

Late Marx: gods and craftsmen

Theodor Shanin

Das ist der Weisheit letzter Schluss:
Nur der verdient sich Freiheit wie das Leben
Der täglich sie erobern muß!

This is the final wisdom, ever true:
He only earns his freedom and his life
Who daily conquers them anew!

Goethe, *Faust II*

Ordering change

Volume I of Marx's *Capital* was both the peak of Classical Political Economy and its most radical reinterpretation. It offered a fundamental model, built on the classical 'theory of value', of the most industrially advanced social economies of its time. It developed and placed at the centre of analysis a theory of accumulation through exploitation, and thereby of structurally determined class conflict and social transformation – the theory of 'surplus value'. It is indeed, therefore, the self-consciousness of the capitalist society . . . primarily a theory of bourgeois society and its economic structure,¹ but for realism's sake one must date it and place it, territorially and politically. The date is that of the pre-1870 blossoming of industrial 'private' capitalism. The place is Western Europe and its focus Great Britain. The political context is that of the socialist challenge to the *status quo*, a demand to turn the material goods and potential that industrial capitalism had produced into a base for a just society – 'to build Jerusalem in England's green and pleasant land'.² In the Hegelian language Marx favoured, the theoretical structure of *Capital* would be, therefore,

the dialectical negation of Political Economy, a self-consciousness of capitalism turning at its highest level of accomplishment into criticism of its very root, its unmasking, and thereby its subversion and transformation.

To date and place *Capital* is also to open up a major set of questions concerning the development of Marx's thought in the period which followed. Central to it is the 1872-82 decade of Marx's life in which there was growing interdependence between Marx's analysis, the realities of Russia, and the Russian revolutionary movement – an uncanny forerunner of what was to come in 1917. The questions concern Marx's theory of social transformation – of ordering change not only within capitalism. To understand this one may well begin with *Capital* but cannot stop at that.

The strength of *Capital* lay in its systematic, comprehensive, critical, historically sophisticated and empirically substantiated presentation of the way a newly created type of economy – the contemporary capitalist economy of Great Britain – had worked on a societal level. Of paramount significance has been the more general use this model offered for other societies in which capitalism has been in manifest and rapid ascent ever since. Its limitations as well as its points of strength are 'children of their time' – the times of the breakthrough and rush forward of the 'Industrial Revolution', the rise and increasing application of science and the spread of the French Revolution's political philosophies of evolution and progress. Central to it was evolutionism – the intellectual arch-model of those times, as prominent in the works of Darwin as in the philosophy of Spencer, in Comte's positivism and in the socialism of Fourier and Saint Simon. Evolutionism is, essentially, a combined solution to the problems of heterogeneity and change. The diversity of forms, physical, biological and social, is ordered and explained by the assumption of a structurally necessary development through stages which the scientific method is to uncover. Diversity of stages explains the essential diversity of forms. The strength of that explanation lay in the acceptance of change as a necessary part of reality. Its main weakness was the optimistic and unilinear determinism usually built into it: the progress through stages meant also the universal and necessary ascent to a world more agreeable to the human or even to the 'absolute spirit' or God himself. The materialist

epistemology of *Capital*, the dialectical acceptance of structural contradictions and of possible temporary retrogressions within capitalism, the objection to teleology, did not jettison the kernel of evolutionism. 'The country that is more developed industrially' was still destined 'only [to] show, to the less developed, the image of its own future'. Indeed it was a matter of 'natural laws working themselves out with iron necessity'.³

Yet Marx's mind was evidently far from happy with the unilinear simplicities of the evolutionist scheme. The richness of the evidence he studied militated against it and so did his own dialectical training and preferred epistemology. Also, the reason why it was the north-west corner of Europe that bred the first edition of the capitalist mode of production was still to be discovered. An admission of simple accident would be far from Marx's requirement for a science of society. In consequence and already by 1853 Marx had worked out and put to use the concepts of Oriental Despotism and of the Asiatic Mode of Production, its close synonym, as a major theoretical supplement and alternative to unilinear explanations.⁴

Marx's new societal map has assumed the global co-existence of potentially progressive social formations and of essentially static 'a-historical' ones. The nature of such static societies, of Oriental Despotism, was defined by a combination of environmental and social characteristics: extensive arid lands and hydraulic agriculture necessitating major irrigation schemes, a powerful state, and state monopoly over land and labour, multitudes of self-contained rural communities tributary to the state. Following Hegel's turn of phrase, Marx saw such societies as 'perpetuating natural vegetative existence',⁵ i.e. showing cyclical and quantitative changes while lacking an inbuilt mechanism of necessary social transformation. Marx's case-list included China, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Turkey, Persia, India, Java, parts of Central Asia and pre-Columbian America, Moorish Spain etc., and also, less definitely, Russia, defined as *semi-Asiatic*.⁶ The heterogeneity of global society, the differential histories of its parts, could be easier placed and explained by a heuristically richer scheme – a combination of evolutionary stages of the progressing societies and of the a-historical Oriental Despotisms, with space left between for further categories such as 'semi-Asiatic'.⁷ Capitalism comes as a global unifier which drags the a-historical societies of Oriental

Despotism on to the road to progress, i.e. into the historical arena. Once that obstacle is removed the iron laws of evolution finally assume their global and universal pace.

The attitude of Marx to colonialism, for long an embarrassment to some of his adherents in the Third World, was fully consistent with those views. Marx abhorred colonial oppression, as well as the hypocrisy of its many justifications, and said so in no uncertain terms. He accepted it all the same as a possible stage on the way of progress towards world capitalism and eventually to world socialism, i.e. a fundamentally positive if terrible step on the long road to the New Jerusalem of men made free.

In the last period of his work, Marx took a further step towards a more complex and more realistic conceptualisation of the global heterogeneity of societal forms, dynamics and interdependence. The change in Marx's outlook took shape as an afterthought to *Capital* Volume I (first published in 1867), and reflected the new experience and evidence of the 1870s.

Four events stand out as landmarks in the political and intellectual background to Marx's thought in this period. First, the Paris Commune of 1871 offered a dramatic lesson and a type of revolutionary rule never known before. The very appearance of the dawn of the great social revolution which will forever free mankind from the class-split society,⁸ had altered the terms of establishment of a socialist society and set a new contemporaneous timetable to it. It also provided the final crescendo to Marx's activities in the first International which ended in 1872, to be followed by a period of reflection. Second, a major breakthrough within the social sciences occurred during the 1860s and 1870s – the discovery of prehistory which was to lengthen the notion of historical time by some tens of thousands of years, and to bring primitive societies within the circle of historical study by combining the study of material remains with that of ethnography.⁹ The captivating impact of those developments on the general understanding of human society was considerable, centring as it did on men's ideas and ideals of community,¹⁰ – then as now the very core of European social philosophy. Third, and linked with the studies of prehistory, was the extension of knowledge of the rural non-capitalist societies enmeshed in a capitalist world, especially the works of Maine, Firs and others on India. Finally, Russia and the Russians offered to Marx a potent combination of all of the above:

rich evidence concerning rural communes ('archaic' yet evidently alive in a world of capitalist triumphs) and of direct revolutionary experience, all encompassed by the theory and the practice of Russian revolutionary populism.

The relation between the new developments in Marx's thought and his Russian connections has been meticulously, yet dramatically, documented in the work of Haruki Wada, turning a variety of odd pieces of Marx's late writings, rewritings, amendments and seeming ambivalence into a consistent whole.¹¹ At the turn of the decade Marx became increasingly aware that alongside the retrograde official Russia, which he so often attacked as the focus and the gendarme of European reaction, a different Russia of revolutionary allies and radical scholars had grown up, increasingly engaged with his own theoretical work. It was into the Russian language that the first translation of *Capital* was made, a decade before it saw light in England. It was Russia from which news of revolutionary action came, standing out all the more against the decline in revolutionary hopes in Western Europe after the Paris Commune.

In 1870-1 Marx taught himself Russian with the purpose of approaching directly evidence and debate published in that language. In a letter to Engels, his wife complained about the manner in which he applied himself to the new task – 'he has begun to study Russian as if it was a matter of life and death.'¹² Marx proceeded with similar vigour to study Russian sources, indeed, he turned the books of the Russian radical scholars into his textbooks of language, beginning with Herzen and giving particular attention to Fierovskii and Chernyshevskii. A major library of Russian books, marked and remarked, rapidly accumulated on his shelves and their summaries increasingly entered his notes.¹³

What followed was a long relative silence, which itself calls for an explanation – Marx did not publish anything substantial until his death. Yet, the direction in which his research and thought were moving emerges from correspondence, notes and re-editions. In an 1870 letter to Engels, Marx praised Fierovskii's description of the 'labouring classes' of Russia – a major populist analysis, as 'the most substantial book since yours, *The Condition of the Working Class*...'.¹⁴ He has subsequently added to the very short list of theorists he respected and publicly applauded to a degree allotted previously only to Engels, the name of Nikolai Chernyshevskii. In

1877, Marx rebuked in a letter the 'supra-historical theorising', i.e. an evolutionist interpretation of his own writings as related to Russia, and rejected it again, much more specifically, in 1881 in relation to the Russian peasant commune. Marx's quip of those very times about himself 'not being a marxist' was coming true with particular vengeance in so far as Russia was concerned.

The Russian connection

An aside concerning Russian revolutionary populism is necessary to place Marx's new interests, insights and friends for Western audiences. The label 'populist', like that of 'marxist', is badly lacking in precision; the heterogeneity of both camps was considerable. In Russian speech a populist (*narodnik*) could have meant anything from a revolutionary terrorist to a philanthropic squire. What makes it worse is the fact that there are today no political heirs to claim and defend the heritage of Russian populism – political losers have few loyal kinsmen, while the victors monopolise press, cash and imagination. Lenin's major work, from which generations of socialists learned their Russian terminology, used 'populism' as a label for a couple of writers who stood at that time on the extreme right wing of the populists, an equivalent of using the term marxism for the so-called 'legal marxists' of Russia.¹⁵ This made Lenin's anti-populist argument of 1898 easier, while increasing the obscurity of the populist creed to his readers of today.

Populism was Russia's main indigenous revolutionary tradition. Its particular mixture of political activism and social analysis commenced with A. Herzen and produced a long line of names well known and respected in the European socialist circles, e.g. P. Lavrov, Marx's personal friend and ally. It reached its full revolutionary potency in the writings of N. Chernyshevskii, and its most dramatic political expression in Marx's own time in *Narodnaya Volya*, i.e. the People's Will party.¹⁶ This clandestine organisation rose to exercise considerable impact during the 1879-83 period and was finally smashed in 1887 by police action, executions and exile.

Russian populists challenged both the Slavophile belief in the innate specificity (not to say intrinsic supremacy) of Russia or its

peasants and the liberal's propagation of West European capitalism as Russia's bright future.¹⁷ Secondly, Russian populists assumed the ability and desirability of Russia 'bypassing the stage' of West-European-like capitalism on its way to a just society. That possibility resulted, however, not from Russia's uniqueness, exalted by the Slavophiles, but from Russia's situation within a global context, which had already seen the establishment of capitalism in Western Europe. The 'world-historical' analytical paradigm led to the assumption of substantively different roads along which different societies proceed toward the similar goals of a better world. In judging those roads, the 'social costs' of capitalist progress were rejected for Russia and the increase in social equality and the level of livelihood of the majority treated as the only measurestick of true social advance. A third major marker, fully expressed only by the People's Will, the tsarist state was assumed to be the main enemy of the people of Russia, both an oppressor and an economically parasitic growth. It differed from Western Europe in its ability to keep people in slavery, not only as the plenipotentiary of the propertied classes. It was the *state*, in that view, which was Russia's *main capitalist force*, both the defender and the creator of the contemporary exploitive classes.

As against the force of order, oppression and exploitation, the revolutionary populists put their trust in a class war of the Russian labouring class seen by Chernyshevskii as 'peasants, part-time workers (*podenshchiki*) and wage-workers' (this trinity became peasants, workers and working intelligentsia in later populist writings). The idea of 'uneven development' (first expressed by P. Chadayev) was to provide the theoretical core of political analysis. Uneven development was seen as turning Russia into a proletariat among nations, facing at disadvantage the bourgeois nations of the West. Internally, it polarised Russia. On the other hand, it enabled and indeed necessitated revolutionary leaps in which relative backwardness could turn into revolutionary advantage. That made an immediate socialist revolution in Russia possible. The overthrowing of tsardom by revolutionary means was to be followed by the establishment of a new regime in which an interventionist government, serving the democratically expressed needs of the people of Russia, would act in tandem with the active organisation of local popular power.

In the early debates, the revolution envisaged by the Russian

ability of some of them to 'leap' over the stage of capitalism. The particular significance of intellectual elites as leaders and as catalysts of political action in a Russian-style society was stressed – a partial explanation of the way revolutionary populists built their organisation and chose their targets in armed action. For those reasons and also to provide the necessary cadres for the clandestine propaganda and for the armed action, exceptional stress was laid within the group on personality training, to inculcate modesty, integrity and totality of devotion. It made the People's Will organisation famous throughout Europe for its discipline as much as for the asceticism and the courage of its members.¹⁹ The Russian image and self-image of 'professional revolutionaries' and 'party cadres' have their main origin there. More, of course, is at stake in so far as the impact of Russian revolutionary populism on the future Russian Revolution is concerned for the movement and the analysis it championed proceeded to unfold with considerable input into the revolutions of 1905-7 and 1917-20, including also what in the first decade of the twentieth century came to be called Bolshevism.

The attitude of the revolutionary populists to the Russian peasant commune was integral to their world-view. About three-fifths of the arable land of European Russia was in the hands of the peasant and cossack communes.²⁰ Within them, each household held unconditionally only a small plot of land, i.e. house and garden plus its livestock and equipment. The use of arable land was assigned to a family on a long-term basis by its commune, the meadows were reassigned annually and often worked collectively, the pastures and forest were in common use. The diversity of wealth within the commune was expressed mainly in differential ownership of livestock, of non-agricultural property, and in some private land bought from non-communal sources. The use of wage-labour inside the commune was limited. Many vital services were run collectively by the commune: a village shepherd, the local guards, the welfare of the orphans, and often a school, a church, a mill, etc. An assembly of heads of the households controlled and represented communal interests: decided about the services, elected its own officers, and collected its informal taxes or dues. With the exception of some areas in the West (mostly ex-Polish) the assembly also periodically redivided the arable lands in accordance with some egalitarian principle, usually in relation to the changing size of the families involved. A number of peasant communes

populists was primarily a 'social' one, i.e. the transformation of the class nature of Russia, and not 'simply political', i.e. aiming at electoral franchise. An uprising of the peasant majority of the nation was to play a major role and other sub-groups of the labouring class and the revolutionaries of non-labouring class origin were to participate fully. Revolutionary populists turned the brunt of their propaganda firstly towards the peasants. As the attempts of the 1870s to propagate new revolutionary spirit among rural propaganda to extra-rural action. By now a two-in-one struggle was increasingly envisaged: an attack on the state which was also the main capitalist and capitalism-inducing institution meant that political and social struggles intertwined. That made the confrontation more difficult, but also offered the opportunity, upon victory, to move with particular speed toward a combined political and social transformation. The majority in the main populist organisation, land and liberty (*Zemlya i Volya*), established in 1876, had consequently adopted a strategy of insurrection (*perevorot*), i.e. of immediate, direct and armed anti-state challenge. In 1879 the organisation split into the People's Will (*Narodnaya Volya*) majority and the Black Repartition (*Chernyi Peredel*) – a minority which opposed the militants, the new anti-state line and the growing stress on armed action. The People's Will was increasingly active in organising urban workers and even published an illegal newspaper specifically designed for them, but explained it not by the exclusive role of the proletariat, but by the tactical significance of this component of the general ('triple') labouring class, i.e. its being present at the centres of administration, where the main battle with tsardom was to be fought. The organisation operated vigorously in the army, incorporating a number of officers, and was increasingly influential with students and young intellectuals. Besides propaganda and the preparations of an uprising, the strategy of attempts at the lives of the tsar and the top officials was adopted as a major tactical weapon aiming to shake tsardom and to trigger off popular opposition and insurrection.¹⁸

A strong moralist and subjectivist streak was prominent within the populist *Wellschchannung*, inclusive of the writings of Chernyshevskii – a philosophical materialist and an admirer of Feuerbach. The impact of ideas was assumed and accentuated to the populists a major determinant of the uneven development of societies and the

formed a *volost*, its officers local but authorised and controlled by state authorities. Despite its surveillance by the state, the commune played (also) the role of a *de facto* peasant political organisation, a collective shield against a hostile external world of squire, policeman, tax officer, robber, intruder or neighbouring village.²¹

To the revolutionary populist the peasant commune was the proof of the collectivist tradition of the majority of Russian people, which stayed alive in spite of its suppression by the state. They were not uncritical of it, but, on balance, considered the peasant commune a major asset to their plans.²² It was seen as a possible tool for the mobilisation of the peasants for the anti-tsardom struggle. It was to be a basic form of the future organisation of local power which would eventually rule Russia together with a democratically elected national government. For Chernyshevskii, it was also an effective framework for collective agricultural production in post-revolutionary Russia, which was to operate alongside the publicly owned industry and a minority of the private (and transitional?) enterprises. The image bears remarkable similarity to some of the realities, images and plans in Russia of the New Economic Policy period, 1921-7.

The most significant challenge to the revolutionary populism of the 1880s (and its substitution on the political map of Russia of the 1890s) was neither the Slavophiles and liberals to their 'right' nor the few Bakunist admirers of mass spontaneity to their 'left', but people who originated from the 'moderate' wing of their own conceptual fold. The main reason for the decline of revolutionary populism by the late 1880s was the defeat of their revolution, as the hope for an uprising receded, and the gallows, death in action and exile to Siberia silenced most of the People's Will activists, while their critics' voices gained in strength. A major argument against revolutionary populism came from an influential group which gathered around the journal *Russkoe Bogatstvo*, especially V. Vorontsov (who signed himself V.V.). They called for a moderate and evolutionary populism, with education as the major road forward and even with possible part-cooperation with government – a 'legal populism'. They were finding an audience and a carrier in the type of the well-meaning, highly talkative but rather ineffectual provincial intellectual – often an employee of the educational and welfare service of the local authorities and the co-operative movement. It was they who came increasingly to dominate

populism in the 1890s (and once again in 1907-17 after the defeat of the Revolution in 1905-7), diluting its content, turning its revolutionary wing into a 'wild' minority, and determining the whole movement's eventual destruction. It was mostly they who 'spoke on behalf of populism' between 1887 and the end of the century.

A second attack on revolutionary populism came from the members of the Black Repartition group who parted company with People's Will in 1879 over its insurrectionist designs. The leaders of that group, Plekhanov, Axelrod, Deutch and Zasulich, emigrated to Switzerland and after failing to make any headway with their own brand of populism, reorganised by 1883 and declared for marxism, scientific socialism, the necessity of a capitalist stage and a proletarian revolution on the road to socialism. They explained the failures of People's Will accordingly.²³ The new name adopted by the group was Emancipation of Labour (*Osvobozhdenie Truda*). Their eyes were now on Germany, its economy as well as the rapid increase of the German Social Democratic Workers' Party, with an explicit expectation that Russia would follow a similar route. Their conceptual 'Europisation' and increasing conversion to 'Westernism', i.e. the type of strict evolutionism we would call today a marxisan Modernisation Theory, meant that the Russian peasant commune, and by the 1890s the peasantry *in toto*, were to them no longer an asset but a sign of backwardness and stagnation, a reactionary mass. All of that had to be first removed to clear the way for the proletariat and its revolutionary struggle, and the sooner the better. They were consequently to watch with eager anticipation the development of capitalism in Russia – once more – the sooner the better, for the advance of socialism. It was to that vision that Marx referred in 1881 derisively as that of the 'Russian capitalism admirers'.²⁴ His own views were moving in an opposite direction.

Archaic commune and forerunner theory

In 1881 Marx spent three weeks contemplating, one can say struggling with, an answer to a letter concerning the Russian peasant commune. It came from Vera Zasulich, made famous by her earlier attempt on the life of a particularly vicious tsarist

dignitary, currently of the Black Repartition group and the future co-editor of the marxist *Iskra*. The four drafts of the reply Marx wrote testify to the immensity of work and thought which underlay it – as if the whole last decade of Marx's studies with its 30,000 pages of notes but no new major text finalised, came together. The drafts are testimony of puzzlement but also of a growing consciousness of and the first approach to a new major problem. It is a veritable display of 'the kitchen' of Marx's thought at a frontier of knowledge at which he, once more, found himself a forerunner to his own generation and friends.

The discovery of the peasant commune by the Russian intelligentsia led to a sharp debate about its nature and historiography. To its detractors, the peasant commune was a creation of the tsarist state, to police and tax the countryside, a device which conserved the backward ('archaic') characteristics of Russian agriculture and its political economy *in toto*.²⁵ To the populists and their academic allies, it was a survival of the social organisation of primary communism, i.e. of the pre-class society, a remnant to be sure but a positive one, both in its present function and future potential. Behind the furious debate about historiography of the commune stood fundamental political issues of strategy, of the class nature of the revolutionary camp, its enemies and even of the nature of the future (post-revolutionary?) regime. To Marx the issue of the peasant commune, significant as it was for Russia, was also a point of entry to a variety of issues of much broader significance, theoretically and politically. These were the issues of peasantry within a capitalist (capitalism-centred?) world, and the type of sub-worlds and sub-economies such 'irregularity' is bound to produce. It was also that of the socialist revolutions in the world at large, i.e. of the 'peasant chorus' without which, he said once, the proletariat's 'solo song, becomes a swan song, in all peasant countries'.²⁶

Already in the *Grundrisse* (1857) Marx had undertaken extensive comparative studies of peasant agriculture and of communal land-ownership within the major pre-capitalist modes of production. The peasant commune was not to him (or to the revolutionary populists) exceptional to Russia. It was simply the best preserved one in Europe – persisting for sound 'materialistic' reasons and by then increasingly placed in a new international and local context of advancing capitalism. Still in 1868 in a letter to Engels he was clearly delighted with 'all that trash', i.e. the Russian peasant

communal structure 'coming now to its end'.²⁷ During the 1870s the works of Mourer and Morgan strengthened Marx's conviction, however, as to the positive qualities of the primary-tribal communities in their ethnocentricity (i.e. their concentration on human needs rather than on production for profits), and their inherent democracy as against capitalist alienation and hierarchies of privileges. The man of capitalism – the most progressive mode of production in evidence – was not the ultimate man of human history up-to-date. The Iroquois 'red skin hunter' was, in some ways, more essentially human and liberated than a clerk in the City and in that sense closer to the man of the socialist future. Marx had no doubts about the limitations of the 'archaic' commune: material 'poverty', its parochiality and its weakness against external exploitive forces. Its decay under capitalism would be necessary. Yet, that was clearly not the whole story. The experience and excitement of the Paris Commune – to Marx the first direct experiment in a new plebeian democracy and revolutionary polity – was by now part of the picture. With the evidence of what appeared as the first post-capitalist experiment Marx was more ready than before to consider the actual nature of social and political organisation in the world he strived for. To all those steeped in Hegelian dialectics, children resembled their grandparents more than their parents. The 'primary' commune, dialectically restored, on a new and higher level of material wealth and global interaction, entered Marx's images of the future communist society, one in which once more the 'individuals behave not as labourers but as owners – as members of a community which also labours'.²⁸

Back from the past/future to the present, the consideration of co-existence and mutual dependence of capitalist and non-capitalist (pre-capitalist?) social forms made Marx increasingly accept and consider 'uneven development' in all its complexity. New stress was also put on the regressive aspects of capitalism and on its link with the issue of the state in Russia. The acceptance of unilinear 'progress' is emphatically out. The extension of an essentially evolutionist model through the ideas of Oriental Despotism is by now insufficient. Specifically, Marx came to see the decline of the peasant commune in Western Europe and its crisis, in Russia, not as a law of social sciences – spontaneous economic process – but as the result of an assault on the majority of the people, which could and should be fought. The consideration of the Russian commune in

the drafts of the 'Letter of Zasluch' brought all this to the surface. It will be best to present the essence of the message in Marx's own words.²⁹

To begin with, 'what threatens the life of the Russian commune is neither historical inevitability nor a theory but oppression by the State and exploitation by capitalist intruders whom the State made powerful at the peasant's expense.' The type of society in question was singled out by its international context, i.e. 'modern historical environment: it is contemporaneous with a higher culture and it is linked to a world market in which capitalist production is predominant,' while the country 'is not, like the East Indies the prey of a conquering foreign power.' The class-coalition of peasant-destroyers – the power-block in societies with peasant numerical predominance – was defined as 'the *state . . . the trade . . . the landowners* and . . . *from within* [the peasant commune] . . . the *usery*' (italics added), i.e. state, merchant capitalists, squires and kulaks – in that order. The whole social system was referred to as a specific 'type of capitalism fostered by the state at the peasants' expense'.

To Marx the fact that the Russian commune was relatively advanced in type, being based not on kinship but on locality, and its 'dual nature' represented by 'individual' as well as 'communal land' ownership, offered the possibility of two different roads of development. The state and the specific variety of state-bred capitalism were assaulting, penetrating and destroying the commune. It could be destroyed, but there was no 'fatal necessity' for it. The corporate aspect of the commune's existence could prevail, once revolution had removed the anti-commune pressures and the advanced technology developed by Western capitalism was put to new use under the communal control of the producers. Such a solution would indeed be best for Russia's socialist future. The main limitation of the rural commune, i.e. their isolation, which facilitated a Russian edition of 'centralised despotism', could be overcome by the popular insurrection and the consequent supplementing of the state-run *volost* by 'assemblies elected by the communes – an economic and administrative body serving their own interest'. That is, shockingly, peasants running their own affairs, within and as a part of socialist society. Indeed, the Russian peasants' 'familiarity with corporate ("artel") relations would greatly smooth their transition from small plot to collective

farming' but there is a condition to it all: 'the Russian society having for so long lived at the expense of the rural commune owes it the initial resources required for such a change,' i.e. the precise reverse of 'primitive accumulation' was now defined by Marx as the condition for successful collectivisation of the Russian peasant agriculture. Also, it would be gradual change . . . '[in which] the first step would be to place the commune under normal conditions [i.e. in a non-exploitive context] on its present basis.'

In conclusion, to Marx, a timely revolutionary victory could turn the Russian commune into a major 'vehicle of social regeneration'. A 'direct starting point of the system to which the contemporary society strives' and a grass root framework for 'large-scale co-operative labour' and the use of 'modern machinery'. Moreover, that may make some chiefly peasant countries 'supreme in that sense to the societies where capitalism rules'. That is, indeed, why 'the Western precedent would prove here nothing at all.' Moreover, 'the issue is not that of a problem to be solved but simply of an enemy, who had to be beaten . . . to save the Russian commune one needs a Russian revolution.' Note the expression *Russian* revolution, twice repeated within the text. Finally, to understand it all 'one must descend from pure theory to Russian reality' and not be frightened by the word 'archaic', for 'the new system to which the modern society is tending will be a revival in a superior form of an archaic social type.'

The issue of the peasant commune was used by Marx also as a major way to approach a set of fundamental problems, new to his generation, but which would be nowadays easily recognised as those of 'developing societies', be it 'modernisation', 'dependency' or the 'combined and uneven' spread of global capitalism and its specifically 'peripheral' expression. There were several such components of Marx's new itinerary of topics for study and preliminary conclusions, none of which worked out in full. At the centre lies the newly perceived notion of 'uneven development', interpreted not quantitatively (i.e. that 'some societies move faster than others') but as global interdependence of societal transformations. The 'Chronological Notes', i.e. a massive conspectus of Marx written in 1880-2, is directly relevant here. As rightly noticed in an interesting contribution of B. Porshnev (who refers it to the 'last 9-12 years period of Marx's life'), it shows Marx's attention turning to 'the problem of historical interdependence of people and

countries in the different period of global history, i.e. the synchronic unity of history' (and one should add to dichronic inter-social unity).³⁰ Marx comes now to assume also for the future a multiplicity of roads of social transformation, within the global framework of mutual and differential impact. (Already in the *Grundrisse* he had accepted it manifestly for the pre-capitalist past.) That is indeed why the generalised application of the discussion of 'primitive accumulation' in Volume I of *Capital* is by 1877 so explicitly rejected. As is documented and argued by Wada, it meant also that Marx had begun to 'perceive the structure unique to backward capitalism'³¹ – to say 'structures' would probably be to say it better. The idea of 'dependent development' is not yet there, but its foundation is laid. To sum it up bluntly, to Marx, the England he knew 'that is more developed industrially' did not and indeed could not any longer 'show to the less developed Russia the 'image of its own future'. By one of history's ironies, a century later we are still trying to shed the opposite claim of post-1917 Russia's monopoly over revolutionary imagination, the assumption that it is Russia which is to show to all of the Englands of our time the image of their socialist futures.

Marx's new turn of mind was unmistakably recognised and acknowledged after their fashion by doctrinaire marxists. The 'Letter to the Editorial Board of *Otechestvennyye Zapiski*' was left unpublished by the Emancipation of Labour group, despite promises to Engels who let them have it for publication. The 'Letter to Zasulich', written by explicit request to make Marx's views known, was not published by them either. (The first of these was initially published in 1887 by the *Messenger of People's Will*, the second only in 1924). Much psychological rubbish was written in Russia and in the West about how and why those writings were forgotten by Plekhanov, Zasulich, Axelrod etc. and about the 'need for specialised psychologists to have it explained'.³² It was probably simpler and cruder. Already in Marx's own generation there were marxists who knew better than Marx what marxism is and were prepared to censor him on the sly, for his own sake.

The clearest salute to Marx's originality and to his new views was given a generation later by the most erudite of the Russian marxists of his time, Ryazanov, the first director of the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow who published first in 1924 the four drafts of the 'Letter to Zasulich' (discovered by him in 1911). To

him, the four drafts written during less than two weeks of intensive intellectual and political considerations indicated the decline of Marx's capacities.³³ On top of that hint he has added, quoting Edward Bernstein, an additional explanation for Marx's populist deviation: 'Marx and Engels have restricted the expression of their scepticism not to discourage too much the Russian revolution-aries'.³⁴ Poor old Marx was clearly going senile at 63 or else engaging in little lies of civility and expedience, once he departed from the 'straight and narrow' of the marxism of his epigones. (An amusing affinity – during and after the 1905-7 Revolution, Lenin was accused of leaning toward populism by some of his marxist adversaries and associates.³⁵ It seems that those two have had a 'deviation' in common.)

Radical backwardness and conservative revolutionaries

Three more related issues should be singled out for attention: the nature of the Russian experience, Marx's attitude to revolutionary movements and the place of Engels as Marx's most significant interpreter. Firstly, while the experience of India or China was to Marx's generation of Europeans remote, abstract and often misconceived, Russia was closer not only geographically but in the basic sense of human contact, possible knowledge of language and of availability of evidence and analysis, self-generated by the natives. It was not only the difference in extent of information which was at issue, however. The Russia of those times was marked by political independence and growing international weakness, placed on the peripheries of capitalist development, massively peasant yet with rapidly expanding industry (owned mainly by foreigners and the crown) and with a highly interventionist state. In the conceptual language of our own generation Russia was, or was rapidly turning into, a 'developing society' – a new type of social phenomenon. Newcomers are hard to recognise but Marx's conceptual 'feel in the fingers' was too good to miss entirely this first silhouette of a new shape. It had been no accident that it was from Russia and from the Russians that Marx learned new things about global 'unevenness', about peasants and about revolution, insights which would be valid in the century still to

come. The triple origins of Marx's analytical thought suggested by Engels – German philosophy, French socialism and British political economy – should in truth be supplemented by a fourth one, that of Russian revolutionary populism. All that is easier to perceive when looked at in the late twentieth century, but the massive brainwashing of interpretation initiated by the second International is still powerful enough to turn it into a 'blind spot'.

To proceed with that line of argument somewhat further in order to test it, the other major departure of Marx from an evolutionist view which assumed an inexorable course of history towards capitalist centralisation, and used the index of global economic 'progress' in political judgment, was also related to a direct experience of struggle at the close 'peripheries' of capitalism *sensu strictu*. The Fenian Rebellion of the Irish made Marx write to Engels in 1868, '*I used to think that Ireland's separation from England would be impossible. Now I consider it to be inevitable.*' (italics added)³⁶ As a leader of the International he had also taken a public stand in that matter. In 1867 Marx defined Irish independence and the setting up of protective tariffs against England, together with agrarian revolution, as the country's major needs. Not only the conclusion but also the way he argued his case were important steps from the nineteenth-century ideas of progress towards the understanding of what our own generation would call 'dependent development' and its pitfalls. In the same year Marx spoke also of the way the Irish industry was being suppressed and its agriculture retarded by the British state and economy. By 1870 Marx went so far as to say that, 'The decisive blow against the ruling classes in England (and this blow is decisive for the working man's movement all over the world) is to be struck not in England but only in Ireland.'³⁷ With full awareness of what such a stand might mean at the very centre of metropolitan nationalism, he called British workers to support the Irish independence struggle. The beautiful phrase coined in the days of their revolutionary youth by Engels, that 'people who oppress other people cannot themselves be free',³⁸ came back, this time with a distinctly 'Third-Worldish' sound.

Secondly, Marx asserted his political preferences loud and clear. His sympathy was with fighters and revolutionaries, be the 'small print' of their creed as it may, and against doctrinaire marxists, especially when on theoretical grounds they rebuked revolutionary

struggle. That was clear when he wrote of the Paris communards 'storming heaven' in 1871. In his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (1875) he scorned socialists who 'keep themselves within the limits of the logically presumable and of the permissible by the police'.³⁹ The members of People's Will on trial for life were to him not only right in the essentials of their political stand but 'simple, objective, heroic'. Theirs was not 'tyrannicide as "theory" and "panacea" but a lesson to Europe in a "specifically" Russian historically inevitable mode of action; against which any moralising from a safe distance was offensive.'⁴⁰ In contrast he had sharply turned against their critics in Plekhanov's Black Repartition group in Geneva.⁴¹

It has been the way of many sophisticates of marxology to scoff at such utterances of Marx or to interpret them patronisingly as 'determined rather by . . . emotional motives'⁴² (an antonym, no doubt, of 'analytical', 'scientific' or 'sound'). To understand political action, especially the struggle for a socialist transformation of humanity, as an exercise in logic or as a programme of factory building only, is utterly to misconstrue it, as Marx knew well. Also, he shared with the Russian revolutionaries the belief in the purifying power of revolutionary action in transforming the very nature of those involved in it – the 'educating of the educators'.⁴³ The Russian revolutionary populists' concern with moral issues found ready response in him. Moral emotions apart (and they were there and unashamedly expressed), revolutionary ethics were often as central as historiography to Marx's political judgment. So was Marx's distaste of those to whom the punch-line of marxist analysis was the adoration or elaboration of irresistible laws of history, used as the license to do nothing.

Finally, and especially after Marx's death, the difference of emphasis between Marx and Engels came to anticipate a dualism which was increasingly conspicuous within the post-Engels marxist movement. Hobsbawm's caution against the 'modern tendency of contrasting Marx and Engels, generally to the latter's disadvantage' must be kept in mind here, but also its qualification: 'the two men were not Siamese twins.'⁴⁴ The two were partners, allies and friends, while Engels's devotion to Marx and his heritage has justly become famous. On a number of issues it was Engels who led and, indeed, often taught Marx, especially in so far as political and military issues were concerned. All that is not at issue, however. In his views Engels was less inclined to move in the new directions

essential for historiography, and the very term disappeared from Engels's published work. In *Anti-Dühring* (1877), still written in Marx's powerful presence, Oriental Despotism spread 'from India to Russia'.⁴⁸ It is never mentioned in *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*. In Engels's known correspondence the concept appears last in February 1884. As from then and until Engels's death in 1895, through the whole bulk of nearly 3,000 pages of his writings and letters, it was not mentioned even once.⁴⁹ We are back all the way to *The German Ideology* of 1846. It had been in its time a dramatic breakthrough of major illumination and a conceptual base to the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) with its immense and lasting impact. It was now a retrograde step.

Engels wrote well, his style served by his capacity to present complex issues with simplicity, strength and impeccable consistency of argument. There was a price to that clarity, however, and Engels's argument with Tkachev is a case in point.

Peter Tkachev was a Russian Jacobin, a historical materialist whose class analysis made him suspect the idealisation of the 'masses' by many of his comrades – he called for a direct use of force by a determined revolutionary minority. In his verbal assault on the Russian state Tkachev had overstated, to be sure, the extra-class, inertia-bound, 'autonomous' dimensions of tsardom – to him it was a 'state suspended in the air, so to speak, one that has nothing in common with the existing social order and that has its roots in the past'.⁵⁰ Yet as Engels was fond of saying, 'the proof of the pudding' of political theorising is 'in the eating of it'. On the point of political prediction and strategy, Tkachev had concluded, in line with Chernyshevskii's views, that Russia might benefit from the 'relative advantages of backwardness' and thereby more easily produce 'social revolution' than Western Europe. Also in his view, that potential could be lost if not taken up in time. He had suggested, impudently for 1874, that there was a chance that Russia might proceed along a revolutionary path towards socialism even earlier than the USA or Great Britain. Such a 'leap' through a 'stage' would entail the conquest and massive use of centralised state power. Tkachev had also assumed that to carry out the aims of social reconstruction, while facing enemies and a still untrustworthy majority of population, the revolutionaries should/would proceed for a time to rule 'from above' – a dictatorship of a revolutionary party. All of the European left was subsequently

Marx explored in the last decade of his life. Despite Engels's warnings against treating marxism as a form of economic determinism, he had been much more than Marx a man of his own generation with its evolutionist, 'naturalist' and 'positivist' beliefs. The same is even more true for Kautsky as the later chief interpreter of Marx and for the mainstream Russian interpretation of Marx by Plekhanov.

When still working shoulder to shoulder, Marx and Engels had felt alike about the past; the medieval peasant commune in its Germanic version was to both of them 'the only kernel of popular liberty and life'⁴⁵ of that period. They agreed about the corrosive influences of capitalism on the peasant commune and that only revolution could save it in Russia. They both assumed that it was worth saving – to be integrated and transformed into the new socialist era. But to Engels, the future of the Russian commune was inevitably subject to proletarian revolution in the West, itself part of the irresistible march of 'progress'. The basic order of things could not be changed. Marx was moving away from such views (though *how far* he had moved by 1882 will be forever a matter of debate). Also, while Engels bowed to Marx's supreme knowledge of the 'East' and its peculiarities, the very heterogeneity of structure and motion round the globe were to Engels less of a problem, less of a bother and less of a trigger to new analysis.

The best way to test the differences between the two men is to consider Engels's writings after Marx's death. In mid-1884, in the space of two months, he wrote his immensely influential *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*, 'in fulfilment of bequest to Marx' and using his conspectus of Morgan's study. The book was brilliant in its discussion of the 'archaic' social structures, yet in its other parts offered a virtual compendium of evolutionism with a dialectical 'happy end' to conclude. In it, and engined by the ever deepening 'division of labour', are historical stages, following each other with the precision, repetition and inevitability of clockwork, for 'what is true for nature holds good also for society'.⁴⁶ It all proceeds to progress unilinearly from the 'infancy of the human race' to 'the highest form of the state, the democratic republic in which alone the decisive struggle between proletarian and bourgeoisie is to be fought'. Then comes socialism, the 'revival in a higher form of the liberty and fraternity of the ancient gentes'.⁴⁷ Since mid-1884 not even Oriental Despotism seemed

provided with light relief when in 1875 Engels came to exercise his wit on Tkachev. Such 'green schoolboy's views' by which Russia may do more for socialism than just to facilitate the beginning of the socialist revolution where it must actually begin, i.e. in the West, or even more outrageously, a vision of a socialist regime in muzhik-full Russia, even before industrialised Western Europe would see it, was 'pure hot-air' and only proved that it was Tkachev who was 'suspended in mid-air' and still had 'to learn the ABC of Socialism'.⁵¹ All very funny, but with an unexpected twist when seen retrospectively, two generations after November 1917 in Russia, and a generation after October 1949 in China.

In so far as the issue of the Russian commune was concerned, Engels loyally defended to the end both the view that it may serve as a unit of socialist transformation and the provision that for that to happen a proletarian revolution in the West must show 'the retarded countries . . . by its example how it is done',⁵² 'it' being the establishment of post-capitalist society. 'It should be borne in mind,' he added in 1894, 'that the far-gone dissolution of Russian communal property has [since 1875] considerably advanced.'⁵³ Plekhanov was by now Engels's major guide to Russia and the head of the Russian marxist organisation, involved as it was in a violent dispute about peasantry's future with the (mostly 'legal', i.e. reformist) populists of the day.⁵⁴ The Russian peasant commune was increasingly seen by Engels, accordingly, as on its last legs, with capitalism in overwhelming presence. The only thing left to those who liked it little seemed to be 'to console ourselves with the idea that all this in the end must serve the cause of human progress'.⁵⁵ As to the European peasantry, he had even more poignant things to say, in 1894, laying bare the general attitude prevailing in the second International: 'in brief our small peasant, like every other survivor of the past modes of production, is hopelessly doomed . . . in view of the prejudices arriving out of their entire economic position, the upbringing and isolation . . . we can win the mass of the small peasants only if we make them a promise which we ourselves know we cannot keep'⁵⁶ – which was, of course, out of the question.

But Engels was also a revolutionary and so were many of his and Marx's intellectual heirs. It was their support of revolutionary strategies which was increasingly at odds with the theoretical doctrine. While on the level of theory Marx was being 'engelsised'

and Engels, still further, 'kautskised' and 'plekhanovised' into an evolutionist mould, revolutions were spreading by the turn of the century through the backward/'developing' societies: Russia 1905 and 1917, Turkey 1906, Iran 1909, Mexico 1910, China 1910 and 1927. Peasant insurrection was central to most of them. None of them were 'bourgeois revolutions' in the West European sense and some of them proved eventually socialist in leadership and results. At the same time, no socialist revolution came in the West nor did a socialist 'world revolution' materialise. In the political life of the socialist movements of the twentieth century there was an urgent need to revise strategies or go under. Lenin, Mao and Ho chose the first. It meant speaking with 'double-tongues' – one of strategy and tactics, the other of doctrine and conceptual substitutes, of which the 'proletarian revolutions' in China or Vietnam, executed by peasants and 'cadres', with no industrial workers involved, are but particularly dramatic examples.

The alternative was theoretical purity and political disaster. Once again using personalities to pinpoint a broader issue, the end of the lives of Plekhanov and Kautsky, the 'father of Russian marxism' and the world's most erudite marxist respectively, provide to it a tragic testimony and a sign. The first died in 1918, an 'internal exile' in the midst of revolution – an embittered, bewildered and lonely foe of the experiment he fathered. The second died in 1938, an exile watching incomprehensibly and aghast the double shadow over Europe of Nazism in the industrially progressive and electorally mass-socialist Germany, and of Stalinism in the first-born socialist Russia. The terrible fate of finding oneself 'on the rubbish heap of history' had claimed its first generation of marxist theorists.

Reading Marx: gods and craftsmen

Back to Marx: what adds significance to discussion of the last stage in the development of his thought is what it teaches us about his intellectual craftsmanship and about him as a human being. The very fact of transformation in Marx's thought and not just of its logical unfolding shocks those to whom Marx is god. Was he god or human? As against gods and godlings the test of humanity is that of being context-bound, changeable in views, and fallible. Human

concept of Oriental Despotism was abolished by decree, i.e. declared un-marxist with the usual penalties attached.

To the marxists west of the USSR, the 1960s were a period of dramatic change and reassessment which, beginning with the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party and the Hungarian uprising, culminated in the experiences of 1968: Saigon, Paris, Washington, Prague and Peking. Marx's early writings were the great find of those days.⁵⁸ The writings differed sharply from *Capital* in their immediate concern, their design and their language of exposition. More importantly, they legitimated the concern of many marxists in the post-Stalin era, with individuals facing systems of social control and repression, non-socialist as well as socialist. The discussion of the material and social determinations of human alienation offered a major and still potent analytical tool to extricate some major issues of human emancipation. That is how an unfinished and obscurely written Germanic text became an inspiration to the 1968 generation of radicals in Western and Eastern Europe.

On the face of it, the discovery of early Marx has simply meant accepting that his views developed and transformed. Amazingly, it was that very evidence of the unmistakable heterogeneity of his writings which gave yet another twist to Marx's definition. An epistemological rupture was decreed in Paris, dividing between Marx of 1844 (young and part-Hegelian) and marxism, i.e. true thought of Marx (mature and pure) – a totally new rigorous and final Science of Man.⁵⁹ Marx was infallible after all; his infallibility simply began at a later age. The vision of 'epistemological rupture', i.e. Marx's leap into simultaneous maturity, scientificity and sanctity has been also used to disconnect his analysis from his goals and beliefs. 'Humanism' was declared a bourgeois concept, nothing to do with mature, i.e. scientific Marx and a survival at best of the pre-scientific thought alongside of the science.⁶⁰ 'Mature Marx' was not only absolute in truth but a-moral.

The task in the eyes of the proponents of this Science of Man was the further elaboration of and deduction from the objective and eternal Laws, uncovered in Marx's 'mature' writings. To succeed in that application one had simply to keep oneself pure and apart from the septic impact of 'bourgeois science', i.e. anything else. That is where, behind the philosophical debates about relationships between Hegel's and Marx's thought, an old and ugly face seemed

vision reflects physical, social and intellectual environments. Human vision changes in time – we learn and discover. Humans err in perception, understanding and prediction. God's vision is unlimited, unchanging and infallible – it can only unfold what is already in it. It is also amoral, for there is no way to judge god's ethics – it is his word which is the moral code. That is one reason why the human mind has designed gods as humanity's anti-model and ever craves for their existence, as the final resort in a painfully unstable world of endless heterogeneity and surprise. Not much was changed on that score by the scientific revolution of our times.

When facing true masters of thought and deed the great temptation is to invest them with godly qualities. Surely, at least they stand above environment, history, mistake and sin, offering their worshippers and interpreters a glimpse of eternity and a link to the Absolute.

To put a case for Marx's humanity it is probably best to begin with the interpretations of his godliness. While commentary varied, the deification of Marx and of Volume 1 of *Capital* was deeply rooted in the second International. The 1917 political victory made Bolshevism into the most influential interpretation of marxism in the world. By the 1930s, stalinism had simplified it and brutalised it into a sole tool of ideological control. Stalin was right and therefore Lenin was right and thereby Marx was mostly right (or else . . .). Political expedience as defined by infallible leadership had merged with final truth and indisputable ethics of obedience. Once the 'antagonist social classes' were 'abolished' and the Communist Party put in charge, the very fact of economic advance would inevitably produce socialism followed by communism. This fundamental state legitimisation has produced powerful ideological demand for unilinearity as the sole mode of explanation – a model of inevitable progress defined by every step of the most progressive regime on earth. Oriental Despotism (or indeed any multilinear model) did not fit those needs. Worst still, it could be and was used to castigate the Soviet regime itself as retrograde. Two ways to iron out these problems were toyed with in the 1920s: (a) to define Oriental Despotism as a universal stage of unilinear development (following 'primary communism' and preceding slavery) or else, a sub-stage of the pre-class 'archaic' societies; and (b) to omit Oriental Despotism altogether as unsound on scholarly grounds.⁵⁷ The Stalin resolved any such doubts by cutting through them. The

to emerge. For, consequently, there could be only two truly credible explanations of failure of prediction based on absolute wisdom: (a) the misreading of what is already in the Scriptures – caused by surrender to the poison of bourgeois scholarship (that is, of course, pseudo-scholarship); and (b) wilful treason in the service of the enemies of the people. We know what were the ways of rectification for each of those. We should also know by now how immense and self-destructive the cost of it is in terms of socialist thought, deed, and blood.

Another, more sophisticated way 'to keep Marx in line' was to salvage his unilinearism by temporarily giving up his infallibility. An interesting and very erudite book by Nikoforov has done just that.⁶¹ The author has convincingly argued out of court the attempts of his colleagues in the USSR to de-emphasise the significance of Oriental Despotism in Marx's writings. He then proceeds to demolish the concept – Marx and Engels were simply wrong on the matter. Marx's studies of prehistory and of the Russian peasant and Indian peasant communes make him see by 1879 some difficulties with that idea, but he still did not 'overcome it'. Then a most dramatic conclusion strikes one dumb. Under the impact of Morgan, in the last moments of his life Marx finally 'overcomes it', rejecting Oriental Despotism (and the mistaken theories of state attached to it) to return to unilinearism, i.e. to the belief in the 'Highway of History' (*Magistralnaya Doroga*), which all societies are bound to tread. Marx's date of divine incarnation, i.e. when he has eventually got things right and final, is 1881.⁶² The proof of this lies, once again, not in Marx but in a review of Engels's later writings and especially of *The Origins*. . . . etc. As a secondary proof comes the fact that in Marx's drafts of 'Letter to Zasulich' and in his conspectus of Morgan's book the term 'Oriental Despotism' did not appear. A comment by Marx related to a study of India (in the same notebook which contain the notes on Morgan), 'this ass Phear calls the organisation of the rural commune feudal', is reproduced but dismissed as inconclusive. The fact that Marx actually speaks of 'central despotism' ('centralised' in further texts) in the drafts of 1881 is not even noticed.⁶³ There is nothing else – an outstandingly thin evidence for the size of the claim made. The happy end of Marx's return to the unilinear fold reminds one of the well-known eighteenth-century tale about Voltaire on his death bed returning to the bosom of the Catholic Church, the clergy at

his bedside bearing faithful evidence to it. Engels's views are, of course, quite another matter.

It is time to recapitulate briefly. The last decade of Marx's life was a distinctive period of his analytical endeavour: a fact recognised, if for different reasons, by a steadily growing number of scholars. Central to it was his involvement with Russian society, both as a source of fundamental data and as a vehicle of analysis and exposition of the problems of a specific type of society which differed structurally from the 'classical case of capitalism' on which *Capital*, Volume 1, was based. Already in the *Grundrisse* (1857-8) Marx had assumed the multiplicity of roads of social development in pre-capitalist societies. Hobsbawm's non-consecutive interpretation of it as 'three or four alternative routes out of primitive communal systems', each commencing in a different area, i.e. as 'analytical, though not chronological, stages in . . . evolution', is important here.⁶⁴ If accepted, it is already much more sophisticated and realistic than any simple evolutionist model would have it. Marx shifted his position further as from the 1873-4 period of extensive contacts with Russian scholars, revolutionaries and writings, but more clearly and consciously so since 1877. Marx had come now to accept the multiplicity of roads also within a world in which capitalism existed and became a dominant force. It meant (a) an anticipation of future societal histories as necessarily uneven, interdependent and multilinear in the 'structural' sense; (b) the consequent inadequacy of the unilinear 'progressive' model for historical analysis as well as for political judgments concerning the best way the socialist cause can be promoted; (c) first steps toward the consideration of the specificity of societies which we call today 'developing societies'; and, within that context, (d) a re-evaluation of the place of peasantry and its social organisation in the revolutionary processes to come; (e) a preliminary step to look anew at the ruling-class coalition and the role of the state in the 'developing societies'; and (f) a new significance given the decentralisation of socio-political power within the post-revolutionary society in which the rejuvenation of 'archaic' communes may play an important role.

Remarkably for a man who died in 1883, the Marx of those days was beginning to recognise for what they really are the nature, problems and debate concerning 'developing' and post-revolutionary societies of the twentieth century. The expression

sion of peasants and rural commune in *Grundrisse* (1857-8) and the drafts of the 'Letter to Zasulich' (1881). But it is high time to dispose of the ever recurring stupidity of discussing a synthetic 'Marx's view', while disregarding a couple of decades of intensive work and thought in between two quotations, just to discover with glee or despair 'contradictions'. He could be wrong, but for heaven's sake, he could not be unmarxist. To admit to the specificity of late Marx is (also) to see Marx in his creativity.

Finally, such an interpretation of late Marx suggests that the development in his thought was neither eclectic nor the type of zig-zag Nikoiforov offered: unilinearism then something else (not quite certain what) then back to unilinearism. The movement seems much more consistent: there was (i) a sophisticated version of unilinearism with 'materialist' and dialectical assumptions forming a part of it; (ii) pre-capitalist multilinearity (bilinearity?) with a supposition that capitalism will iron it all out; and (iii) the acceptance of multidirectionality also within a capitalist-dominated (and socialism-impregnated?) world of mutual dependence, indeed, of heterogeneity resulting from that very interdependence.

Which brings us to the last question but one: was Marx human? To put it otherwise is to begin from the 'multi-dimensionality' of Marx's theory which causes all but the dim-witted or prejudiced to respect and admire Marx as a thinker even when they do not agree with him;⁶⁵ and to add that we are dealing here not in pure logic only. Marx is one in his personal endeavour, ethical stand and intellectual analysis. He showed both remarkable tenacity and outstanding flexibility of mind. When, and in what way?

Since 1847, and through the trials of political defeats, factional struggles, hopes which were dashed, and extreme personal privation, Marx never deviated from the goals of serving socialist revolution the way he came to see it, as a young man. In human terms there was the winter of 1863 when underfed, with the rent unpaid, wife ill, daughters out of school for their winter shoes were with the pawnbroker, Marx carried on with his research and political action. There were more such winters yet Marx stood fast, refusing a variety of 'soft options' and offers, e.g. that of semi-governmental and well cushioned journalism. Such biographical details are inexplorable in terms of 'pure logic', yet they have a logic of their own, without which Marx's life would not make much sense.

At a more theoretical level Marx's early writings are not only

'neo-marxist', often used for those who stepped on from *Capital*, Volume I in their interpretations concerning 'developing societies', is clearly misconceived. Most of the so-called neo-marxism, often treated as original or scandalous, is Marx's marxism. To understand the scope of this achievement one would have to review the three generations of conceptual blindness of the adversaries of Marx within the various 'modernisation' schools, as well as Marx's official descendants. The ground is by now littered with self-fulfilling prophecies masquerading as historical necessities and as laws of social sciences, especially so in so far as the countryside is concerned. Yet, it was Marx who laid the foundations for the global analysis of 'unevenness' of 'development', for the socialist treatment of peasantry not only as the object or the fodder of history, for the consideration of socialism which is more than proletarian, and so on. Indeed, Marx's approach to the Russian peasantry, whom he never saw, proved on balance more realistic than that of the Russian marxists in 1920 – witness the New Economic Policy. Without idealising the '*muzhik*', Marx showed better wisdom even concerning optimal parameters of collectivisation – consider contemporary Hungary. One can proceed with examples.

How does the last stage of Marx's thought fit into the general sequences of his work? To assume the very existence of that stage is to accept at least three major steps in Marx's conceptual development: early Marx of the 1840s, a middle Marx of the 1850s and 1860s (the expression 'mature' smugles in the metaphor of a 'peak', to be necessarily followed by decline) and the late Marx of the 1870s and 1880s. Uncompleted as the last stage was left by his death in 1883, it was rich in content, laying foundations for a new approach to global capitalism, its not-so-capitalist companions of the world scene, and also the prospects for socialism – issues and doubts our own generation came to call its own. To accept that is to correct a record concerning Marx's thought. It is also to demolish the very possibility of saving Marx's godly stature by making him, or some of him, into an 'icon'. Rigid divisions into stages will not do; he often returned to an earlier piece of study to rework it and/or to incorporate it in a new way, e.g. the re-emergence of elements of the analysis of consciousness in *German Ideology* (1845-6) in the discussion of commodity fetishism in *Capital*, Volume I (1867), or the clear relation between the discus-

clues to his personal dreams and insurrection against human poverty and oppression but also to his philosophical anthropology, his ideas about the essence of being human. It still offers the only available 'objective' base for socialist ethics, alternative to either simple political expedience, i.e. the party line as defined by a current leader, or else to theology – an issue as urgent as it is understated in socialist thought. For it is not only an issue of fine spirit and detached discourse, but of political action and of the actually existing socialisms (remember Poland).

While clearly impatient with banal sentimentality, Marx was a humanist and an heir to the culture of the Enlightenment, in which he was steeped. His scholarship was a chosen tool in the service of a grand ethical design of liberation of human essence from its alienation caused by the grip of nature as well as by the man-made worlds of class-split societies. The best evidence of that side to Marx is his unwaning appeal today, which is, after all, not like an adoration of the multiplication table. To purify 'mature' Marx from the philosophical ethics of early Marx, to divide aspects of his thought into separate boxes, or to be ashamed 'on his behalf' of the claim for the moral content of socialism, is to do him indeed 'too much honour' (by someone else's code of practice) and 'too much injury' (by that of his own).⁶⁶

Gods remain unchanged by the process of creation and, it was said, can think only of themselves. If metaphors are to be used, Marx was not a god but a master craftsman. Craftsmen change matter while changing themselves in the process of creation. Also, if a dilettante is indeed 'a man who thinks more of himself than of his subject', Marx was professional in his analytical skills and therefore self-critical to the utmost. He was often tart in his critical comments and polemics, but for a man greatly admired by his own circle he was remarkably free from self-deification.

That is, in all probability, the root of the long public silence during the last decade of Marx's life. He was ailing, but then he was never a very healthy man. He was tired and at times depressed by the post-1871 revolutionary low in Europe, but fatigue and defeat were not new to him either. He was working on the further volumes of *Capital* but did fairly little to it. Biographers have faithfully rewritten Mehring's note that Marx's last decade was 'slow death', failing to acknowledge that even Mehring actually described this as (before 1882) 'grossly exaggerated'.⁶⁷ The subse-

quent discovery of 30,000 pages of notes written over ten years, as much as the quality of the work he did, militate against the solicitous remarks about Marx's failing powers. In the period directly following the publication of Volume 1 of *Capital* Marx faced critical comments and an increasing influx of 'stubborn data' which did not fully fit, and had to be digested. He was rethinking intensively, once more, his theoretical constructs, and moving into new fields. Lack of lucidity and a 'heavy pen' are often the price of depths in a path-breaking effort. Must a scholar be ill or senile not to 'rush into print', while still thinking through new theoretical thresholds?

To conclude, there was neither 'epistemological rupture' in Marx's thought nor decline or retreat but constant transformation, uneven as such processes are. His last decade was a conceptual leap, cut short by his death. Marx was a man of intellect as much as a man of passion for social justice, a revolutionary who preferred revolutionaries to doctrinaire followers. The attempts to single out as truly scientific, external and a-moral Marx from Marx the scholar, the fighter and the man, are as silly as they are false. That is why one should not 'read *Capital*' but read Marx (*Capital* included) and also Goethe, Heine and Aeschylus whom Marx admired and, together with the tale of Prometheus, made into a part of his life. To give his due to the greatest revolutionary scholar, we should see him as he was as against the caricatures and icons drawn by his enemies and his worshippers. To know him is to see him change and to see in what sense he did not. To be 'on his side' is to strive to inherit from him the best in him – his grasp of new worlds coming into being, his critical and self-critical faculty, the merciless honesty of his intellectual craftsmanship, his tenacity and his moral passion.

Acknowledgments

Thanks are given to those who by comments or help with the collection of the evidence contributed to this paper: Perry Anderson (London), Michael Barratt-Brown (Baslow), Zygmunt Bauman (Leeds), Isaiah Berlin (Oxford), Philip Corrigan (London), Arghiri

7. The attraction of the concept of Oriental Despotism as a supplement to the dynamic model of *Capital* is still potent. For well-argued cases for and against the contemporary usage of the concept within marxist analysis, an issue which does not directly concern us here, see U. Meleto, *Marx and the Third World*, London, 1977, and P. Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State*, London, 1970. Appendix B. The recent book by R. Bahro, *The Alternative in Eastern Europe*, London, 1977, has blunted the conceptual edge of the term by using it as a residual catch-all category for all which is contemporary, yet neither socialist nor capitalist. The most important explanation of Marx's attitude to heterogeneity of societal developments alternative to the one suggested is that by Hobsbawm in his Introduction to Marx's *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, pp. 36-8. Hobsbawm assumes that with the singular exception of the transformation of feudalism to capitalism, Marx's 'stages' of social development have to be understood as analytical categories and not chronologically.
8. K. Marks i F. Engels, *Sochniennyya*, Moscow, 1961, vol. 18, p. 51 (written by Marx in 1872).
9. R. Samuel, 'Sources of Marxist history', *New Left Review*, 1980, no. 120, p. 36. See also Nikoiforov, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-103.
10. R. Nisbet, *The Social Philosophers*, St. Albans, 1973, p. 11. Nisbet described the issue of community as the main axis of the whole history of Western social philosophy.
11. H. Wada, 'Marx and revolutionary Russia' (see p. 40). Wada's achievement stands out in particular when compared with the work of analysts who 'knew it all', i.e. were aware of the evidence, yet made little of it. See, for example, the editorial comments in K. Marx and F. Engels, *The Russian Menace to Europe*, Glencoe, Illinois, 1952, and many Soviet equivalents to it, especially so in the 1930s.
12. M. Rubel and M. Manale, *Marx without Myth*, Oxford, 1975, p. 252.
13. *Marks Istork*, Moscow, 1968, p. 373. The book offers an important contribution to the whole of the issue discussed. The most important earlier study of relevance is that of 'Marx's Russian library', written by B. Nikolaevskii and published in *Arkhiv K. Marksa i F. Engelsa*, Moscow, 1929, vol. 4.
14. Marks i Engels, *op. cit.*, vol. 32, p. 358. Marx has clearly used the superlative 'most' referring to a type of book, i.e. the analytical descriptions of contemporary plebeian classes. Two decades later, Plekhanov was hard at work 'explaining away' as ill-informed Marx's admiring comment about this evidently populist book.
15. The book referred to is *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* and the populists selected for punishment in it were Danielson (who has signed himself Nikolai-on) and Vorontsov (the V. V.). Lenin, whose admiration of Chernyshhevskii was profound, but tempered by the tactical needs of struggle against the Socialist Revolutionary Party (which claimed Chernyshhevskii's heritage), solved it all by naming Chernyshhevskii a revolutionary democrat, semantically unrelated to 'populism'. This position was often followed by official Soviet publications.

Notes

1. Lukács defined in this way the more general but inclusive realm of 'historical materialism, in its classical form'. G. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, Cambridge, Mass., 1971, p. 229. A comment by Harry Magdoff: 'This is not wrong but I would prefer in describing what *Capital* Vol. 1 is about to lay emphasis on the laws of motion of capitalism, its evolution and seeds of its transformation. . . .
2. For those uninitiated into the British political culture, those are words of William Blake's 'Millton', still sung as an anthem at the Labour Party conventions. The New Jerusalem was Blake's anti-image to the 'dark satanic mills' of the nineteenth-century capitalism: its factories and churches.
3. K. Marx, *Capital*, Harmondsworth, 1979, vol. 1, p. 91. The same idea was expressed by Marx also as a heuristic device, specifically modelled after the natural sciences: 'Human anatomy contains a key to the anatomy of the ape. . . . [which] can be understood only after the animal of the higher order is already known.' K. Marx, *Grundrisse*, Harmondsworth, 1973, p. 105 (translation slightly amended).
4. See 'The British rule in India', written in 1853, in K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works*, Moscow, 1973, vol. 1. E. Hobsbawm described the concept as 'the chief innovation in the table of historical periods' introduced in the period when *Grundrisse* was written, i.e. 1857-8, for which see K. Marx, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, London, 1964, p. 32 (Introduction). See also Godelier's Preface to *Sur les Sociétés Pré-Capitalistes*, Paris, 1970, L. Krader, *The Asiatic Mode of Production*, Assen, 1975, and M. Sawyer, 'The concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production and contemporary Marxism', in S. Avneri, *Varieties of Marxism*, The Hague, 1977, and Footnote 7 below. For a good summary of the Soviet debate of that matter by a contemporary Soviet scholar, see V. Nikoiforov, *Vostok i Vsemirnaya Istoriya*, Moscow, 1975, and E. Gelnor, 'Soviets against Witfogel' (unpublished MS).
5. G. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, London, 1878, p. 168. The organic metaphor is particularly apt, for no society is assumed to be stationary in the mechanical sense, 'stagnation' meaning the overwhelming cyclicality of processes within it.
6. Russia lacked, of course, 'hydraulic' determinants. It was the impact of extensive militarisation and conquest which was assumed to have shaped Russian state and society in an 'oriental' manner.

Emmanuel (Paris), Leo Haimson (New York), Harry Magdoff (New York), M. Mchedalov (Moscow), Sidney Mintz (Baltimore), Derek Sayer (Glasgow), Paul Sweezy (New York), Eric Wolf (New York), and the editorial collective of *History Workshop*.

- For further discussion, see A. Walicki, *The Controversy over Capitalism*, Oxford, 1969, pp. 16-22.
16. The word *volya* meant in nineteenth-century Russian both 'will' and 'liberty'.
 17. For biographical details, see pp. 172-8, this volume. For a selection of relevant writings, see Part Three. For studies of the Russian populist tradition available in English, see in particular F. Venturi, *Roots of Revolution*, London, 1960, I. Berlin, *Russian Thinkers*, Harmondsworth, 1979, and Walicki, *op. cit.* See also T. Dan, *The Origins of Bolshevism*, London, 1964, chs 3, 6 and 7, and L. Haimson, *The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism*, Boston, 1966. There is considerable Russian literature on the topic of which the most recent is the excellent study by V. Kharos, *Ideinye techeniya narodnicheskogo tipa*, Moscow, 1980. Contrary to an often held view, the Russian populists did not reject industrialisation but wanted it socially controlled and adjusted to regional needs, ideas which often bridge directly with some of the demands of the most contemporary 'environmentalists' and socialists. See Walicki, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-16, and Khoros, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-40, 220-5.
 18. See Part Three, and especially the analysis by Kibalich on pp. 212-18.
 19. See the last wills of members of the People's Will, pp. 239-40.
 20. *Statistika zemlevladieniya 1905 g*, St. Petersburg, 1907. The figures referred to the fifty *gubernya's* of European Russia, i.e. excluded Russian Poland and the Caucasus.
 21. For further discussion of the Russian commune, see G.T. Robinson, *Rural Russia under the Old Regime*, New York, 1979, T. Shanin, *The Awkward Class*, Oxford, 1972, and, in Russian, V. Aleksandrov, *Sel'skaya obshchina v Rossii*, Moscow, 1976, and the general discussion by L. and V. Danilov within *Obshchina v afrike: problemy tipologii*, Moscow, 1978.
 22. E.g. already Herzen spoke of the need to overcome simultaneously 'the British cannibalism', i.e. total surrender to the rules of capitalist competition, and the total immersion of the Russian peasant in his commune, to keep the personal independence of the first and the collectivist *élan* of the second.
 23. See Venturi, *op. cit.*, chs 20 and 21; also Dan, *op. cit.*, chs 6, 7 and 8. For a good self-description of the Black Repartition group see L. Deutch in V. Nevskii, *Istoriko-revolutsionnyi sbornik*, Leningrad, 1924, vol. 2, pp. 280-350. For biographical details, see pp. 177-8, this volume.
 24. See below, Part Two. This line of analysis has been reflected subsequently with particular strength in the works of the Russian 'legal marxists', e.g. M. Tugan Baranovskii *Russkaya fabrika*, St Petersburg, 1901, vol. 1, ch. 4.
 25. Central to that line of argument were the works and views of B. Chicherin adapted in Marx's time by A. Wagner and in the latter generations by P. Miliukov, K. Kocharovskii, etc., as well as by G. Plekhanov and I. Chernyshev in the marxist camp. This view was

- often referred to as the 'state school'. It was opposed by an equally impressive list of scholars and political theorists of whom N. Chernyshevskii and I. Belyaev were paramount to Marx's own generation. Marx himself spoke up sharply against Chicherin (*Marks i Engels, op. cit.*, vol. 33, p. 482). For a good historiography of the debate see Aleksandrov, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-46.
26. Marx wrote the passage in 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte' (1852) referring to France but deleted it in the reprint of 1869. The dates are significant for reasons discussed in our text.
 27. Marx and Engels, *Sochineniya, op. cit.*, vol. 32, p. 158. Relatedly in time, Marx has attacked Herzen's view in 1867 and spoke in absolute terms of the French peasantry's conservatism (e.g. in the 1871 notes on the Paris Commune, *ibid.*, vol. 17, pp. 554-7).
 28. Marx, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations, op. cit.*, p. 68.
 29. For full text, see Part Two.
 30. *Marks-Istorik, op. cit.*, p. 431.
 31. See below, p. 631.
 32. See below, p. 129. How much all that still 'aches' can be best exemplified by a short aside from P. Konyushaya, *Karl Marx i revolyutsionnaya rossiya*, Moscow, 1975, where after a stream of invectives against the multiplicity of 'falsifiers of Marx', i.e. everybody who discussed him outside Russia, tells us that Plekhanov 'based his argument on the position formulated by Marx in his letter to "Otechestvennye Zapiski"' (p. 357). She forgets to inform us when, where and how.
 33. David Ryazanov, see below, Part Two. For contemporary Western equivalents of that view see Marx and Engels, *The Russian Menace to Europe, op. cit.*, p. 266, and on the left, J. Elster in K. Marx, *Verker i Utlag*, Oslo, 1970, p. 46.
 34. See below p. 130.
 35. Plekhanov's speech at the Fourth Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party in 1906 stated it explicitly. On the other hand, the year 1905 has seen also the appeals of the Saratov Bolsheviks and of Nikodim (A. Shestakov, the chief of the agrarian section of the Bolsheviks Moscow committee) against Lenin's new agrarian programme, treated by them as 'capitulation' to the populist petty bourgeoisie.
 36. Letters of 2 and 30 November 1876, Rubel and Monale, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-31.
 37. *Ibid.*, p. 254. For further discussion, see the paper by K. Mohri in *Monthly Review*, 1979, vol. 30, no. 11.
 38. From the 1847 speech about the independence of Poland, Marx and Engels, *Sochineniya, op. cit.*, vol. 4, p. 273.
 39. *Ibid.*, vol. 19, p. 28.
 40. The quotation comes from Marx's letter of 21 March 1881 to his daughter, *ibid.*, vol. 35, pp. 145-8.
 41. For Marx's sharply critical view about the 'boring doctrines' of the Black Repartition, see his letter to Sorge of 5 October 1880, *ibid.*, vol.

- part of his growing polemic against the populists. Relentless pressure, mixing flattery and cajolery, was applied by him to enlist Engels's authority in squabbles within the Russian left, for which see *Perepiska, Marksa i Engel'sa*, Moscow, 1951, pp. 324-46. Engels had on the whole explicitly rejected those pressures, and had shown for a time considerable suspicion of Plekhanov (Walicki, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-3) but was, no doubt, influenced nevertheless, the more so as his Russian was 'rusty' by the late 1880s and by his own admission he had stopped reading any sources in that language.
55. Engels's 1892 letter to Danielson in *Perepiska*, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
56. Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, *op. cit.*, vol. 3, pp. 460 and 469.
57. See, for discussion, Marx, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, *op. cit.* (Introduction), pp. 60-2.
58. Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, London, 1963.
59. L. Althusser and E. Balibar, *Reading Capital*, London, 1975. For a British version of the same see B. Hindess and P. Hirst, *Pre-capitalist Modes of Production*, London, 1975. The next step came when Althusser had discovered Hegelian traces in *Capital* itself and therefore re-timed Marx's full 'maturity' to 'The critique of the Gotha Programme', i.e. 1875 (when Marx was aged 57). L. Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy*, New York, 1971, pp. 93-4.
60. 'Humanism is the characteristic feature of the ideological problematic (which survives alongside science). Science . . . as exposed in Marx's better work, implies a theoretical anti-humanism.' Althusser and Balibar, *Reading Capital*, *op. cit.*, p. 312 (translation glossary authorised by the author).
61. Nikoforov, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-35.
62. *Ibid.*, pp. 145, 149. See also, for discussion, Gellner, *op. cit.*, from which the expression 'date of incarnation' has been gratefully borrowed.
63. See below, p. 103. It seems that the only reasonable interpretation of evidence is indeed that of Hobsbawm: 'There is - at least on Marx's part - no inclination to abandon the "Asiatic Mode" . . . and quite certainly a deliberate refusal to re-classify it as feudal.' Marx, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, *op. cit.*, p. 58 (Introduction).
64. Marx, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, *op. cit.*, pp. 32 and 36-37 (Introduction).
65. Marx, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, *op. cit.* (Introduction), p. 16. The quotation is from Marx's own words in self-defence against a unilinear interpretation of his writing, 'Letter to Otchestvennyye Zapiski' (1877-8). See Part Two.
67. F. Mehring, *Karl Marx: The Story of his Life*, London, 1936 (first published 1918), pp. 501, 526. For an example of recent repetition of that view see Chapter 8 of D. McLellan, *Karl Marx: His Life and Thought*, London, 1977, from which a new generation of Anglo-Saxon students are learning about Marx.

- 34, p. 380. The way Marx (and in the 1880s, Engels) related their attitude to People's Will to their other contacts is interesting. The very letter of Marx, which spoke admiringly of the human qualities of the members of People's Will (11 April 1881) described Kautsky as "mediocre, not a very able man, self-assured, the "know all" type . . . admittedly hard working, he spends much time on statistics without getting far with it, naturally belonging to the tribe of "philistines", while, on the other hand, no doubt, a decent fellow." On 23 April 1885, Engels replied to Vera Zasulich's request to express his views about Plekhanov's book declaring his marxist creed against the Russian populists (*Nashi raznoglasiya*) refusing to pass judgment: 'My friends of People's Will, did not tell me of those matters', and then proceeded to defend the People's Will belief in the chances of an immediate Russian revolution.
42. W. Weiraub, 'Marx and Russian revolutionaries', *Cambridge Journal*, 1949, vol. 3, p. 501.
43. The third *Thesis of Feuerbach*, Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, vol. 1, p. 13.
44. Marx, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, *op. cit.* (Introduction), p. 53. For an interesting discussion of the philosophical differences between Marx and his immediate interpreters, Engels, Kautsky, Plekhanov and Bernstein, etc., see L. Colletti, Introduction to K. Marx, *Early Writings*, Harmondsworth, 1975, pp. 7-14. See also L. Kolakowsky, *Main Currents of Marxism*, Oxford, 1981, vol. 1.
45. Marks i Engels, *op. cit.*, p. 272 (the quotation adopted from Maurer). For Engels's views see his paper 'Marka', written in 1882, Marx and Engels, *Sochineniya*, *op. cit.*, vol. 19, pp. 335-7.
46. See below, p. 108.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 334 (subquotation from Morgan).
48. F. Engels, *Anti-Duhring*, London 1943, p. 203.
49. Marx and Engels, *Sochineniya*, *op. cit.*, vols. 21-2 (publications) and 36-9 (correspondence). 'Thanks are due here to Professor M. Mchedlov of the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute in Moscow for ascertaining that point. He has pointed out that, on the other hand, Engels did not remove that term from the new editions of *Anti-Duhring* in 1886 and 1894, an important point open, however, to a variety of interpretations. The explanation offered by Hobsbawm (Marx, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, *op. cit.*, p. 51) and by some Soviet scholars that the 'Asiatic Mode' is simply substituted at that stage by the broader concept of Archaic Formation does not fully meet the case, i.e. does not explain the correlation between the disappearance of the concept of Oriental Despotism from Engels's work and the date of Marx's death.
50. Quoted after Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, *op. cit.*, vol. 2, p. 388.
51. *Ibid.*, pp. 387-8, 390, 395.
52. *Ibid.*, pp. 403-4.
53. *Ibid.*, pp. 395-412.
54. In the 1890s Plekhanov moved to a sharply 'anti-peasant' position, as