the Aristotelian dinamis, existence, and potentia, strength and power.” (5) We cannot fail to see that Hegel, regarding the need for development as the transformation of possibility into reality, came close to an understanding of the decisive, objectively revolutionary content of history. But, in his structure, this content is deprived of self-sustaining existence independent of “spirit,” reflection. Since Marx there has been no need, in quests for the meaning of history, to return to the sphere of the absolute idea, containing all beginnings and ends hereafter. Today, basing ourselves upon facts, upon the study and experience of history, we are able to conceive of it as a process in which the “secondary,” the subjective — precisely because it is engendered by the objective needs of material development and to the degree that it corresponds to the latter — itself

in turn becomes material, and moves, moreover, to a rising degree (despite all deviations) into the sphere of the objective. Or, to put it differently: world history is a process of transition from the initial stages of progress, when various possibilities were created not so much by the conscious activity of man as by the difference between spontaneously shaped conditions of natural history, to a more mature stage characterized by the fact that social consciousness increasingly approximates reality and, what is particularly important, the transformation of advanced ideas into more or less organized and purposeful actions on the part of the progressive forces in society: the revolutionary classes and parties serving as storage batteries of the interests and longings, protests and initiatives, of the oppressed masses, the overwhelming majority of mankind.

This aspect of history is becoming so evident in our time that no serious and conscientious scholar can ignore it. Is this not why it is more difficult than in the past to distinguish Marxists from non-Marxists by the subjects, the themes, of their historical studies? Both Marxists and non-Marxists write a great deal about revolutions and the labor movement, but they do so differently: not only and not even so much in the sense of their actual evaluations, their sympathies and antipathies, but in the broader sense of methodology.

Since to the economic materialist and the pluralist history appears as a conglomerate of diverse "aspects" or "factors," both are as a rule incapable of discovering that the class struggle, mass movements, and their highest form — social revolution — constitute the focal point of history in which all sides and factors of the preceding evolutionary development intersect and clash, undergoing synthesis and giving birth to a new reality that embraces everything — from the economic structure of society to its political and spiritual superstructure. Marxists, however, place stress upon the creative role of revolutionary upsets and transformations, without at all forgetting in the process that mankind has had to traverse a long and difficult path before "earning the right" to a consciously revolution-

ary form of social progress. The followers of Marx and Lenin are least of all inclined to idolize each and every manifestation of social protest, to close their eyes to the historical weaknesses characteristic of many movements of the oppressed masses, and to the presence in them of conservative and other admixtures as well as of religious, monarchist, and similar prejudices that have on more than one occasion rendered these movements a blind tool in the hands of their opponents — open and concealed — the selfish minority of society. But even with respect to the more advanced movements, at least most of the bourgeois revolutions of the 17th to 19th centuries, study of the experience of history enables us to formulate a law of a unique repetitiveness in their development, related to the fact that these revolutions, moved by the energy and enthusiasm of "the bottom strata," remained, in social content, revolutions of a minority. Therefore, the very first triumphs over the old system led to splits in the revolutionary camp. The involvement of broader strata of the toilers was accompanied by simultaneous departure of "moderate" strata and parties and consolidation of the counterrevolutionary forces that won out in the final analysis. They emerged triumphant, although historical necessity compelled even the enemies of the revolution to be, more often than not, its executors — offering a paradoxical variant of progress in conditions in which, objectively, it was incapable of going beyond change in the forms of exploitation and class dominance.

However, no matter what the immediate outcome, the forward motion of society was determined not by this but by the highest peak attained by the revolutionary wave. It was precisely that which was gained in periods that not only conservatives but even some bourgeois liberals are fond of calling "insane" that was most firmly retained. Do the facts not prove that no restoration was capable of taking the land from the French peasant after thirteen months of Jacobin dictatorship, as no one could have succeeded in restoring the institution of slavery in the United States after the Battle of Gettysburg? Finally and most important: the more merci-

lessly these national movements and social revolutions dealt with the old and obsolete, the farther they moved beyond the limits of what was attainable at the given historical moment, the more deeply they thus plowed the soil for the future (by the triumphs, experience, errors, and defeats), providing long-range preparation for the turning point in world history that has occurred before the eyes of generations now living, when the social revolution — now no longer an isolated act but an entire epoch — is becoming both subjectively and objectively a revolution of the majority for the majority, the direct motive force of evolution, of universal human progress in all its spheres.

That is the point of view which, for us, plays the most important role both in specific researches and, particularly, in reconstructing the historical process as a whole. It is that which properly constitutes that “higher criterion” in the cognition of conformity to law in history that marks the line of demarcation between Marxists and non-Marxists. Therefore, when Professor Mendel thinks he sees concessions being made today by Soviet historians to bourgeois methodology, he yields, in our view, to the temptation to mistake the wish for the reality.

II

As Professor Mendel’s fifth and seventh questions are related, we shall deal with them jointly.

There is, of course, not the slightest contradiction between recognition of the notion of general laws of the development of history and the need for concrete study of the facts. To think otherwise, to draw a line of demarcation between law and facts, would mean above all to ascribe some mystical meaning to the law itself, which — if it is actually a scientific law — consists of a reflection of actual reality (i.e., not of individual, isolated facts, but of their totality, the system, embodying the motion of the whole) and at the same time the result of cognition, the logically synthesized consequence of prior study

of facts. It is precisely for this reason that the law, in turn, serves as a criterion “for the selection and the classification of facts” — the general rule followed by all sciences, natural and social, equally. Thus, after having studied the real properties and interconnections among the chemical elements known to science in his day, D. I. Mendeleev formulated his famous “periodic law,” and it was only later, directed by this, that scientists discovered dozens of new elements, filling the empty spaces in Mendeleev’s table. In turn, with the passage of time, Mendeleev’s law gained a more comprehensive interpretation and was modified in the light of the discoveries of the 20th century (radioactivity, above all). Is this not also the situation with the study of society, naturally, with consideration of the features differentiating this sphere of human knowledge and related, particularly, to its social function (of which more below)?

As far as Marxism is concerned, its creators invariably emphasized that their theory is “a guide to investigation,” which does not substitute for that investigation itself. In Lenin’s words, the materialist conception of history was initially a hypothesis of genius, and it became scientific sociology only as the result of Marx’s painstakingly detailed study of a single, specific society — capitalism — an investigation that truly knows no equal in its thoroughness and factual soundness. When we say that the Marxist-Leninist theory is objectively correct, we are thinking not only of the fact that this theory has found confirmation (and not just one time) in social practice, but also of the fact that its founders developed, not speculatively but in the course of the investigation of tangibles, a scientific method that opened the possibility of limitless penetration of the depths of the nature of the historical process and of encompassing it in all its connections and through all mediations.

This last is particularly important to historical scholarship, dealing as it does with the most fluid of all possible subjects, whose development is characterized by rapidity of qualitative changes as well as by an uncommonly large spectrum of diversity. Even the broadest categories, such as “socio-economic system,” ex-

press only the leading trend in development, and not all of reality, which embodies more than one system within any single era and country and does so to an even greater degree when one considers the scope of world history. To this one must add the multiplicity of variants and nuances resulting not from the difference in material conditions alone — which may be identified with the exactness of natural science — but also by the influence of a mass of attendant circumstances, “accidents,” including mistakes, confusions, the personal qualities of historical figures, etc. Marxists understand well the significance to the real course of history of the will, passion, imagination, infatuations, and even illusions of individuals and, even more so, of entire social strata. In history, as in nature, there is much that is unwise and unsuccessful. We take into consideration the surprises of certain turns in history, the “tricks” that it plays, and the “evil irony” inherent in it. The problem of the divergence between optimal and real forms of progress, the failure of the goals and the results of men’s activity in history to coincide, is not only not foreign to Marxism, but it is precisely Marxism that placed that problem on an objective basis, seeing its solution in a materialist interpretation of possibility and actuality, in the dialectical view of progress as “spiral” motion, with return to the past — but at a higher stage of development — with deflections and even entire periods of temporary retrogression and the triumph of reaction, which has on more than one occasion placed the fate of the peoples under threat (the events of World War II and the atrocities of fascism are things that we can still conjure up before our eyes).

Important gnosiological conclusions derive from this. From our viewpoint, both the attempts to isolate the philosophy of history as a distinct field of purely abstract propositions, unchanging with the development of science, and the tendency, deriving from this and similar in essence to a teleological viewpoint, to reduce the study of real things in history to quests for confirmation for postulates advanced beforehand, to description of diverse variants of a process, the nature and conformities to law of which have al-

ready been discovered in their most general, logical form, are equally untenable. As long ago as the 1890’s, Engels criticized those young socialists who employed the word “materialist” right and left, using it as a sort of skeleton-key. “All history must be studied afresh,” (6) wrote Engels at that time, clearly recognizing that materialist historians had before them a vast job of discovering and investigating numerous facts from all epochs and the historical destinies of all countries and peoples. However considerable the volume of work done since then, the task posed by Engels still retains its significance. For society itself, whose motion gives rise to new problems, casts new light on old ones, and does not stand still. The discovery and accumulation of fresh facts (and their number, as all researchers know well, is increasing in geometric progression) lead to further development of historical concepts, give rise to new hypotheses, demand that earlier conclusions and conceptions be compared with them, and, in the final analysis, impel us to refine and to develop the theory itself and to perfect and to update the method of historical research.

The impression that Marxist historians allegedly always have but a single, “canonical,” so to speak, opinion on all historical problems, large and small, is deeply mistaken. Were that the case, our science, our knowledge, would be incapable of developing. Soviet researchers often hold different opinions and conclusions both on particular problems in history (including very significant ones) and with respect to the methods to be used in studying them. One evidence of this is provided by the variety of recent discussions in research institutes, in universities, and in the pages of Soviet journals that, apparently, gave rise to Professor Mendel’s question. But if creative scholarly discussion, in the course of which diverse judgments are expressed, is a law of the development of science, then it is also natural that, as the result of open discussions among equals, those viewpoints whose falsity or incompleteness has been proved by the facts and the advance of thought will fall by the wayside, and at the same time the opinions of men guided by a common world view and

technique for the acquisition of knowledge will converge. The most important result is the more profound interpretation of the problems under discussion. In the final analysis, discussion is not an end in itself, but a means of bringing about an approximation of true, scientific thought to absolute truth, which can never be cognized in its entirety and all at once, but which exists within relative truths and exists in reality. Here we are placing our stress upon the latter, although we never lose sight of the relativity of knowledge and, consequently, of the constant need to seek to verify and refine our views, not being satisfied with what has already been achieved.

III

The question as to the prerequisites and causes of the October Revolution in Russia in the light of historical theory and the theory of historical cognition is exceedingly important. At the same time, there is an obvious contradiction rooted in the very manner in which Professor Mendel poses the question. From the correct notion that the Revolution of 1917 revealed a combination of general conformities to law and features distinctive to the historical development of Russia, the completely unexpected conclusion is drawn: "Thus it would seem that the general theory of Marxism was proven by an exception."

Why by an exception? Is it because the Russian Revolution was the first in the series of triumphant socialist revolutions? But in that case we have the right to pose the question to our opponent: what does he hold to be the rule; what is the content he gives to that concept? Obviously, a different one than that offered by Marx and Engels, who held that social revolution by the proletariat is possible and necessary as the result of the development of the contradictions of capitalism, as the end product of the class struggle in its depths. Was there perhaps no "real" capitalism in Russia, and were forms of class struggle specific to it lacking? When the Narodnik revolutionaries thought thus in

their day, the historical justification for that in the seventies and eighties of the 19th century was offered by the underdeveloped state of capitalist relationships and, above all, by the extreme slowness and camouflaged nature of the growth of capitalism under the conditions of the village subsequent to the Reforms. But confusion forgivable under certain circumstances becomes a prejudice in others.

The Russian Marxists began by demonstrating, particularly in the well-known polemic waged by Plekhanov and Lenin against the feeble imitators of Narodism, that Russia, for all the distinctiveness of her socio-economic and political system, was developing in the same direction as the countries of Western Europe and North America, and that its social structure at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries did not differ in its fundamentals from those of the countries in question. For Marxists, what was decisive in this respect was not the quantitative dominance of particular social systems, but identification of those which, by their accelerated development and concentrated economic strength, placed their imprint upon the entire evolution, modifying the old, archaic forms of the economy and social relationships in one way or another. Where a superficial view observed mere islets of large capitalist production in an ocean of tiny subsistence farms, scientific Marxist analysis, performed primarily by Lenin, discovered the complex process of permeation of commodity-and-money relationships into all pores of life, creating in Russia an entire gamut of transitional stages and forms — from "pure" serfdom to "pure" capitalism — and, accordingly, a colossal army of semi-proletarians, "wage laborers with a piece of land," who comprised the nutritive medium for growth of the industrial proletariat, and who could not fail to be attracted within the orbit of the latter, objectively, in their social struggle. (7)

The overcoming of the illusions of uniqueness had yet another consequence of enormous importance: it enabled the young workers' movement of Russia to base itself upon the experience of the West European proletariat and the socialist movement of those countries which

were most advanced in that respect in the 19th century. Lenin repeatedly commented upon this in offering an explanation of the origin of Bolshevism and the conditions for its victory. But Lenin and the Bolsheviks also understood clearly that to be faithful to one's heritage does not mean to be confined to it. On the contrary, belief in Marxism requires, at each new stage and under each given set of conditions, a search for those distinctive, specific forms in which the general conformities to law of historical development, the universal laws of social revolution, find implementation.

In this connection, we cannot fail to direct attention to the fact that the elevation to the status of an absolute of a historical situation that has already basically passed — the era of ascending development of bourgeois society and the experience and lessons of the European revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries (which were, moreover, understood in a one-sided fashion) — was one of the most deep-going causes for the turn toward opportunism of such prominent representatives of Marxist thought as Kautsky or Plekhanov were in their time. The superiority of Lenin to his opponents and ideological enemies in the socialist movement lay primarily in the fact that he correctly estimated the nature of world development as a whole and the consequences of those changes and shifts, hardly noticeable at the outset, that arose in the capitalist world from the end of the 19th century and led, on the eve of the War of 1914, to a more or less complete form of imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism, in America, Europe, and Asia. When in 1917, in Russia, which had only just overthrown the tsarist monarchy, Lenin called for socialist revolution, the reason for this was not that he was a Russian and wanted socialism for his own people above all. His call for revolution derived from his consideration of the extremely extraordinary and in many respects contradictory conjunction of two decisive factors. One was the objective material readiness of the bourgeois world, including Russia (although it was in a number of respects one of the most backward of the capitalist countries), for social revolution, which at

this stage of development could actually bring about socialization of the means of production and exchange in the key branches of the national economy, i.e., for a revolution of such a nature in which satisfaction of the immediate interests of the exploiting masses was possible along a road to socialism. The horrors of war, the military defeats, the destruction and hunger, only accelerated the revolutionary explosion but naturally were incapable in themselves of defining its character, essence, and prospects. Otherwise one might readily conclude that the situation was ripe for such a revolution during, say, the Thirty Years' War.

But the possibility of a socialist revolution is not equivalent to its reality. It becomes a reality by the efforts of the advanced class which possesses the determination to make sacrifices for the sake of victory and is capable of uniting around itself at the decisive moment the majority of the people. It was precisely in Russia at that time that the working class possessed these qualities. It was precisely Russia that was the first country in which the proletariat had succeeded in gaining the role of hegemon in the revolution. It was precisely in this sense that it was not a backward, but the most advanced, of all countries — a political factor that had its socio-economic roots and at the same time contained a fundamentally new "economic potential": the possibility of accelerated triumph over backwardness and of movement toward progress on a socialist foundation.

Let us give the floor to Lenin himself and cite his statement in the course of a public polemic with the Mensheviks and other petty-bourgeois democrats. In July 1917, after the defeat of the proletariat and the temporary triumph of the counterrevolution, he wrote: "The objective situation is as follows: the overwhelming majority of the country's population is petty-bourgeois in its way of living and even more in its thinking. But big capital rules in the country, through the banks and the syndicates above all. In the country there is an urban proletariat advanced enough to follow its own road but not yet capable of enlisting the majority of the semi-proletarians on its side." (8) Proceeding from

these premises, from an analysis of all aspects of an uncommonly diverse and rapidly changing reality, Lenin foresaw the inevitability of a new upsurge of revolution that would bring complete understanding to the masses and a final break between them and the ruling classes. The proletariat would not triumph, he held, because the country was at the edge of catastrophe, but because only the triumph of the proletariat could save the country from a catastrophe. The Russian bourgeoisie was condemned to bankruptcy not only because all past history had tied it to the living corpse of Russian serfdom, but also because the tasks facing Russia could no longer be resolved by the usual means of bourgeois revolutions that did not go beyond their confines. (9) In Lenin's eyes, the proletarian revolutionaries were the Jacobins of a new social order — the epoch of machine industry and railroads, monopolies, and finance capital. "In the 20th century, in a capitalist country," he repeated on the eve of the October uprising, "it is impossible to be a revolutionary democrat if you are afraid to go on to socialism." (10)

The Bolsheviks were consistent democrats of this order. On the contrary, fear of the new and lack of capacity for revolutionary creativity were far from the least important factors in the decline of the Mensheviks and in their betrayal not only of socialism but of democracy as well. Proclaiming in words that they were partisans of the socialist revolution in Russia, in reality they held its success to be dependent upon circumstances of so ideal a nature as to be simply impossible in actuality. Here, for example, is how a Russian Menshevik, B. Kibrik, envisaged in 1917 the transition from capitalism to socialism: "We hold that the downfall of the bourgeois world — the triumph over the ruling classes — can occur only when the productive forces of the country have attained the proper development, when capitalist society has attained the appropriate level of development, when it reaches the point of negating itself, when the middle class falls apart, when the apex of society will truly consist of a tiny group in whose hands all power over the world will be concentrated." He further added: "We conceive of

this overturn as not even occurring on a national level, but consider it to be an international affair. . . ." (11) When put in this manner, the possibility of socialist revolution is pushed into a future so remote as to be out of sight, even assuming this to have any real meaning at all.

In practice, the consequence of these views would have been the preservation of the authority of the propertied classes, which preferred to throttle the revolution "with the bony hand of hunger and mass poverty" and to invite "the German watchman," placing Petrograd beneath his feet rather than yield its monopoly of property and power. As we know, the dispute between the Bolsheviks and social reformists over the possibility and necessity of proletarian revolution in a single country and specifically in Russia was resolved by historical experience, a fact which should be faced up to by certain Western sociologists and historians (for example, Sidney Hook in the USA) who continue to repeat their worn-out arguments with respect to the "illegitimacy" of the Russian Revolution.

Of course, the Revolution of 1917 and the subsequent history of our country had distinctive features related to its historical past and its position as a pioneer in paving a new road in social development. Naturally, the translation of theoretical postulates into practical language demanded special efforts and unceasing quests that were not always unaccompanied by error. The Soviet people had to experience gigantic difficulties and to bear enormous sacrifices. But Marxists have never asserted that all revolutions must repeat the Russian experience fully and in detail. It is worth recalling that even after October, Lenin drew a distinction between the significance of our revolution in the broad sense, in the sense of influence upon the development of the entire world, and its significance in the narrow sense of the word, understanding by the latter the historical inevitability of repeating some of its fundamental characteristics. History has rendered this formulation concrete. It has confirmed and supplemented it by the example of revolutionary and socialist transformations in other countries. Moreover, the very experience of the first land of socialism, taken

together with the economic and political support that it has given and is giving to peoples entering upon the path of building a new society, enables them to attain their goals at lower costs, and it provides the revolutionary forces with the impulse for new creative quests. This confirms once again the validity of one of the fundamental propositions of the philosophy of Marxism: no abstract truths exist, truth is always concrete, and the reality of the universal is embodied, with all the richness of its internal content, in its concreteness.

IV

The questions numbered 8 to 10 on Professor Mendel's list are among the most persistent — we would even say, traditional — confusions of our opponents, to whom all ideology is subjective and the concepts of the objectivity and the party-mindedness [partiinnost'] of scholarship incompatible always and under all conditions. By and large these are sincere confusions, but not infrequently — and it is not worth concealing this — they are also forms of conscious defense of a particular ideology, specifically the bourgeois ideology, in its struggle with the communist ideology. If every ideology is subjective, then does it not make sense to say of its truth: "All are right and none are right"? This position reflects, of course, a lack of confidence in the correctness of one's own views and their objectivity. The complexity of the collisions in the contemporary world, and the contradictoriness of cognition itself, and, finally, the special difficulties of historical cognition feed this lack of confidence and to some degree serve as a justification thereof. Yet we cannot but object most strongly to elevating this pessimistic, relativist view to a universal, inasmuch as it leads inevitably, whether Professor Mendel likes it or not, to denial of the possibility of any kind of scientific knowledge, including historical knowledge. This is a question significantly affecting not only professional historians, but society as a whole, for which the study of history is a form of self-knowledge and stimulus to action.

Therefore there is reason to deal with Professor Mendel's questions in fuller detail. To be clear on the subject at issue, it is necessary to render the concepts themselves more precisely and to review briefly the initial Marxist postulates on this score. Ideology, or the totality of views in the realm of politics, law, morality, philosophy, religion, and art, is the spiritual expression of the fundamental material interests and economic conditions of life of classes and social groups. This does not mean that ideologues of a given social group must necessarily be representatives of that group alone. Often they come from other strata of the population. For example, educated intellectuals, noblemen or bourgeois in origin, have often served, and serve today, as ideologists of the working class. Let us go further: ideology, from our point of view, reflects economic interests only in the final analysis. It has its own specific conformities to law, as well as a substantial independence from the conditions of life that give it birth. This is conditioned primarily by the fact that the movement of thought has as its direct source "the material of ideas," its own and that inherited from its precursors. Not to consider this means to descend to vulgar sociology, against which Marxists have always fought. Finally, the class character of ideology does not exclude the existence therein of content common to an entire people or to all mankind, merely refracted in one way or another through the consciousness of a given class. All this vastly complicates analysis both of the true class meaning of a given ideological phenomenon and its interrelation with the objective conditions of the life of society.

When speaking of the incompatibility of concepts of the class origin of ideology and the confidence of Marxists in the objectivity of the materialist explanation of history, Mr. Mendel has in mind, essentially, the question of the truth of Marx's theory. One can answer this question only by determining whether the content of the theory accords with the principal trends in the development of human civilization, whose actual bearers are particular classes.

Ideology can reflect reality with varying de-

grees of accuracy and completeness, while not ceasing, in so doing, to perform the function of the social conscience of its time and class. History has known forms of consciousness, ideas, and concepts in which, despite the fact that they were illusory and untenable in the scientific sense, they reflected the forward motion of reality itself (various forms of religious heresies and social utopias, for example). But the general rule, particularly as we approach the present day, is that the degree to which ideology is scientific depends upon the progressiveness of the class and social group it represents, and, on the other hand, it is essential and even a condition of this progressiveness that the self-awareness of the class be scientific.

Marx and Engels sometimes employed the concept "ideology" in a negative sense to denote a distorted reflection of social existence in the notions of particular classes and their theoreticians. However, neither Marx nor Engels ever dreamed of asserting that men's consciousness of their interests and the related concrete tasks were incapable under all conditions of assuming a scientific form and could not instill in theoreticians a justified conviction in the correctness of their conclusions. Marxists hold the ideologists of the revolutionary bourgeoisie in high esteem precisely because they were able to express the interests of a rising class, progressive in a given historical period, in a form causing social knowledge to approximate objective reality. It is equally conforming to law that the possibility of most adequate reflection of this reality attaches to the ideology of the proletariat, the class whose very position requires it to be fearless in the face of the truth and to have an interest in knowing it to the full.

On the other hand, the obvious fact that social consciousness as a rule lags behind social life does not at all mean that it is merely a pale copy of reality. History convinces us that scientific thought is capable of advancing to a greater or lesser degree ahead of man's practical activity, i.e., of expressing the matured need to change social existence prior to the time when this necessity takes on the form of mass action. The thinkers of the Renaissance and the Enlighten-

ment lauded and idealized the form of bourgeois society. Marx and Engels discovered the road to socialism long before it began to become embodied in reality.

At the same time, it cannot be denied that the question posed by Mr. Mendel reflects a certain difficulty. In fact, if we hold only such a content of our notions as corresponds to things and processes "in themselves" to be true, then is it possible to speak of the truth of an ideal? If that which distinguishes an ideal is the fact that it reflects not only what is but what must be — that toward which men strive — may an ideal be regarded as a reflection of reality?

Marxism resolves this question by proceeding primarily from an analysis of the diverse and contradictory nature of reality itself, which, as noted above, always contains elements of the future (long concealed in hidden form) that are incorporated in the present and at the same time negate it. When Marxists state that they are convinced of the inevitability of the replacement of capitalism by socialism, they proceed from the notion that the "necessity" is determined by the entire mechanism of development and distinctive features of the capitalist mode of production. It has not only created the material prerequisites of its own negation, but has shaped the social forces whose acts accomplish the historic necessity for the new society. Resting upon these real elements of the future, Marx and Engels created, in its most general outline, the scientific ideal of a communist system. It incorporates not only the notion of social property as the basis for a new way of life, but also the concept of a high level of development of production forces, of an existence of material abundance for each human being, of a broad participation by the masses in the administration of society, of a genuine freedom for creative activity in all spheres of life, of a purification of man's moral features from the faults that deprave him which stem from the competitive struggle and the morality of individualism. Thus, Marx and Engels posed the question of communism as "a natural scientist would pose the question of the development of a new, say, biological variety, once we know that it arose

in a given manner and is evolving in a particular direction." (12)

Therefore, progressive ideals also constitute, at this stage of progress, not only an anticipation, a definition of an ultimate goal, but also a movement leading to a goal, and, moreover, the movement of thought and practical action in their complex, dialectical unity. Communists have more than once been accused of having allegedly betrayed the principles of Marx by adapting his general conception to transient facts and temporary interests. But this indictment does not stand up to criticism. From the standpoint of Marxism, the counterposing of "interests" or "contemporary tasks" to the ideal is invalid for the simple reason that the very development of communist ideals is explained by the development of "interests," understanding this term not in the narrow sense of egotism but in the broad sense of the social economy and social relationships. We understand perfectly well that the ideal of communism cannot be outlined in all its details and that, furthermore, it cannot be attained at one fell swoop, bypassing a series of intermediate stages. If, in the USSR, the emphasis is presently laid upon the economic factor or, as we have come to phrase it, upon the creation of the basis for communist society in material goods and technology, this does not at all mean that the other conditions for advance to communism are disregarded, including some which are no less important: political conditions and those in the realm of ideas — the development of socialist democracy and modification of social consciousness, psychology, and norms of behavior. A broader conformity to law also obtains here: the interaction of goal and movement is not exhausted when it is rendered concrete and defined more precisely as it is approached. Reality, in turn, stands in need of checking against the ideal and being brought into accord with it (in this we see, particularly, the function of socialist theory and the policies based thereon). Understanding and struggling toward immediate goals in this fashion, Soviet people protect the future of the entire communist movement. Therefore there is nought of mystification, utopia, or idol-building in adher-

ence to a final goal.

V

Does the foregoing bear a relationship to historical scholarship? Doubtless, inasmuch as the latter is part of ideology, it is one of the forms of social consciousness. While the historian is concerned with the past, solution of problems with which mankind is presently concerned is by no means the least of his reasons for looking backward.

There would appear to be no marked differences between Professor Mendel and ourselves in terms of recognizing the pertinence of historical knowledge to the present. But he is dubious about the possibility of objective historical research if a writer who holds definite social and political convictions defends his convictions and seeks to have them accepted by broad strata of society, by the entire people. Let us divide the question into two parts. To begin with, let us note (and our opponent will hardly object to this) that "the requirement of service to society" is accepted by far from all representatives of non-Marxist historiography. But does this mean that they do not serve their society — in one way or another, directly or indirectly — even if that society is a socially contradictory entity, in which case this service is to a particular part of that entity or, in other words, to a particular class? We know that the pronouncement that historical knowledge is "above classes" has on more than one occasion represented honest confusion and even an attempt on the part of a scholar to defend his right to dispassionate scientific research against reaction. Of course, we shall not lump together this kind of confusion with the pretensions to being apolitical that manifest themselves most frequently at those times and places in which it becomes particularly disadvantageous to expose the relationship of historical views to the present day and to the dominant ideology and politics. How can we not recall, for example, that L. Ranke, the recognized head of 19th-century "objective" historiography, who argued for the transformation of history into a "pure

science," was himself quite far removed from the principles that he propounded and quite definite in his own political — reactionary and Prussophile — sympathies, when he proceeded to concrete research. He was prepared to betray the requirement of rigorous selection and criticism of sources, if use of a source would make it possible, for example, to slander the ideologist and leader of the rebel peasantry, Thomas Münzer. It is curious that one of the major German bourgeois historians, himself a product of Ranke's school, Heinrich von Sybel, found it necessary to dissociate himself from the idea of the political neutrality of scholarship. Every historian, he wrote, "has his color, his religious, atheist, liberal or conservative convictions. Historians belong to various parties, but there is no such thing as a nonpartisan historian." (13)

The question, it would appear, is not that of subjective recognition of partisanship [partiinost'], i.e., of the social function of historical knowledge, but that of what is, at the given moment and in the given conditions, the concrete content of that function, the real content of historical ideas, conceptions, notions: do they coincide with the progressive trend in the development of society itself, do they express this objective tendency or do they express (consciously or unconsciously) the other, reactionary or conservative trend, which also is rooted in reality, in that sphere of the life of society that gravitates to the past, to the world that is retreating but not surrendering? Marxist historians openly regard their activity as part of the revolutionary, organized, planned activity of the people in the name of the triumph of a new social system. We stand consciously on the position of partisanship [partiinost'] of historical knowledge, inasmuch as this creates a constant interaction between the experience of the past and the struggle and creative work of the present day.

Does this interfere with rigorous historical research? Here we return once again to the problem, already treated earlier, of the specifics of the reflection of reality in scholarly research into the past. How often do we hear from the mouths of our opponents the appeal: reproduce the facts as such, without adding to them

our own views, and ignore the world view of the researcher. But this is a clearly unsound demand, one that is unsound, moreover, in any case — whether it is directed to the social scientist or the natural scientist. When a biologist discovers for the first time under the lens of the microscope a new variety of life, or when an experimental physicist "intercepts" a new elementary particle with the aid of ultra-powerful accelerators, is there not invisibly present, in this mystery of discovery, all the prior history of science — not only in the form of the instrumentation, but also in the form of ideas or hypotheses whose confirmation or reexamination was the purpose for which the experiment was performed, and in the form of the accumulated knowledge which reduces the distance between observation, description, and generalization? The difference between social and historical knowledge from that in the natural sciences lies purely in the fact that the historian, on the one hand, is as a rule deprived of the opportunity to observe directly the object under study and to verify the correctness of his conclusions with the aid of direct experimentation. On the other hand — and this is what is more significant — whereas the natural scientist (whatever changes may have been introduced into this evolution by the sciences and the production experiences of human beings) always faces the world of nature, which is external to human society, in historical research society comes face to face with itself. Therefore, a historical fact, which possesses an objective basis independent of the knowledge of the researcher, is at the same time doubly "subjective." We are dealing with sources that are most frequently colored by a particular ideology and reflect some fragment or aspect of socially diverse reality (how, often, for example, is the people, the oppressed mass, "silent" in monuments of the past, although the reason, of course, is not at all that it was silent in real life). (14)

In turn, the historian, who encounters numerous facts, large and small, significant and insignificant, is always engaged in selection, in which he is guided by some criterion. First it is the problem under study itself that serves this purpose. But the fact is that the very choice or, to

be more precise, the posing of the problem is determined by that which is usually termed the researcher's interest, and while the scholar's personality plays no small role in this, it still does not have decisive significance. Here the dictates of his time come into action. In the final analysis, each of us answers questions posed by our day and gains our most powerful impetus from it — not only as a man and a citizen but as a student of the past, inasmuch as the most significant characteristics of all previous history have been embodied and crystallized in the modern world and contemporary man. Who will contend that this embodiment was in the form of some "arithmetic mean" distributed identically among all the existing classes and societies? Finally, even the primary operation of discovery of facts is conducted by the historian, often unwittingly, from the standpoint of a conception that has earlier taken shape, and in accordance with the method he follows — a circumstance whose role increases in the course of the research and the incorporation of individual facts into a complex historical entity. We do not at all disregard the significance of other facts, such as the volume of the available sources, the level of contemporary knowledge and, finally, the talent of the scholar. But the entire evolution of historical knowledge persuades us that the determining conditions for the objectivity, factual authenticity, depth, and comprehensiveness of research consists of the nature of the relationship of the historian to the reality of his day, the nature of his world view, and the degree to which his method is scientific. This is why conflict of ideas in the field of history is not something extraneous to the strictly scholarly aspect of science, but is an organically necessary element of historical cognition, inasmuch as the latter is moved, as is everything in the world, by the inner contradictions characteristic of it, reflecting in its own way the contradictions of history itself. Of course, this is more difficult to observe so long as we are in the realm of specialized researches and problems. But when the discussion turns to major generalizations and where science enters its most complex sphere, the sphere of historical

synthesis, the role of the world view is revealed there with particular force. Can it be considered as an accident that precisely this sphere is the source of insuperable difficulties for non-Marxist historiography, which many of its contemporary spokesmen note with alarm?

Marxist historiography (particularly if we confine ourselves to the professional sphere) is considerably younger than bourgeois. It was born in the struggle against social oppression. The socio-political acuteness, along with the scientific nature of this method, made it possible for this new science to advance rapidly, primarily in resolving cardinal problems of sociology and human history. This, for example, is the evaluation placed upon the Soviet World History [Vsemirnaia istoriia] not only by those who share our view but by certain non-Marxist critics, including American. We do not recall this for the purpose of evading recognition of our shortcomings or omissions with respect, particularly, to the aspect touched upon by Professor Mendel. Yes, there was a definite period in the formation of our historiography under conditions of fierce class and military conflict with the old world, when the times were often interpreted in the spirit of one-dimensional and naive sociologizing, a "projection back" into the past of current politics. There were even more serious cases of departure from historical truth, the replacement of precise class analysis by arbitrary evaluations under the pretext of falsely understood political necessity. But every scholar of good conscience will have to recognize that the infantile disorders of the growth of our discipline, like the deviations from the Marxist-Leninist principle of the unity and the identity of objectivity and partisanship [partiinnost'], are not the rules, but conflict with it. As proof we may cite the multifaceted criticism to which Soviet historical literature of recent years has subjected the errors and distortions related to the cult of Stalin's personality.

However, the lessons of the past do not at all incline us to conclude to depart "further from politics." On the contrary, we are convinced that never has it been so essential for science, and we mean precisely science, equipped with

a correct, objective method for the study of historical reality, to intervene actively in the reality of the present day. Naturally, the purpose should not be abstract moralizing and ratiocination, nor should crude analogies and unjustified historical parallels be employed. The task we face is another: that of equipping mankind (which is today resolving the most complex problems that it has ever had to resolve) with ideas — an understanding of the laws of social development — and with a morally valid, sober confidence in the superiority of the forces embodying progress and the fact that even in the present atomic age men are not the helpless victims of the “fates” of history, but are its creators. This is why Marxist historians and sociologists now attach special significance to the struggle against all possible forms of historical fatalism. While rejecting the fashionable cyclical structures with their idealist mysticism and pessimistic prophecies, we do not at all regard as secondary the problem of recurrence, whether on the theoretical plane or that of social practice, from the standpoint of possibilities and variants of development not utilized in the past and quests for more direct, “economical” roads to progress. Finally, the gigantic revolutionary changes occurring in the world, sharply strengthening the interconnections between the development of individual countries and the process of forward motion of mankind as a whole, and the involvement in active historical life of peoples who for a long period were regarded by their colonial oppressors as merely objects in history: all the foregoing renders exceptionally timely for the contemporary Marxist methodology of history the problem of universality, the interrelationship between the international and the national, the general and the particular, demanding intensive work and greater differentiation than in the past of the pertinent categories and concepts, and the improvement of the logical apparatus of science in that direction.

If the role of historical scholarship in the life of society is to be understood in that fashion, the artificiality of counterposing “rigorous objectivity” to “propaganda,” i.e., the dissemination among the masses of the conclusions to which

historical scholarship has come, becomes obvious. Do not our opponents sometimes, perhaps unconsciously, yield to the ruses of those people who see — and, moreover, with every reason from their point of view — a serious danger in the fact that the mass of the population and, above all, the youth, are learning to see beyond the external chaos of contradictory events to their real meaning, the connection with the past and the future, i.e., the general historical line of development? Is it valid always to give a negative meaning to the concept “propaganda”? This would clearly seem to be unjustified, because there is propaganda and propaganda. There is propaganda upholding the genuine emancipation of man, and there is propaganda for freedom of exploitation, the inevitability and desirability of dividing society into an “inert” mass capable only of implementation and mechanical repetition, and an elite of “management,” “technocrats,” “organizers,” possessing a monopoly of leadership, creativity, and power. There is the propaganda of peace and humanism, and the propaganda of the “right to murder” and all sorts of racist abominations. Our descendants can hardly be expected to view with approval the conduct of those representatives of scholarship who today prove unwilling to engage in struggle against reactionary propaganda and to place their knowledge — consciously and with conviction — at the service of the genuine, fundamental interests of their people and of all mankind.

More than a century ago, our fellow-countryman, the young thinker and revolutionary A. I. Herzen, threw a challenge at the “Buddhists of science” who attempted to conceal themselves in the supra-historical sphere of allegedly dispassionate abstractions: “Who grants them the right to exchange our life, with its turbulent passions, in which one must work and sometimes perish, for their spacious cathedral in which one does nothing but enjoys honor?” (15)

Has that reproach lost its validity today?

* * *

We have incorporated the replies to questions 13 and 14 into the text of our response to ques-

tions 8 through 10 on Professor Mendel's list. Questions 11 and 12 fall into the category of those that have recently been under lively discussion by Soviet scholars. Lack of space makes it difficult to detail here the various points of view and argumentation. A certain idea of this may be obtained from the essay volume, History and Sociology [Istoriia i sotsiologiia], issued by the Nauka Press (comprising the stenographic report of a discussion held in January 1964). More up-to-date data may be gained from our theoretical and historical journals. (16)

We do not flatter ourselves with the hope that we can readily persuade all our opponents of our correctness and, moreover, change the convictions of those who hold entirely opposite views and methodological principles. But the bringing of clarity is always a plus in scholarly debate and the struggle of ideas.

Footnotes

1) Marx to L. Kugelmann, July 11, 1868, in Marx and Engels, Soch., Vol. 32, pp. 461-462.

2) E. H. Carr, What Is History? (The G. M. Trevelyan Lectures Delivered in the University of Cambridge), January-March, 1961, London, 1962, p. 37 [p. 52 in the American edition, published by A. A. Knopf, 1962].

3) P. Zagorin, "Carl Becker on History. Professor Becker's Two Histories: a Skeptical Fallacy," The American Historical Review, 1956, Vol. LXII, No. 1, p. 6.

4) Marx to P. V. Annenkov, Dec. 28, 1846, in Marx and Engels, Soch., Vol. 27, p. 403.

5) Hegel, Filosofiia istorii, Soch., Vol. VIII, Moscow, 1935, p. 54.

6) Engels to K. Schmidt, Aug. 5, 1890, in Marx and Engels, Soch., Vol. 37, p. 371.

7) In recent years, Soviet historians have engaged in a lively discussion of the entire complex of questions pertaining to the general traits and features of Russia's socio-economic development which, in the broad sense of the word, was the historical prologue to the October Revolution. See the contributions to these discussions in the books: Osobennosti agrarnogo

stroia Rossii v period imperializma, Moscow, 1962; Ob osobennostiakh imperializma v Rossii, Moscow, 1963; Rabochii klass i rabochee dvizhenie v Rossii. 1861-1917, Moscow, 1966. A historiographic survey of certain of these discussions is provided in A. L. Sidorov's "Nekotorye problemy razvitiia rossiiskogo kapitalizma v sovetskoi istoricheskoi nauke," Voprosy istorii, 1961, No. 12, in the book by K. N. Tarnovskii, Sovetskaia istoriografiia rossiiskogo imperializma, Moscow, 1964, and in the collection Sovetskaia istoricheskaiia nauka ot XX k XXII s'ezdu KPSS. Istoriia SSSR, Moscow, 1962.

8) V. I. Lenin, "Tri krizisa," PSS, Vol. 32, p. 432.

9) We draw attention to a single circumstance: as early as the eve of World War II, 44,500,000 dessiatines of privately held lands, primarily in the hands of landlords (approximately half of all the lands belonging to landlords) were mortgaged to banks, including 30,600,000 to banks founded on stock-purchase; in other words, they were actually under the direct control of the financial oligarchy (see Statistika dolgosrochnogo kredita v Rossii. 1915 g., Petrograd, 1915). Thus, without nationalization of the banks, no radical agrarian reform — nationalization of the land and destruction of the most important vestige of medievalism, the latifundia of the nobility — would have been possible.

10) V. I. Lenin, "Groziashchaia katastrofa i kak s nei borot'sia," PSS, Vol. 34, p. 190. Also see the resolution of the 6th Congress of the RSDRP(b), "Ob ekonomicheskom polozhenii" (August 1917), in Shestoi s'ezd RSDRP (bol'shevikov), Minutes, Moscow, 1958, pp. 257-260.

11) Izvestiia Moskovskogo Soveta Rabochikh deputatov, April 28, 1917.

12) V. I. Lenin, "Gosudarstvo i revoliutsiia," PSS, Vol. 33, p. 85.

13) H. V. Sybel, "Ueber den Stand der neuen deutschen Geschichtsschreibung," in Kleine historische Schriften, 3rd ed., Vol. I, Stuttgart, 1880, p. 355.

14) Interesting thoughts in this respect have been offered by a Polish historian: C. Bobinska,

Historyk fakt, metoda, Warsaw, 1964.

15) A. I. Gertsen, Sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh, Vol. III, Moscow, 1954, p. 69.

16) Iu. A. Levada, "Tochnye metody v sotsial'nom issledovanii," Voprosy filosofii, 1964, No. 9; P. V. Tavanets and V. S. Shvyrev, "Nekorye problemy logiki nauchnogo poznaniia," Voprosy filosofii, 1962, No. 10; V. A. Glushkov, "Gnoseologicheskaia priroda informatsionnogo modelirovaniia," Voprosy filosofii, 1963, No. 10; P. P. Maslov, "Modelirovanie v sotsiologicheskikh issledovaniakh," Voprosy filosofii, 1964, No. 3; I. D. Koval'chenko, V. A. Ustinov, Z. G. Karpenko, and Iu. Iu. Kakhk, "Novuiu vychislitel'nuuiu tekhniku — na sluzhbu istoricheskoi nauke," Istoriia SSSR, 1964, No. 1 [translated in Soviet Studies in History, Vol. III, No. 2]; A. V. Gul'ga, "O predmete istoricheskoi nauki," Voprosy istorii, 1964, No. 4 [translated in Soviet Studies in History, Vol. III, No. 4]; I. D. Koval'chenko and V. A. Ustinov, "Primenenie elektronnykh vychislitel'nykh mashin v istoricheskoi nauke," Voprosy istorii, 1964, No. 5; M. A. Barg,

"Strukturnyi analiz v istoricheskom issledovanii," Voprosy filosofii, 1964, No. 10; volume on "Metodologicheskie i istoriograficheskie voprosy istoricheskoi nauki," Trudy Tomskogo universiteta, Vol. 173, No. II, 1964; V. A. Ustinov, "Primenenie vychislitel'nykh mashin v istoricheskoi nauke," Moscow, 1964; F. Konstantinov and V. Kelle, "Istoricheskii materializm — marksistskaia sotsiologiia," Kommunist, 1965, No. 1; A. Berg and I. Novik, "Razvitie poznaniia i kibernetika," Kommunist, 1965, No. 2; Kh. Momdzhian, "Filosofiia obshchestvennogo razvitiia," Kommunist, 1965, No. 4; Iu. Levada, "Kiberneticheskie metody v sotsiologii," Kommunist, 1965, No. 4; O. Iakhot, "Zakon bol'shikh chisel i sotsial'naia statistika," Voprosy filosofii, 1965, No. 12; A. Ia. Gurevich, "Obshchii zakon i konkretnaia zakonomernost' v istorii," Voprosy istorii, 1965, No. 8 [translated in Soviet Studies in History, Vol. V, No. 1]; M. Ia. Gefter and E. E. Pechuro, "Metodologiia istorii," Sovetskaia istoricheskaiia entsiklopediia, Vol. 9, Moscow, 1966, and other sources.

Asiatic Mode of Production

Voprosy istorii, 1966, No. 5, pp. 77-90

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THREE MODELS FOR THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF PRECAPITALIST SOCIETIES

(On the Problem of the Asiatic Mode of Production)

Marxist historians know well that the problem of the Asiatic mode of production is by no means new. The idea that the mode of production and the characteristics of the process of history in the lands of the East often differed very markedly from those of Europe (or, to be more exact, of Western Europe) was expressed by Marx more than a century ago. (1) As specialized research has shown, (2) Marx's ideas on the Asiatic mode of production took shape gradually and were closely related to the level of knowledge attained by mid-19th century historical scholarship. Nonetheless, Marx's analysis and the conclusions that he reached with respect to the distinctive nature of the development of the lands of the East and the reasons for this distinction retain their significance even to this day.

The problem of the Asiatic mode of production has today again become a point on the agenda, and this indicates the pressing need to interpret anew the knowledge accumulated, from the standpoint of the development of the discipline

today. The factual material presented in the writings of many Soviet Orientalists clearly contradicts the hitherto prevailing concept that the slaveholding mode of production was dominant beyond any question in the Ancient East. For example, Academician A. I. Tiumenev, in his monograph The State Economy of Ancient Sumer [Gosudarstvennoe khoziaistvo Drevnego Shumer] (Moscow and Leningrad, 1956), demonstrated persuasively that the principal producers in the state economy of ancient Sumer differed markedly in many respects from slaves in the genuine meaning of that term as it applied to "Graeco-Roman antiquity." Nonetheless, a year later he wrote that it was precisely these producers who determined the slaveholding nature of that society as a whole, (3) a formulation with which one can hardly agree. A special study of agrarian relationships in China in the Chou dynasty has shown that slave labor was hardly employed at all in the agriculture of ancient China and that both the "elite" of Chou

China and the slaves who served them lived off the labor of the members of the peasant communes. (4) Students of ancient India are very familiar with the fact that the slaves, who in any case were not very numerous, enjoyed considerable rights and that it was not they but the members of the lowest castes (who were not formally slaves at all) who were regarded as the most exploited and looked-down-upon stratum of society. (5) It was not slaves but dependent agriculturalists who were the principal producers in ancient Egypt, in Assyria and in other societies of the Ancient East as well. (6) Articles have begun to appear in the press with increasing frequency, whose authors have directed the attention of researchers to the fact that early slaveholding and early feudal societies resemble each other very closely indeed, and that primitive society was quite capable of developing directly into feudal society, bypassing the slaveholding system. (7) These conclusions, combined with the increasing flow of studies of social structure and economic relationships in various societies of Asia, Africa, and America, were the occasion for the revival of the problem of the Asiatic mode of production. In an article on this problem, Iu. I. Semenov holds that what existed in the Ancient East was a "debt-slavery" or "pre-feudal debt-slavery" mode of production. (8) Although these terms seem lame to us, and the suggested answer to the problem appears hardly subject to proof, it must be granted that the critical portion of Semenov's article is quite persuasive. Its author is profoundly right in the sense that the factual data adduced in the work of many specialists contradict the obligatory conclusion to the effect that slaveholding was dominant in the lands of the Ancient East. This same notion underlies the article, "On the Asiatic Mode of Production" [Ob aziatskom sposobe proizvodstva] by Iu. M. Garushiants.

The contradiction between the numerous facts accumulated by scholarship and the level of theoretical interpretation thereof presently attained has naturally led to the result that it is not only or not so much the Asiatic mode of production itself that has become central to the attention of the present discussion as more general prob-

lems — the conformities to law and features of development of precapitalist societies, both those of ancient times and those still existing (as, for example, in many African countries), and a whole set of interrelated problems in the history of precapitalist societies. The research material assembled is quite sufficient to permit a new examination and evaluation of the most distinctive features and conformities to law in the development of the diverse peoples of the world and to permit an identification of the major trends of development common to various groups of societies. To do this is not easy. It will apparently require the efforts of many specialists and long years of work. However, in order that these efforts and years not be expended in vain, it is essential that specialists in the history of the different precapitalist societies not be confined to a single obligatory model, but that they be able to make use in their work of differing models valid from a Marxist point of view, all the more so as such models already exist and do not have to be invented. These models were developed by Marx more than a century ago so profoundly and persuasively that they are entirely capable of serving today as the basis for analysis of any precapitalist society. Marx, in his work Precapitalist Economic Formations, subjected to careful and comprehensive analysis the conditions of existence and the typical features of internal structure of the three major forms of primitive communes — Asiatic, antique, and German — whose development from the primary (pre-class) to secondary (class) structures led to unlike results. In speaking of the causes that gave rise to these differences, Marx devoted principal attention to the study of forms of communal property that "depend in part upon the natural attributes of the tribe, and in part upon the economic relationships already existing between the tribe and the land as its property, i.e., whereby it appropriates the fruits of the earth through its labor; the latter in turn will depend upon the climate, the physical composition of the soil, the physically determined method of exploiting it, and the relationship to hostile or neighboring tribes and to the changes resulting from migra-

tion, historical events, etc.” (9) In other words, the distinctive nuances of the various primitive communes were, in Marx’s opinion, determined by a series of factors — primarily natural — which in their totality determined the subsequent dominance of a particular form of property and the establishment of a given type of secondary structure. In what, concretely, was this manifested?

The Commune of the Antique Type. Here, under the conditions of the Mediterranean, nature was kind to man. The land in itself posed “no obstacles to relating to it as to the inorganic nature of a living individual, as toward his workshop, as toward an implement of labor, and the object of labor and the means of livelihood of the subject.” (10) Under these conditions, the property of the individual person, according to Marx, did not necessarily have to be mediated via the work of the entire group. In the commune of the antique type, each of its members was a free property holder in the land, and it was precisely for this reason that he enjoyed all the rights of a member of the commune. The firm unity of the antique commune and the necessity for uniting its members into a single closely welded group were determined, in Marx’s opinion, primarily by military and political reasons: “The difficulties encountered by the commune came only from other communes that either had previously seized the land or threatened to seize the land of this commune. . . . This is why the commune of families was organized at the outset along military lines as an organization of warriors and for military purposes, and why such a form of organization is one of the conditions for its existence as a property holder.” (11) It is understandable that this required that all the members of the commune continue to be free landowners enjoying equal rights. In the absence of this condition, the antique commune would not have existed, and this, in turn, was the guarantee of the democratic nature of the antique type of commune and prevented the subordination of some of its members to others. Moreover, when the traditional status quo was threatened, the commune was able to find within itself the strength to resist that. This was expressed,

specifically, in the radical reforms of Solon in Athens and Petelius in Rome, resulting in the prohibition of debt-enslavement of one’s fellow-citizens. (12) At the same time, these very conditions were highly favorable to establishing a sharp line of demarcation between the citizen members of the communes, enjoying all rights, and the outsiders, having no rights, who became slaves.

Thus, the conditions of the antique commune provided scope for the development of class contradictions of a slaveholding nature, (13) while the essential prerequisites did not exist then for development of the class contradictions of another order — debt-enslavement of one’s fellow-citizens. As a consequence, the tendency to intensification of exploitation of slave foreigners, i.e., toward the slaveholding mode of production, became dominant, and this resulted in the appearance of the “classical” antique slavery.

The German commune differed substantially from the antique commune. Neither the military-cum-political nor the economic factors obtaining in northern and central Europe rendered the successful functioning of the individual at his work dependent upon his membership in a tightly knit group. The German tribes settled over large territories and engaged in an extensive economy, with the consequence that their communes were structurally loose: “Among the Germans, whose individual heads of family settled in forests at large distances from each other, the commune, even when considered in its purely external aspects, exists, in each individual case, only as assemblies of its members.” The commune and communal property — ager publicus — among the Germans were, in essence, themselves mediated by the existence of individual families, inasmuch as “each individual house was an economic entity.” (14) Thus, Marx regarded the patriarchal German family, living independently and in isolation, to be the economic and political foundation with respect to which the commune performed the function merely of an alliance of families — a distinctive sort of guarantor of the freedom and independence of each individual family. The German “commune exists not only in the individual relationships of these individual

landed property holders as such. . . ,” but German communal property “is actually the common property of individual property holders and not the property of the alliance of these property holders that existed in the cities distinct from them as individual property holders.” (15)

From this we see the difference between the German commune and the antique commune. In one case unification within the bounds of a commune, out of which there later developed the slaveholding “polis” or “civitas,” was the inevitable and the sole condition under which the group could exist and enjoy success in its struggle with its neighbors. In the other case the existence of the commune was virtually unrelated to the cohesion and unity of its members. It is not surprising that the further development of the German communes led to results different than those occurring in the antique type. The loose and amorphous character of the German commune would not permit its use as a dependable organizational foundation for cruel exploitation of slaves taken as the result of war. The Germans had slaves, but their utilization was patriarchal in nature. The difference between the foreign slave and the free German was not remotely as striking as in Greece or Rome. The children of slaves were raised side by side with those of citizens (16) and the status of the slaves themselves so nearly approximated that of the junior members of the patriarchal family that the line of demarcation between them was virtually erased. Thus, slavery did exist among the Germans, but the slave form of exploitation had no foundation on which to develop further. On the other hand, these very features of the social and economic structure of the German commune promoted gradual and ever intensifying debt-slavery of members of the group among themselves. Development here took such a course that, as A. I. Neusykhin has commented, “while the extended family was breaking up in the landholding commune, the commune itself was undergoing development in the direction of conversion into the mark, i.e., into a commune in which the land allotted for cultivation was already becoming the freely alienable allodium of the conjugal family.” (17) The loss of the allodium and the transfor-

mation of the free, property-holding member of the commune into a dependent tenant or a holder who went with the land was now only a matter of time.

Thus, under the conditions of the German commune, the principal figure in production was the exploited fellow-citizen, fellow-countryman and former member of the commune. Furthermore, it was precisely this that determined the appearance of those productive forces that led to the establishment of feudal states in central and western Europe. (18)

This was the second model. It follows from the context of Precapitalist Economic Formations that this model, as Marx himself conceived it, was entirely as valid as the first and reflected a development from the primary (pre-class) structure to the secondary (class) structure. Marx wrote, specifically, that when a man and his land are conquered, slavery and serfdom arise, and that “slavery and serfdom are therefore merely further stages in the development of property resting on the tribal structure.” (19) Marx’s notion that the two models had equal validity is evident from the following excerpt from the draft of a letter to Vera Zasulich: “The agricultural commune, being the final phase of the primary social system, is at the same time the transition phase to the secondary system, i.e., a transition from a society based upon common property to one based on private property. The secondary system, of course, embraces a number of societies resting upon slavery and serfdom.” (20) Analogous ideas were expressed by Engels in a letter to Marx: “It is certain that serfdom and bondage are not a peculiarly medieval-feudal form; we find everywhere or nearly everywhere that a conqueror compels the native populace to till the soil for him, as in Thessaly, where this occurred at a very early date.” (21)

Thus, Marx and Engels were agreed that serfdom as a form of exploitation was capable of existing and did also exist in the ancient world, and that slavery and serfdom are two parallel forms, two equally valid models for development of primary societies in the process of decomposition. Unfortunately, this idea was undeservedly forgotten for a long time and was very often sup-

planted by another, which can be summed up as follows: the development of feudalism among the ancient Germans (or Slavs) allegedly was the result of their having taken over the achievements of slaveholding antiquity in the area of production techniques. (22) Certainly the influence of ancient Rome (or Byzantium) upon the surrounding tribes must not be denied. There can be no doubt that among the tribes experiencing this influence, the decay of the primitive commune took place more rapidly than among others. Moreover, the influence of advanced Rome played no small role in determining the rates of development of feudal Europe and even, in the final analysis, in determining the fact that it was precisely Europe that showed the world the path to capitalism and to socialism. Nonetheless, the influence of the culture of ancient Rome, vast and undeniable as it was, does not explain in the slightest, nor is it capable of explaining, why it was that it was feudal and not slaveholding relationships that took place among the Germans or the Slavs. The chief and determining factor here was the distinctive nature of the communes of the Germans or Slavs as they entered the stage of the formation of classes, the distinctive nature of the conditions under which they developed.

Sometimes the second, feudal, model is held to be not of equal validity with the first, or slaveholding, on the grounds that the productive forces of slaveholding society were obviously more backward than those of feudal society. The question of the forces of production is not to be resolved nearly as simply as is sometimes imagined. Researchers sometimes work from the premise that the Bronze Age is capable of giving birth only to a slaveholding society, while feudalism is held to be incapable of appearing prior to the Iron Age. Although these abstract judgments are not supported in any way, there are many to whom they seem self-evident. (23) But the fact is that this a priori conclusion is very far from the truth.

What is it that we actually do know about the productive forces required for a class society to develop? It follows in the clearest way from Marxist political economy that this requires the

appearance of implements of labor, whose utilization makes possible, under given, concrete conditions, the production of a surplus product which, in the final analysis, is the catalyst in the development of class society, the secondary social order. But the mere posing of the question predetermines the answer to it. The essence of this response resolves to the fact that, under different concrete conditions, these tools may and even must differ. This is demonstrated persuasively by much historical evidence. Thus, we know from ancient history that, under the conditions of soft alluvial soils of river valleys existing along with a warm climate, the use of stone and wooden tools (not to speak of copper and bronze, of course) yielded an economic effect so great in a number of parts of Asia as to serve as a real basis for the appearance of class societies in the East. The natural conditions of most of the districts of the Mediterranean (particularly its western portion) required iron implements to yield a surplus product. Furthermore, peoples living in more severe natural conditions (the Germans and Slavs), even when they had relatively advanced iron implements at their disposal, were unable for a long period to take the path of development of classes and states. Clearly, there must have existed and did exist here a definite, conforming-to-law interdependence of various factors, finding expression in the fact that in order for a surplus product to be produced, unfavorable natural conditions had to be balanced out by the utilization of more advanced implements of labor, and vice versa.

In reality, the productive forces of feudal society were higher (only potentially, at the beginning of its development, but later actually) than those of slaveholding society. But this was not at all because feudalism from the very outset makes use of more advanced implements of labor, but because this system employs the labor of a toiler who has an incentive in his work. As we know, the productive forces of any society are formed from three basic components: the implements of labor, the objects of labor, and people, toilers. We have already spoken of the two former. With respect to the latter, it is clear to all that the work activity of the enserfed

member of a commune was, because he had some incentive, greater than that of the slave, whose maintenance and the intensification of whose exploitation were not cheap. It is precisely in this — the type of toiler employed — that there lies the principal and fundamental advantage of the productive forces of a society becoming feudal over one based on slaveholding. Under the conditions of the slaveholding world the development of the productive forces went more rapidly and yielded more effective results. But this was achieved not so much by the development of techniques as by increasing the intensity of the slaves' labor. Labor on the part of free persons increasingly became a cause of shame. As a result, the slaveholding world found itself in a blind alley, and its productive forces were no longer capable of development. The crisis and consequent death of slaveholding society resulted. Under the conditions of feudalism, on the other hand, the productive forces — its implements, above all — developed slowly, without significant triumphs or sharp changes, but steadily and unceasingly, as it encountered no obstacles to the complete development of its potential, thanks to the fact that the basic mass of the producers had a material interest in the results of their work. This is why, toward the end of its existence, it had attained a level of technology and culture high enough to make possible the maturing and development within it of the capitalist mode of production.

In reviewing our description of the second, feudal, model, we may recall once again that under the conditions of the German (and Slavic) commune, as distinct from the antique, the elements of slavery did not, for a variety of reasons, find conditions favorable to their development and were rapidly extinguished without having progressed farther than patriarchal slavery. The elements of feudalism, i.e., of compulsion exercised against one's own countrymen who are tillers of the soil and are related to the land as the object of their work activity, found in this society, on the other hand, all the conditions required for it to flourish and rapidly become predominant. Thus, the productive forces essential to the genesis of feudalism, and which predeter-

mined the appearance specifically of a feudal system, gradually came into being within the German communes under the influence of a variety of circumstances. It becomes clear from the course of Marx's reasoning that he held that course of development to have arisen quite independently as a legitimate variant, in the reappearance of the secondary, i.e., class, form of society on the foundation of the primary primitive communes. This is why Marxist historians have every basis for stating that the transition from primitive society to feudalism (which is the much more common course) is just as possible and legitimate as the transition to slaveholding. Furthermore, the reason for the transition to one or the other of these systems is not determined by the time when it occurred (before or after the onset of our era) but is related in every way to the distinctive features of the conditions under which communes of this type developed.

Communes of the Asiatic Type. Marx did not limit his analysis to the two forms examined above. On the contrary, he treated them in association with a third model of development, that of the commune of the Oriental type, which was the most complex and difficult to explain. In Marx's day, these difficulties lay primarily in the fact that at that time the Orient had been studied very poorly. The special studies then available were insufficiently accurate and very limited, both in terms of the quantity of materials they embraced and the number of countries covered, as well as with respect to their chronological limits. As we know, Marx was most familiar with India, which the British had studied comparatively widely. He had considerably less knowledge of China and the other countries of Asia. In his day, the histories of the peoples of Africa and America (except for the USA) had had virtually no study at all. It is therefore nothing to be surprised at that Marx's analysis was based on a limited range of materials and countries. Something else is much more amazing: for all the historical limitedness of the material available to him, this theoretician and thinker of genius was able nonetheless to understand and explain the conformities to law of development of non-European precapitalist societies. What

was it that Marx regarded as characteristic and distinctive in the Orient? His major premise resolved to the idea that the natural conditions of the East demanded, for the successful conduct of agricultural undertakings, preliminary expenditures of the joint efforts of a large number of people (for example, to combat the ravages of water in river valleys, to build irrigation wells and canals, to fight deserts, jungles, etc.). In practice this meant that for a considerable portion of the Asiatic communes, firm cohesion within large entities was dictated by economic conditions and the requirements for the conduct of farming. It was impossible for the individual to contend with nature under the conditions of such an economy. "The Asiatic form is inevitably the most stubborn and the longest-lived," wrote Marx. "This is inherent in its prerequisite: the fact that the individual does not become independent of the commune, that the scale of production is calculated solely to maintain one's own existence, that agriculture and a craft are combined into one, etc." (24)

Distinguished by exceptional stability and a monolithic nature, the Asiatic type of commune was not a sum of individuals, as was the German. The Asiatic commune was a group in the strict sense of the term: everything that a man possessed and that he conceived of himself as being was mediated through the collective. This circumstance possessed dual significance, which determined the dual nature of communes of the Oriental type. On the one hand, this kind of cohesion as the initial stage of the formation of classes did not make it possible for the clan elite to subject the individual members of the commune to themselves within the confines of the commune. On the other hand, the commune itself could readily be made an object of exploitation as a unit under conditions of joint use of large masses of labor. It was not for nothing that Marx commented that either the Oriental type of despot, or an imagined divinity, or something of the sort, stood over all these communes as the single and supreme property owner serving as a unifying entity. (25) In order to raise themselves above their fellow-tribesmen, the clan elite, headed by its leader, had in some way

to separate out and concentrate in its own hands the larger portion of the wealth of the group and to hold power over the group. Slavery was a powerful accelerator of that process. Numerous war prisoners of foreign tribes came into the hands of successful military leaders and their close associates. These slaves, and the valuables acquired through plunder, came in practice to be at the disposal of the clan elite, and this placed influence and power in their hands. But contradictions, followed by exploitation within the confines of the commune itself, inexorably developed on the basis of the antagonism between the foreign slaves and the members of the commune personified by its elite. In this respect, the Asiatic communes did not differ from the antique or German. In both instances, two types of contradictions, two tendencies, two possibilities of further development, were present from the very first steps taken out of the primary system to the secondary. The distinction lay elsewhere.

As already stated, the distinctive aspects of the structure of the antique and the German communes favored the development of only one of these two lines of class contradictions, one of the two forms of exploitation. In the antique model the slaveholding system was so favored, and in the German — the feudal. Another picture was manifest in the non-European world. The exceptional strength and stability of the Asiatic (and also, apparently, of the African) commune promoted the development of slaveholding relationships chiefly in the exploitation of foreign slaves, who had no rights. But at the very same time, the commune as a group became an object of exploitation which was, moreover, very cruel. Consequently, the distinguishing features of the development of communes of this type resolved themselves, in their most general characteristics, to the fact that here the group as a commune and the foreign slaves were, equally, exploited by the clan elite. Moreover, the two groups not only were not sharply contrasted but, on the contrary, often merged in fact into a single mass of population, unfree and lacking rights. In other words, in many non-European communes — as distinct from the antique and the German

communes — both trends in class contradictions, each based on extra-economic compulsion, the feudal and the slaveholding, were actively operative and, at the same time, interacted. It was precisely the long-term and parallel coexistence and intimate interweaving of these two lines or trends in class contradictions, which arose during the disintegration of the Asiatic commune, that constituted, it would appear, the major distinguishing feature of the early historical course of the overwhelming majority of non-European peoples of the world. This is not to be regarded as something strange and uncommon, something “peculiar” allegedly causing the development of the non-European societies to deviate from the “classical,” European type of slavery and feudalism. On the contrary, it is precisely in this “peculiar” that the indissoluble unity of slavery and serfdom — that feudal institution, (26) as Marx called it — was manifested in the most obvious and universal form. This unity rests upon the economic and social similarity of the two institutions, which, equally, are based upon extra-economic compulsion.

It must be noted that a description of the societies of the Ancient East, recognizing the fact of the interweaving and combination of two basic tendencies — the slaveholding and the feudal — is encountered repeatedly in Marxist literature. One of the first to advance this idea was A. G. Prigozhin. (27) The Chinese scholar T'ung Shu-yeh, who declared that “the history of the Ancient East is the history of the interweaving of the slaveholding and feudal systems,” came to analogous conclusions in 1956 on the basis of study of entirely different factual material. (28) Somewhat later, in their review of Volume II of the Soviet *World History* [Vsemirnaia istoriia], a group of Czech historians wrote: “An examination of the question as to the possibility that slaveholding and feudal elements existed side by side in societies of the Asiatic type would at least facilitate solution of our disputes within the confines of the general Marxist conception.” (29) In other words, a careful study of Marxist theory and of the concrete historical material led many Marxist historians to the common conclusion that the third, or what Marx called the

Asiatic, model of precapitalist society was characterized, in its most general features, precisely by combination and interaction (sometimes by the production of a resultant) of the two trends of exploitation known in the precapitalist world: slaveholding (the exploitation primarily of foreign slaves) and feudal (the exploitation of one's fellow-countrymen, of agriculturalists within the commune who had worked their own allotments from time immemorial). It is not accidental that, in characterizing Asiatic forms, Marx and Engels sometimes emphasized the undeveloped, household nature of slavery in the Orient while, in other instances, they spoke of “universal slavery” there. There is nothing contradictory in these descriptions. They reflect very accurately the dual essence of societies of the Asiatic type, on the basis of which the historian is able to see most clearly that slaveholding and feudalism are not two contradictory systems and actually different social orders, but two sides of one and the same more general phenomenon — precapitalist societies based upon extra-economic compulsion.

Returning to the current discussions of the Asiatic mode of production, and disregarding the details and nuances of the various viewpoints, it must be observed that the essence of the dispute resolves to just what this mode of production actually was in the final analysis. Was it a transition stage from the primary (pre-class) system to the secondary (class) system, a stage from which movement progressed along the usual route through slaveholding to feudalism or, bypassing slaveholding to feudalism, is it to be regarded as an independent phenomenon parallel to slaveholding and feudalism? Most of the proponents of the idea of the Asiatic mode of production have inclined to the former alternative. The French Marxists Godelier and Suret-Canale took as a point of departure in their writings that the Asiatic mode of production had existed in the overwhelming majority of the societies known to history as a transition stage, the essence of which lay in the coexistence of both basic types of exploitation, slaveholding and feudal. (30) In refutation of these French scholars, V. V. Struve wrote that the Asiatic

mode of production was merely a local phenomenon which had arisen only within highly specific conditions in the Orient and which was then succeeded specifically by the system of slavery. (31) Thus, Struve was willing to grant only some extension of the customary sequence of social orders, as it pertained to the most ancient civilizations, and then only in the Orient. As we have already indicated, Semenov postulated a somewhat different viewpoint, holding that it is necessary to introduce a new social order, that of "debt slavery," into the customary sequence. (32)

All three variants, differing in many respects and even sharply conflicting, derive in the final analysis from the identical premise: precapitalist societies had developed in a sequence: primitive, Asiatic, slaveholding, feudal. But they all do recognize not only the possibility but the fact that it was essential, as a practical matter, that two or three of the stages in this extended "ladder" exist side by side. The sequence either moved from the primitive through the Asiatic to the slaveholding or from the primitive through the Asiatic to the feudal, or from the primitive, skipping the Asiatic, to slavery or to feudalism, etc. In practice, it turns out that in the concepts of all those scholars who take as their premise the existence of four consecutive precapitalist systems, the development of society was not unilinear but multilinear. Only the first stage (the primitive) and the last (feudalism) are common to all of them. The other links may or may not exist, and this is what determined the differences in the lines of development. In our opinion, the viewpoints of the French Marxists, of Struve, Semenov and other experts who have participated in the disputes and offered their conclusions, may be reconciled and reduced to one common denominator in the light of the notion propounded above of three equally valid models of precapitalist society. Needless to say, we are not thus setting the unattainable goal of reconciling all the disputants. The matter at issue is something else. If we look carefully at all the patterns and sequences offered by Godelier, Struve, or Semenov, it will be found that, in the final analysis, all fit without difficulty into the three major

models of development of precapitalist societies examined above.

Godelier and certain other scholars see in the Asiatic mode of production a transitional stage of development from the primary social order to the secondary. Judging by the arguments they adduce, the essence of this stage lies in the fact that, when primitive society breaks up, two lines of class contradictions always arise, the development of which in the final analysis leads to the triumph of one of them — the slaveholding or the feudal. This statement is true in the sense that, at birth, the first and second models have always been almost wholly identical to the third (the Asiatic), inasmuch as the most characteristic trait of the third model is a combination of two trends of development, and the typical factor in the development of the first and second models is the gradual triumph of one of the two trends over the other. Thus, Godelier is largely right. But not in everything. Having observed the conformity to law of the development of the first and second models by comparing them to the third, by this very fact he considers the third model as something of a temporary, even short-lived nature. And there lies the essence of his error. In Struve's new theory, the third model is recognized to be independent. This is very important, and true. However, at the same time, Struve holds for some reason that, in the course of its evolution, the third model necessarily leads to strengthening of the first, the slaveholding trend, and gives birth to the first model. This, in our view, is unmistakably an error and lacking in any foundation whatsoever. In that sense Godelier is right in asserting and proving the theoretical possibility that both the first model (the slaveholding) and the second system (the feudal) are capable of developing on the basis of the early, third, i.e., Asiatic, model.

Apparently the truth is to be found in a recognition of the existence of all three models as independent entities. The histories of precapitalist society known to us confirm the correctness of this conclusion. Moreover, the very diversity of these societies and the paths taken by their evolution are, in the final analysis, reducible to the three basic models. For the fact is that all

the societies of antiquity, the Middle Ages and even of modern times, without exception (other than those that had already strongly experienced the influence of the capitalist economic system), were familiar precisely with the two principal trends in oppression and exploitation — the slave and the feudal. And all combinations of these trends in all possible variants do, in the final analysis, fit within the confines of the three models examined above. This is either slaveholding with a greater or lesser admixture of the feudal type of exploitation, or feudalism with a greater or lesser admixture of slaveholding relationships, or else a model (the third) in which both types of exploitation, both trends, are quite strong and interact with each other for a long time.

But to recognize that all three models of precapitalist society may exist independently does not in itself in any way resolve the question as to the evolution of these societies, their path from primitivism to feudalism and then to capitalism. What is the interrelation among the three models? How can they (and can they) undergo transformation into each other? The assertion that all three models are independent and equally valid does not in itself mean that they are equally capable of development and enjoy equal opportunities and conditions for that. On the contrary, the essence and inherent nature of these three models render them highly different in capacity for evolution. Therein, specifically, lie the roots of the differences in development of the diverse precapitalist societies, so well known to all.

The first model, in which the exploitation of slave foreigners is predominant, is found very rarely in history. Strictly speaking, except for ancient Greece and Rome, we have very little knowledge of the existence of societies of this type. It is possible that development in accordance with this model occurred in some of the city states of the Ancient East at various times in their history. But what does the experience of development of societies in accordance with the first model tell us? Despite the fact that, in its "purest" and most "classical" form, that model, as we see from the example of ancient

Greece and Rome, demonstrated considerable capacity for development of production and culture, the borrowing of which by later generations played, in the final analysis, a decisive role in accelerating the rate at which feudal Europe came into being, the development potential of societies of that type was limited. Without going into detail, we note merely that as a consequence of the faults inherent in the slaveholding system and, above all, as a consequence of the fact that its basic labor force was a slave with no incentive to work, it inexorably enters a blind alley and degenerates. The achievements of its production and culture are not lost. They are inherited by other peoples, whose development on the soil prepared by slaveholding proceeds at an accelerated pace. However, the slaveholding society (our first model) perishes as a social unit. It returns, as it were, to the starting point of the founding of classes, intensifying those tendencies of feudalization that were characteristic of it when it first came into existence, thus completing what may be called one twist of a spiral.

The second model, on the other hand, is that best adapted to progress, and to complexity. It is precisely as a consequence of this that, in the final analysis, it gives birth to capitalism at a certain stage in its evolution. The reason for this is also understandable. Production and exploitation in societies of the feudal type rest upon the relationship between the exploiters and exploited peasants of the same tribal origin. Exploitation of the feudal type, as we well know, yields maximum opportunity for development of the productive forces and the evolution of society, and the extent to which this occurs is the greater, the "purer" and more "classical" the form in which the feudal relationships of serfdom are implemented.

The third model, the Asiatic, develops most slowly of all. The two trends, the two lines of class contradictions existing side by side, serve to inhibit each other, as it were. It is precisely this blending of the two trends, this constant influx of new slaves and their gradual absorption into a feudalism comprising communes, a state, and serfdom, the humiliation of the individual and, as a consequence, the fact that the status

of the commune-member of the native nationality approaches the status of the slave foreigner — all this and much else (specifically the phenomena of a political, social, and ideological nature) create the basis for exceedingly slow rates of evolution, externally often resembling simple reproduction [a subsistence economy producing no surplus used for growth — Trans.]. Unlike the second, feudal, model, the third or Asiatic is incapable of evolving toward capitalism at rapid rates, although, unlike the first or slaveholding, it does not perish in insoluble contradictions, does not return to its starting point, and does not reach a dead-end of development. Although it develops slowly in the course of millennia, the Asiatic model does, however, display a very definite tendency toward development. The essence of this tendency resolves to the fact that, in the final analysis, the feudal elements in it begin gradually to prevail over the slaveholding ones. In mathematical language, the third, Asiatic, model “approaches” the second, feudal, one. Thus, unlike the first two models, the third, which is characteristic of the overwhelming majority of the world’s peoples may, with the passage of time, undergo conversion into the second. This is the case in theory. In practice, however, this transformation has gone at such very slow rates that, in essence, it did not prove capable in any single one of the non-European countries — despite the fact that some non-European societies often “took off” considerably earlier than the European — of attaining a level at which the appearance of capitalist relationships became a reality. In other words, the “purification” of the feudal mode of production from what are, at the outset, very considerable and, later, less significant admixtures of the slaveholding mode of production in all three of the areas where this combination occurred, went at such slow rates that it was very far from completion by the time European capitalism attained worldwide dissemination.

However, as we make use of the three-model scheme, it must not be forgotten, as in the use of any scheme, that real life is considerably more complex than any model. The fact is that, in addition to the objective, determining factors

and conditions, tens, hundreds, and thousands of subjective factors and mere random events are operative. And whereas historic conformity to law does in the final analysis find its way through this murk of accidental occurrences, to disregard the latter is out of the question. If we have given such great attention in our article specifically to these three models, to a characterization of them and to their mutual relationships, role in history and objective potentials, this was only so as once again to remind the researcher that Marx’s ideas on the evolution of precapitalist societies do encompass the possibility of independent existence of three different models that are to be regarded as possible examples. The number of variants of precapitalist societies that have existed in the real historical past may be considerably larger, if only because of the interactions of the three models in space and time.

The final question consists of how to combine the abundance of variants of precapitalist societies with the law of forward development, of progress, of sequential succession of systems differing in stage. Apparently, to answer this question it is necessary in the first place to define precisely what positions are to be considered the points of departure. Actually, what are the stages of historical development and forms of social organization that are to be regarded as fundamentally different and non-simultaneous as stages? It is perfectly clear, for example, that primitive society (the primary social order) differs fundamentally from class society (the secondary social order). It is just as irrefutable that all precapitalist secondary systems differ fundamentally from the capitalist system, based upon bringing economic compulsion upon the producer. (There is no need here to speak of the fundamental differences between capitalism and socialism.) We think that, so far, all our readers will be in complete agreement with us. But wherein lies the fundamental difference between the Asiatic, the antique (slaveholding) and the feudal forms of the secondary social order? All three of these forms are based upon similar types of property and exploitation. The basis for the existence of all three is extra-economic

compulsion. The differences between them, of which we have said so much above, are not of a primary but of a secondary order. In the main, i.e., in that which determines the essence of the antagonism in a class society, all three systems are quite similar. In other words, productive forces similar to each other in level of development give birth to production relations that are in many ways similar in essence, equally founded upon an extra-economic system of exploitation of slaves, serfs or dependent, half-free and even formally free peasant members of the commune.

The idea that the secondary precapitalist formations are subject to an obligatory sequence is sometimes supported by an argument based not upon the notion of fundamental differences between them, but by the fact that chronologically they are not simultaneous, for don't we all know that antiquity and the Middle Ages are different stages, different epochs in the development of human society and civilization? Yet, it is true that the ancient world made a different contribution to mankind than did the Middle Ages. It is true that the medieval period, particularly in its final stages, stood higher than the ancient world in the sense of the development of production and culture and even on the plane of social development. There can be no doubt that, on the whole, human society developed, in the final analysis, progressively, from the 5th millennium B.C. to the 16th and 17th centuries of the present era, evolving from the simple to the complex and from the primitive to the advanced. But other systems — the primitive and the capitalist — possessed an equally evident evolutionary potential. Yet would any of our opponents draw the conclusion that Holland or England in the 16th and 17th centuries differ fundamentally (in the sense of belonging to a particular social system) from the USA in the 20th century? Clearly, the single fact of a striking contrast between the state of evolution in production, culture, and social structure does not make it possible to draw the conclusion that fundamentally different, opposed, antagonistic social systems are involved. It is no accident that Marx's distinction was only between the primary, the secondary, and the capitalist systems.

Thus, the hypothesis, based on the ideas of Marx, of three principal models of precapitalist societies gives us the basis for the conclusion that all the various actual precapitalist societies fit within the confines of two basic and fundamentally mutually different sequential social systems — the primary (primitive, pre-class) and the secondary (class). Moreover, the secondary, precapitalist system, based on private property and on extra-economic compulsion directed against its own and a foreign population, has three fundamental variants — the "Asiatic," the "antique" (slaveholding), and the feudal. Of these three, the most perfect and advanced is the feudal. One has the right to call it the principal and basic one in the secondary precapitalist social order, and that which defines the nature of that order. (33) For the elements of exploitation of a feudal nature arose in remote antiquity, when civilization and class society were taking their very first steps, and have survived to our day. Moreover, in the final stage of existence of the secondary precapitalist system, feudalism indubitably predominated among the variants of that system.

Footnotes

1) As early as 1857, in his famous Preface to The Critique of Political Economy, Marx wrote: "In broad outlines we can designate the Asiatic, the antique, the feudal, and the modern capitalist methods of production as so many epochs in the progress of the economic formation of society" (Marx and Engels, Soch., Vol. 13, p. 7). The differences between the Asiatic and other forms of precapitalist production were developed in fullest detail by Marx in his work Precapitalist Economic Formations [Formy, predshestvuiushchie kapitalisticheskomu proizvodstvu]. The fundamental distinctions and characteristic features of Asiatic societies were discussed in many other of the works of Marx and Engels (see Marx and Engels, Soch., Vol. 9, pp. 130-136; Vol. 23, pp. 89, 152; Vol. 20, pp. 181, 184, etc.). Lenin, too, wrote on this score (see V. I. Lenin, PSS, Vol. 1, p. 136; Vol. 26, p. 57;

Vol. 13, pp. 14-15; his synopsis Perepiski K. Marksa i F. Engel'sa 1844-1883 gg., Moscow, 1959, p. 260, and others).

2) N. B. Ter-Akopian, "Razvitie vzgliadov K. Marksa i F. Engel'sa na aziatskii sposob proizvodstva i zemledel'cheskuiu obshchinu," Narody Azii i Afriki, 1965, Nos. 2, 3; Iu. M. Garuchians, "Ob aziatskom sposobe proizvodstva," Voprosy istorii, 1966, No. 2.

3) A. I. Tiunenev, "Perednii Vostok i antichnost'," Voprosy istorii, 1957, Nos. 6, 9.

4) L. S. Vasil'ev, Agrarnye otnosheniia o obshchina v Drevnem Kitae, Moscow, 1962.

5) G. F. Il'in, "Osobennosti rabstva v Indii," Vestnik drevnei istorii (hereafter VDI), 1951, No. 1.

6) I. A. Stuchevskii, Zavisimoe naselenie Drevnego Egipta, Moscow, 1966; V. A. Iakobson, "Sotsial'naiia struktura Novoassiriiskogo tsarstva," VDI, 1965, No. 1; Ia. A. Manandian, "Problema obshchestvennogo stroia doarshakidskoi Armenii," VDI, 1950, No. 1; see also: M. L. Gel'tser, "Materialy k izucheniiu sotsial'noi istorii Ugarita," VDI, 1952, No. 4, pp. 28-37; same author, "Novye dannye o sotsial'noi strukture Ugarita," VDI, 1954, No. 3, pp. 72-74; I. D. Amusin, "Narod zemli (K voprosu o svobodnykh zemledel'tsakh drevnei Perednei Azii)," VDI, 1955, No. 2, pp. 14-36.

7) I. V. Sozin, "K voprosu o prichinakh perekhoda vostochnykh slavian ot pervobytno-obshchinnogo stroia k feodalizmu," Voprosy istorii, 1957, No. 6; M. N. Meiman and S. D. Skazkin, "K voprosu o neposredstvennom perekhode k feodalizmu na osnove razlozheniia pervobytnoobshchinnogo sposoba proizvodstva," Voprosy istorii, 1960, No. 1.

8) Iu. I. Semenov, "Problema sotsial'no-ekonomicheskogo stroia drevnego Vostoka," Narody Azii i Afriki, 1965, No. 4.

9) K. Marx, Formy, predshestvuiushchie kapitalisticheskomu proizvodstvu, Moscow, 1940, p. 18.

10) Ibid., p. 8.

11) Ibid.

12) In his article "Perednii Vostok i antichnost'" (Voprosy istorii, 1957, No. 6, p. 56), A. I. Tiunenev observed with justice that the

trend to debt-enslavement of free persons had little potential in the Graeco-Roman world.

13) It must be observed that the fact that slavery became the leading type of production relation under the conditions of the polis or civitas of Graeco-Roman antiquity occurred in close relationship to the development of crafts and of production for sale.

14) Marx, Formy, predshestvuiushchie kapitalisticheskomu proizvodstvu, pp. 14-15.

15) Ibid., p. 16.

16) See Vsemirnaia istoriia, Vol. II, Moscow, 1956, p. 699.

17) A. I. Neusykhin, Vozniknovenie zavisimogo krest'ianstva kak klassa rannefeodal'nogo obshchestva v Zapadnoi Evrope VI-VIII vv., Moscow, 1956, p. 14.

18) The historical development of the Slavic communes resembled the German.

19) Marx, Formy, predshestvuiushchie kapitalisticheskomu proizvodstvu, p. 26.

20) Marx and Engels, Soch., Vol. 28, p. 695.

21) Marx and Engels, Soch., Vol. 35, p. 112.

22) See Vsemirnaia istoriia, Vol. III, Moscow, 1957, pp. 73, 247; Politicheskaiia ekonomiia, Moscow, 1954, pp. 40, 41.

23) See Iu. I. Semenov, op. cit., p. 87.

24) K. Marx, Formy, predshestvuiushchie kapitalisticheskomu proizvodstvu, p. 18.

25) Ibid., p. 6.

26) Serfdom is indubitably a feudal institution, although feudalism, as we know, is not confined to this. Feudalism has had various structures, including both the hierarchical structure of landlord landownership and the centralized form of state landownership. What was basic to it was the fact that the tiller of the soil in actual fact held his piece of land, his means of production, as "property."

27) A. G. Prigozhin, "Problema sotsial'no-ekonomicheskikh formatsii obshchestv drevnego Vostoka," Izvestiia Gosudarstvennoi Akademii istorii material'noi kul'tury, 1934, No. 77, pp. 24-31.

28) T'ung Shu-yeh, Appendix to article "Nekotorye problemy izucheniia drevnei istorii," Venshichzhe, 1956, No. 6, p. 23 (in Chinese).

29) P. Oliva, Ia. Burian, I. Fral, and T. Po-

kora, "Chekhoslovatskie istoriki o II tome 'Vse-mirnoi istorii,'" Voprosy istorii, 1958, No. 7, p. 163.

30) M. Godelier, La Notion de "Mode de production Asiatique" et les schémas marxistes d'évolution des sociétés, Paris, 1964. Also see M. Godelier, "Poniatie 'aziatskogo sposoba proizvodstva' i marksistskaia skhema razvitiia obshchestva," Narody Azii i Afriki, 1965, No. 1; J. Suret-Canale, "Traditsionnye obshchestva v Tropicheskoi Afrike i marksistskaia kontseptsiia 'aziatskogo sposoba proizvodstva' (ibid.).

31) See V. V. Struve, "Poniatie 'aziatskii

sposob proizvodstva,' Narody Azii i Afriki, 1965, No. 1.

32) See Iu. I. Semenov, op. cit.

33) In this sense we completely support the conclusion drawn by A. Ia. Shevelenko to the effect that the main road of human development was the evolutionary path from the primitive communal system to feudalism, bypassing the slaveholding system (see A. Ia. Shevelenko, "Sopostavlenie putei genezisa feodal'nykh otnosheniia vo Franskom gosudarstve i Indonezii," Voprosy istorii, 1965, No. 12).

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CAPTAINS OF SOVIET INDUSTRY: 1926-1940

Soviet historical literature on the top personnel of industry during the period of industrialization is very scanty. It is possible to list no more than a few overall articles published in special and statistical collections on the personnel of heavy industry. (1) There has as yet been no study of the innovating activity of those outstanding leaders of industry: F. E. Dzerzhinskii, V. V. Kuibyshev, G. K. Ordzhonikize, and their splendid co-workers who gave nearly two decades to the building of heavy industry: V. I. Mezhlauk, M. L. Rukhimovich, I. V. Kosior, S. S. Lobov, and A. P. Serebrovskii. No studies exist on managers of enterprises and construction projects. In the present article, the author undertakes a highly limited task: that of presenting the course followed in shaping the leading personnel of the enterprises of heavy industry.

As early as January 1918, Lenin posed the task of promoting leaders and organizers of production from among the masses. (2) At all stages in the building of socialism, the Communist Party has given particular attention to shaping the organizers of the economy.

During the early years of Soviet power, the

Communist Party resolved the problem of making up the staff of top-level industrial personnel basically by enlisting old experts. The bulk of the top personnel of industry were experts who did not belong to the party, who often did not conceal their lack of faith that socialism could be built. They worked in the apparatus of the Federal Council of the National Economy (VSNKh), the managements of industrial branches [*glavki*], and in the "trusts." The stratum of party members in management at the enterprises and in the shops was negligible. Technological direction of the *glavki*, trusts, and enterprises was concentrated almost entirely in the hands of old experts who had formerly been intimately associated with capitalist stockholder-owned firms and companies. (3)

At the same time, the work of training new personnel, engineers and technicians, was begun. As early as 1920, Lenin pointed out that "we lack most particularly specialists with scope and imagination, men who are not content with the present level of technology, but who seek to look into its future. The lack of faith of many of the experts in the building of the new society also made itself felt." (4) From the rostrum of

the 3rd Congress of the Komsomol, Lenin called upon the youth to study and master knowledge. The first special prep school for workers [rab-fak] was started way back then to train for admission to Moscow University and the Institute of Red Professors. Much attention was given in its work to mastering the theory of Marxist-Leninist economic science. Immediately after the end of the Civil War, the Communist Party sent hundreds of its best sons, who had gone through the difficult test of underground revolutionary struggle and the Civil War, to study. Party, trade union, military, and Soviet workers entered the walls of the engineering universities. The Communist Party regarded successful completion by a communist student of a course at an engineering university and the mastery of engineering professions as his priority party duty. The 12th Congress of the RKP(b) (1923) pointed out in its resolution: "...All that enthusiasm which working youth formerly expended upon the revolutionary political struggle should be directed to the mastery of science and engineering.... The organization of the socialist economy is, for the proletarian vanguard, not a career but an exploit." (5)

As economic rehabilitation approached completion, and as the complex tasks of reconstructing industry and of transferring it to a most modern technological foundation, of developing entire branches of industry and of building individual enterprises, became more acute, the problem of top-level personnel arose again. On the eve of the First Five-Year Plan, the Communist Party devoted particular attention to improving the system of training new personnel. A program for the training of new professional personnel was developed by the July 1928 Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b) and the November 1929 Plenum of the Central Committee. (6) It was decided to make a fundamental change in the social composition of the student body, bringing the core of workers up to 70% of the total new admissions. The engineering universities and technical secondary schools were gradually turned over to the corresponding people's commissariats of branches of industry. Curricula were fundamentally revised to bring them

closer to the practical needs of production. The November Plenum of the Central Committee gave particular attention to strengthening the managerial personnel of industry. The Plenum proposed decisive steps to advance to top posts new organizers selected from among the graduates of the engineering universities and technical secondary schools, and particularly from among workers "who had emerged in the course of the work of production conferences, and from among active trade unionists." The USSR Central Council of Trade Unions (VTsSPS) was commissioned to promote 1,500 to 2,000 trade union personnel to management work. The first party "thousands," trade union, party, and soviet workers, were assigned to the old and the newly founded engineering universities. The first thousand was followed by a second, a third, and a fourth. As a consequence, fundamental changes occurred in the composition of the students of the engineering universities. In a ten-year period the percentage of party members and candidate members and Komsomols among students multiplied nearly six-fold. Whereas in 1923 they numbered only 11.4% of the total, by 1933 they were already 61.3%. In the 1931-1932 school year, workers numbered 69.4% of the students of the engineering universities as against 17.5% in 1923-1924. (7)

At the same time, the work of educating managers who had had only practical experience got under way. In 1927 there was organized the first Industrial Academy, a distinctive type of educational institution designed for people with rich practical experience. It had 100 students. By the close of the First Five-Year Plan, fourteen industrial academies were already in operation, with 3,000 executives in attendance. The system of industrial academies continued to grow. We adduce figures on the composition of the student bodies of the industrial academies. In 1932, 35% of their enrollment consisted of Old Bolsheviks who had been in the prerevolutionary underground, and 83% had been highly skilled workers: steel makers, mechanics, machinists, miners. Over 77% of them had held managerial posts of responsibility. The students included the managers of very large plants: the Sormovo, Ko-

lomna, Liuberetskii, "Red Vyborzhets," Izhor-skii, the Podol'sk Machine Works, and many others. (8) Initially the industrial academies set themselves a limited task — that of providing their students with a fixed range of general knowledge in engineering and economics. Subsequently, pursuant to the May 31, 1931, resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU(b), the industrial academies fundamentally changed their system of instruction, enlarging to a maximum instruction in the special technical disciplines at the expense of other subjects, and reorganizing the curriculum to accord with particular branches of the economy. (9) Thus, the established executives with no more than practical experience were educated along with the training of a new engineering intelligentsia.

The first members of the new Soviet intelligentsia, who had tied their destinies to the cause of the working class and the Communist Party, came to posts of responsibility in industry as early as 1925. Dzerzhinskii brought into leading posts in the USSR Council of the National Economy (VSNKh) a large group of young specialists who had graduated from the Institute of Red Professors, where they had gained fundamental general theoretical training in the sphere of the economic sciences. These new personnel subsequently played a major role in the apparatus of the USSR VSNKh. Thus, for example, I. A. Kraval' was made head of the Bureau of Labor Economics and Wages. He later became vice-chairman of the USSR State Planning Commission and head of the Central Office for National Economic Accounting (TsUNKhU). G. I. Smirnov did big things in the Central Economic Management (GEU), and went on to head the USSR State Planning Commission in 1937-1938. New members of the Soviet engineering intelligentsia entered industry in 1926-1927 as members of the machinery of the glavki, trusts, and particularly at the enterprise level. But these personnel, too, were still few in number and, what was most important, they still had to traverse the difficult road of mastering practical experience. The number of technical people graduated by higher and secondary technological institutions increased from year to year. During the twelve

years prior to World War II (1929-1940), the country gained 868,000 specialists with higher education and 1,529,000 with secondary specialized training. (10) During the Third Five-Year Plan, the annual graduation of persons with higher education was 9 times as high, while those with secondary education were 32 times as numerous as in 1914. By comparison with the years of the First Five-Year Plan, the ratios were 2.3 and 3.1 times as high, respectively. As a consequence, in 1940 there were 290,000 engineers with diplomas in the Soviet economy, or almost twice as many as in the USA, where there were 156,000. (11) All in all, the specialists with higher and secondary education engaged in the economy multiplied nearly five-fold during the prewar five-year plans (1928-1940). As of January 1, 1941, there were 698,000 engineers, technicians and economists with higher and secondary education, as against 117,000 in 1928. (12) This new young growth of the technical intelligentsia of the USSR was flesh of the flesh of the Soviet people. As early as 1936, of 796 managers of the largest industrial enterprises in heavy industry, 230, or 28.9%, had a higher education. Of these, 182 had graduated from engineering, 32 from economic, and 16 from other higher educational institutions. (13) Nearly three-fourths (72%) of all industrial managers in heavy industry had themselves been workers prior to the Revolution and had known all the severity of capitalist exploitation, while 10.9% were of the young generation of executives. (14) By the mid-1930's virtually all plant managers in heavy industry were party members (97.4%), whereas the figure had been only 29.4% in 1922. (15) In other words, the percentage of communist managers had multiplied by 3.3 times. The great industrial revolution and the heroic epic of the first five-year plans became a rigorous examination for the heads of construction projects and enterprises. A considerable number of industrial executives, who had handled their responsibilities well during the period of rehabilitation of the economy, now had to make way for others, those of whom G. M. Krzhizhanovskii in February 1934 said from the rostrum of the 17th Congress of the CPSU(b): "We see turbulent, energetic, young

proletarian newcomers, whose growth it is difficult to keep up with." (16) In 1931, two-thirds of all participants in the First USSR Conference of Industrial Plant Managers, Directors and Their Assistants had held their posts for less than a year, and nearly a fifth had held them for but one to two years. Yet, of every ten plant managers participating in the conference, eight had worked in the given branch of industry not less than five years, and six had worked in it for more than ten years. (17) These data are evidence of the fact that as early as the middle of the First Five-Year Plan the management of the overwhelming majority of enterprises consisted of personnel who had had years of association with their fields, but had come to occupy the position of plant manager only in the very last year or two. Personnel who had mastered technology and demonstrated themselves to be talented organizers came to the "captain's bridge" during those years. The process of filling the leading posts of industry with highly competent personnel went on with intensity during all the years that followed.

The complexity and difficulty of choosing the top-level executives for industry are testified to by the history of the very largest plants. The names of the heads of giant construction projects, Ia. S. Gugel' (Magnitorgorsk Integrated Iron and Steel Industries, Azovstal'), S. M. Frankfurt (Kuznetsk Integrated Iron and Steel Industries), V. I. Ivanov, P. I. Svistun, and K. P. Lovin (directors, respectively, of the Stalingrad, Khar'kov, and Cheliabinsk tractor works), I. T. Kirilkin (Novokramatorsk Heavy Equipment Works), A. P. Bannikov (Ural Machinery Works), M. M. Tsarevskii (Gorky Auto Works), M. A. Granovskii (Bereznikovo Integrated Chemicals Works), P. G. Arutiunians (Bobrikovskii, now the Novomoskovskii, Integrated Chemical Works), V. E. Tsifrinovich (Solikamsk Potassium Trust), K. P. Valerius (Zlatoust Iron and Steel Works) and many, many others, are widely known.

These project heads were not found at once. Many specialists who already had considerable experience proved unable to manage the very largest-scale construction projects. Both in scale, engineering difficulties, and the difficul-

ties that had to be overcome in areas remote from centers of industry and culture, the building of the giants of the iron and steel industry was beyond comparison with the tasks faced by the builders of, for example, new textile mills in Ivanovo or Moscow. In the years 1925-1928, new textile enterprises were built on the model of enterprises erected before the Revolution. On the other hand, the new integrated iron and steel and chemical works were characterized by technological revolutions in their fields. However, the Communist Party and the working class proved capable of promoting executives who could cope with these giant projects. A considerable proportion of the managers of the period of the First and Second Five-Year Plans had begun their work in industry as early as the years when the VSNKh was headed by Dzerzhinskii. Many had worked under Kuibyshev, and even the youngest of the plant managers were familiar with the work style of Orjonikidze.

By the mid-1930's the large iron and steel plants were generally headed by personnel who had graduated either from an industrial academy, a university, or an engineering university. The directors of these iron and steel mills had passed through a rich schooling in politics and production. (18) Thus, for example, I. G. Makarov, manager of the Donets Plant, a member of the Communist Party since 1905 who had served two terms of exile, had been promoted to leading posts in management from the very first days after the October Revolution: first as chairman of the economic council of a gubernia, then as manager of the Sormovo Works, chairman of Industrial Imports, and chief of the steel group of plants. After graduation from the Industrial Academy in 1933 he was placed at the head of the Donets Iron and Steel Works, which at that time was in a state of real chaos. (19)

Pavel Ivanovich Korobov was a striking example of the new generation of captains of industry. It was precisely of such as he that Orjonikidze said, not long before his death, "these are our own sons, the brothers whom we raised." (20) Korobov started as a boy gas watchman in the blast-furnace department of the Makeevka Works. In that department, where his father worked for

many years as top foreman, he learned several different skills. Then followed years of study in the Moscow Academy of Mines. Korobov's years as an engineer included the remodeling of blast furnaces at a number of plants. In the space of eleven years, he advanced from assistant department chief to manager of the very largest of integrated iron and steel mills (Magnitogorsk), and then to First Vice-Commissar of the Iron and Steel Industry of the USSR. The secret of his amazing career lay in the combination of vast experience with mastery of the depths of theory, steady improvement of his knowledge, and remarkable efficiency. Leadership not merely by the issuance of orders and administrative directives but by the granting of concrete assistance was his style. Frequently, instead of talking about how to eliminate troubles he would take his place at a piece of equipment and demonstrate how some complex operation should be performed correctly. It was precisely these qualities of Korobov's that were valued by Orjonikidze, who kept an eye on him from his first steps as an engineer. In 1933, on the latter's instructions, Korobov was sent on short notice from Enakievo to the Dnepropetrovsk Petrovskii Works. The problem was that the management of that plant could see no way to increase metal output other than by dismantling old furnaces currently in use and erecting new ones. Orjonikidze did not agree with them, and expressed confidence that Korobov could get metal from the existing furnaces. (21) And Korobov justified the hopes of the people's commissar. Arriving in Dnepropetrovsk, within a few weeks he familiarized himself with the organization of production there, with the process procedures, delved deeply into all loose ends and their causes, and took counsel with the workers and foremen, analyzing and drawing conclusions from his observations. The plan of the struggle to eliminate the department's lag developed in this manner. It was based upon the institution of proper process procedures, putting all equipment into order, daily concern for it, and work to teach people and to mechanize heavy processes. Korobov also led the implementation of this plan. The personnel very quickly became convinced

that a real leader, demanding, intolerant of slovenliness, and capable of cultivating honest workers, had come into the department. Within two months, the blast furnace department of the Petrovskii Works became one of the best in the Soviet iron and steel industry.

Korobov's work was marked by the award of many high honors by his country. He was accepted in the party in 1932 by a special decision of its central committee, at a time when the membership lists were temporarily closed in consequence of a purge [chistka]. In 1943 he was awarded the title of Hero of Socialist Labor.

Korobov's biography and methods of work are typical of those of many managers and engineers of that period and of the entire engineering profession whose origins were deep in the working class. S. S. D'iakonov in the machinery industry, E. L. Brodov and O. P. Osipov-Shmidt in the chemical, K. K. Kartashev in coal mining had similar biographies. Each year the ranks of the plant executives were further strengthened by a fine new group. They included young communist engineers who had graduated from engineering universities. They studied production on the job, gained experience working as workers, team leaders, foremen, familiarized themselves with the latest achievements of science and engineering abroad, and soon became real experts in their fields. Two typical biographies of such communist engineers follow.

I. F. Tevosian graduated from the Academy of Mines in 1927. Then he worked at the Elektrostal' Plant near Moscow (which now bears his name) as assistant foreman. Next he worked for a year as worker and assistant foreman at the Krupp Works in Essen. Upon his return to Elektrostal' he worked as foreman, then as chief of the steel furnace departments, and as chief engineer. From 1931 to 1936 he served as organizer and then as manager of the Spetsstal' combine of enterprises making quality steels. The three years that followed were devoted to leading posts in defense industry (as Vice-Commissar of the Defense Industry and Commissar of the Shipbuilding Industry). Then he was named People's Commissar of the Iron and Steel Industry. The title was later changed

to Minister. He worked at this post for more than twelve years. (22)

Upon graduation from the Khar'kov Institute of Technology in 1922, A. D. Bruskin worked as mechanic and then foreman at a farm equipment plant, followed by a period as graduate student in the department of tractor manufacturing at Berlin and Halle, then as designer, mechanic, and assistant chief of the tractor department of the Khar'kov Locomotive Works, chief engineer on the construction of the Khar'kov Tractor Works and, after this last-named plant had gone into construction, as its process manager, then manager, then as manager of the Cheliabinsk Tractor Works and Vice-Commissar of Heavy Industry. In 1937 he became First Vice-Commissar of the Machinery Industry of the USSR.

Hundreds of communist engineers followed a path leading from assistant foreman to plant manager, director of a trust, chief of a glavka, etc. At the same time we must not underestimate the role and significance of the plant managers who had been communist industrial executives for years, such as I. P. Manaenkov and P. F. Stepanov in the iron and steel industry; L. S. Vladimirov, V. A. Elenin, K. M. Ots, I. S. Dot-senko, V. I. Kuritsyn, I. A. Likhachev, and M. S. Mikhailov in machine manufacturing industries; V. Kondrikov, M. A. Granovskii, and V. E. Tsi-frinovich in chemistry; A. I. Mil'chakov in the gold mining industry; E. T. Abakumov and K. I. Rumiantsev in the coal industry, and many others. They were not graduate engineers, but had mastered the profundities of technology during their years of practical work in industry and had become splendid organizers of production. A considerable proportion of these practical managers had gone through the industrial academies. Many of them went abroad repeatedly and familiarized themselves with the technological achievements of foreign countries.

For example, Vasilii Ivanovich Ivanov, who had no engineering diploma, was the pioneer in high-speed construction. It was under his management that the personnel of the Stalingrad Tractor Works project shifted from seasonal to year-round operations. His example demonstrated that it is possible to build late in the fall,

and in winter, and in the early spring, even under the difficult climatic conditions of the Lower Volga, with its severe winds in autumn and spring, and its winter steppe snowstorms and blizzards.

Using the experience of the Stalingraders, virtually all construction projects converted to year-round work in 1931-1932. Ivanov inspired his personnel to struggle for each day, each hour, that could be employed. He smashed long-standing traditions boldly and with decision. Everything was subordinated to the struggle for speed. The enormous plant was put up in eleven months. (23) Such speed was unknown in the entire previous history of construction in our country. Ivanov was a former St. Petersburg workingman, a sailor in the Navy, court-martialed under the tsar for organizing a strike, a party member since February 1917, a hero of the Civil War, and presiding officer of the Cheka in Khar'kov. He had learned the rudiments of technology at a school for radio technicians at Kronstadt. Ivanov studied and enlarged his knowledge all during his life. More than once he found himself in disputes with specialists. While in the United States in 1930, at plants implementing orders for the Stalingrad Tractor Works project, he carefully examined equipment already completed and more than once justly criticized its quality. As a rule, the firms involved had to agree with his competent criticisms. This occurred, for example, with the well-known Chain and Co., makers of the main conveyor. (24) The name of Ivanov is also part of the history of another construction project of the first order of magnitude, the Balkhash Integrated Copper Smelter, which he headed from 1933 to 1937. In conditions of indescribable difficulties, the staff that he headed proved capable of building a powerful combine, of vast significance in strengthening the economic independence and defense capacity of the country.

All the exceedingly rich experience of development of socialist industry showed that personnel possessed of a broad horizon, capable of creative thought, with the ability to analyze deeply and synthesize their observations, distinguished by great organizing ability and iron will, strong

in their faith in the cause of the party, proved to be first-class executives despite the fact that they had been unable to acquire higher engineering educations.

In the large and gifted family of captains of socialist industry, there stands out particularly a large group of glorious names of those who succeeded in building powerful new centers of industry and culture in uninhabited, desert places. Kornei Osipovich Gorbachev was a typical representative of the galaxy of those who mastered industrial virgin soil. This old-time miner, who had put in twenty years in the prerevolutionary Donbass as a lamp-carrier, a stone-boat hauler, a teamster and a pick-wielder, had fought on the barricades in 1905, and in 1915 joined his life forever with that of the Communist Party.

During the first years of the building of socialism, the opening of the mines of Prokop'evsk District, the pearl of the Kuzbass, took place under his guidance. But his life was crowned with the organization of the coal industry of the Karaganda field. (25) It was here that his rare talents manifested themselves to the full. In the desert plains, 230 kilometers from the railroad, with primitive equipment, when everything down to drinking water had to be hauled long distances by camel, and with a shortage of skilled personnel, the foundations of the country's third coal center were laid. Gorbachev believed deeply that Karaganda had a great future as a shipper of coking coal for the iron and steel industry. The basis of his strategy was parallel work in all fields at the same time: prospecting, thorough laboratory study and quality analysis of the Karaganda coals, the sinking of wells and of the first mines, and the building of housing. Major and constant work was done to teach and develop Kazakh personnel. This broad-shouldered, chunky man, with his long red moustache, sparing of words, could be found in the tents of the prospecting crews, and where mines were being sunk, and at the construction sites of dwellings for the miners, and in dormitory barracks. Externally restrained and, at first glance, severe, Gorbachev had a real love for the working man, a good knowledge of his thoughts and longings, and knew

how to find his way to a man's heart. The builders and miners referred to him as "our Kornei."

The most difficult period in opening the wealth of Karaganda was passed by the end of 1932. In a three-year period (1930-1932), the population of Karaganda increased from 300 persons to 100,000. The first small electric power station and the first mines went into operation. A railroad joined the new center of the coal industry to the country at large. The blast furnaces of Magnitogorsk obtained Karaganda coal. The party sent Gorbachev to the steppes of Orenburg Region to master the wealth of the Southern Urals. Gorbachev died in 1936 while working as director of the Southern Urals Coal Construction Enterprise. A year prior to that, the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR had awarded him the Red Banner of Labor for his opening of the Karaganda Coal Field. (26)

Another typical example of the conquerors of the industrial virgin soil was Sergei Mironovich Frankfurt, under whose guidance the Kuznetsk Integrated Iron and Steel Mills were built. Frankfurt went through a rich school of political struggle in the ranks of the Communist Party. He entered the party as early as 1904, as a sixteen-year-old. He graduated from the Polytechnical Institute at Grenoble, France, while in exile. (27) He returned home in December 1915 and went into underground revolutionary work. An active participant in the October Revolution, he was subsequently sent by the party to the most critical sectors in the building of socialism. In 1920 he headed the work of reconstructing Siberian industry. In October 1920 he was called to Moscow, where Lenin received him, and they talked for hours about Siberia, its natural wealth, and its future. (28) In 1930, when the party picked out those who were to build the new industry, Frankfurt accepted with enthusiasm Kuibyshev's proposal to head the Kuznetsk Project. At first glance this short man in glasses, with the fine features of an intellectual person and a high forehead, more nearly resembled a scholar, and his image didn't match the poster image of that day of the effective manager of an enormous construction project. But the staff soon sensed that a real field commander had arrived at the

site. He organized a firm commanding staff. He did not substitute for any of his subordinates and, at the same time, held all the threads of this enormous undertaking firmly in his hands. In 1931, 80,000 people were employed at that project. Frankfurt not only ran the construction, but kept track of the fulfillment of orders for its equipment in the USSR and abroad, directed prospecting for iron and manganese ore, and trained staffs of builders and future production executives. From the very outset, with the support of the party organization of Western Siberia and its head, R. I. Eikhe, as well as of the People's Commissar of Heavy Industry, G. K. Orjonikidze, Frankfurt did not confine himself to building the combine, but sought to open the entire area economically. In view of the remoteness of the project from the principal centers of industry, the director of the Kuznetsk Project worked energetically to provide it with its own resources of raw materials and repair facilities. At that time, the slogan "Everything for the blast furnaces" was popular at the construction sites of the giants of the iron and steel industry. Frankfurt, however, strove for uniform and planned progress of his project in all departments. This strategy, which left no room for boastful display, justified itself to the full. Kuznetskstroï was the first of the giants of the iron and steel industry to yield a finished product: rails. In that connection Pravda emphasized that "Kuznetskstroï has shown an example of Bolshevik planning. All the new construction projects of the USSR, including Magnitostroï, must learn from it." (29) Frankfurt encountered very many difficult and unique problems. The situation as far as key personnel was concerned was very difficult. Thousands of dispossessed kulaks and their families arrived at the construction site. With the help of the party organization, Frankfurt got work under way to reeducate them. He announced that he would propose to the Soviet government the restoration of the rights of citizenship to those who would work honestly. And the fact was that within three years after the arrival of the "special settlers" at the site, a large portion of them had their rights restored — on November 7, 1933. Virtu-

ally all of them chose to remain in Novokuznetsk, became iron and steel workers, and did their jobs honestly and conscientiously. The construction chief gave much effort to making provision for the workers' needs. He was often in their cafeterias and barrack dormitories, where he talked with people at length and with sincerity about their everyday problems: their worries, the supply of necessities, etc. (30) By the end of 1934, the Kuznetsk Iron and Steel Works, the iron mines and the repair services had gone into operation, the city of Novokuznetsk had appeared, and Frankfurt was shifted by party decision to the Southern Urals to open the resources of the Orsk-Khalilovo district and put it at the country's service.

As early as the middle of the Second Five-Year Plan, the names of many managers of plants and heads of entire branches of industry, of executives capable of scoring outstanding triumphs in the struggle for accelerated technological progress and for highly efficient and well organized production, for the mastery of new technologies and the building of new enterprises, were well known.

Below we give two specific examples to attempt to demonstrate the methods of leadership of executives who had moved into the front ranks of industrial management, as well as their struggle for accelerated technical progress and a high culture of production and work.

The personnel of the Khar'kov Tractor Works and its manager, Panteleimon Ivanovich Svistun, enjoyed deserved country-wide fame. (31) Svistun's particular concern for economies and efficiency manifested itself even during the stage of construction. From the very outset of the construction work, he adopted a policy of reducing as far as possible importation of equipment from abroad and of employing the most economical designs. Svistun dealt most severely with every attempt to approve a bay or a department for use when it was not entirely complete, even if the things undone were most minor. This plant was one of the very few that had no so-called starting troubles. From the very first day of operation, its conveyors began to produce the planned number of machines. To no small

degree, this was due to the fact that Svistun had, from the very first days of construction, given great attention to choosing the future production executives and to teaching and developing them. In 1935, the government instructed the Khar'kov Tractor Works to produce 3,000 tractors over and above the 30,000 originally assigned. It was in the process of fulfilling this heavy schedule that all Svistun's skill in management was manifested. He did not have recourse to alarm methods and overtime. The plant functioned at an even pace. Of the monthly planned output, 33.5% was produced during the first ten days of the month, 32.3% in the second, and 34.3% in the third. (32) In December 1935 the plant was producing 200 tractors a day as against a projected capacity of 144. In 1936, the Central Management of the Automotive and Tractor Industry (GUTAP) found "the work of the Khar'kov Tractor Works to be outstanding with regard to its major production and economic functioning," and noted that "the operations of the Khar'kov Tractor Works in 1935 in the field of organization of production and in the work of managing the plant and of accounting must serve as an example to all plants in the auto and tractor industry." (33) In February 1936, S. S. Dybets, the head of GUTAP, speaking at a conference of all plants in auto and tractor production, called upon all executives to learn organization of production from the example of Svistun. (34)

In the middle of the Second Five-Year Plan (1934-1935), the manager of the Makeevka Iron and Steel Mill, Georgii Vissarionovich Gvakhariia, won nationwide popularity. In those years, the iron and steel industry and a considerable portion of the fuel industry were running at a loss. These losses had been envisaged in the state plan, and the enterprises received subsidies from the government. Gvakhariia and the staff that he headed were pioneers in the struggle for profitability in the iron and steel industry: they not only dispensed with subsidies but began to produce profit. The profitability of the enterprise was the consequence of basic reconstruction of the plant, the bold introduction of a number of technical innovations, and an equally decisive reconstruction of the entire organiza-

tion of the labor force and of wages. When named to head the Makeevka Works in May 1933, Gvakhariia, although then not yet forty, had lived a rich life. From the very first days after the October Revolution, he fought actively, as a soviet and party worker, for overthrow of the Menshevik government in Georgia. After Soviet government was established in Georgia, the party sent Gvakhariia to the most critical places. Then came years of work in the London Trade Mission and in the People's Commissariat of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection of the USSR (1924-1928).

In 1927-1929 Gvakhariia was part of the Trotskyite Opposition, and in 1929 he was arrested. But he had come to understand his errors even prior to this. He recognized his mistakes courageously, honestly and completely, and broke forever with the Opposition. (35)

Orjonikidze knew Gvakhariia well and valued him for his work in the construction projects, and later in the machinery of the people's commissariat. And in May 1930, when the commissariat dealt with questions of strengthening leadership at the enterprise level, Gvakhariia was named manager of the Makeevka Iron and Steel Mill. He began his work at the mill with a thorough study of its leading personnel. Subsequently, having consulted on this with the people's commissar, he boldly began to promote talented youth to posts of responsibility.

Gvakhariia rewarded experimentation and took reasonable production risks. Orjonikidze, carefully following the work of the Makeevka Works, gave Gvakhariia special authority, which authorized him to engage in the very boldest experiments. Very soon the fruits of this work began to make themselves felt. The Makeevka workers announced a number of bold technological innovations: very large melts, oxygen melting, extensive utilization of blast-furnace gases that had formerly been permitted to escape into the atmosphere almost in their entirety, the smelting of iron with acid slags, which melt at lower temperatures than basic. These measures led to a steep rise in the output of the blast furnaces, savings in materials, and reductions in metal production costs. The Makeevka personnel be-

came the initiators of the struggle for profitable operation. As a result of their heroic efforts, the Makeevka Works yielded 12,000,000 rubles of profit in 1935, whereas it had been planned to run at a 27,000,000 ruble loss in 1934. To no small degree the profitability of production was achieved by the Makeevka personnel as the result of introduction of a well thought-out and consistently implemented system of comprehensive cost accountability carried down as far as the crews serving the individual producing units. The development and introduction of a system of cost accountability for the plant and for the department and the fundamental reorganization of the entire wage system were guided directly by the manager.

A separate account was established for each department in the bookkeeping offices of the plant management, listing its profits and losses. The heads of the principal production departments (coke, blast-furnace, open-hearth furnace, rolling) were given just a few indices: a quantity target, one for product mix, a wage fund per ton of product, and a price for it. The department chief was granted the right to set the workers' wages within the bounds of the established rates, and to pay them bonuses. The department manager was given control over all its resources. He was required only to turn over the planned volume of output at the established price. If the cost in the department was less than the price, the profit was credited to the department. In the opposite case, it was charged with the loss. In identical fashion, the auxiliary departments were also transferred to cost accountability. The transport department, for example, was given three indices: a freight turnover target, a price per ton-kilometer, and a wage cost per ton-kilometer. If it was successful in cutting the cost per ton-kilometer, the difference was credited to it as profit. The transport department concluded contracts with the service departments. The contracts provided for fines to be paid to the departments if empty freight cars were not delivered on time, and to the transport department if there were delays in unloading the cars. Special indices were introduced for the power department, the main mechanics depart-

ment, etc. The relationships between closely related departments were regulated in very precise fashion. The consumer department defined the quality of the product it used. If differences of opinion occurred, the bureau of technical control decided the matter. The side at fault was fined 10% of the sum in dispute (for the purpose of combating litigiousness). Of the profit earned by a department, 50% was placed at the disposal of its chief. Should it operate at a loss, the department was deprived of bonuses, and the salaries of the engineering and technical personnel were cut (to a maximum of 25%). Gvakhariia devoted special attention to developing overall indices for each participant in the production process. The earnings of leading personnel in the departments were governed by the indices for efficiency of utilization of equipment. If, during the month, the volume of blast furnace space per ton of pig iron was above the norm (the norm being 1.13 cubic meter of furnace per ton of pig iron smelted), the earnings of the department chief and the foremen rose sharply. If the melts increased so much that only one cubic meter of blast furnace volume was required per ton, i.e., 0.13 cubic meters less than the norm, the department chief received triple wages. If he succeeded in improving the utilization of the equipment even further, and in obtaining a ton of pig iron per 0.9 cubic meters of blast furnace, he obtained four times his base pay, but if things went badly and 0.19 cubic meters more than the norm was required per ton, he only got 75% of his salary. (36) Utilization of blast furnace volume improved. The effective employment of the equipment by the Makeevka people led to an increase in output and a rise in labor productivity. The plant produced the cheapest metal in the South, while the earnings of the workers and engineering and technical personnel were the highest. (37)

Gvakhariia persistently introduced efficiency in the operation: work was planned to proceed at an even pace. The manager held not only the organization of production but concern for people's daily lives to be his personal business. He often visited the dormitory barracks, rooms, workers' cafeterias, and the community center.

He spoke repeatedly of the fact that people would work better and more efficiently if their recreation were organized intelligently and interestingly.

The profitability of production was the natural outcome of all these innovations, which are indissolubly associated with the name of Gvakhariia.

In 1937-1938 Soviet industry was dealt heavy losses by mass-scale repression. Replacement of these losses was not easy. A considerable number of young engineers who had graduated only in 1933-1934 were placed at the head of enterprises. Many talented organizers of production emerged from their ranks. Gradually these new executives gained experience. Gifted managers promoted during the Third Five-Year Plan entered the history of industry, the history of our country. Virtually all of them had received a higher engineering education and came to know their field of technology not only in theory but also on the job, as foremen, department chiefs, plant chief engineers, and plant managers. These leading personnel bore on their shoulders the guidance of industry during the years of war and of postwar reconstruction.

Footnotes

1) See the statistical handbooks Sostav rukovodiashchikh rabotnikov i spetsialistov Soiuza SSR, Moscow, 1936; Kadry tiazheloi promyshlennosti v tsifrakh, Moscow, 1936; and Novye kadry tiazheloi promyshlennosti (1930-1933 gg.), Moscow, 1934.

2) See V. I. Lenin, PSS, Vol. 35, p. 276.

3) Thus, for example, posts of prominence in industry were held by the former leader of the St. Petersburg Society of Manufacturers and Mill-Owners, Bachmanov, and by figures in the prerevolutionary iron and steel industry: Svitsyn, Gulyga, Khrennikov, and Zhdanov; the machinery industries: List, Strikovich, Makarovskii, Veitsman, and Shein; nonferrous metals: Ivanov; construction: Bernatskii and Klezeval'; the rubber industry: Liaudanskii. Former bigwigs in the old stockholder-owned

firms found places in the planning agencies (Gartvang, Fedorovich, Taube, Rabinovich). Economists who had served before the Revolution either in the Ministry of Trade and Industry or on the war industry committees, the Zemgor, the Organization of Cities, and in entrepreneurial organizations worked in the agencies directing the economy (Kafengauz, Nikitinskii, Oganovskii, Sobolev, Karatygin, Nol'de). See the literary miscellany, God XIX, Moscow, 1936, p. 307.

4) V. I. Lenin, PSS, Vol. 40, p. 62.

5) KPSS v rezoliutsiakh i resheniakh s'ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK, Part I, 7th ed., p. 703.

6) Ibid., Part II, pp. 518-524, 632-642.

7) Novye kadry tiazheloi promyshlennosti (1930-1933 gg.), pp. 49, 51.

8) Tekhnika (newspaper), June 1, 1932.

9) Ibid.

10) Statistical handbook, Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1958 g., Moscow, 1959, p. 837. Author's calculations.

11) Ibid., p. 839. Author's calculations.

12) Ibid., pp. 673-674. Author's calculations.

13) Kadry tiazheloi promyshlennosti v tsifrakh, p. 129.

14) Sostav rukovodiashchikh rabotnikov i spetsialistov Soiuza SSR, p. 16.

15) Ibid.; Nash promyshlennyi komsostav, based on data of the Accounting and Assignments Bureau of the Central Committee of the VKP(b), Moscow, 1923, p. 10.

16) XVII s'ezd VKP(b), stenographic report, Moscow, 1934, p. 643.

17) Za industrializatsiu, Feb. 1, 1931.

18) From October 1934 to January 1935, the present author studied and synthesized the data of personal questionnaires and autobiographies of 578 managers of the very largest enterprises in heavy industry and 76 heads of major construction projects of the USSR People's Commissariat of Heavy Industry. Familiarization with these documents was supplemented by conversations with a number of one-time heads of enterprises. The resultant data, analyzed and synthesized, were published (see Za industrializatsiu, Dec. 26, 1934 and Jan. 24, 1935). Here and below, unless otherwise stated, these data

are our source.

19) Central State Archives of the National Economy of the USSR (TsGANKh SSSR), Fund 4086, List 42, File 136, Sheet 37.

20) S. Orjonikidze, Izbrannye stat'i i rechi, Moscow, 1945, p. 467.

21) Recorded by the author in May 1965 from the words of P. I. Korobov.

22) Files of I. F. Tevosian, in the possession of his family. Autobiography.

23) See 16 zavodov. Glavy iz istorii, Moscow, 1933, pp. 568-578; Za industrializatsiiu, Nov. 6, 1932.

24) Taken down from the words of I. B. Sheinman, engineer, who visited factories in the U.S. in the company of V. I. Ivanov.

25) See A. F. Khavin, Karaganda — tret'ia ugol'naia baza SSSR, Moscow, 1951, pp. 73-76, 80-81.

26) Izvestia, July 9, 1935.

27) Recorded by the author from the words of O. M. Frankfurt, brother of S. M. Frankfurt.

28) V. I. Lenin, PSS, Vol. 51, p. 317; see S. M. Frankfurt, Rozhdenie stali i cheloveka, Moscow, 1935, pp. 13-14.

29) Pravda, Sept. 21, 1932.

30) Recorded from the words of V. N. Topor,

who at that time was special correspondent of the newspaper Za industrializatsiiu at Kuznetsk-stroi.

31) See Voprosy istorii, 1966, No. 2, pp. 207-209; Iu. L'vov and A. Epshtein, Sled na zemle, Moscow, 1966; I. Baltuzevich, Opyt i uroki stroitel'stva KhTZ, Moscow, 1932; Istorii KhTZ, Vol. I, Khar'kov, 1960, p. 266.

32) TsGANKh SSSR, Fund 7622, List 1, File 771, sheets 55-56.

33) Ibid., sheets 54, 58.

34) Ibid., File 53, sheets 35, 36.

35) TsGANKh, TsGANKh SSSR, Fund 7297, List 17, File 1016.

36) See Za industrializatsiiu, Dec. 16, 1934; Feb. 14, May 9, Nov. 14, 1935; March 9, 1936; Rasskazy o sotsialisticheskom masterstve, Moscow, 1936, pp. 91, 98; Promyshlennost' SSSR. Statisticheskii sbornik, Moscow, 1934, p. 173; S. M. Veingarten, Ekonomika i planirovanie chernoi metallurgii, Moscow, 1939, p. 73; Literaturnaia gazeta, Jan. 14, 1965.

37) Recorded from the words of A. Ia. Osi-pian, who was employed in those years as chief of one of the departments of the Makeevka Works. Also see memoirs of V. Cherniavskii, Literaturnaia gazeta, Jan. 14, 1965.

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