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N. G. CHERNYSHEVSKII'S ECONOMIC VIEWS, WITH PARTICULAR
REFERENCE TO THE AGRARIAN SITUATION IN
MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY RUSSIA

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Forward

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Unfortunately a change of typescript occurs in the middle of the text, affecting the uniformity of presentation. This is due to circumstances beyond my control for which I offer my apologies.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to examine those economic views of Chernyshevskii which arose from his attempt to give a solution for the agrarian problems of mid-nineteenth century Russia.

Because Chernyshevskii was not a professional economist but a polemist, his writings cannot be understood without a detailed knowledge of the social and political conditions of his time. Accordingly, the first part of the thesis is devoted to an analysis of these conditions.

In Part one, chapter one is concerned with the crisis in Russian feudalism, chapter two with the effect of forced labour on the Russian rural economy, chapter three with the condition of the gentry and the serfs, chapter four with the causes of the reform movements, and chapter five with the government's steps towards reform.

In Part two Chernyshevskii's economic arguments in support of the abolition of serfdom, and his schemes for redemption payments, are analysed. Chapter one deals with his polemic against Tengoborskii on the superiority of hired labour over serf labour. Chapter two discusses his redemption schemes.

In Part three Chernyshevskii's dialectical theory of social development and his views on the commune are considered. Chapter one deals with his polemic against Vernadskii on the superiority of communal ownership over communal ownership over private ownership of the means of production. In Chapter two his theory of social

development is analysed.

Part four contains Chernyshevskii's critique of the political economy of his time, and his theory of socialist production. Chapter one presents his criticisms of the laissez-faire principle. Chapter two is concerned with his discussion of the scope and nature of political economy, and his "hypothetical method". Chapter three deals with his classification of labour into productive and unproductive labour. Chapter four examines his criticism of the Malthusian theory of population. Chapter five is concerned with Chernyshevskii's attitude towards different social formations with particular reference to capitalism. Chapter six discusses his theory of socialist production and his theory of the 'toiling masses'.

PART ONE

**Economic, political and social conditions during
Chernyshevskii's time**

CHAPTER ONE CRISIS IN RUSSIAN FEUDALISM

If one attempts to-day to analyse the historical events of the second and third quarters of 19th century Russia, one's first task is to discover the forces that were at play in the social, political and economic life of Russia at that time. I have chosen to concern myself with this particular period because it coincides with the development of Chernyshevskii's central economic ideas and because it marks the time of his greatest impact on the progressive radicals in Russia. The radicals and later the populists found a constant source of inspiration in Chernyshevskii's formulations of the economic questions of his time. There were, of course, other influential groups, of which the liberals were the most important. Kavelin and Chicherin mainly spoke for this group. Apart from this there were the Slavophiles and the Westerners of the Vernadskii persuasion. All these groups advocated their own cure for the social malady of Russia, either a romantic therapy (the Slavophiles), a liberal one (Kavelin and Chicherin) or a prescription derived from classical English economic theory and practice, often without taking into account the profoundly different historical circumstances of Russia. An attempt will be made in the main body of the thesis to show that Chernyshevskii's analysis of the agrarian question, the burning issue in the economic sphere in Russia at the time, was illuminating and his suggestions for solving it realistic. An attempt will also be made to evaluate his critique of classical political economy, the body of the dominant contemporary economic doctrines which guided the formulation of the official economic policies in western societies.

The economic conditions in the period under review are characterised by a form of feudalism whose principal feature was

serfdom. Some industrialisation was admittedly in progress, but on most counts the second quarter of the 19th century in Russia can best be termed a period of economic feudalism with its attendant crises, which, however, did not as yet issue in any fundamental social change.

There is some controversy over the meaning of feudalism in general and Russian feudalism in particular. If one leaves aside the juridical notion of feudalism and defines its nature in economic terms, one will be involved in a paradox, which is particularly apparent in the definition given by M. N. Pokrovskii, the well-known Marxist historian. In his view feudalism is a system in which there is a self-sufficient 'natural' economy by contrast to a moneyed 'exchange economy' that has consumption as its object.(1) This definition, as Dobb has pointed out, is in line with the classical concept of feudalism. In the case of Russia, the two indicators of a state of economy which is basically non-feudal - the revival of commerce and production for market existed as early as the 16th century. Pokrovskii was therefore impelled to argue that the 16th century was the period of the dissolution of feudalism in Muscovy. But, curiously enough, the very basis of economic feudalism, enserfment of previously free or semi-free peasants, took place in the late 16th century and at the very beginning of the 17th century during the reign of Tsar Boris Godunov.

In this context, Russian feudalism can be seen, paradoxically, to decline from the 16th century and at the same time to become the main factor in giving the economy a strong feudal character from the late 16th century onwards. The only way to understand

the situation is to define feudalism as a social system in which servile labour is the dominant productive force.(2) Marx attempted to explain the paradox with reference to other stages in the history of human society. The feudal system of production contrasts, on the one hand, with slavery in that "the direct producer is here (in feudalism) in possession of his means of production of the material labour conditions required for the realisation of his labour and the production of his means of subsistence. He carried on his agriculture and the rural home industries connected as an independent producer," whereas, "the slave works with conditions of labour belonging to another." At the same time serfdom implies that "the property relation must assert itself as a direct relation between rulers and servants, so that the direct producer is not free": "a lack of freedom which may be modified from serfdom with forced labour to the point of a mere tributary relation" (3). Under capitalism, on the other hand, "labourer is no longer, as in slavery, independent producer and he is alienated from his means of production and from the possibility of supplying his own means of subsistence. Again, the labourer, unlike a slave, has a contractual relationship with the owner of the means of production: legally he is both free to choose his masters and change his masters. His obligations are only limited to the terms of his contact." (4) It is surprising to note that M. N. Pokrovskii, Marxist though he was, should have committed himself to such an ambiguous characterisation from the Marxist point of view of an epoch of Russian history.

In the period under review, the two obligations of the peasants in Russia to the landlords, viz. the obrok (money payment) and

barshchina (forced labour) constituted the very basis of Russian feudalism. Sometimes the obligations were wholly as obrok and sometimes wholly as barshchina, in other cases a combination of the two were demanded. Production for market was carried on to some extent. Actually, this was a feature not uncommon in other forms of feudalism, but, as in all varieties of feudalism, Russian feudalism remained at a very low level of technology. Although with the advent of factory production in the late 18th century, due to the needs of the economy and the exogenous influence of the industrial revolution of the west, the rural economy based on serfdom started to decline. The net result of these mutually exclusive trends of economic activities - one submerged in the pool of stagnation and the other endeavouring to set a new pace of productive activity in Russia spelt a crisis. This crisis became more pronounced in the middle of the 19th century, i.e. in the period with which this study is concerned. The causes for this crisis have been attributed by many thinkers entirely to certain minor factors taken out of the context of the totality of factors; for example Pokrovskii and another Russian historian, Rozhkov, reduced the problem to one of imbalance between internal and external trade. (5) But such partial explanations are clearly unsatisfactory. In fact, to find a satisfactory reason for the crisis of the economy of serfdom, the entire socio-economic structure of Russia must be analysed.

The basic sector of the economy of serfdom in Russia was agriculture. Before the 18th century, a preponderantly natural economy prevailed in the barshchina dominated sector. The economic units were self-sufficient and did not produce any surplus for market

elsewhere. In the 18th century the sale of surplus products in the market became necessary for the landlords and the primary producing barshchina units of the economy started to lose their self-sufficient closed character. (6) A growth of trade occurred in the 18th century, and in many cases the landlords sent not only food crops to the market but also redirected production to flax and wool. In this connection, it may be remembered that all the units of the barshchina dominated economy did not behave in the same way. Their behaviour depended on the size of the estate, on the extent of internal consumption and the magnitude of forced labour available to the landlords: all these factors determined the inclination of the landlord to send goods to the market, which means that small estates sent very few goods to the market.

Barshchina obligations were dominant in the fertile black-soil areas of Russia. However, in the non-black-soil regions, which were unfertile, in the 19th century nearly half of the serfs were in obrok and many of the peasants pursued seasonal work in factories and trading concerns in the towns and in the cities. This led the landlords to increase the peasants' obligations in money terms in many cases, because, as Liashchenko observes, the landlords took advantage of the legal right to the person of the serfs, i.e. to a share of all money which the peasants earned inside or outside the estate. (7)

In different spheres of the economy and in different parts of the country, the transformation from a natural economy to a money economy did not take place at the same tempo. In the villages, an important element helped the money-trade relations to take a firm root: it was the growth of the social division of labour. It became the foundation on which the wide development of commercial

production in the first half of the 19th century took place.

Though this penetration of the money-trade economy was felt in most areas where agricultural production was carried on, there is no way to determine precisely the volume of goods that entered the market for sale and the volume that remained for the purpose of internal consumption. Therefore the ratio of the two, nationally or regionally, cannot be computed. At the time only rough approximations were carried out to establish the degree of penetration of money-trade relations in the rural sector. Although precise calculations of different magnitudes and ratios of crops for different purposes would have been the best indicator of the extent of the transformation of the natural economy to a money economy, yet even rough approximations which show a trend sharply deviating from that in the past are sufficient to indicate the symptoms of change. I. D. Koval'chenko made the following observation in this connection: "The manifestation of commercialisation in agriculture in Russia (throughout the history of serfdom) and in the first half of the 19th century in particular came up against great difficulties. There was no correct figure or even an approximate estimate of the extent of commercialisation in this respect. So, the investigation has always been dependent on tracing an indirect path, for ascertaining the degree of marketability of the products in that period." (8) This approach was as follows: firstly, a calculation was made of the demand for crops for consumption by the non-agricultural population, for the breweries and for export. Secondly, a calculation was made of the surplus over need in one region and the deficit in another. Finally, there was the extent of transportation of crops where in every transaction 'the respective pluses and the minuses' were calculated. In

Koval'chenko's view, this particular method has the advantage of dealing with commercial crops only and so an approximate estimate of the penetration of crops into the market for trading objectives alone could be made. (9) Elsewhere he again asserts that "the dynamics of transportation of crops by river proves the quick development of commercial production in the sphere of agriculture in the first half of the 19th century." (10)

As has been mentioned earlier, production for market was to a greater or lesser extent in existence in Russia from the very beginning of feudalism. But the volume of production for market gradually increased to such an extent that the economy could be considered to be 'transforming from a natural economy to a money economy'. (11) According to Liashchenko, the non-black soil agricultural regions based on obrok obligations were more advanced in the process of transformation than the central agricultural regions based on barshchina obligations. This phenomenon was not unique in Russia, since in other countries, e.g. England and France, the process of disintegration of feudalism occurred at different rates in different regions.

Though economic changes came slowly in the barshchina dominated landlords' economy, this sector of the economy was the main producer and supplier of agricultural products for the market. There is an estimate that out of the total volume of crops that went into the market, 90% came from landlords' estates and 10% from the peasants themselves. (12) This shows that peasant economy was definitely at the subsistence level.

There has been some controversy among economists and economic historians about the role of production for market in the breakdown of feudalism (and hence in the rise of capitalism) in Russia. The

controversy centred mainly around the role of spontaneity in such a transformation and the social basis for production for market. On the one hand, there is the opinion of M. A. Rozhkov who held that all types of production for market are organically transformed into a capitalistic type. According to him, "the development of a money economy led to technical improvements which made servile labour disadvantageous to the nobility, the peasants and the state itself, and it called forth a replacement by hired labour; the replacement of servile labour by hired labour signified precisely the abolition of serfdom." (13) This statement clearly shows Rozhkov's belief in an automatic change of the mode of production arising mainly from the comparative advantage of hired labour to the landlords. On the other hand, one should mention the opinion of N. A. Tsagolov, another Soviet economic historian, who maintained that development of agriculture for market in an economy based on serfdom was quite distinct from the development of production simply for market. Production for market may exist in several different kinds of socio-economic formation and it is only if production for market is the sole reason for production that the socio-economic formation is capitalism. He asserts that production under feudal landlordism cannot spontaneously be transformed into a capitalistic form and that production of goods for market takes place under the most diverse methods of production: but this does not signify that each of these means of production can grow into capitalism organically and spontaneously. He further contends that the transformation from feudalism to capitalism - a transformation from a system in which the landlords owned the peasants to one in which the workers are free and the master owns only the means of production - cannot be spontaneous. (14)

The transformation, then, of a natural economy into an economy

for market, or the existence of a mixed economy, are neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the breakdown of feudalism. It follows that the growth of commercial agricultural production based on serfdom is not a transformation of the mode of production. The Russian landlords had a considerable control over commercial goods and they traded for profits employing in many cases hired labour, but that feature alone did not make them capitalists.

Pokrovskii once referred to the existence of 'capitalistic barshchina' in many estates in Russia which actually means that the landlords in these estates produced only commercial crops with the help of forced labour. But the very expression 'capitalistic barshchina' is a contradiction in terms. (15) Firstly, because the peasants were not in a contractual obligation, whatever may have been the form of obligation (i.e. barshchina); secondly, because they were not free to choose their masters, nor had they any freedom to change them: only if the workers are in a contractual obligation as free men is the form of production capitalistic. Perhaps, however, Pokrovskii had some different notion of capitalism. Surely, he did not imply anything resembling Sombart's view. (16) Sombart characterised as capitalistic any society in which there was production for profit and thus thought that the essence of capitalism existed from the ancient time, and not from the 17th century. This view of capitalism subsumes widely different forms of society under the term capitalistic and is unilluminating. It amounts to saying that there never was a non-capitalist society.

If we shift our attention from this controversy to the actual crisis of feudalism in Russia, it must be recalled that by the

middle of the 19th century, Russia was still one of the most backward countries in Europe. The main reason for this backwardness was serfdom. In the first two decades of the 19th century certain factors contributed to the rise of aspirations among landlords to increase their agricultural production. The growth of towns, the rise of home demand, the higher prices of crops, all encouraged a concern for technical improvements and greater agricultural production. But a certain downward trend of agricultural prices in the third decade of the century dampened their enthusiasm and the improvements that the landlords were considering were not put into effect. As a consequence, the new economic opportunities were not seized by the rural sector of the Russian economy. In the absence of the technical improvements needed to intensify production, the economy of serfdom was in a sorry state, with insufficient capital, and productivity of labour to adjust itself to the fluctuations of price in the commodity market. The problem was further aggravated by the general economic crisis in Europe in the third decade when an oversupply of goods caused a sharp decrease in the market price of commodities, including all varieties of crops.

The lack of initiative among the landlords in improving their methods of production in the face of fluctuation of prices has an economic explanation. In the existing conditions they could produce a surplus even if the price was falling, because of the peculiar nature of the labour cost, especially in the barshchina dominated sector. In fact the labour element in the prime cost of production was an indeterminate factor because it was never computed in money terms, and thus the cost of production too was indeterminate.

If the price was low the landlord tried to extract more labour from his peasants by force in order to keep his income within a reasonable range of oscillation, whereas if the price was high he could afford to be liberal in getting the required amount of forced labour. But there is a snag in the first case: if the landlord wanted to get the desired level of surplus by more forced labour, the very nature of this kind of labour led to less marginal productivity per additional labour hour spent, and as the price was low the surplus would be less than the desired level. Hence the exploitation of the serfs to the utmost and the ensuing crisis. The concept of economy and diseconomy in production were not at all important, if not irrelevant in an economy based on serfdom as there was no way of computing the cost of production.

Some of the well-known Russian economists, notably M. P. Zablotskii and L. V. Tengoborskii held similar views. Zablotskii was of the opinion that the question of the cost of production in an economy based on serfdom did not arise and he even doubted whether the landlord needed to earn the 'compulsory rent'. The landlord could not curtail his production when the prices in the market were low because he had to sell at whatever price the goods could be sold. Although the level of price was a consideration with the landlord, it was not the main concern because he had in possession the chief weapon - the legal right to exploit the peasant at will. So, according to Zablotskii, the problem was not in the fluctuation of prices but in the system of the economy itself which could not adapt itself to the new conditions, could not rationally allocate the resources ^{available} to itself and was not capable of calculating the cost of production. In short, it

was totally incapable of transforming itself to a rational, that is, the capitalist mode of production which takes account of all these factors. (17) L. V. Tengoborskii agreed with Zablotskii that "the actual system of our rural economy excludes the possibility of determining the cost of production in some way", that "it removes one of the definite moments of market price because of this and comprises one of the main reasons of significant changes of prices." (18) But he did not go further to assert that serfdom itself was the key to all the problems and that price fluctuations and other maladies of the economy were just secondary effects. He even held the view that a continuous improvement of the national economy could bring the rural economy out of the blind alley into which it had been driven. Tengoborskii was an ardent supporter of serfdom somewhat after the manner of Baron von Haxthausen and Chernyshevskii devoted much of his energy in an attempt to refute his views. (19)

From the above it is evident that the crisis of the economy of serfdom should be sought in the prevalence of barshchina rather than in that of obrok, as the former served better for forcible utilisation of labour for productive purposes. In the obrok dominated areas the increase in the amount of such obligations did not equip the landlord with more productive power but with more money income.

In the middle of the 19th century, Russia needed a growing tempo of production not only in the agricultural sector but also in the industrial sector. The framework of obligations of peasants in the agricultural sector was not however undergoing a transformation in the direction that would help this to happen, i.e. from

barshchina to obrok. Manpower for industry had to come from the peasants in obrok. There was not a sufficient increase in the proportion under obrok to prevent a manpower lag and thus a productivity lag in the industrial sector. The lack of significant change affecting the framework of obligations in the direction appropriate to the economic needs of the time is evidenced by the small change in the proportion of peasants under the two obligations, that is, barshchina and obrok, between the 18th and 19th centuries.

I. Ignatovich has given an exhaustive appraisal of the situation in quantitative terms. (20) Between the 18th century and the 19th the proportion of peasants under obrok increased only slightly. In 12 of the non-black soil guberniias the percentage of obrok peasants increased only from 55 to 59.9 and in all the black-soil provinces taken together it increased only from 26.1 to 28.8 (21). It should be noted that the increase in obrok was less in the black-soil regions. Overall, in the 19th century, the proportion of barshchina labour was greater than that under the obrok form of feudal obligations. But if one takes the data on separate guberniias, a striking difference in the percentage of each obligation is revealed. For example, in 1858 in the Kostroma guberniia the serfs on barshchina were 12.5 and the percentage in Tambov was 78. If one takes into account the dynamics of the change in the percentage of obligations in separate guberniias, the growth of obrok is not visible everywhere. Thus, for example, in comparison with the 18th century, the percentage of barshchina peasants increased in the 19th century; in Voronezh from 36 to 55, in Orlov from 66 to 72, in Penza 48 to 75. (22)

The rise in the proportion under obrok obligation was least evident in the black-soil regions, that is, the most fertile areas in central Russia. It is worth mentioning here that in New Russia and in the Ukraine the percentage of barshchina peasants was 95 everywhere, and in some isolated cases it even approached a hundred per cent.

The above findings of Ignatovich point to one fact, that is, that the obligations of the peasants did not move very greatly in the direction of tributary relation towards the landlord. In a developed market system, with the rise of factory production, the rural economic set-up needed a re-orientation, especially in the sphere of production relation. Even if spontaneity does not play a decisive role in economic progress, particularly in a transformation from one mode of production to another, at least it paves the way for the interaction of decisive forces in this transformation. It could be regarded as quite natural, economically speaking, if the shift of emphasis in the obligation had gone the other way as the result of such spontaneous development. If the percentage of obrok peasants had increased significantly in proportion to the other category, a necessary condition for the establishment of an independent peasant economy would have been ensured and the landlords would have been forced to hire for their production to a greater extent. This would have also been instrumental in solving to some extent the manpower lag in the growing industrial sector. As a consequence, the passage to capitalism would have been easier and less painful. This does not imply however that the change would have come automatically. History shows that such changes are always painful.

Tsagolov presents a quantitative assessment of the same problem and his findings are similar to those of Ignatovich. According to Tsagolov, side by side with the rise of the obrok system in agricultural production by serfs, the scale of utilisation of barshchina labour increased. This is confirmed by the increase of the number of barshchina man-days which was noticed everywhere in the 19th century. (23)

The growth of the obrok system, according to Tsagolov, did not mean that peasants involved in it were gradually freeing themselves from the direct control of their masters, as one might expect in such circumstances. Which kind of obligation existed was to some extent due to their different type of profitability for the landlords with the different types of soil. It is well-known that the growth of the obrok system was more pronounced in the non-black soil regions and that, in course of time, this system did not evolve into a relationship of tribute between the landlord and the peasants, when the latter could enjoy comparatively more freedom than the barshchina class. This is shown by the fact that the amount of obrok obligation increased considerably (to be precise - nearly 500%) in the course of hundred years. According to the estimate of N. P. Oganovskii, at the beginning of the 18th century the obrok per soul was one ruble. It became two rubles by the middle of the same century and five rubles at the beginning of the 19th century. (24) While there was also a rise in the price of crops during this period, the increase in the amount of obrok was always far ahead of the increase of crop prices.

We have outlined the crisis within the institutional set-up of the economy based on serfdom. Without the abolition of serfdom nothing could be done. The stagnation of the rural economy was so complete that even the rise in the number of free peasants during the period under review made no impact on the level of agricultural production.

There was another feature which started to show with striking regularity in the middle of the 19th century: the failure of harvests and famine conditions in the villages. Zaionchkovskii quotes a landlord of the province of Tula who stated that "during famine in the winter the condition of the peasants and their families is horrible. They eat all sorts of filth - acore, plant roots, swampy grass, straw - all these go into their food. They even cannot buy their salt, become almost poisoned; terrible diseases attack them..." (25). This served to enhance the critical state in which the agricultural economy, and indeed the entire economy of Russia found itself.

Side by side with the sharpening of the economic crisis, a discontent of the peasants grew also. The discontent exceeded simple protests, and open revolts by peasants against their masters and their regional centres of administration became chronic affairs. This could not but aggravate the economic crisis because of the reluctance of the peasants in revolt to work on their masters' estates. Production fell, innumerable man-days were lost, sometimes the estates were completely burnt down. Police reprisals followed with the army often in the wake. Chaos spread to many parts of Russia leading to greater economic stagnation.

CHAPTER TWO EFFECT OF FORCED LABOUR ON THE RUSSIAN ECONOMY

The middle of the 19th century in Russia saw the beginning of industrial progress on capitalist lines. This century is everywhere in Europe noted for the swift changeover from manufacture by hand-operated machines to machines operated by power. Though the ground for this development was prepared in England in the 18th century, outmoded economic theories prevented full scale industrialisation then. There were two main differences in the state of production in England and in Russia during the 19th century. The first was the volume of production. England, the pioneer of the industrial revolution, marched forward far ahead of her competitors, to say nothing of Russia which was far less advanced than other European countries. The second was the nature of labour. In England, though the conditions of the workers were appalling, labour was free; whereas the manufacturing establishments in Russia were run mainly on serf-labour, except in those very rare cases when the free manufacturers and the workers were the same persons. One important event in the economic life of England was instrumental in speeding up the tempo of industrial activity in Russia. It was the disappearance of the doctrines of mercantilism which involved the prohibition of exports of machines abroad. The ban on the export of cotton textile and other machines was lifted in 1842, when Smithian doctrine took its root in the minds of the English public. Even before this, the English manufacturers found a steady market for the machine tools abroad and Russia was one of their important markets. The following is an estimate of the volume of imports of machines and instruments into Russia in the first half of the 19th century:

83000 rubles (assignates) worth of goods in 1815-16; the corresponding figures for 1825, 1840 and 1850 were 828, 3500 and 8397 thousand rubles assignates respectively.(1) As a consequence of this, the manufacturing establishments where manual labour was used were transforming themselves into power driven factories. At the same time a significant change in the structure of the working force in the industries was taking place, that is, servile labour was being replaced by 'voluntary' labour. (2)

In spite of such an opportunity for industrialisation in Russia, it lagged far behind other industrialised countries in terms of its productivity and consumption. According to an estimate for the period 1840-1850, the per-capita production of cast iron in Russia was 8.7 Russian pounds*, the corresponding figures for England and France were 23.1 and 37.5 pounds respectively in the same period; the per-capita consumption of cotton fabrics in Russia was 0.87 pounds (Russian), whereas the corresponding figure for other industrial countries of western Europe, that is, England, France and Germany was 8, 3.1 and 3.07 pounds respectively. (4)

Although productivity and consumption in Russia were relatively small, compared with England or France or even Germany, the number of factories and the number of workers employed showed a considerable increase in the first two quarters of the 19th century. Whereas in 1804, the number of factories was 2402 with 95000 workers, the same figures for 1825 were 5261 and 210000 respectively. Between 1828 and 1860 the number of factories increased to almost three

* 1 Russian pound = 0.90 English pound

times as much as in 1825, even excluding the mines, mills, distilleries and breweries; and the index of the number of workers became 270 in 1860 taking 1825 as base. One striking development could be noticed in the character of the working force during this period. As Liashchenko pointed out, the trend moved increasingly and inevitably to hired labour. Whereas in 1804 the percentage of hired labour in the total labour force in the factories was 47, the corresponding figure went upto 50 in 1812, 58 in 1820, decreased to 54 in 1825 and in 1860 reached 87. (5) Another estimate by Blum on the shift from forced labour to hired labour gives a somewhat different picture: (6)

Year	No. of Workers	No. of Hired Workers	No. of Forced Labour
1804	224,882	61,000 (27%)	163,282 (73%)
1825	340,568	114,515 (34%)	226,053 (68%)
1860	862,000	479,000 (56%)	383,000 (44%)

In this estimate the total number of workers is strikingly different from Liashchenko's figures. The proportions of the two classes of workers are also very differently estimated. In another estimate made by Pazhitnov for 1860, based on the information of Department of Manufacture and Internal Trade, the number of factories in European and Asian Russia taken together, excepting Finland and Poland, was 15388 and the number of workers was 565,142. According to an estimate for 1857, there were 12542 factories with a working population of 560,364 workers. (7) These discrepancies are not surprising, because in the first half of the 19th century in Russia, there were no reliable statistical

data available to the administration. Computing was done on the basis of information returned from regional administrative units which in most cases were rather chancy. The vastness of the country, and looseness of administrative links coupled with the inefficiency of officers at all levels made a dependable collection of data virtually impossible. As a consequence, anyone who wants to go deeply into the facts of Russian economic life in this period finds wide deviations in the values of variables in different estimates. In this situation the best method for the investigator is to place no importance on the exact magnitude of the figures given and to deal with the general trends seen in the figures.

A gradual change in the structure of the working class can be taken as one of the indicators of the transformation of the Russian economy towards capitalism. There is also another indication of capitalistic development. According to an estimate by Tugan-Baranovskii, of the total 5599 factories in 1832, 862 (14%) belonged to the nobility, whereas by the end of the forties the nobility owned only 500 ((5%) of the total of 10,000 factories.(8) These estimates indicate both that capitalist entrepreneurs were considerably increasing in number and that there was a decrease in the entrepreneurial activities of the nobility.

Side by side with large scale industries, the position of the handicraft or the kustar industries during the same period needs examination. In spite of the rise of capitalist production, the kustar industry held its sway in small scale commodity production and trades in towns and handicraft and cottage industries in the villages. The increase in the volume of employment due to the

growth of industries created a demand for consumer goods which the large scale industries were incapable of meeting. The kustar industries were utilised to supplement the large scale industries. The low labour cost of the handicraft worker, low overhead cost, and smaller depreciation of assets put this decentralised form of manufacture at an advantage over the centralised production in the sphere of consumer goods, particularly cotton textiles. Whereas previously the kustari had adopted their own policies of production and disposal of goods through intermediaries, in the middle of the 19th century the 'putting out' system of work (as it was called in England), also called the 'tonya' system in Japan, became common.

At the head of the kustari stood a master with hundreds of workers. He purchased raw materials in large quantities and distributed them partly to his own factory and partly to the kustari to be utilised in the small production establishments. The finished goods were then handed back to the master. Economically, this system helped the workers to specialise in a trade and since this system was most prevalent in the cotton textile industries, weavers constituted the first artisan class. According to Lenin, this tonya system was the pre-condition for the development of future capitalist factories, for the accumulation of capital by the masters and the formation of a group of skilled workers specialised in a trade.(9)

Such were the conditions of industrial activity, both large and small scale in the middle of the 19th century in Russia. A question that arises here ~~concerns~~ the state of the working class during this period. In the first stage of the development of capitalism in England the working class had to suffer immensely;

their conditions of work were unbearable; there was growing pauperisation among them and in many cases they went so far as to break up the machines and set fire to factories and establishments. The theory that, because England was first in entering the arena of capitalism, the normalisation of the conditions of the working class in the absence of any example or previous experience, was bound to take a long time, and that the development of capitalism in other countries would not therefore follow the same agonising path, is not confirmed if one examines the condition of the working class just before the abolition of serfdom in Russia. Moreover, it was not merely the lack of experience that reduced the English working class to the state it found itself in: the influence of 'laissez-faire' attitudes and policies became dominant in the ruling class, which prevented the government from effecting working class legislation.

It is necessary first to examine the working conditions in Russian manufacturing establishments before 1859. A special commission was formed in that year consisting of representatives from the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, with Stackel'berg as chairman. Its object was to effect a complete transformation of the system of legislation concerning industry. The findings of the commission were published a year after the abolition of serfdom. An examination of the recommendations of the committee reveals the prevalent conditions before 1859. For the first time the employment in any manufacturing establishment of children below the age of 12 was prohibited. Workers of both sexes within the age group of 12-18 were allowed to work up to a maximum of 12 hours a day, out of which two hours

were to be set apart for breakfast, lunch and rest. Night-shift work by persons below the age of 18 was prohibited. (10) If the beginning of the 19th century is taken to coincide with the beginning of industrialisation in Russia, industrialisation was attended by appalling working conditions. There was no organised working class movement; there was no question of bargaining between the employers and the workers because of the bondage of the latter within the institution of serfdom, and there was no intervention by the state to improve matters during the reigns of Alexander I and Nicholas I. Russian autocracy was altogether afraid of industrialisation on western lines lest it gave rise to a mass of disaffected workers. The negative attitude of Nicholas I towards the industrialisation of the country is well-known to all students of Russian economic history. Pazhitnov describes the state of affairs in this way: "Workers and even children are exhausted by back-breaking work 16 hours a day. The statistical committee of Yaroslav considered the conditions of the workers in the factories where men, women and children had to work for 14½ hours a day and live in barracks to be typical. No measures were taken to guarantee the health of the workers and while they perished, the capitalists received 60% return on their capital. More often than not, the administration does not take any measures to guarantee the health of the workers and where measures are taken for various reasons, they are ineffective." (11)

The measures referred to by Pazhitnov were in most cases haphazard, piece-meal attempts at amelioration: the Russian propertied classes, whether the nobility or the merchants, or the big or medium investors of capital could afford not to take them seriously since labour was cheap and easily replaceable.

There is some controversy among historians about the extent of pauperisation among the working class in Russia in the period under review. On the one hand, there is the view that the very nature of primitive accumulation of capital in Russia led inevitably to a growth of pauperisation amongst the masses on a wide scale. One author contends: "The period of primitive accumulation is genetically connected with the previous stage of economic development - the period of the pre-capitalist money economy, the economy of serfdom. That is why in the period of primitive accumulation many of the vestiges of the economy of serfdom based on forced free labour within the system of servitude, were preserved. Naturally these traces of the past are preserved almost exclusively in the sphere of national economic life which took precedence in and almost entirely dominated the rural economy in the epoch of serfdom. ...But the influence of the tradition of the serfdom was not limited and never is limited to only a direct preservation of the methods of the old rural economy in the period of primitive accumulation: it goes further and penetrates into the sphere of swiftly developing modern industries. Here it manifests itself in an extremely crude method of exploitation of the hired workers. Excessively long hours of work, extremely low wages, the absence of any sort of provision for old age, sickness or accidents leading to the loss of working ability, persecution of workers who take part in strikes or form their organisations: these are the things to which this method led. The result of this exploitation is the extreme poverty of the labouring masses. Two circumstances exercise a particularly strong influence on this gross exploitation and on increasing pauperism: the absence of any organisation of the working class and the existence of speculative enterprises (grunderstvo)."(12)

There is no doubt that in the first stage of the development of capitalism in Russia, the working class could not organise itself because of the absence of both the objective and subjective preconditions. The lack of political freedom and civil right coupled with the oppressive rule of the Russian autocracy made it well-nigh impossible for any section of the Russian population to form an association amongst themselves. In fact, at this time the working class did not even realise the need for such associations. As a consequence, only sporadic unorganised agitations took place among the Russian rural and urban workers. The upper classes, of course, enjoyed some political freedom. One author called it a "freedom analogues to that of England in the 17th and 18th centuries, which was only vested in the exploiters themselves, while the mass of the people in England or in the 19th century in Russia were deprived of this freedom." (13)

The speculative industries referred to by the same author went side by side with primitive capitalist accumulation. It was, according to him, "an echo of servile tillage". "The essence of the servile economy consisted in predatoriness, in the crude seizure of the fruits of 'other people's labour' without any payment. The same imprint of predatoriness, easy profit without labour is to be found in the speculative industries, but there is an important difference between the method of exploitation here, and that in serfdom, in as much as here more energy, enterprise and adroitness - these newly acquired practices of the capitalist era - are needed." (14)

Another viewpoint is expressed by an author named Turner in a book published in 1861 under the title "On the Working Class and the Measures for Guaranteeing Their Welfare." He states: "Russia till

now has not known either factory production or pauperism in the real sense. Our entire rural and town population were at a much lower stage of welfare than the greater part of European countries. But we have not had as yet pauperism and a proletariat which appeared as a dangerous sore around the most luxurious development of the country and other classes of the population." (15) In the estimate of the same author, in 1856 out of a total population of 57 million in Russia, only 5,200,000 resided in cities and towns (less than 10%). He asserts that as a result, "the present moment represents the most favourable one for the introduction of those institutions for the working class" which by their nature, "would prevent the very birth of pauperism" (16). The favourable conditions were supposed to have been, first, that Russian society was at the 'very beginning' of the malignant development of capitalism which was far advanced in Europe; second, that Russia could take account of the experience of other countries and avoid its aberrations, and, third, and most importantly, that there had survived in popular customs the idea and the practice of the working association - the artel. The author concludes that because of the small size of Russia's city population, and the actual absence of pauperism, at least in the form which it was found in western Europe, one could avoid impoverishment by taking certain reasonable and inexpensive precautions. (17)

The discussions of the controversial question as to whether a proletariat was already in the process of formation in 19th century Russia and as to whether there was an economic basis for such a process, led to the view of some that a proletariat was evolving in the womb of feudalism itself. Pankratova states: "The process of primary accumulation dragged on right up to 1861

and was completed in the first decade after the emancipation of the serfs, when the industrial transformation was completed. After studying trade relations in all their ramifications, it is particularly important to show the process of the growth of trade of the hired labour force within feudal-servile Russia and to determine the extent and the sources of the appearance of hired workers, their specific weight and place in production... But the essence of the problem of hired labour as the most important factor in the rise of capitalist production is not in the magnitude of its expansion. The proletariat arising within the feudal method of production was a huge new productive force. Simple cooperation and manufacture could not have arisen if the small producers had not attained a high level of working skill of productive and technical habits, if they had not possessed the ability to work collectively, or learnt to use comparatively differentiated instruments.

The expropriated small producers could be quickly transformed into skilled factory hands and then into trained hired workers, because even before this time they were not simply ruined peasants but were experienced 'hands' possessing certain productive and technical skills. These skilled forerunners of hired labour (the 'pre-proletariat' according to Engels) were the most important element of the new productive forces, which ripened with feudal society." (18)

It will not be out of place here to mention the role played by the government in the development of industries in particular, and economic development in general during the 19th century, especially in the immediate pre-reform days. The Russian autocracy was never keen to develop industries on western lines, and thus be instrumental in creating a proletariat. The very idea

of such a proletariat haunted the Tsarist bureaucrats during the reigns of Alexander I and Nicholas I. The fiscal policies that were adopted during the first part of the 19th century were directed towards guaranteeing the privileges of traders and merchants who came from the rank of the nobility. But the same fiscal policies, with their emphasis on high tariffs, were at a later date a boon to the industrial entrepreneurs and the swift industrial growth in the second half of the 19th century was greatly aided by the preceding favourable fiscal policy.

In the early 19th century the tax structure of Imperial Russia was very regressive. That is, the poorer section of the population whose incomes were very low had to contribute proportionately more to the state treasury in tax than its richer counter-part. As a consequence, revenue to the state treasury was extremely limited. The main sources of revenue were the oppressive poll-tax from the landlords' peasants and the taxes from the state peasants. The income from tax on business profits was negligible, firstly, because the rate of investment of capital in the country was extremely low and, secondly, because the property-owning classes were not at all taxed as they might have been. Apart from the direct taxation of the peasants, there was another source of revenue which the government drew on freely to increase its income, namely, indirect taxes and fiscal tariffs. The former increased the burden of taxation on the poorer section of the people, that is, of workers and peasants. The regressive nature of the tax structure put the rich propertied class in an excessively privileged position.

In 1823, during the reign of Alexander I, Kankrin was appointed Minister of Finance. He remained in this position till 1844 during which time he pursued such a reactionary policy that Nicholas I, himself an arch-reactionary, had to remove him. Kankrin was charged with the responsibility for economising on state expenditure and rationalising the disorganised finances of the state. He fulfilled his task so punctiliously that he aroused the dissatisfaction of Nicholas himself.

Kankrin was anything but a protector of industrial progress in Russia. When he spoke against serfdom, as many serfowners did themselves, it was because the continuation of serfdom was fraught with the danger of a revolution. But he was even more afraid of a city proletariat and pauperism, and for this reason he opposed the general development of factory production in Russia. He disapproved of industrial development to the point of resisting the introduction of joint-stock companies, private commercial banks and opposed the improvement of industrial techniques and machines. He was even opposed to the building of railways. But ironically enough, during his tenure an office for advice to the manufacturers was established, technological and forestry institutes were brought into being and the mining acts were re-written. The effect of his tariff policy was also favourable to the government.

The tariff policy pursued by Russian government during the first six decades of the 19th century was especially important to the development of industry in Russia. Throughout his period of office, Kankrin followed a policy of high tariff rates. This was not because he wanted to protect nascent Russian industries but because it was profitable to the state treasury. There were six

tariff revisions during his ministry - 1825, 1830, 1831, 1836, 1838 and 1841. The effect of these revisions was that high duties were substituted for import prohibitions; many taxes were lowered; the home trade was given a boost and the revenue increased from 11 million rubles in 1824 to 26 million rubles in 1842. Production in cotton industry was almost doubled during this period and the number of people employed increased from 47,000 to 110,000. (20)

But while Kankrin followed the policy of high tariffs in order to increase revenue, the nobility was putting pressure on the government to lower tariffs because the continuance of a high tariff policy deprived them of important items of luxury, such as perfumes from France, wines from France and Spain. As a result of this pressure, the tariff duties on some items started to come down and, after Kankrin's departure, a new tariff structure was introduced in 1850 which put the tariff policy of Russia almost on a free-trade basis.

The year 1850 may be taken as the line of demarcation between the policy of high protection and the policy of freer trade. In the new tariff of 1850, many prohibitive duties were removed and duty remained only on 25 goods (which included sugar, iron and alcoholic drinks). The import duty on the rest of the items was lowered and the export duty on all items of exports was altogether removed. This created a tremendous impetus for the Russian producers to increase production and to export more at the same time, as well as to import the necessary tools and machines for factory production. Thus, the new policy of 1850 created the opportunity to reorganise Russian industrial production. Machines could be imported to equip factories and exports of agricultural commodities could earn much needed capital. But after a short

period of time it was found necessary to revise the tariff system and so a new policy came into effect in 1857 which helped to a considerable extent develop home industries. The tariff policy of 1857 singled out, in the first place, some foreign firms that were less dangerous competitors to the home producers. A low tariff was imposed on the goods of such foreign producers. This tariff was principally designed to obtain a fixed revenue rather than protecting any home industries because the competition with such foreign firms was not stiff. But one distinct feature of the tariff policy of 1857 directly helped the Russian manufacturers: the moderate tariff on imported food, raw materials, instruments and machines helped the manufacturers to get the supply of both working and fixed capitals. The subsequent tariff policies of the second half of the 19th century represented to a greater or lesser degree confirmation of the policy of 1857.

Speranskii, one of the most gifted of all tsarist administrators, had suggested, during his tenure of office, measures that would have given impetus to the national industries. One such measure was to reformulate the tariff policy in line with the tariff policy of 1857. But no proper attention was given to this at the time on the grounds that the recommendations were impracticable. In fact, the tariff policy of 1857 was only a partial fulfilment of the proposals by Speranskii.

CHAPTER THREE CONDITION OF THE GENTRY AND THE SERFS

(a) Condition of the nobility

The highest position in the table of ranks of Russian society was occupied by the nobility. It was the backbone of Russian autocracy. Before the days of Catherine the Great, the nobles had had themselves to do military service. But the nobility demanded concessions as a reward for their contribution. So, in 1762 they were exempted from military service and were allowed to send their serfs on their behalf. Consequently, a period of unrestricted opportunity to enjoy the fruits of the labour of others dawned. The nobility were able to lead a life of luxury and conspicuous consumption which encouraged further exploitation of the serfs in proportion to the growth of consumption. Actually, of all the landlords, only a minority could be said to have been greatly privileged. There were large differences in the economic power of the landlords resting as it did on the number of serf_souls owned. The following table will indicate the extent of the serf-owning strength of the nobility.

Character of ownership	No. of serf-owners	% of all serf-owners	No. of revision souls owned	% of all revision souls	average no. of revision souls
without land	3633	4	12045	1	3
less than 21 souls	41016	40	327534	3	8
21-100 souls	35498	34	1666073	16	47
101-150 "	19930	19	3925102	37	197
501-1000 "	2421	2	1569888	15	648
over 1000 souls	1382	1	3050540	29	2207

(source: Blum J. - "Lord and Peasant in Russia"- page 369)

As the above table indicates, 1 per cent of all the serf-owners owned 29% of all the serfs whereas 78 per cent of serf owners owned less than 100 souls. The latter category of serf

owners (i.e. possessing less than 100 souls) were economically hard-up, and possession of less than 100 souls in the condition of Russian serfdom could not guarantee much economic advantage to the landlords, to say nothing of prosperity. It was quite natural, that the serfs in smaller estates had to face more onerous conditions of existence than those in larger estates. On the one hand, the smaller serfowners had to maintain the assumed dignity of the landlord, and, on the other, their resources and revenues were too limited to maintain an economic position which was compatible with a dignified existence: the result was more and more extortion from the peasants and even mortgaging of the peasants, which was of doubtful legality but very common in Russia at that time.

The big landlords, possessing thousands of 'souls' and owning vast tracts of land, led lives of such luxurious affluence that, by comparison, the tales of medieval barons pale into insignificance. They included the Sheremetev family, Prince Yusupov, B. A. Kanukin and others. Their attitude at different points of time is illustrated by some interesting stories about the Sheremetev family. The Decembrist N. Turgenev told of a case where a serf wanted to buy his freedom for 500,000 rubles and a two-storied house (a rarity in a Russian village of that time). But Count Sheremetev refused this request. (1) On another occasion Count Sheremetev refused an offer of 200,000 silver rubles from a peasant for the latter's freedom, but later gave his freedom for just a barrel of oysters. The story goes like this: one day Count Sheremetev was sitting at breakfast and felt a strong desire for oysters. But there were none in the house or anywhere near it. By chance the peasant in question arrived with a barrel of oysters and offered it as a gesture of goodwill to the master. Sheremetev

was so delighted that he liberated the man on the spot and invited him to join the table as his guest.(2) On another occasion a rich St. Petersburg serf merchant offered the Count one million rubles for his freedom. The answer was revealing. He said: "keep your money, since for me there is more blessing in owning a man like you than in receiving an additional million rubles."(3) Such incidents were not exceptional. The mentality of the big landlords has been described by one author in the following manner: "these ironhearts (the nobles) are proud that among their serfs there are millionaires whose hearts and lives they can destroy with one word since these unfortunates completely depend on the whim of the lord and his overseers. They are proud when they see serfs descend from magnificent carriages, products of their own energy, and kneel down until their foreheads touch the ground. And for all this, the nobility had to take only the trouble to be born." (4) As has been pointed out earlier, such privileges were only the prerogatives of the great landlords; the small landlords often lived in straightened circumstances.

Since the autocratic government was a champion of the institution of serfdom, it endeavoured in all possible ways to help the nobility to preserve their status. To ameliorate the condition of the small and medium-sized landlords, they offered generous loans. The security for these loans was nothing else but the 'souls' themselves. The history of serfdom in Russia is full of paradoxes, but nothing is more paradoxical than the idea of mortgaging human beings as movable property. The facility of such credit was not used by small and medium landlords alone, even rich landlords of the stature of Count Sheremetev and Prince Yusupov freely indulged in borrowing on such security. Whereas the former stratum of nobility needed loans for their subsistence,

the latter used them for the provision of luxury. If we look at the extent of borrowing by the nobility from the government agencies, from the second decade of the 19th century until the time immediately preceding the abolition of serfdom, a rise of staggering proportions can be seen. The following table gives the figures.

Table Showing the Indebtedness of the Nobility. (5)

Year	No. of revision souls mortgaged (in millions)	% of all revision souls	Amount borrowed from State credit institutions (million of rubles)
1820	1.8	20	110 (assignat)
1833	4.5	37	950 (")
1855	6.6	61	398 (credit rubles)
1859	7.1	66	425 (" ")

So, by the end of the fifties, the Russian nobility had already mortgaged 66% of their valued possessions to the government credit institutions. This is an estimate only of borrowing from the government agencies of credit. How many more hundreds of millions were borrowed from different private sources is difficult to ascertain. The question that generally arises in the minds of impartial observers is how the nobility could hope to maintain their extravagance in the face of such a decrease in their earning capacities. The usual consequence of non-repayment of loans is confiscation of the mortgaged property. As the above table shows there was not the slightest trace of nobility repaying the loan. On the contrary, with the passage of time the debt gradually increased. This borrowing policy would not have been uneconomic if the money was invested in increasing production on the estates. Then the net return out of these investments would have repaid the debt with its interest. But the loans were rarely, if ever, employed for economically profitable purposes; most of them went towards financing the consumption of the nobility -

in some cases, especially in the case of great landlords, in the consumption of the most conspicuous nature. It is interesting to note Blum's comment in this respect: "The usual landlord, whether he borrowed from a government institution or from a money lender, rarely employed this loan for capital improvements on his property. Instead he used it for consumption. The improvidence and profligacy of the Russian nobility is familiar to every reader of the great Russian novels of the 19th century. There is no question that in these faults lay much of the explanation for their ever increasing indebtedness. Moreover, the lenient policy of the governmental lending agencies encouraged excessive borrowings and extravagant spending. These institutions granted extensions and postponements freely and they rarely foreclosed, since their *raison d'être* was to save the properties of the dворянство and not to take them away. Delinquents were allowed to remain in possession, so that loans often amounted to outright gifts from the state." (6)

The nobility knew that the government wanted to perpetuate the institution of serfdom and that the government needed the nobility to realise this policy. That is why they borrowed indiscriminately and the government pursued the most 'uneconomic' loan policy. The government wanted the nobility to stay: "I love the gentry, I consider it the first support of the throne," (7) Tsar Alexander II said. Similar statements came from all the emperors. The nobility was conscious that it was the lifeblood of Russian autocracy. Such was in brief the economic condition and character of the Russian nobility in the 19th century, before the days of abolition of serfdom.

(b) Condition of the serfs in the 19th century.

In Russia under serfdom there were three types of serfs that need our attention and we shall not be concerned with other types in the present study. Firstly, there were the state peasants whose ultimate master was the government, and whose obligations were due to the state; secondly, there were the peasants of the landlords whose obligations were due to the landlords mainly in the form of obrok or barshchina. Finally, there was the class of house serfs (dvorovye liudi) who had neither land nor equipment of their own, nor had they any usad'ba. They used to stay with their masters and went wherever the masters went. The following is a breakdown of the serf population into different categories: (8)

Types	Number (in thousands)
Palace, Royal and Imperial family and house serfs	2,019
Crown (State) of various designations	18,308
Crown of the mining enterprise	386
Peasants assigned to private factories	518
Landowners' peasants	20,173
Artisans of the Crown mines	230

(source: the Census of 1858 - the 13th revision)

Of these the state peasants and the landlords' peasants were the only important groups of the entire serf population in Russia not only because of their number but because of the important role they played in the economy.

Reference has already been made to the different types of obligations that the serfs in different regions had to fulfil and it has also been mentioned that a shift in the framework of obligations of the peasants took place in the course of time. It is a well-known fact that the landlords, in the non-black soil regions always wanted to commute labour services into money-rents when the agricultural activities on their estates

were not very profitable, which was often the case. By the middle of the 19th century obrok had assumed a dominant position in the non-black soil region. Since the landlords in such areas were getting a straight forward money-rent, they demanded greater amounts of obrok whenever the actual or potential earnings of the peasants increased. These increased earnings were mainly from seasonal work in the new factories. There was another means by which the landlord could secure more income with the help of the serfs. The landlords were proverbially known for their love of luxury goods. They had to buy these and also necessities in the open market. Some of their estates were situated in regions unsuited to agriculture and so in time they thought of establishing estate industries, the products of which could fetch, according to their calculations, enough money to guarantee the fulfilment of their desires with the help of free serf labour. Here is how Rosovskii summarises the situation: "The basic skills for estate manufacturing were at the disposal of the nobles, particularly in northern Russia. What the nobles did, in effect, was to unite the small independent part-time producers of the serfs into centralised estate manufactures. Here they produced items which the peasants had produced themselves - wool, linen, leather etc. - somewhat more efficiently. The estate factory developed gradually. Probably starting on a seasonal basis to occupy idle winter months, it frequently grew into a permanent institution where the serfs were quartered and fed but paid no wages and by this time their land had been taken away" (9) Working conditions were very poor in these estate factories and the workers feared these factories like the 'plague', (10) In many cases the landlords after some time abandoned their interests as manufacturers. The serfs who

were being utilised as workers in the estate industries were required to pay a money rent to their master either on a 'soul' or a tiaglo basis and were allowed to move away from the estate.(11) Where the opportunities for employment were adequate, this procedure became quite effective. Thus the nobility secured a steady money income.

However, in the black-soil regions where barshchina was predominant the landlords were always keen to keep their serfs on their estates. A barshchina serf was a peasant with two places of employment, his own land and that of the master. So, a barshchina serf was a serf in the classical sense.

With rising expectations and without the will and energy to modernise their estates, the only way the nobility could increase their income to meet their desires was by extortions from the peasants. There were, however, a handful of landlords who wanted to introduce newer and more modern methods of agriculture, but the structure of the organisation of production was such that it tended to be unresponsive to innovations, i.e to agricultural measures which would transform the existing tilling system into a many-field system, would introduce agricultural machines and improve the quality of livestock. Such innovations were incompatible with the presence of forced labour whose productivity was significantly lower than that of hired labour. To illustrate this let us consider the statement of a Tambov landlord: "If the entire crop is threshed in the autumn, then what will the peasants and their wives do in the winter? A threshing machine costs money, requires repairing and attachment with horses but the labour of the peasant does not cost anything" (12). This assertion is symptomatic of the economic bankruptcy of the serf system.

How then did the landlords attempt to get more work from the peasants? Zaionchkovskii gives some examples of 'original'

methods of getting more work out of the peasants by the landlords. "The forced labour by serfs," writes Zaionchkovskii, "was extremely unproductive. The desire of the landlord to increase the productivity of servile labour was accompanied by various kinds of mockery and torture of peasants. Thus, according to the data of D. Morodovits, some landlords allotting work to peasants put on turnpikes on their necks so that they could not lie down on the ground. There were circumstances when the landlords, in order to force a quick completion of the allotted task in harvesting, did not allow the peasants to drink water in spite of tremendous heat. For the slightest offence they were subjected to merciless flogging." (13)

Flogging was part of the daily routine in a Russian serf's life. The landlord had the right to buy and sell peasants along with the land or even without land, like herds of cattle. In many cases serfs were bought and sold separately from their families and once sold never saw the faces of their families again. They were treated like merchandise, were displayed at fairs and bazaars, and were included in the list of landlords' property. Until 1845, the serfs had no right to own or acquire either movable or immovable property. They could acquire movable property only in the names of their masters. After 1848, they were allowed to own property only with the expressed permission and sanction of the landlord. The landlord had the right to take away a peasant's land or make him either a house serf (dvorovyi) or a landless serf (mesiachnik). In the latter case the serf was deprived of all his means of production and had to subsist on a meagre ration (skudnyi payok). Whereas the conversion to mesiachnik was a rare phenomenon in the 18th century, in the middle of the 19th century

the rapacity of the landlords was such that it became almost a regular affair. The landlords by law controlled over almost every aspect of the life of the serfs. They enjoyed enormous legal privileges and could punish their serfs for anything which was deemed by the landlord an offence. The permitted punishments were:

- 1) 40 strokes with a rod, 15 strokes with a stick ;
- 2) keeping the serf in question imprisoned upto two months ;
- 3) sending him to a reformatory to live with corrective criminal gangs (as he himself was thought to be a criminal) ;
- 4) remand a serf up to 6 months ;
- 5) sending a peasant to the workhouse for a period upto 3 months.

According to the law of 1822, the landlords had the additional right to send the peasant to Siberia. (14) So, the landlords enjoyed all the power and the privileges of the ancient master of slaves.

What rights, if any, had the serfs? The state never, in principle, accepted the view that the landlords had the prerogative of punishing the serfs to the point of tyranny. The state assumed that serfdom was based on a patriarchal relationship between master and serf which precluded serious conflict, let alone class antagonism. The ironic outcome of this assumption was that the state denied the peasant any right to complain against his master. According to an old law of 1767, the peasant who tried to bring a charge against his landlord was subjected to punishment by flogging, and transfer to a forced labour camp. The criminal code of 1845 virtually confirmed this: any serf who lodged a

complaint against the landlord was to be punished with 50 strokes of the rod. In practice, defending as it did the rights of the nobility, the government looked upon any protests of the peasants against the landlord as a revolt against the state because in the logic of autocracy, the nobility was the representative of the crown. This enabled the landlords to indulge freely in extremes of ill-treatment of their serfs. Some indulged in forms of punishment which went beyond the limits laid down by law. Tying a hook to a peasant in such a way that any slight movement would make the hook pierce his flesh was one such innovation. In the province of Riazan, a landlord tied one of his house-serfs to a chain to which a wooden stump weighing 30 pounds was attached: she had to remain like that for four weeks and received only crusts of bread and water. On another occasion the same landlord chained one of his serfs to an iron turnpike and kept him in such a position for several weeks. Such devices became more and more widespread. There were cases when landlords kept their serfs in chains for years like dangerous criminals. In one incident a Kherson landlord named Kartsov kept his serf in chains for 4 years.(15)

In fact, the nobility made their own laws for the treatment of their serfs; they knew that the officers of the state and the regional police would never question the authority of the landlord. The government sometimes made a show of intervening into the excessively cruel behaviour of the landlords towards the peasants. There were indeed a few instances when the regional police authorities wanted to take the offending landlord to task, but they never succeeded because even if the offending landlord was convicted by a court of law, the punishment was rarely carried out or the "punishment" was very mild.

The condition of the women serfs was particularly appalling. Apart from the kind of atrocities inflicted on the male serfs, they were also subjected to sexual assaults. Zaionchkovskii quotes one landlord named Sprashinskii, of the province of Kiev, who raped most of his serf-girls. In the course of an investigation it was found that 86 of his serf-girls in the age-group 12-14 were assaulted by him and two of them died while being raped by their master. He even seduced his own daughters born of serf women. In estates owned by Count Kochubei, apart from innumerable married women, there were nearly 200 serf-girls who were raped by the count. Some of the masters as a matter of course carried out the 'right of the first night'. The moral degradation of 19th century Russia was as much a result of the persisting institution of serfdom as its economic crisis. Historically speaking, the economic health of a society and its moral tone are interrelated. A decline in the former has always served to undermine the foundations of morality and in such circumstances the animal instincts of the more powerful always became dominant.

As regards the state peasants, their position was, in theory, better. They were not subject to the arbitrary behaviour of individual landlords. Yet the attitude of the controlling agents, from the petty police officials to the uezd administrator and provincial government, did not, in fact, differ much from that of the landlord. Whereas in the case of landlords' peasants the master could do whatever he liked, in the case of state peasants the officers of the state exerted their power - a no less oppressive power - while remaining within the bounds of law. The difference was a quantitative rather than of a qualitative nature. By an act of 26 December 1837, a special Ministry for Crown property was set

up. The task of the Ministry was to take care of the "free rural people" (free here means people not in servile bondage to a person) and for managing the rural economy. The second task was to set up a rural administration based on the principle that the state peasants were under feudal obligation to the state as their master. At the head of the Ministry was P. D. Kiselev, who later became one of the exponents of the reforms of 1861. On the basis of this law, the administration of the state peasants was totally reorganised. In every province a directorate of the Ministry of Crown Property was established with a staff of officers. In every uezd sub-directorates were set up which were subordinate (16) to the provincial directorates of Crown properties. / In the uezd offices, the regional officers and the landlords occupied the main positions. It was an elaborate organisation with innumerable officials of various ranks and designations. This huge army of officers 'supervised' the state peasants. In spite of the law's (1837) emphatic assertion that its purpose was to set up a rational administrative framework for the state peasants, the net result was that the peasants who used to enjoy some autonomy before, lost it altogether after the implementation of the new act. They could neither understand the complexity of the new arrangement nor did they comprehend the new right of self-rule the law was supposed to confer on them.

The net outcome of this reorganisation can best be gauged by a statement in 1842 by the Chief of the Third Section during the reign of Nicholas I (Benckendorf). He made the following comments: "Now it remains to decide whether their conditions have improved by instituting a new administration over them". The peasants themselves solved this question. The agitation that took place

among them in the last year in the Olonets, Vittka, Perm, Kazan regions and Moscow/had two main reasons: oppression and extortions by the officers of the Crown property, and the desire of the peasants to remain under the authority of the regional police as before, who, even if did not care for the good of the peasants, at least did not cost the peasants so much, because previously the entire uezd sacrificed for one police officer or two or three assessors but now scores of officers live at the expense of the peasants."(17)

So the condition of the state peasantry who were 'free' in the interpretation of the government was almost as bad as that of the landlords' peasants.

For perhaps sixty or seventy years the plight of the serfs in Russia had caused concern among all sections of the thinking public. By the middle of the 19th century the raznochinnecheskaya intelligentsia, both radical and liberal, a section of the nobility and some members of the bureaucracy thought the system of serfdom had outlived its existence. They thought it to be one of the gravest diseases of Russian society. The economic backwardness of the country as compared with the west, the dissatisfaction prevailing in the country, the excesses of the Third Section of His Majesty's Chancellory were attributed to this one malignant growth of Russia's body politic - serfdom. The apparent calm during the 'iron rule' of Nicholas I was, even according to many government officials, an omen of a future explosion, which could be averted only if serfdom was abolished. "Behind the ferment caused by the great 'thaw' lurked Russia's basic social problem, the question of the future of serfdom, the question of questions - "the greatest of all our misfortunes is serfdom", - a high official confided to one of his friends, "All other evils of Russian life - and they are numerous - are connected with this cancer and would

lose much of their gravity by its removal." (18) A contemporary author viewing the situation in retrospect goes further than this. "In Russia, serfdom was even more than a social life. It retarded all development, proved a gold mine to bureaucracy and bathed on the superstitious homage paid to tradition." (19) Even the Russian conservatives started to think in terms of doing away with serfdom as the vestige of a bygone era, but their voices failed to affect the undisturbed surface of the Nicolaian state power. Herzen once said, "There was calm on the surface but turmoil within." Chernyshevskii appraising the situation in 1852 said, "Soon there will be a revolt in our country, and if it takes place, I will certainly participate in it.... I am not afraid of either dirt, or the drunken peasants or butchery". (20) Elsewhere he says, "I do not value my life at all for the triumph of my convictions, for the triumph of freedom, equality, fraternity and prosperity, liquidation of misery and vices; if only I am convinced, then my convictions would be justified and they will triumph, and if I am convinced that they will triumph, then I shall even not be sorry that I will not live to see them triumph and rule, and it will be a sweet death if it occurs because of that conviction." (21)

CHAPTER FOUR ABOLITION OF SERFDOM AND ITS CAUSES

One of the first signs of a crack in the apparently stable rule of Nicholas I was revealed during the Crimean war. The outcome of this war is well-known. It was an important pointer to the critical state of the Russian economic and social structure. The war served to explode the myth of Nicolaian military might, showed up the paralysis of imperial government and brought added misery to the wider masses of the population. But historians are not unanimous about the extent to which Russia suffered a decisive military defeat. The defeat of Sevastopol was offset by the victory at Kars and, in any case, the regime was not seriously threatened, in its existence. (1) The allies did never intend it to be seriously endangered and they would probably have done everything to help it to survive in order to preserve political reaction in Europe, even while forcing Alexander II to sign the humiliating treaty of Paris. But the regime was undoubtedly discredited. "The political and economic structure was deeply infected with corruption, ranging from paymasters who pocketed every unit's payroll to contractors who made huge profits from selling shoddy materials or rotted food to the armed forces. At the root of all the weaknesses and abuses was the supreme evil of serfdom." (2) Even if Nicholas I did not take his own life in disgrace (as the rumour went), the reason of his premature demise should be sought in the breakdown of his rule against the background of a pointless and futile war. While not being seriously threatened, the regime showed no sense of security either and Alexander II, in his speech to the Moscow gentry on 30th March, 1865, hinted at it specifically.

As the war progressed, the transport system, including the railways, showed terrible weaknesses. Urgent reinforcements needed a swift despatch of men and materials to the front. The notion of Kankrin that the development of railways in Russia would bring more misfortunes than virtues - a notion which Nicholas willingly or unwillingly fostered - brought disasters. Along with this, the institution of serfdom and the peculiar nature of recruitment in the army which enabled the gentry arbitrarily to send substitutes for war service resulted in a drastic reduction of fighting capacity. The unwilling army of serfs had little to choose between a miserable village existence at the mercy of their masters and death in a war for a cause unknown to them. Moreover, the army of Nicholas I had to fight with that of the industrially emergent countries of Europe. Their armies were technically better equipped, well-trained, and were composed of men who accepted military service as a career, professional soldiers, and not an unwilling mass of illiterate semi-slaves with weapons from a past century in their hands. The outcome on the field was a foregone conclusion and it brought a tragic end to the military dreams of Nicholas, the 'Gendarme of Europe' who successfully waged war against European revolutions but who could not withstand the onslaught of a more efficient economic order. The defeat and the peace terms were thus an indication of the feebleness of a regime, dependent on an old servile system. It was in fact a defeat of the prevailing economic order in Russia. So, "in the minds of the emperor and the higher bureaucracy, the course of the war and its outcome left the feeling that once more the country had been allowed to lag far too behind the advanced nations of the west, that some degree of modernisation of the economy was indispensable for regaining a strong military

position. It seemed clear at the same time that some change in the peasant status, must be assigned a very high, perhaps the highest priority on any list of requisite reforms." (3)

According to another author, "it was the interest of the government and the governing class alike to bring into being new productive forces and serfdom undoubtedly impeded the task." (4) The war not only brought military and economic defeat in Russia but it was also a great political blow. The Russian autocratic political structure became an object of ridicule both inside and outside Russia. (5) The war also brought about a serious crisis in the financial position of the government. The fight on the eastern front and the Sevastopol campaign alone cost the government 538 million rubles and the usual budget in 1857 after the war showed a deficit of 38.4 million rubles (revenue - 309.4 million rubles and expenditure - 347 million rubles). Budget deficit was a chronic affair with the tsarist government. A budget deficit is not by itself an oppressive economic factor. Whereas the revenue was 209.8 million rubles in 1847, the same became (as shown above) 309.4 million rubles in 1857. The most significant portion of this increase was assessed on the peasants. 70% of the total amount of direct taxes came from the peasants in the form of taxes and poll-tax. In addition to these, they had to pay their own share of the indirect taxes which comprised 44% of the total revenue. Moreover, the government resorted to an increase in its spending ability by taking measures that inevitably led to an inflationary situation in the country. According to an estimate by P. Liashchenko, during the period of 1852 to 1861, 837 million rubles were spent by the government through emergency budgets and this money came from the following sources: public debt of

different categories - 434 million rubles, and issue of new paper currency - 403 million rubles. (6)

The war not only brought about a financial crisis of a serious nature, but also an overall economic crisis. This was not caused by the Crimean war alone. Just after the war there was a general economic crisis in the whole of Europe. The crisis in Russia was therefore also a reflection of an all-European economic crisis. The industry was particularly hit by this crisis. More will be said about this elsewhere. (7)

There were other factors at this time that served to undermine the structure of the Russian state, namely a new wave of peasants' revolts. This was not of course a new phenomenon in the history of Russian serfdom. The stories of Razin and Pugachev had the power of myths and legends among the people. In the 19th century, the number of peasant revolts rose with every decade. These revolts owed much to the growing expectation among the peasants of their emancipation from serfdom. This led to their outright refusal in many cases to perform the barshchina or to pay obrok. In such cases, the landlords redoubled their oppressive measures, which in turn led to a refusal to perform obligations, and indeed to mass risings by peasants against the authority of the landlords. As has been said earlier, the peasants had no legal right to complain against the landlords and the only way to escape from or resist oppression was to rise against their masters and the whole order which enslaved them. The following table illustrates the increase in the number of peasant uprisings from the beginning of the 19th century till 1861, the year of the abolition of serfdom. (11)

Year	Number of disturbances (single or prolonged)
1801-1810	83 (6% of the total)
1811-1820	124 (8% of the total)
1821-1830	156 (11% of the total)
1831-1840	143 (10% of the total)
1841-1850	351 (24% of the total)
1851-1861	591 (41% of the total)

Total - 1448 (100%)

(I. Ignatovich - Krest'ianskie volneniya pervoi chetverti 19 veka
vopr osy istorii - 1950 No.9, p.49)

In spite of the inadequacies of the method of collection of data, the above table is sufficiently revealing of the general trend of the peasant mood. Even as early as 1839, the Chief of the gendarmes, Benkendorff, had to convey to Tsar Nicholas I that, "it is necessary to start somehow and it is better to start gradually and cautiously rather than wait until things should be set in motion from below, that is from the people" (8). Benkendorff was obviously referring to the need of the abolition of serfdom in Russia. After this statement he concluded with a comment that, "the condition of the peasantry is a powder magazine (porokhovoi pogreb) under the state." (9)

A special feature of the revolts was that they were most severe in the central districts and in the Urals, that is, where serfdom was at its harshest, where state peasants were virtually engaged in forced labour. The nature of the revolts varied from passive and active resistance to open revolts. Sometimes and in some estates the uprisings continued for some years, in other cases disturbances recurred in isolated estates. But once a disturbance started in one spot, it tended to spread to other places till substantial parts of rural Russia became engulfed in open confrontation between the peasants and the tsarist agencies of coercion which invariably defended the land-owning

dворянство. In the words of one author, "from the day when the servile system was still in the making, fire had smouldered in the Russian village, and several times a hurricane of fire had raged through the country, never sweeping the manors clean but never quite extinguished." (10)

Though the position was severe in the central regions and in the Urals, the south was not immune from revolts either. The number of disturbances was considerably lower here but, characteristically, it was on the increase, too. Thus, whereas in the west of the Ukraine there was only one disturbance between 1823 and 1829, there were 12 incidents between 1830 to 1840. In the steppe region of the Ukraine, where serfdom became established in the thirties of the 19th century, the number of peasant uprisings increased with every decade. The uprisings, as a rule, and in all regions, had massive support among the local peasantry, but where massive action was impossible, peasants resorted to individual terror. According to the data of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, covering a period of 16 years from 1836 to 1851, there were 139 cases of assassination of landlords in their own estates and 70 attempted assassinations. According to the same source, 59 attempts were made on the lives of the landlords between 1852 and 1859, but the exact figure of death is not known. (12)

Disturbances and terroristic activities became so widespread that the word 'revolt' (bunt) became the subject of everyday conversation among the panic-stricken landlords. Sometimes, at the first sign of insubordination, even the district and local police officers hid in their apartments. The landlords became

so frightened that they started to see revolts among peasants when actually they were voicing their misery in a most non-violent way. As a result endless complaints flowed from the masters to the Third Section and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The following examples will show the extent of the fear among the landlords and the humiliation suffered by the peasants in this connection. A prosperous landlord, F. F. Myshetskii complained that his peasants were refusing to pay obrok "under the influence of a false understanding about freedom and proclaiming themselves free". (13) When the local officer enquired, it was found that the peasants only requested him to grant delay of the payment of 10 rubles which was in arrear of obrok payment. In another instance a landlord named Popov demanded that, since his peasants showed signs of agitation, immediate measures should be taken to repress them. Actually, they silently declined to obey their master's order to cut woods in a neighbour's forest. In another case a landlord named M. E. Chekobinskii made two petitions - one to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the other to the Third Section: his complaint was that his peasants delayed the payment of obrok because they expected immediate freedom from the Tsar. An enquiry showed that the peasants simply were so poor that they had no means of any kind to pay. (14)

There is some difference of opinion about the causes of peasant uprisings. One contention was that in most cases revolts or uprisings were manifestations of protest against the oppressive working conditions, rather than rebellion against serfdom itself. Robinson presents this position in the following way: "as far as the very incomplete and one-sided records show, active insubordination most often was a protest against the economic conditions of

servile life and less frequently was an attempt by one measure or another a complete escape from the system of serfdom.(15)

But according to the findings of an official investigation of the causes of revolts, out of 423 cases, 210 incidents took place because of rumours about the peasants' expected freedom, i.e. they are directly related to the institution of serfdom. Hard conditions of barshchina accounted for revolts in 95 estates; the figure for the hard conditions of obrok was 26. There were 9 cases of revolts against the oppressive forms of collection of arrears, 30 cases for famine conditions and absence of any sort of relief measures, 17 cases for forcing the peasants to resettle in other regions and, finally, 13 cases for the reduction of land allotment to the peasants by the landlords.(16)

Apart from uprisings of peasants en masse and individual terror there was another way by which the serfs expressed their discontent: they fled from the estates or from the regions where they lived. The number of such cases grew particularly in the eighteen fifties. This passive protest took a heavy toll of peasant lives. They had to walk hundreds of miles in extreme weather conditions in fear of being caught, and suffering from diseases. One of the notable cases was the flight of nearly ten thousand peasants from Vitebsk. In spite of the scarcity of reliable information, there is no doubt that the flights sometimes involved whole villages or even groups of villages. In 1854 such flights affected ten guberniias, seven in 1855 and seven in 1857. In 1856 there were nine thousand runaways from the guberniia of Ekaterinislav alone. (17)

All these manifestations of discontent could not have been by themselves instrumental in ushering an era of reform, with abolition of serfdom as the most prominent measure, had not other equally important factors caused the actions of the 'Tsar Liberator'. Peasant discontent existed since the 17th century, assuming at times the proportions of Russian style 'jaequeries'. Yet, as has been mentioned earlier, little was done to improve the condition of the serfs; if anything, the enslavement and oppression of the peasants was growing in proportion to, and as a safeguard of, the growing privileges of the land-owning nobility. The situation in the fifties of the 19th century raised new problems and called for a new solution. (18)

The Crisis in Industry

The institution of serfdom, as has been mentioned earlier, hindered the industrialisation of Russia, in line with the countries of Western Europe. Storch, the economist and tutor of Tsar Nicholas I, observed as early as 1815 that the principal cause of Russia's inability to develop modern industries lay in serfdom. He declared that, "the superiority of free labour over serf-labour is even more apparent in industry than in agriculture." (19) But at the time no particular importance was attached to such declarations. The entrepreneurship in Russian industries was rather unconventional. Apart from the merchant capitalists, who depended mainly on hired workers and assigned peasants, there were two other groups who promoted the industrial growth of the country, usually the serf-owner-entrepreneurs and the peasant-serf-entrepreneurs. As for the merchant capitalists, after surmounting the initial difficulties in the last half of the 18th century, they made considerable headway throughout the 19th century in the industrial sphere. With the extensive use of power in the

manufacture and importation of more modern machines, this particular group of entrepreneurs tried to model their production on the real capitalist pattern. The increase of free labour, by comparison with the forced labour in the entire working force of the industry, became an advantage to such entrepreneurs. At the same time, the governmental fiscal policy, in whatever direction it was aimed, served ultimately as an incentive to such entrepreneurs. Their production apparatus was set up in such a fashion that it could be readjusted to the fluctuations of prices and demands of the market. The wages and other conditions of work were more favourable than comparable manufacturing establishments under different types of entrepreneurship. As a consequence, the productivity was higher here and the cost per unit of output was lower. The superiority of this kind of entrepreneurship became more evident by the middle of the 19th century even in the eyes of the government. But, this, as a single factor, was too inadequate to alleviate or eradicate the intensive proletarianisation of the urban masses, because growth of production on capitalist lines would have welcomed the surplus mass of rural population, which in turn would have led to ^{the} proletarianisation of the masses. As one author has said, "the government was eager to lay the ghost of peasant rebellions, it was unwilling to conjure up the menace of urban revolutions." (20)

Whereas the merchant capitalists were really advancing towards acquiring the character of a bourgeoisie on Russian soil, the other two types of entrepreneurship, i.e. serf-owner-entrepreneurs and the peasant-serf-entrepreneurs, were involved in a serious crisis. In the first case, it was a crisis involving the economy in production, in the second it was a crisis concerning owner-worker

relationship. In the case of serf-owner-entrepreneurs, the enterprises were mainly of two types, (a) the ancestral (votchinnyi) and (b) possessional (possessionnyi). In the case of ancestral manufacturing establishments, the practice was for the serfs to work for their own subsistence in their own allotments of land, and when their agricultural pursuits for the year were over, they were obliged to work in the factories of their masters. Thus, the owners of such factories simply reaped the 'surplus' product from the labour of their serfs and in these circumstances there was no labour cost. Hence, from the economic standpoint, the production for market in such enterprises was advantageous to the owners, as it had no need to adjust its production to the trend of prices, nor had it any need to introduce cost reducing measures in the face of falling demand. But there was one snag in the set-up: the productivity of labour in such enterprises was deplorably low, and for reasons mentioned earlier, the entrepreneurs were never keen on innovations as they had at their disposal abundant free human labour. At a time when internal competition for market was becoming stiffer, inefficient utilisation of resources for the purpose of production was a serious disadvantage for ancestral factory establishments. The net result was that the product of such establishments had more difficulty to be absorbed in the market mechanism since it lagged behind the products of capitalist manufacturers, as far as quality was concerned. The only way by which the deficiency in the quality of the product could be compensated was through increase in quantity and selling cheaper, and this could only be achieved through more extortions of workers and hence more unfavourable conditions of work, leading to more inefficiency. Thus a vicious circle ensued. (21)

In the second category of establishments, viz. in possessional factories, the practice was for the owner to buy the workers and then to utilise their labour for production. Initially this system paid off because, firstly, these workers became, within a relatively short span of time, skilled workers who knew their jobs; and secondly they were not simply utilised for producing the 'surplus' product, as in the case of ancestral factories, and they did not have to pursue two different occupations in the same or in two different locations. That is, work in the factories was a full-time occupation of the workers (in such factories) and they earned their subsistence from such work and not from agricultural pursuits. The result was more productivity per unit of labour and greater efficiency. But this initial advantage could not be enjoyed by the owners of the possessional factories for long. In the 19th century, especially towards the middle of the century, a severe bottleneck was created in the sphere of production. As these establishments had to 'own' the workers and not to hire them, the problem of adjustments of production in the face of changing demands became difficult. When a shrinkage of production was necessary, the huge cost of maintaining the fixed assets (which included the workers too) in working condition became an extremely burdensome liability to the owners. In the competition for market, these establishments fared very badly against establishments run on capitalist lines, where the owners could hire and fire hands according to the needs of production. The possessional factory owners like the ancestral ones could not afford or did not want to introduce innovations in the factories because it is one of the first principles of economics that, in order to make innovations play a due part, the condition of the mobility of

labour must be fulfilled. The question of the mobility of labour could not even be raised in either of these types of factories so long as the institution of serfdom existed. In the middle of the 19th century, with the increase in the tempo of capitalist production on the one hand and the defect inherent in the system of ancestral and possessional factories on the other, a crisis in the whole sphere of manufacture gathered momentum. One point should be mentioned in this connection: even in the midst of this crisis, the ancestral factories enjoyed more advantage than the other because the purpose of their production was simply to get as much 'surplus product' as possible; and this was more economically feasible in the conditions prevailing in the ancestral establishments than in the possessional ones.

In the case of peasant-serf-entrepreneurs, the enterprises were run by the peasants in the name of their masters, and they hired freely their fellow serfs as workers, who were generally under obrok obligations. This unusual nature of production relations has led one author to comment: "paradoxes abound in things Russian, at least to western ways of thinking, but surely few have been stranger than this phenomenon of the peasant industrialist - above all when the peasant was a serf owned by another man. Serf factory owners not only hired other serfs to work for them but also employed freemen, sometimes to do menial tasks, and a few among them were even millionaires." (22) Another author in a few lines has summarised the genesis of the successful serf-entrepreneur in the following way: "Russia had her rags to riches stories during the early 19th century, for it was not impossible for a few millionaire industrialists of the time to trace their origins in the lumpenproletariats of St. Petersburg or Moscow. There were more millionaires among the peasants,

however, by the end of the reign of Alexander I. Here again, as with the middle class, a prior accumulation of capital in trade might be diverted by a wealthy serf into industrial enterprises. In many cases, however, the serf millionaires of the pre-reform era began their career, pounding the road, with no other assets than a knapsack filled with their wares, a few kopecks, and a furlough from their master granting them permission to leave the village to trade." (23)

Two of the most well-known serf-entrepreneurs were Grachev and Garelin - the calico manufacturers in the village of Ivanovo, in the province of Vladimir. Their master was none other than Count Sheremetev, who, as has been mentioned before, was famous for his refusal to grant freedom to his serfs at any price. But these two calico manufacturers became so prosperous that they could persuade even a Sheremetev to grant them the freedom they sought. Having been set free, they went as far as to oppose effectively the prevalence of kustar industries in Northern Russia as a potential competitor of their products. They also became ill-famed for their harsh attitude to their workers - one time their fellow serfs. Another important serf-entrepreneur was Morozov - the cotton textile manufacturer. From a small beginning in 1801, his family acquired by 1852-53, 9 steam engines, 456 handlooms, 74 mechanical looms. It employed 2572 workers and the annual production was worth 1,943,000 rubles. This did not include their putting out affiliations. (24) There were the Kondrat'ev brothers, silk manufacturers of Moscow, Ushkov, the founder of the first large chromate plant in Russia, and Nikita Demidov, the founder of the great Demidov industries in the Urals. In the middle of the 19th century when firms of serfs had already reached a definite stage of prosperity and were contributing a

fair share towards the gross national product of the country, employing thousands of men, the whole set-up that made them the 'property' of other people and their owners, the ultimate owners of these enterprises became an anachronism and a hindrance in the pursuit of a policy of optimum growth of the firms. This difficulty could be resolved only in those cases where enough money could buy the peasant-owner's freedom. But this was not always possible. In the case of Morozov, mentioned above, the owner adopted a peculiar attitude towards the freedom of the members of his family. In 1823 Ryumin, the master, accepted 17,000 rubles for the freedom of Morozov himself, his wife and four of his five sons. He did not give freedom to the fifth son, because he thought that, as Morozov was on the way to greater prosperity, he could get a much larger sum for his fifth son later. This is just one of the many anomalies brought about by the existence of serfdom.

Apart from such anomalies indicative of the crisis which the serf-owning society had experienced and which called for sweeping changes, another turning point in industry was reached in the second half of the nineteenth fifties. There was an international trade crisis in the fifties (though the concept of trade cycle or business cycle was not used in contemporary economic literature) and Russia did not escape its impact. According to S. G. Strumilin, "ominous harbingers of crisis (in Russia) could be found as far back as 1852, and its effects did not disappear completely in some branches of industry until 1860". (25) The years 1857, 58 and 59, were particularly critical, though in economic history the crisis is known as the crisis of 1857. One government official, V. Tatarin, wrote at the beginning of 1858, "due in part to the general

depressed condition of European trade, and in part to an over-rapid pace of activity during the preceding two years, a stagnation of sales has been experienced." (26) The stagnation became so deep-rooted in 1858 and 1859 that even the soundest industrial enterprises could not escape its effects. The sales of the Nizhni-Novgorod fair, which was a good indicator of the business activities of the country, dropped rapidly to rock bottom level, and did not recover until 1861. The general nature of the early stages of the 1857 crisis cannot be discerned because of the disruptions caused by the Crimean war. It was felt more deeply in Russia than in other European countries because of the post-war economic dislocation. It is difficult to ascertain precisely how far this industrial crisis affected Russian society as a whole, but there is no doubt that it served, along with other forces, to deepen the crisis of feudalism in Russia. (27)

Attitude of the Gentry towards Abolition

We must now investigate how far the gentry as a class was willing to part with their serf-owning right and in which manner they were contemplating this sacrifice. The theory that, because of excessive indebtedness, the landlords were thinking in terms of an abolition of serfdom in a manner which would relieve them of this burden is not correct because their excessive borrowing was a measure of their presumed right to 'own' souls and of the state's support of this presumption. Since the state considered financial advances to the gentry to be 'bad debts' for a good cause, there cannot be any doubt that the nobility as a class never thought of redeeming its debt at the expense of giving away the privileges of masters. There were, however, certain

other factors that prompted the nobility to think in terms of abolition of serfdom in a manner advantageous to them. Firstly, the effects of demographic movement have to be considered. There was a continued increase in the relative density of population in the agricultural sector. This necessitated a more intensive cultivation of the soil, since there was no means to increase the average productivity of servile labour. Thus, many landlords came to believe that servile labour was disadvantageous to them. They entertained the idea that the productivity of hired workers was higher than that of the serfs.

The landlords were facing yet another problem: despite the miserable living conditions, the serf population was increasing quite rapidly, and so was the cost of their maintenance. Consequently, the surplus labour was becoming less productive. This feature became particularly pronounced in years of bad harvests. Secondly, the increase in the price of land, coupled with the growth of population in some parts of the black-soil area, mainly in Tula and to some extent in Orel, Kursk, Riazan, Tambov and Voronezh, created the circumstances that made the servile system disadvantageous to the landlords. (28) This disadvantage was once again found in the low productivity of servile labour and the high cost of maintenance in the days of bad harvest. The situation repeated itself with statistical regularity. During the fifties, Samarin, Cherkasskii and Koshelev cited a number of cases within their respective gubernii where the price for uninhabited lands was more than for the inhabited ones. This was due to the simple fact that the owner of the uninhabited lands could get greater return by the application of hired labour. At its limit, it shows that

serfdom had lost its economic importance for the landlords in possession of such lands. (29) In 1858, at the time of the election of the gentry committee of Tambov, the landlords conveyed their well-thought out intentions of liberating the peasants entirely, provided they (the peasants) had no allotments, because, in the opinion of the landlords, this would have provided them with enough natural resources which consisted mainly of land. As is well-known, the landlords of the black-soil regions regarded the right to the land more valuable than the right over persons: the land was the most precious commodity. In the changed social and economic conditions in these regions the value of the land to the masters was the only important thing and the number of souls one possessed lost its significance as a measure of one's power. That this production relation was acting as a fetter to economic development in the rural sector and that it was preventing them from obtaining maximal return from the land was quite apparent to many of the landlords. So, the main question that the landlords of these zones considered was the amount of land that they would have to part with if serfdom were abolished. Though they would have preferred the abolition of serfdom without land grants to the peasants, they realised that a land allotment to the peasants would to some extent tie them to the region and, in the absence of an abundant supply of free labour, these peasants would be invaluable as hired labourers. Also they recognised that if the government decided to free the peasants, it would feel obliged to grant them some allotment.

In the south-western region, particularly in Kiev and Podol, the value of the land was higher because of the intensive sugar beet culture. This particular situation made it more advantageous to employ salaried workers than to own serfs. The landlords in these regions were totally against parting with any of their valuable land, but they were not at all against setting their peasants free. The same situation prevailed in most places in the Ukraine, especially where peasant households did not have any permanent allotment.

The picture was quite different in the 'non-black-soil' areas where the landlords valued their peasants more than their lands as a source of revenue. So, whenever the idea of emancipation arose, the question of redemption of persons was uppermost in their minds. It is interesting to note that in spite of the bad quality of land in Vladimir, Kostroma, Yaroslav, Tver, Smolensk, Kaluga and some parts of Riazan, in the years before the reform, the price of estates rose more than in the black-soil regions. According to an estimate by Koshelev, the price of an estate was 100 rubles per soul in the black-soil region immediately before the reform and 125 rubles in the non-black-soil region.(30) According to the data compiled by Ia.A. Solov'ev for the government of Smolensk in 1855 the average price of inhabited estates (domains peuplés) had risen to 117 rubles per 'soul' whereas the price of land was only 5.5 rubles per dessyatina.(31)

Whereas in the regions of black-soil there was little difference between the prices of uninhabited and inhabited lands - in Orel - 12%, Tula - 11%, Riazan - 12%, Voronezh - 6%, and Kursk - 5%; in the non-black-soil regions the differences were remarkably large - in Tver - 29%, Yaroslav - 48%, Kostroma - 52%, Nizhni-

Novgorod - 35%, Vladimir - 43%, Moscow - 29%, and Smolensk - 26%. (31)

Another interesting fact is that during the ten years preceding the abolition of serfdom, the average price of a serf was 50.4 rubles in the non-black-soil but only 20.4 rubles in the black-soil areas. (32)

It follows, therefore, that the abolition of serfdom would have deprived the landlords in the non-black-soil regions of a large portion of their incomes. The landlords in this region did not want abolition without land allotment to the peasants. They foresaw that if this happened, their peasants would leave the fields and in most cases seek work elsewhere, leaving the landlords with no peasants to work their fields. Thus their desire to offer reasonable allotment to the peasants was to guarantee 'working hands'. Also to organise the estates in the non-black-soil areas on capitalist lines, as some landlords contemplated of doing, needed capital. So, they hoped to obtain liquid funds in exchange for their loss of obrok revenue, and it was imperative that this liquid fund was obtained as soon as the reform was completed. Most of the powerful landlords, therefore, desired 'proper' redemption of persons to accompany emancipation.

How economic interests predominated in the consideration of the reform is evidenced again in the case of the landlords in the Steppe region. Here there were vast expanses of in part fertile land. The population was thin in relation to the availability of arable soil. The landlords therefore, in spite of the high fertility of the soil, did not consider liberating the peasants without land allotments. They wanted working hands; and a landless abolition would have prevented them from utilising their land. Though it was possible that after the abolition there

would be an influx of free peasants from other more densely populated parts of the country, the landlords of the Steppes were not prepared to take any risk. Moreover, in these regions the obligations were mostly in barshchina; so the landlords had neither the implements nor the know-how to work the land. They were quite ready to part with a portion of their fertile lands in order to keep their peasants tied to the region. With similarly fertile soil but a denser population, the landlords of the black-soil region held the opposite opinion, considering reform without land preferable.

All the different categories of landlords considered the question of the abolition of serfdom with unmistakeable reference to a maximum economic advantage. And it is evident that the conditions most advantageous to one group were least advantageous to another. These conflicts of interests among the landlords and the government's desire to satisfy all the groups as much as possible led to a decree which satisfied none.

Attitude of the Intelligentsia to Reform

It is interesting to note at this point the trend of liberal opinion on the question of the abolition of serfdom. In 1855, a year before Alexander II's speech to the Moscow gentry, K. D. Kavelin circulated a memoir proposing emancipation of the peasants according to a compromise formula which, in his opinion, would have satisfied both the landlords and the peasants. Later the 'Slavophil' - A. I. Koshelev, published a proposal advocating in more detail a radical reform for the peasants, but his proposals lost their radical appearance when his plan for redemption was found to be the same as that of Kavelin, that is, the redemption of both persons and land. These memoirs and proposals were circulated for one purpose - to influence the landed

gentry. Kavelin, Koshelev and others of their persuasion were convinced that the gentry would benefit from the abolition of serfdom and their statements dwelt at length on the positive benefits that would accrue to the gentry should abolition take effect. (33)

The written evidence from the liberals not only supports arguments in favour of abolition but also attacks the bureaucracy. In their view, the defeat in the Crimean war had undermined the credibility of bureaucratic absolutism. One author stated, "the key to the necessary changes, it was generally recognised, lay in the reform of the bureaucratic administration which in its recent great expansion had become the *bête noire* of all articulate Russians." (34) Valuev's characterisation of the evils of a bureaucratically run state is a reflection of the general liberal view of the contemporary bureaucracy: "universal absence of credibility, mistrust by the government of its own instruments, and disregard for everything else. The multiplicity of forms smothers the essence of administrative activity and assures universal official falsehood. On the surface - lustre, beneath - decay." (Sverkhu blesk, snizu gnil') (35)

In spite of such a scathing criticism of the general social conditions and of the bureaucracy in particular, and in spite of their awareness of the sorry position of the peasantry, the proponents of liberal reform as will be shown in a subsequent chapter, never dreamt of any real change in the structure of the society of which these conditions were a necessary by-product. The articles of K. D. Kavelin and Boris Chicherin, at first circulated in manuscript form (36) and later published in Herzen's "Voices from Russia", proposed only mild reforms. A

reform scheme in which serfdom is abolished but the autocratic state retained was not a democratic reform scheme at all, but it is just this kind of ambiguity which is characteristic of Chicherin's attitude. Chicherin's later seven point plan for liberal reform was a closer approximation to the different freedoms as conceived in western liberal democracies at that time. But in all his expressions of liberal opinion there was no suggestion of curbing the autocratic power of the sovereign. It is difficult to understand how Chicherin could conceive the freedoms enshrined in his seven-point proposal while ignoring the political context in a bourgeois democracy. Russian liberal opinion, however, no less than Slavophil opinion - never doubted the validity of autocracy. The liberals attacked the bureaucracy because it was allegedly the only obstacle in effecting a harmonious unity between the tsar and the people. Unlike the Slavophiles, the Russian liberals were inspired by western political ideas, but lacked comprehension of the basis of these ideas in a democratic form of government. Consequently, the various liberal proposals were utopian, unrelated to the real condition of Russian society.

Public opinion in support of freeing the peasants was increasing. The liberals, the liberal bureaucrats, a cross-section of the nobility and the radical intelligentsia were united in thinking that abolition was necessary, though each judged the necessity from its point of view or group or class interest. Amongst these groups, the most critical of the government were the raznochintsi. They represented the opposition at its extreme. They protested not only against the economic serfdom of the peasants but also against the intelligentsia's moral responsibility for it.

This raznochinnecheskaia intelligentsia became an increasingly important radical force in Russian society. The development of industry, the crisis of serfdom, the extension of the services of the state, the progress of education (starting from the Nicolaian era) - all these helped to increase the number and the moral fervour of this section of the intelligentsia. Here is how Herzen characterises these people: "Renegades of all classes, these new people, these moral raznochintsi do not denote a class but a stratum, comprising primarily teachers, men of letters, literary hacks, non-dilettantes; but also students who had or had not completed their courses, employees of universities and seminaries, small landlords, disaffected children of high ranking government servants, officers fresh from the military academy and so on." (37) These people asserted new social values. They rejected aristocratic prejudice. They proclaimed new principles in aesthetics and politics. The only thing they considered to be noble was work. (38) Often, they were condemned to live in misery and destitution, uncertain of the future. Rejecting as they did the existing order, they could not serve within it except at the price of betraying their convictions. Instead, they became disinherited professional ideologues of the peoples' cause. Even so, they powerfully influenced public opinion. The relative relaxation of censorship during the first years of Alexander II's reign enabled them to articulate their views, however indirectly, in the pages of the more progressive journals (Sovremennik and Russkoe slovo). Even though this activity in the open was short-lived, the radical ideas became imprinted on the minds of the public. Western European political literature also became more accessible than during the reign of Nicholas I. One might say that what is known as public opinion became for

the first time in Russian history a definite, if not decisive, factor in Russian political life.

Though the raznochinnecheskaiya intelligentsia played a most important role in shaping public opinion in favour of reform, the liberals and a section of the conservative elements in the society also contributed to making the government consider and finally implement the abolition of serfdom.

Among the factors that were decisive in bringing about abolition of serfdom, two stand out as of particular importance, namely, economic necessity and the need of political stability. When disaster came in the wake of the Crimean war, the autocracy felt strongly that there was no longer an economic justification for serfdom. The government was very slow in understanding that serfdom was no longer relevant. Now the need for large-scale farming and manufacture had become evident. It was accepted that the prestige of the Russian empire depended not only on owning vast stretches of soil but on the strength of the Russian economy. In order to strengthen the economy, the government needed a period of internal as well as external peace. The deep anomalies of Russian society, the declining economy and the discredited administration, along with the increase in the number of peasant revolts, were admitted to be a stumbling block in the promotion of a stable government. The authorities were convinced that, while avoiding to endanger the interests of the nobility, a peasant reform was a necessary condition of stability. Even before the slaughter of the peasants in uniform during the Crimean war really began, Alexander II feared a liberation from serfdom from below. This threat, and the mood of apprehension in court circles, remained alive even when the deliberations on the reform were in full swing. All the more important became the need for government agents who

could be trusted to promote change, while keeping the order intact, and for elements among the wider public who could effectively play this dual role.

CHAPTER FIVE THE GREAT REFORM

The first statement, semi-official in nature, that the government was considering the abolition of serfdom came from Alexander II when he addressed the Moscow gentry on 30th March 1856. He asserted the view that unless he did something, that is, unless something is done from above, emancipation would start from below, and would culminate in a rebellion.

On the other hand, it must be mentioned that Alexander II made this statement to the Moscow gentry not with the purpose of convincing them of the immediate need of emancipation but to pacify them. There was a rumour that the Tsar was seriously considering the passing of a decree to this effect and this became a source of agitation among the gentry. In order to remove any misunderstanding as regards his concern for the gentry, the Tsar made (at the express request of Zakrevskii, the governor-general of Moscow) the following historic statement: "Rumours are spreading that I want to give the peasants freedom, - this is unjustified and you can tell this to everyone; but an inimical feeling between the peasants and the landlords unhappily exists, and on this account there have already been some cases of insubordination to the landlords. I am convinced that sooner or later we shall have to come to this. I think that you agree with me. Consequently it would be much better for it to come from above than from below." (1)

It is necessary to trace chronologically the actions taken by the government. In 1856 the Tsar began to appoint secret committees to discuss ways and means of freeing the peasants. One such committee was appointed on 1st January 1857 and it marks the first official step towards an elaboration of reform

bills. The committee was instructed to study the memoirs of Kavelin and Koshelev, although the committee members never considered the question of land allotment to the peasants. In July 1857, S. Lanskoi, the Minister of the Interior, submitted two memoranda to this secret committee. In the first he raised the questions: (a) whether the land would remain completely the property of the landlords and (b) in case of their retaining ownership, would the peasants have the right to work the land or could the landlords drive the peasants away, (c) could the landlords expect compensation from the government for losing their rights over both person and land if they were obliged to part with their land? In the second memoir, it was emphasised that it would be impossible to deprive the peasants of all rights to land. This memoir proposed to grant the 'usad'ba' to the peasants with compensation to the landlords. The secret committee discussed all the suggestions but the members could not reach an agreement as to whether all the land would remain the property of the landlords or whether the peasants would be given the 'usad'ba'. Other questions such as the norm of allotment were also discussed. The prevailing view in the committee, persisting until the ultimate stages of deliberations, was that the landlords had the right to all land, but that for prudence's sake this right should be slightly curtailed. This opinion was initially and explicitly stated by K. Chevkin, one of the members of the Council of State and a man quite indifferent to the idea of emancipation.

Because of the resistance of the gentry to the idea of the abolition of serfdom evidenced in the deliberations of these committees, the government considered a novel plan in which it sought to show that the whole problem of emancipation had to be started as there was a definite concern at least from a section of the nobility and that the nobility itself was anxious to

promote it. Accordingly Nazimov, the Governor General of Lithuania, was asked to submit, on behalf of the landlords of Kovno, Vilno and Grodno a petition to the Tsar to free their peasants. Considerable pressure was put upon the landlords of these gubernias to concur with this request. Nazimov was given the authority to persuade these landlords should they not agree to the scheme; it was explicitly stated that a new inventory would be taken in the western gubernias (which included the above three), "which would decrease the rights" of the landlords much more than in the already existing inventory.(2) The Tsar's reply (20th November 1857) to this so-called petition is known as the 'Nazimov rescript'.

The main points of the Nazimov rescript were as follows:

- (a) that preparatory committee be set up in each of the three above gubernias, and then one general commission for all the three in the guberniia of Vilno.
- (b) Each guberniia committee was to be chaired by the leader of the nobility, with members as follows: 1) one member from each of the uezds elected from among the rank of the nobility, and 2) two experienced landlords of the guberniia, to be selected by the government officers.

The general commission was to be composed of the following persons:

- 1) Two representatives from each of the three guberniia committees.
- 2) One experienced landlord, to be chosen by Nazimov
- and 3) a member chosen by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

Nazimov was also to choose the President of the commission from among the members of the guberniia committees.

The guberniia committees were given the task of formulating a detailed plan for "improving the condition of the peasants", having in mind the following principles: (a) the landlords would preserve the right of property on the entire land and the peasants would be left with their 'usad'ba' which, in course of a definite time, could become their property by means of redemption payment: the peasants would also be given some lands to till for their livelihood for which they would have to either pay obrok or perform barshchina. (b) The peasants must be distributed into rural societies (obshchina) and the landlords would be given the traditional police power; (3) and (c) proper payment by the peasants of state and local taxes were to be guaranteed. The responsibility of developing a project on these lines and applying it to each of the three guberniias was conferred on the guberniia committees, which, after finalising these projects, would present them before the general commission. The general commission, having examined the separate plans of the three guberniias would prepare the final grand plan, which would take into account regional peculiarities. Nazimov was given full authority to supervise and to direct the work of the guberniia committees. When the plan was completed he was to send it to the Ministry of Internal Affairs which would present it to the emperor. (4)

Publication of the rescript was greeted with unprecedented enthusiasm and optimism not only among those who were close to the government, but also among those who were sceptical about the government's attitude towards emancipation. Herzen came out with an article 'You have won, - Galileian,' even Chernyshevskii for a moment considered approvingly the government's

advance towards emancipation. He went as far as to compare this rescript with the reforms of Peter the Great. (5) The intelligentsia looked forward to new and better times. In Moscow, on 28 December, a political banquet was given to celebrate the publication of the rescript. Members of the Moscow intelligentsia attended this banquet: a political banquet was undoubtedly a unique occasion in the history of Moscow. Count Zakrevskii hailed Alexander II as the "Russian Pasha" to whom had been given the glory of instigating the much desired reforms of the entire society. This is how Dzhanshiev describes the occasion: "The entire Moscow intelligentsia, whatever their views, assembled around one table to hail the approaching 'new era'. The arch-conservative Pogodin, the liberal constitutionalist Katkov, the tax-farmer Kokorev, forgetting their differences of opinion, met to give a feast in the Tsar's honour". (6) Dzhanshiev says that on this occasion Alexander II was hailed as 'Tsar Liberator' by a member of the gathering, Professor Babst of Moscow University. (7)

Even if the rescript was a positive step towards reform, yet, to many it remained obscure in some important respects. How long was the transition period to be during which the landlords retained supervisory rights over the land eventually to be given to the peasants. Nothing specific was said about the nature and the amount of redemption payments. With the purpose of clarifying these issues the government appointed the Main Committee on 16 February 1858. It continued to deliberate until March 1859, when it was replaced by an editorial commission. On 21st April 1858, a government order authorised the formation of gentry committees in all the provinces of the empire with the duties and functions specified in the rescript. The task of forming such committees fell to the marshals of the nobility

under the supervision and control of the Governor-General of the region. Within a short period most of the committees were formed and commenced discussions on reform.

Looking at the composition of the Main Committee, one was bound to be sceptical about the outcome of its working. The majority of its members, Count Orlov, V. A. Adlerberg, M. N. Murav'ev, V. A. Dolgorukii, Count V. Panin were well-known reactionaries. Some other members, namely K. V. Chevkin, Ia. I. Rostovtsev, Baron M. Ia. Korf maintained an attitude of indifference. Only S. S. Lanskoi and D. N. Bludov took seriously the task of the committee, though the latter had no definite programme in mind. On 4th March 1858, a provincial Section of the Ministry of the Interior (zemskii otdel) was formed. This Section was to examine new ways of organising the rural economy, A. I. Levsin presided over this Section, whose other members were N. A. Miliutin and Ia. A. Solov'ev. All three were partisans of emancipation and the formation of the zemskii otdel was therefore a significant step towards the realisation of emancipation programmes. Of these three, N. A. Miliutin was one of the most eminent figures in the reform movement. He took the initiative in seeing the rescript published and it was under his influence that the editorial commission was formed. In all stages of preparation he persistently supported progressive programmes and won himself the reputation of a 'red'. He was supremely efficient and the Tsar, in spite of his known misgivings about Miliutin, could not dispense with his service for quite a long time.(8)

With the admission of these three new members the atmosphere in the main committee changed perceptively. In the meantime

Ia. I. Rostovtsev, who later became the Chairman of the Editorial Commission, whose attitude towards emancipation was at first indifferent, had begun to show serious concern in favour of it. This proved a powerful weapon in the armoury of Lanskoï and Miliutin and they could push forward their proposals of reforms with more confidence.

While the sessions of ^{the} Main Committee were going on, the provincial committees were also discussing emancipation on the basis of data collected in their respective provinces. The main points that were considered important were the size of allotment to the peasants, the extent of the temporary-obligatory period if any, (9) the size of the redemption money and also the nature of redemption (whether redemption of land and/or persons). In these discussions of the provincial committees, two distinct opinions, each supported by some members, tended to crystalize, one representing the majority of the members and the other the minority. In all the provincial committees where this division of opinion occurred, the majority opinion supported a reforming measure that would essentially preserve the status quo. The only exception, and it was a notable exception, was in the Tver provincial committee, where the majority of the gentry, under the leadership of Unkovskii, Golovachev, and Evropeus, proposed far-reaching changes. In formulating the project of the Tver committee, Unkovskii played a very important role at all stages of the discussion supported ably by the other two. (10) Their proposals for fairly sweeping reforms were however unpalatable to the Tver gentry, and the latter eventually forced J. Unkovskii, who was marshal of the nobility, to resign his post. Provincial committees where wider reforms were proposed by a minority were Kaluga, Vladimir, and Moscow,

but they were not agreed on the conditions of reform. In some cases even the minority opinion resisted real change. For instance, in Nizhni Novgorod, where the minority committee proposed complete abolition of seignorial rights, but suggested a smaller allotment of land to the peasants, the Governor, A. N. Murav'ev concluded, after examining the report that "serfdom is only abolished in words, but in fact remains with all its consequences". (11)

The different attitudes of the members of each provincial committee have been brilliantly characterised by Evaniukov: "In the provincial committees people of the old and new eras assembled. One group - the persistent Don Quixotes of moribund serfdom brought to its defense the whole weight of ancient traditions, and desperately (cried) out that property and law would perish, that the foundations of the aristocracy were rocking, that waves of democratic revolution would inundate Russia. The others, passionate and energetic fighters, took their aspirations to the blessings of civilisation out of the walls of the lecture-rooms; an active minority, they wholly dedicated themselves to the problem before them, for it was to them the realization of their sacred dreams and would increase the prosperity of their fatherland. Finally there was the third category, the largest in number: those who understood that serfdom's hour had struck and directed their efforts mainly to the defence of their pockets." (12)

Because of the apathy of most of the members of the guberniia committees towards emancipation, the progressives within the government, Lanskoï, Miliutin and others, decided to invite the minority opinion in each guberniia committee to attend the gentry convention held in the capital. This convention of gentry deputies

was held in St. Petersburg in August 1859 with 44 delegates from the 15 non-black-soil provinces. This convention was originally called by the government to act as its advisory body in questions arising out of the reform proposals. As these minority opinions generally favoured a liberal emancipation, the main purpose of such an invitation was to give the Tsar the impression that the gentry as a whole was not entirely opposed to real reform.(13) In the first convention only the representatives of the non-black-soil regions were invited and Unkovskii played a most significant part in the deliberations of this convention. But even if the spirit of this convention was more in line with the wishes of the liberal bureaucrats, its representatives were not even allowed to meet the main committee, which was from then onwards reduced from an advisory body to a panel of information. Before the convention, Lanskoï had submitted a secret memorandum to the Tsar, (according to many, this memorandum was actually drafted by N. Miliutin) which stated the three main opinions of the nobility, but stressed that the majority were against any sort of abolition of serfdom. So, the main purpose of the memorandum was to inform the Tsar about the dominant gentry opinion. Consequently, the gentry of the first convention met with an unexpectedly cold response from the government.

The bureaucrats who were real proponents of emancipation feared a possible entente between the aristocratic-oligarchic elements of the gentry and the conservative elements of the bureaucracy which would constitute an open and powerful pressure group vis-a-vis the Tsar to force him to withhold the progressive part of the proposed emancipation. In the words of Nicholas

Miliutin, the immediate aim of the aristocratic party was "to replace the legislation with some kind of defined rules, so that emancipation would remain only in words without the solution of the most vital economic question" (14). Some of the members of the provincial committees, especially the members of the Tver committee, feared such a reaction from the government. This is evidenced by the following remark by Evropeus, an ex-Petrashevist and an important member of the Tver committee; "the time has come gentlemen, to understand that the utilisation of rights is not an exclusive privilege of one class; we must fulfil our obligations in respect of our society. At the present time our consultative meeting alone has the legal right to enter into discussion of the questions of social utility and to serve as the only legal guarantee against the arbitrariness of the bureaucracy; the entire oppressed people do not understand anything,... and are afraid of everything; the bureaucracy has in view only its personal advantage, directly opposed to the interests of the entire society and the will of the sovereign emperor." (15)

At the time of the sessions of the Main Committee and the guberniia committees, the Tsar became apprehensive about the mood in the country. He was becoming impatient with the long deliberations of the committees. He feared that the people, after having been kept waiting so long, would become impatient or would revolt. As a precaution, he sanctioned the regional Governors to use more power and ordered them to keep military personnel ready at hand. N. Miliutin and a few others tried to persuade the Tsar not to take any hasty measures that might infuriate the masses and thus place the government in a defensive position. But the Tsar went on with his precautionary plans

and asserted that "in desperate circumstances desperate measures have to be taken" (16).

The Editorial commission was appointed in March 1859 and it ended its proceedings on 10th October 1860. The main points that were considered important in these proceedings were the norms of allotment, the extent of the temporary-obligatory period and the value of the redemption payment. The norms were fixed in such a way that the peasants were deprived of some portion, in some cases a substantial portion, of the land that they were utilising under the servile regime. The editorial commission conceded the vested interests of the nobility and released a schedule of redemption based on over-valuation of the land. This scheme tied the peasants to another form of servile bondage for not less than 49 years.

The chairman of the commission, Rostovtsev, in spite of his early indifference to the cause of abolition, on becoming a member of the Main Committee, took up his task in the editorial commission with real enthusiasm. He considered the task to be a 'glorious cause'. In the early part of 1860, just before he died and knowing that his work was unfinished, he appealed to the Tsar not to be afraid of the consequences of a real reform. (Gosudar' ne boites' was the last sentence in his letter) (17). After the death of

Rostovtsev, the Tsar showed his characteristic irresolution by appointing the arch-reactionary Count Panin as the chairman of the commission. As one author has aptly remarked, "Panin, for whom reaction was not merely a policy, but a state of mind, behaved like authority incarnate, with whip in hand. He confessed on a famous occasion, "as a wealthy landowner, I consider the matter of emancipation to be a private affair of the landlords." (18)

Dzhanshiev summed up the character of Panin by saying that he suffered from 'photophobia' (svetoboyazn'). (19)

Lack of fixity of purpose was evident in all the decisions that Alexander II took concerning abolition. In one speech he tried to hasten the preparation of the measure, in another he tried to appease the gentry. Russia had had her own share of court intrigues and palace plots originating in the nobility. Consequently the Tsar was afraid to go totally against it. At the same time he knew that the peasant question would have to be solved. These two mutually opposed factors, coupled with his peculiar psychological make-up, that is, "an immense capacity for lachrymose sentimentality and splenetic peevishness, but also an overwhelming indolence of will, a lack of direction or even conviction"(20) played a vital role in the final outcome of abolition proposals.

When the editorial commission finished its work and submitted the draft Statutes to the Tsar for final approval, the intention was to declare the abolition of serfdom on the 19th February 1861. But after going through the Statutes, the Tsar became convinced that there would be widespread uprisings as soon as the provisions of the Statutes reached the peasants. Extreme precautions were taken: military units were sent to all corners of Russia so as to be able to wipe out even a faint trace of 'insubordination'. One wonders if a ruling circle has ever been so fearful of the consequence of granting freedom to its people. This very fear explains the half-heartedness of the proposals. A limited liberation from above conceived to forestall liberation from below is no liberation at all.

The government officials close to the Tsar did not doubt that the decree, when announced, would, instead of offering

unbounded satisfaction and delight to the masses, infuriate them. So, the government made elaborate arrangements to induce jubilation among the people. But these did not bear fruit. Except for the supporters of the government, no one could see any spirit of freedom emanating from the manifesto. Pertsov's unpublished diary* vividly depicts the response of the masses to the manifesto and the bureaucracy's desperate attempts to prove that the people were delighted by the Tsar's grant of freedom.(21) Millions of copies of the manifesto were printed, distributed and ceremonially read. But they were at last accepted with complete indifference. Here is how one author describes the situation: "They (the serfs) only understood one fact, that whereas they had been bond, they had become free. It took them a long while to grasp that they would have to pay heavily for their freedom, and not one piece of the wide land of Russia was to be had without paying for it. When someone who could read tried to interpret the terms of the deal to the others, he was flogged for his pains."(22) Pokrovskii, while describing the immediate post-reform conditions of the peasants once said, "never were the peasants flogged so violently as in the time immediately following the publication of the manifesto of the emancipation". In many cases, of course, the administration was relieved of the necessity of flogging the peasants because of the simple fact that the peasants were completely deprived of the faculty of understanding what freedom meant. The burden they had borne was so heavy that in the course of time they had become stultified, I. Ignatovich describes such a situation in the guberniia of Kursk, where an officer named N. Reshetev went to read out the manifesto to the peasants of a landlord named Kharkevich. They

* See Sons against Fathers - E. Lampert.

could not understand a word "having been successfully transformed into animals in human form." (23)

Even from a cursory examination of the Statutes, it is clear that the entire abolition scheme was prepared for the advantage of the nobility. According to article 8 of the general Statutes, the landlords were guaranteed that no land exceeding the extent stipulated by the local Statutes would be taken from them under any circumstance. Article 11 obliged the peasants to pay compensation even for their usad'ba. According to article 12, the peasants were entitled to acquire holdings of land for constant use (at this stage the question of ownership has not been mentioned) only by the consent of their landlords and there is no penal provision in that article if the landlords refused to give their consent. According to article 18, the landlords were given the traditional powers, Articles 21 to 30 on civil rights, in which the peasants were granted the right to marry freely and to lodge complaints against any injustice inflicted on them by the landlords, were definitely liberal in spirit, but the language of the articles was such as to obfuscate any reader and to ensure that the peasant would not understand what his rights were, thereby preventing him from taking advantage of them. Article 31 conferring the right of property to the peasants contradicts article 12. Such contradictions between different articles are noticeable throughout the Statutes. (24)

It had become customary that whenever there were some grounds for a legal dispute between the rich and the poor, the former got the benefit of the doubt. The provisions of the Statutes are a striking case in point. The reactions of two authors to the Statutes may be of interest in this connection; "These laws of 1861 were so verbose, so full of variables, so loaded down with

qualifications and exceptions and in general so astonishingly involved and complicated that it is difficult to understand how many serfs could ever by any possibility have known what rights might be hidden in this legislative haystack." (25) "The only conclusion to be drawn from the emancipation Statutes themselves is that they represent in the last analysis a charter not for the peasants, but for the landlords." (26)

If one looks at the mechanism for the allotment of land and for redemption payment in various regions, one sees a contrast of attitudes between the landlords of the 'black-soil' areas and those of the 'non-black-soil' areas. The pomeshchiks of the black-soil region wanted a deal without land to the peasant or with a minimum allotment of land reduced to his house and plot. This prompted Prince Cherkasskii to comment that the serfowner is a monopolist over the most valuable commodity - the black soil. In the non-black-soil regions, the emphasis evidently was on the redemption of persons, but as Liashchenko puts it, "When personal redemption proved to be impossible in open form, a solution was found in excessive land valuation which included personal redemption in a hidden form." (27)

In the 16 black-soil provinces the post-reform land allotment exceeded that of the pre-reform days only in the case of three provinces; Tula, Voronezh and Kharkov. In 12 provinces, the post-reform allotments were lower than those of pre-abolition days. In the province of Oryol the allotment remained unchanged. In the provinces of Kiev and Podol the allotment was greatly reduced from 6.6 and 5.5 dessyatin per person to 2.1 and 2.2 dessyatin per person. Taking the 21 black-soil provinces, the reform resulted in a reduction of 26.2% in the allotment. On the other hand, in six sample obrok dominated non-black-soil

provinces namely, Vladimir, Moscow, Kaluga, Petersburg, Novgorod, and Smolensk, the post-reform allotment was higher than the pre-reform allotment. Taking all the 15 obrok dominated non-black-soil provinces the amount of reduction of allotment due to reform was 9.9%. According to an estimate by Professor Y. Yanson, 5 dessyatin in black soil and 8 dessyatin in non-black-soil areas were the minimum requirement for the subsistence of a peasant family. But after reform the allotment averaged only 2.45 dessyatin per person in the black-soil and 4.3 per person in the non-black-soil regions. The following table gives an overall picture of the land allotment before and after the abolition of serfdom: (29)

Change in Peasant Land Allotment in 43 Provinces

Land under peasant tillage before 1861	Land permanently allotted to peasants under the reform procedure	Decrease compared with pre-reform allot- ment	%
(dessyatin)	(dessyatin)	(dessyatin)	
35,196,734	33,755,658	1,441,076	4

Not only the size of allotment, but also the huge redemption which the freed peasants were obliged to pay (especially in the non-black-soil regions) clearly showed that the serf-owners were the ultimate gainers. Apart from the additional holding, the land-lords of the black-soil regions extracted a redemption value 60% higher than the value of land in 1854-1858 and 25% more than the linearly extrapolated value for the same in the period 1863-1872. For the non-black-soil region these differences were 120% and 90% respectively.(30) The only region which did not experience an inflated price of redemption was the western provinces and this again reflects the advantages of the serf-owners in these provinces. It is interesting to cite Liashchenko's

comment on the whole affair: "If we compute the entire premium collected by the landowners for the portion of land detached from them, it seems evident that they sold land at a price well above average prices prevailing at the time in the black-soil belt, at 12.5 rubles per dessyatin, and in the non-black-soil zone at 15.2 rubles per dessyatin. This was indeed a payment to the landowner in redemption of the peasant person, a payment for the 'serf-souls' formally charged against the landlord. If we relate this cost specifically to that which it actually represented, namely payment for the 'serf-souls' it would seem that the landowners, having received in the redemption operation the entire value of the land, obtained additionally, as a result of the inflated redemption values, about 36.1 rubles per 'serf-soul' in the black soil belt, and as much as 62.3 rubles per person in the non-black-soil belt." (31)

The net outcome of all these different aspects of the so-called emancipation was that after the passing of the decree there ensued widespread and unprecedented unrest among the peasants. The peasants thought that a new decree was in the offing, containing 'real freedom'. One of the most well-known and tragic of such revolts was the incident at Bezdna, where the peasants under the leadership of one Anton Petrov refused to accept the Tsarist manifesto as a charter of real freedom. Their resistance was so stubborn that the government resorted to systematic suppression by military units. Several hundred peasants were shot dead and Petrov was summarily executed. This was not an isolated incident. In fact from March to July of 1861 not a single province was free from more or less massive protests against the ill-conceived emancipation. The following table will illustrate the extent of peasant resistance:

Table showing the number of peasant revolts (March-July 1861)

Province	Number of Revolts					
	<u>March</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Total</u>
Vilno	2	1	2	-	-	5
Vitebsk	3	4	3	1	-	11
Vladimir	1	2	6	-	-	9
Vologod	1	-	-	-	1	2
Volyn	-	1	1	-	-	2
Voronezh	2	3	1	-	-	6
Viat	1	-	-	-	1	2
Grodnen	1	1	1	1	-	4
Ekaterinislav	-	2	1	1	-	4
Kazan	-	5	4	-	-	9
Kaluga	1	4	4	-	-	9
Kostroma	-	-	1	-	-	1
Kiev	-	1	1	-	2	4
Koven	2	2	4	1	1	10
Kursk	1	1	1	-	1	4
Minsk	-	-	1	-	-	1
Mogulev	1	2	2	2	-	7
Moscow	2	-	-	-	-	2
Nizhegorod	-	1	2	-	-	3
Orenburg	2	1	2	-	-	5
Orlov	1	2	1	1	-	5
Penzen	1	6	5	-	-	12
Perm	2	6	2	1	1	12
Podol	-	1	1	-	-	2
Poltav	1	-	1	-	-	2
Pskov	2	2	1	-	-	5
Riazan	1	2	6	-	-	9
Samara	2	3	1	-	-	6
St. Petersburg	-	-	4	-	-	4
Saratov	1	1	1	-	1	4
Simbir	1	2	2	1	-	6
Smolensk	-	1	24	4	-	29
Tambov	2	2	1	1	-	6
Tver	-	2	1	-	-	3
Tula	-	1	8	-	-	9

table contd.

Province	Number of Revolts					
	<u>March</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Total</u>
Kharkov	-	-	2	-	-	2
Kherson	-	2	-	1	-	3
Chernilov	-	4	5	-	-	9
Yaroslav	1	1	3	2	-	7
<hr/>						
Total	35	69	106	17	8	235
<hr/>						

(Compiled from the book Krest'ianskoe dvizhenie v 1861 godu posle otmeny krepostnogo prava. Moscow 1949)

The peasants showed their rejection of the 'false freedom' not only in revolts, but also by refusing to sign title deeds (ustavnaye gramoty) after the abolition. In July 1862 out of 20,108 such deeds issued 9687 remained unsigned, (43% of the total). By the end of the same year, out of a total issue of 73,195 title deeds, 36,782 were not signed, that is, more than 50%. The peasants refused to sign these documents because they considered them fraudulent. By the beginning of 1863, the percentage of unsigned deeds was 57.9%. (33) It should be pointed out that obtaining the signature of the title deeds was the responsibility of the mir and so the number of unsigned deeds might understate the number of peasants dissatisfied with the reform. Here again the peasants took this action because they still believed that a new charter of real freedom would be granted.

This situation in Russia produced a great impression on Chernyshevskii, and had a considerable influence on the formation of his views.

PART TWO

Chernyshevskii and the abolition of Serfdom

CHAPTER ONE SUPERIORITY OF HIRED LABOUR

This chapter will be mainly concerned with Chernyshevskii's views on the agrarian situation after the publication of the Nazimov rescript of 20th November 1857. As has been pointed out earlier, the publication of this rescript was received with great enthusiasm by all sections of the intelligentsia.(1) It was felt that at last a solution was being sought for the age-long problem of serfdom. Chernyshevskii shared this reaction to some extent. From 1858 onwards he published a series of articles in the journal Sovremennik (of which he had become the principal editor) dealing mainly with different aspects of serfdom and suggesting ways and means by which serfdom could be abolished. He published two studies under the title, 'O novykh usloviakh sel'skogo byta', of which the first expressed his provisional view of the rescript. They were concerned mainly with the question of the economic superiority of hired labour over forced labour and that of the role of the state in changing the economic situation in a society.

Initially Chernyshevskii hailed the Imperial rescript as something the significance of which could only be compared with the reforms undertaken by Peter the Great.(2) Whether he genuinely welcomed the rescript or indirectly and surreptitiously ironised about its real implication is difficult to determine. Censorship regulations even after the relaxation usually associated with the beginning of Alexander II's reign, made it very difficult to publish anything outspoken, let alone anything that questioned official state policy. Therefore, even if Chernyshevskii had wanted to condemn the rescript, he would not have been able to do so. The fact that he published an excerpt from K. D. Kavelin's manuscript, 'Zapiski ob osvobozhdenii krest'ian v Rossii' (1855)

in the second of the two articles mentioned above is sometimes taken as evidence that he genuinely welcomed the rescript, since Kavelin's suggested basis for reform was far from being radical. But Chernyshevskii of course did not agree with Kavelin and was simply publicizing all opinions supporting emancipation.

Voluntary or Hired Labour and Forced Labour

Chernyshevskii believed that a transformation from a condition of forced labour to hired labour was not only economically desirable but imperative. In the interest of the entire Russian economy, at any rate of the rural economy, the abolition of serfdom was therefore the first step in this transformation of the labour force. He elucidated this viewpoint in a polemic against L. V. Tengoborskii, a contemporary economist whose book, Etudes sur les forces productives de la Russie, he attacked.

Chernyshevskii prefaces his argument against the supporters of forced labour with the following remarks: "We must first of all discuss the views that, in the present stage of development of Russian life, the preservation of serfdom could be advantageous to the rural economy, that with the liquidation of forced labour, the quantity of arable land would be diminished. We would not be surprised to hear such views from people who say that the earth is stationery and the sun revolves round it, or who assume that we are richer than other Europeans because of the prevalence of serfdom in our country: but it is surprising that, to the disgrace of science, there are people, apparently acquainted with political economy, who stubbornly talk of the value of serfdom for agriculture" (3).

This was stated a propos of the arguments and figures put forward in Tengoborskii's book and reproduced in detail by Chernyshevskii. The number in the two categories of peasants (serfs and free peasants) given by Tengoborskii were; (4)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| (a) No. of serf peasants (male only) | 11,683,200 |
| (b) No. of free peasants (male only) | 11,687,500 |

According to this estimate, the number of the two kinds of labour was almost equal. He (Tengoborskii) went on to say that if account were taken of the fact that on many estates the landlords had substituted obrok for barshchina, it would be found that two-thirds of the total number of peasants were free, because Tengoborskii had reckoned peasants in obrok as free peasants. And so, in Tengoborskii's opinion, serfdom could not have such a strong influence on agriculture as was claimed. He goes on to argue the necessity for forced labour in agriculture in some parts of Russia. He contends that (a) Russia had insufficient capital to introduce rational agriculture with hired labour on all her arable land; (b) in many regions the price of the agricultural products did not produce enough surplus to cover the cost of production; (c) in the provinces where there are poor trading institutions, with little turnover of money, it was much more helpful to the peasants to fulfil their obligations by labour than to pay any sort of rent in money. He says that in many regions the poor peasants who were in obrok wanted to go back to barshchina because they found that those who were in barshchina were better off. He also quoted Baron von Haxthausen on the necessity of preserving serfdom in some regions of Russia, including even Yaroslav, an infertile province.(5) Haxthausen says in effect that "if an estate in Yaroslav were offered to any one, on condition that he should manage and cultivate in the same manner as in Central

Europe, then he would refuse it. Not only would he derive no advantage and receive no income from it, but he would lose a considerable sum of money every year.

"Thus in these northern districts, agriculture cannot be pursued on large estates as a profitable speculation: nor can it be abandoned, for it is absolutely necessary, and in an inland country alone supplies the means of subsistence for man and beast.

"Under present circumstances, I should say that large proprietary farms can only exist in these districts in two ways; either as corvée establishments, where the landowner has not himself to maintain labourers, etc. (in other words, to pay none of the farming expenses) or as ordinary farms with hired workmen and cattle, but united with manufacturing industry by means of which the labour not required for agriculture might be constantly and profitably employed.

"That there should be a certain ~~number~~ of large agricultural establishments in these districts I consider absolutely necessary. Without them no progress in agriculture (which is more needed in Russia than is generally acknowledged) can be imagined. But if the existence of these large estates is necessary for the improvement of agriculture, the consequent welfare of the people, serfage cannot yet be abolished; it may however be regulated by land, with fixed amounts of labour and limitation of the landowners' power, such as the ukase of 2d September contemplated." (6)

Tengoborskii asserts that the Russian peasants were not subject to the kind of arbitrary fixation of obligations that was the practice with the French peasants and he mentions the ukase of 1797 of Tsar Paul which placed an upper limit on barshchina obligations of three days per week. Along with this, Tengoborskii maintains

that time and moral progress transform the nature of the obligation and that little by little 'natural' obligation is transformed into an obligation of rent. He also emphasises the regional divergence in the nature of obligations and in some cases finds special justification for them. Tengoborskii says, "Haxthausen quite correctly says that the emancipation of the peasants must definitely be solved with a view to regional conditions and not uniformly throughout the entire empire"(7). In support of this Tengoborskii contends: "in those regions, where the land is not fertile and is unsuitable for cultivation, where production does not meet the needs of the tiller, where he has to find another occupation as an auxiliary source of subsistence and for the payment of obligations, the change-over from barshchina to personal rent is as advantageous to the peasant as to the landlord: but it can be advantageous to both sides only in places where it is easy for the agricultural worker to find an occupation. For these reasons there are voluntary agreements of this kind in a large number of places where arable land is scarce, where there is man-power and time to spare, and where well-paid jobs are easily to be found. On the other hand, in places, where arable land is abundant, where the soil is fertile, where the harvest exceeds the needs of the population, and where at the same time there is a good market for agricultural produce, it is often advantageous for the landlord to cultivate his fields on the bases of barshchina. In these places barshchina does not affect the welfare of the agricultural labourers and when barshchina is replaced by obrok, this generally takes place by mutual agreement, to the satisfaction of both landlord and peasant..... It is extremely difficult to regularise all these circumstances by laws based on general, predetermined principles." (8).

Chernyshevskii's rebuttal of Tengoborskii's views is a masterly piece of lucid thought and irony. He starts with the charge made by Tengoborskii against many economists who think that serfdom is an inefficient way of tilling the land. Chernyshevskii expresses surprise at the word 'many' and says that one might just well say that many astronomers think that the earth moves round the sun; he says the statement should be, "...with the exception of the author of the book 'Etudes....' and Haxthausen - all the economists". (9) He then deals with the matter of obrok. Chernyshevskii contends that the amount of obrok that a peasant has to pay increases with every change of the owner as a general rule; there are exceptions of course, but these exceptions prove the general rule. He also maintained that the obligations of obrok payment increased several times if a peasant remained with the same landlord for a considerable time. Tengoborskii, on the contrary, believed that the peasant in obrok may be considered a free labourer and the fixation of obrok is made by a voluntary agreement. Chernyshevskii asserts in this connection that of the two means available to the landlords for receiving incomes, it is obrok that discourages the peasants from tilling their holding with real zeal. The peasant knew that if he showed initiative and started to cultivate more, the obrok would invariably increase in proportion to the rise in the volume of his production, if not more. (10)

There is no doubt that obrok assumed a parasitic character in the economy of Russian serfdom. It became more parasitic when the obrok peasants had to leave their villages in pursuit of some gainful occupation which would enable them to meet their obrok obligation. In such circumstances, the logical basis of the payments to the landlord was doubtful. Chernyshevskii was aware of it and

spelled it out in an article published in 1859 under the title, 'Ustroistvo byta pomeshchich'ikh krest'ian'. He examined the legal basis of serfdom in this article and contended that serfdom consisted in the appropriation of power by the landlord to force the peasants to settle on his land to do agricultural work for his profit. Only that and nothing else was involved in serfdom. The juridical and police authorities enforced the obligation of the serf to do agricultural work. "It is easy to prove this", he says, "Let us assume that a tailor or a shoemaker, a serf who lives in a town and pays obrok, returns to the village and says to the landlord, 'I do not want to pursue my trade and pay obrok'. Can the landlord say that such a peasant will not be fulfilling his obligation if he regularly performs barshchina? Ask the police officer or the justice of peace of the district: it would appear to all that if the peasant is ready to go over to barshchina he is fulfilling his obligation and the landlord cannot complain of the fact that he (the peasant) is only a tiller and not a trader. Consequently, if obrok is received from some other occupation besides agriculture, it is only an arbitrary substitution for agricultural barshchina which alone is appertaining to serfdom." (11) The Soviet historian Yatsevich presents an interesting case of a nobleman who put his peasants on obrok, sent them to St. Petersburg to work and trade, and when they had accumulated sufficient money, called them back, took away the money and transferred them from obrok to barshchina. (12) Chernyshevskii then presents a case in this article where landed property due to its smallness of size or the infertility of its soil, cannot give sufficient income to the landlord to maintain his personal commitments, or perhaps does not feed the peasants at subsistence level. In this situation legalized

serfdom, that is, the tilling of land by forced labour breaks down. He raises the juridical question of whether the landlords have any right to demand obrok when the peasants leave their estates. According to him, the law of serfdom permits the landlords to receive rent in whatever form it may be so long as the peasants are on the territory of their estates.

If the landlords resort to transferring the peasants to obrok and sending them away to earn money for the landlord, they are violating the bounds of serfdom - specified by the law.

Chernyshevskii asserts emphatically that "besides serfdom our law does not recognise any other basis for rights over persons,"(13) which implies evidently that the right to persons is only valid so long as the masters and serfs are within a legal relationship within serfdom. But since that was not the case anywhere, the landlords resorted to more exploitation of the peasants on obrok by forcing them to pay money rent and exerting their presumed right to persons wherever they physically existed; he concludes that "in point of fact obrok is almost always in excess of serfdom; it is the utilisation of the right to persons under conditions which contradict the basic character of serfdom"(14)

Chernyshevskii analysed the effects of barshchina obligation to refute Tengoborskii's contention that this obligation was not disadvantageous to the peasants. According to Chernyshevskii, although during the reign of Tsar Paul the maximum limit was fixed at 3 days a week, in most cases the limit was either ignored or applied in such a fashion that the peasants had no time to till their own holdings.. He remarks sarcastically that since Tengoborskii's entire information was based on Haxthausen, he could not know how the prescribed three-day labour was carried out since Haxthausen does not deal with the matter. Chernyshevskii

describes one way of circumventing the limit: the peasants were supposed to work, say, on Monday for the landlord, but it so happened that the weather was bad on that day, so the landlord shifted the work to a later day when the weather was fine. As a result the peasants would lose a day for their own cultivation, and if the weather remained unfavourable for a few days in a week, the peasants would not have even a single day to work on their holdings.(15) Similarly the peasants would be made to till the masters' land continuously during periods most favourable for cultivation. Only after finishing the landlord's land were the peasants permitted to work on their own. In this way the peasants would be put in the position of working most productively for their master and least productively for themselves.(16)

Moreover this method of utilisation of forced labour involved the fixation of tiaglo by an even number, i.e 2 or 4 etc. And if any household had only one work-hand, then necessarily he had to work twice the time that he would have worked if the allotment or work was fixed on a unit composed of individuals. As a consequence the workhand of such a household could never even step into his own allotment except occasionally in the middle of the night, if he were not by then completely exhausted. Also the law was sometimes flouted and peasants were forced to work more than three days per week. All these cases undermined the credibility of Tengoborskii's arguments that Paul's ukase fixing the three day limit made serfdom less burdensome. (17)

Chernyshevskii characterised Tengoborskii's explanations as spurious since they failed to take into account the real situation as regards the use of forced labour by the landlord. Apart from the fact that forced labour led to more exploitation of the peasants, Chernyshevskii also showed the economic

inefficiency of forced labour in the productive sphere during the period under review. His analysis was succinct, the facts were conclusive and his conclusion was brilliant. Here are a few examples of the factual evidence adduced by Chernyshevskii. He cites an example of an estate, where the income after abolition went up by three times. The findings of a Danish Minister, Count Bernsdorf, who found that on his own estate, average productivity rose by more than 300% when hired labour was substituted for forced labour, confounded the Danish landlords who objected to the abolition of serfdom on the grounds of unprofitability. A statistical survey, originally conducted by Zhuravskii in the province of Kiev showed the extent of the wastage of man-days in unproductive labour under serfdom. According to this survey, in estates with 250 adult workers the total number of man-days in barshchina comes to 45,000 a year, of which only 12,000 were generally utilised for cultivation. This comprised approximately a quarter of the total barshchina days. What about the remaining three quarters of the working days? Most of them were spent on activities which were virtually unproductive. For example, 1,900 days were spent on the gardens of the masters who had an army of house-serfs to do the job. Over-manning of threshing machines also accounted for 5,800 man-days. This is a glaring example of 'disguised' unemployment of serf-labour. This is evidenced by Zhuravskii's estimate that the total number of man-days that were necessary for all the work in the province of Kiev was 17,500,000 and the total number actually used was no less than 65,000,000.

The concept of 'disguised' unemployment was not explicitly stated by Chernyshevskii as it was later by the Norwegian economist Ragner Norkse and the Bolshevik leader Preobrazhenskii in the

twenties of this century, but there is not the slightest doubt that he clearly understood the working of this type of unemployment in agriculture within the peculiar social framework of serfdom, where the available man-days of labour in most cases far exceeded the socially useful labour requirement. Chernyshevskii concludes that this underutilisation of productive power is a general phenomenon not peculiar to Kiev alone.

This conclusion is followed by an analysis of the extent of diseconomy prevalent in agriculture based on forced labour. Chernyshevskii assumes that the labour cost at the level of technology prevalent in agriculture at that time in Russia comprised half of the working capital and in most cases less than that. This was quite a reasonable assumption to make. According to his calculation, the total cost of agricultural production in Kiev would be 14,500,000 silver roubles; adding a net profit of 10%, the aggregate normal price of the entire produce of the same province would amount to 16,000,000 silver roubles. But Zhuravskii's findings show that the total income in money terms of the Kiev province was 7,123,380 silver roubles, which is even less than the labour cost alone if properly computed.(18) This diseconomy was, according to Chernyshevskii, due to the existence of forced labour. The nature of the labour cost in such a productive activity has already been discussed in an earlier chapter* where this was shown to have been an important reason for exploitation of serf labour by the landlords to augment their incomes, involving diminished productivity per man-day and leading to a vicious circle of diseconomy. (19) Chernyshevskii attributed the growing indebtedness of the landlords to this unprofitable form of production rather than

* See Chapter one of Part one

to indulgence in luxurious living and conspicuous consumption which some writers have assumed to be the cause. "The ruin of the landlords themselves is the most evident consequence of forced labour. The account of the credit institutions as to the extent of mortgaged estates and the publication of the figures of sale of these estates due to non-payment of the loan unfortunately show only too clearly that this scientific truth is confirmed by the facts of our life. Recently a scholar - he should remain anonymous - tried to prove that our estates are not (as we all know them to be) burdened with debts. The answer to this frivolous joke was a bitter smile on the lips of all readers to a man. A landlord whose estate is not mortgaged is a rare exception with us. Correct information about the amount of the entire indebtedness of our landlords' estates has not been collected, but it is certain that with every year the burden of these debts has increased and at the present time Russian estates are the most burdened with loans of all the estates of Europe." (20) He then states, "...one can talk about extravagant life, about neglect of one's affairs. But firstly, all these and other secondary causes are insufficient to account for an accumulation of debts so ^{universal} and so large; secondly, extravagance and neglect of one's affairs arise mainly from a fundamental evil to which a limit is now being imposed." (21) Chernyshevskii contends that because the landlords had an easy means of income from serf labour, they never took pains to make their productive activities economic.

Chernyshevskii then proceeds to criticise Tengoborskii's statement that "in those regions, where trade and industry are weak, where there is little money in circulation, it is more beneficial (udobno) for the peasants to fulfil their obligations by labour rather than by paying for the rent of the land in money.

Chernyshevskii contends that even if such a state of affairs is more practicable, it is not desirable.

"...If in fact the tilling of some fields in Russia were possible only under forced labour, then what would follow from this? It would follow only that some fields do not justify the labour needed, and the sooner their cultivation, which is disadvantageous to the state, is stopped, the better for the state."

(22) Here again Chernyshevskii refers to the existence of 'disguised' unemployment in the economy of serfdom and so he does not consider any productive activity worth pursuing unless it is economic. The existence of an abundant supply of forced labour cannot be a justification for indulging in economic activities which are harmful both to the state and the society. "If, I, utilising privileges granted to me by the state, decided to grow forests in the Vologda or Viatka provinces, in which, as it is, there is too much forest, I would doubtless succeed in growing a few dessyatins of forests in my plantation. But it goes without saying that the sale of this forest would not by any means cover my expenses and my plantation would only be viable if the government were to give a grant every year to cover my losses. What then follows from such a state of affairs? I shall only contribute to the ruin of the state supporting my uneconomic production; the state should therefore stop its assistance..... I should myself feel bound to put an end to my uneconomic production and turn to some other occupation that would be not ruinous but advantageous to the state." (23)

The point at issue is whether it is economically self-defeating to uphold a system that perpetuates the indebtedness of the landlord. It also shows the need for maintaining a position of economic equilibrium in production. As is well-known,

equilibrium in production is a function of revenue and cost and even if the latter is indeterminate, under forced labour any reasonable computation of the labour cost will reveal that in most cases it, together with the cost of raw materials is not safe-guarded by the sale of agricultural products in the presence of forced labour. In the prevailing circumstances, therefore, the rural economy of Russia ran constantly under loss (economically speaking) and Chernyshevskii held that no one with any knowledge of economics could possibly support such a state of affairs.

"An enterprise", he says, "which does not cover its cost by the sale of its products when produced by forced labour is ruinous to the state, and the sooner it is stopped the better for the prosperity of the state". (24)

Tengoborskii took Yaroslav, one of the most infertile regions in Russia, to prove the justifiability of serf labour and Chernyshevskii criticises him for his generalising from an atypical sample.

Chernyshevskii introduces a criterion for assessing whether forced labour was advantageous in any region in Russia. This criterion was originally formulated by a pre-Smithian economist, T. Tucker and . . . an exponent of the labour theory of value. In 1774 Tucker, published a book under the title, "Four Tracts and Two Sermons on Political and Commercial Subjects" in which he dealt exhaustively with the question of the efficiency of servile labour in agriculture. The criterion was based on population density. If the population density exceeds or is equal to a certain number, then cultivation by free labour is more advantageous; if, on the other hand, it is less than that number, servile labour is more advantageous. Taking into consideration the whole of Russia, Chernyshevskii tries to apply this criterion and his arguments are as follows:

"One of the circumstances on which the advantage or disadvantage to the landlord of hired labour as compared with forced labour depends, is the population density. The smaller the population of the country the more advantageous is forced labour to the landlords; the denser the population the more advantageous to them is hired labour. Tucker made a study of this and found that with sixty six persons per square mile, hired labour becomes more advantageous to the landlord than forced labour. This figure is too high, as we shall see below; and even in a population of less than sixty six persons per square mile hired labour is more profitable than forced labour; this we will prove. But let us try to apply to Russia the figures we find in Tucker. In order to apply them in Russia, we must take into account two circumstances: the size of the urban population and the amount of infertile land.

"In the countries, which Tucker had in mind (western Europe and North America), the urban population forms at least one-third of the entire population. In Russia it forms hardly ten per cent, including the capitals, and in the greater part of the provinces it is under nine per cent.

"In western Europe and Northern America, the amount of land unsuitable for crops is limited: five or six per cent of the entire area of the territory; in European Russia infertile lands occupy more than one-third of the entire territory. These two factors must be considered, if one is to apply the figures given by Tucker to Russia.

"(Tucker's estimate of) 66 persons per square mile amounts to 1400 per geographical square mile. Out of this (total density), the urban population in western Europe and North America is not less than a third, so 966 persons constitute the rural population. Those provinces in Russia where the size of the rural population exceeds this figure therefore satisfy the conditions stipulated

by Tucker." (25)

But land in England was more fertile than in Russia and Tucker developed his criterion on the basis of the fertility of England. Chernyshevskii therefore adjusted Tucker's estimates according to the regional infertility of soil in Russia. According to Chernyshevskii, in Voronezh, Tula, Podol, Nizhninovgorod and Tambov, the percentage of infertile land is small, that is 3 to 8%. This proportion is not unlike that which Tucker envisaged. But in the provinces of Orenburg and Kherson half of the land was infertile; in the provinces of Ekaterinislav, Stavropol and Tavrich, the amount of infertile land is larger than the amount of fertile land. It would be misleading, according to Chernyshevskii, to take into account the number of people tilling barren lands, where no increase in population is likely to occur and where no workers can be employed.

Chernyshevskii now proposes to deduct 5% of the Tuckerian criterion of 966 persons in the rural area to make an adjustment for the number of working hands in infertile areas. (26)

First of all, he considers the areas where the working hands are mostly serf peasants and states that there is positive evidence that hired labour is found to be more advantageous to landlords in these areas.

He then points out that in almost every area of Russia, the population density is above Tucker's level, and so hired labour is more advantageous than servile labour. "The regions of the Russian empire", he states, "which do not have forced labour at the present time either because of the high density of its rural population which attained such a level that hired labour becomes more advantageous to the landlord than the forced labour or according to other local conditions which has led to such an economic situation, embraces almost the entire area of Russia and its population amounts

to 63,000,000. In all these regions forced labour for the landlords is less advantageous than hired labour."(27)

I have quoted Chernyshevskii extensively in order to show that he was an ardent supporter of free labour and so was a champion of emancipation of serfs. But he was not, as will be seen later, an advocate of the creation of free landless peasants, a feature peculiar to England during the industrial revolution where it was assumed that the existence of such people, historically speaking, was a pre-condition of capitalist development. Chernyshevskii did not advocate the 'abstract' freedom of the toiling masses, i.e. a mere legal or formal freedom. That is why all his arguments against forced labour were not aimed at creating a condition in Russia reminiscent of the days of the infamous enclosure movement in England. This will be evident later when his various redemption plans will be examined. He not only protested against the moral injustice inherent in rural servitude but also challenged it on economic grounds.

Referring again to Tucker's criterion, Chernyshevskii asks whether forced labour is indispensable even in regions with less than 966 persons per geographical square mile. If this were the case there would have been partial justification, economically speaking, for servile labour. But taking the regions of the United States of America as evidence, Chernyshevskii tries to prove that in areas of low population density, free labour is efficient. With the help of the American population figures of 1850 in the regions where there was free labour, Chernyshevskii showed that even with a population density of less than 66 persons per English square mile, free labour existed, and thus was presumably most advantageous. He quotes, (a) Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut and other New

England states where the population density was 43.07 per English square mile or 915 geographical square mile and (b) the north-western states of Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and others where the population density was 16.75 per English square mile or 356 persons per geographical square mile.(28) Thus there was no reason to favour forced labour anywhere where cultivation took place, since the population density everywhere in Russia exceeded 16.75 persons per English square mile: even in the Yaroslav province which provided the test case for the argument the population density was 66 persons per square mile.

In discussing the advantages of free labour, Chernyshevskii attaches importance to the role of the state, monarchial or otherwise, as the promoter of a more progressive form of production. He quotes Roscher, founder of the Historical School of Economics whom he disagreed with in many other respects, but who shared his view of the historical role of monarchies in doing away with slavery. Roscher dealt with different types of economic formations in different historical epochs. Here is one of his explanations of the decline of servile labour in different countries.

"The progress of civilisation increases the burden of labour. As the demands of luxury grow the gulf separating the master from the servants or the peasants widens everyday. As the industry and commerce develop the master finds it more and more advantageous to demand excessive labour, ... the last bridle that could check the greed, becomes weaker while the demoralisation of masters and the servants grows in proportion to the increase in luxuries... that is why among almost all nations, in the course of the development of civilisation, state power endeavoured to abolish forced labour.

The autocratic monarchies of all nations saw the necessity of acting energetically against the forced labour and in favour of the betterment of the lot of the lower classes. In Italy Frederick II emancipated all the slaves of the state. In England Alfred the Great attempted to liberate the slaves, though unsuccessfully. Wilhelm I had more success. Queen Elizabeth accomplished in England what Frederick II did in Italy. Even in Russia, Tsar Ivan III restored the freedom to the peasants which they lost during the Mongol domination; but again they lost this right in the dim period of the beginning of the 17th century when the importance of the nobility in the state affairs increased. In Bohemia, when the nobility became stronger during Vladislave II serfdom previously abolished was again restored. When the Danish aristocracy became strong in the government they also subjected the free settlers to servile domination." (29)

Roscher tried to link the growing influence of the nobility in state affairs with the restoration of serfdom. In quoting him Chernyshevskii was implying that a dominant gentry class and free labour did not go together.

But the main question in Chernyshevskii's time was whether the government could justifiably interfere at all in the inner working of the economy as a whole. It was the hey-day of *laissez-faire*, *laissez-passer* and that was the only conceivable view of economics. The sacrifice of the group interest (even if the group constituted the overwhelming majority in society) for wealth of 'the nation' was considered necessary, and no one questioned the assumption that the economy was a self-regulating system, wondrously adjusting itself to the best possible state. But this is what Chernyshevskii did question. He endorsed the intervention of the state, if undertaken in the best interest of the society. Often he referred to common

sense (zdravyi smysl') to justify this. Common sense tells us that the prosperity of a nation is inseparably linked up with the well-being of the masses. Chernyshevskii was a normative economist. He reacted against the indifference of the policy makers towards the miserable plight of this majority of the people: the indifference, he said, was due to their resolve to sacrifice concrete reality for an abstraction, concrete people for abstract nationhood, narod for natsia. This being the ^{conceptual} ~~abstract~~ foundation of the dominant school of economics in Chernyshevskii's time, the question of social evil of forced labour was ignored. "We will make full concession to the theory which says that the government must not interfere in politico-economic relation", Chernyshevskii writes; "let us assume that the government must never, in whatever form and under whatever circumstances, concern itself with matters, which are subject to the operation of politico-economic principles. We have expressed the law of the independence of economic labour from administrative measures with a more unqualified insistence than even the most ardent supporters of this system (the system of forced labour). Well, what follows from this? The government must not undermine the independent activity of politico-economic relations; so what sort of principles will not be the concern of the government? The answer is politico-economic principles. Now does forced labour belong to politico-economic principles and are the relations arising from it within the ambit of the laws of political economy?... According to Storch, "forced labour is not within the scope of political economy; it is completely alien to the group of conceptions and relations subject to this science and its laws. All the scholars pursuing political economy, from Adam Smith to Roscher are in agreement with this." (30)

Chernyshevskii attacks with irony the upholders of the idea that an analysis of forced labour does not concern the science of political economy. He states, "thus whatever you think about the dependence of politico-economic principles and relations on the government, or their independence of it, your politico-economic theories do not concern themselves at all with the question of forced labour." Chernyshevskii asks if the question of forced labour is not the concern of political economy then what sort of phenomenon is it? "Forced labour is a phenomenon, completely alien to the laws of political economy", he continues ironically, "a historical phenomenon of quite a different order. It both arises and is upheld in opposition to all economic principles; this phenomenon is purely historical, arising out of relations and events belonging to the ambit of politics, military affairs, administrative power, but not in the least to political economy. It (an analysis of forced labour) plays the part of an obstacle to development of political economy." (31) In brief, Chernyshevskii wants to impress upon his readers the ridiculousness of the attempt of the theoreticians of political economy to avoid the analysis of forced labour. Forced labour constituted a major share in the working force in the agricultural sector of Russia at that time and it was the obligation of the political economists to analyse it carefully.

Now Chernyshevskii puts forward his own idea of the role of the government in economic matters. He emphatically asserts that the government under all circumstances must come forward when the welfare of its people is endangered. In his opinion, the role of the government is that of the guardian of the peoples' interest. "The government has not only the right, but it has, according to the

demands of all economists, a direct duty to remove from the nation all the obstacles to the working of the essential parts of the economic structure. If in a state there is absence of safety on roads, this hinders the development of economic life and so the government not only can but is obliged to make the roads safe. In a similar way, all economists would agree that the government is obliged to support justice with all its power, to observe the fulfilment of contracts, to punish criminals and so on. Precisely in the same way it has a duty in respect of free labour." (32)

Chernyshevskii did not propose that political economists should study forced labour as an autonomous subject but argued that if one considered hired labour properly, forced labour had to be considered also.

According to him, if free labour is an element of investigation in the science of political economy, its corollary, forced labour, should also be equally treated. As will be evident later this was one of the characteristic ways by which Chernyshevskii attacked the arguments of his opponents, utilising their own assumptions to refute their reasons for upholding principles which Chernyshevskii considered regressive. The expression, 'all economists would agree' was used to preface the views of that body of economic opinion which did not involve a belief in the infallibility or unchangeability of the doctrine of laissez-faire, laissez-passer. He called the Russian representatives of the English Classical School (Vernadskii, Bezobrazov and others) 'economists of a backward school' (ekonomisti otstaloi shkoly); by 'all economists' he meant those who opposed this school. (33) His reference to the 'danger in the road' has been interpreted by K. A. Zhuravley, a Soviet commentator on Chernyshevskii, as a cryptic demand for nationalising the landlords' estates without compensation. The reason for such

cryptic language is supposed to have been the vigilant censorship.(34) While it is true that Chernyshevskii had to express his radical views in allegorical and other indirect ways, Zhuravlev's interpretation of the 'danger in the road' is not entirely credible because in 1858 Chernyshevskii was not yet thinking in terms of emancipation. In fact he himself formulated a number of redemption schemes and he wanted to assemble at the time the whole body of pro-abolition opinion around his journal Sovremennik. This accounts for the inclusion of a long excerpt from Kavelin's important 'Zapiski ob osvobozhdenie krest'ian' in which not only the redemption of land, but also redemption of persons was recommended.

CHAPTER TWO CHERNYSHEVSKII AND HIS REDEMPTION SCHEMES

When the abolition of serfdom became the talk of the day after the publication of the rescript, Chernyshevskii himself put forward some schemes of redemption. His thinking was focussed on two matters. Firstly, as has been mentioned above, he emphasised the economic necessity of abolition and, in doing so, he tried to rally liberal opinion around him, even though he differed on many fundamental issues with it. This was just a tactical manouvre to isolate the anti-abolitionists. Secondly, he took up the question of redemption payments. It became quite clear to him that abolition without any burdening of the peasants with redemption payments was the only correct solution, but that it was unlikely to occur. Indeed he foresaw that the gentry would put forward arbitrary and excessive claims of redemption to the government, which would find it difficult to ignore the gentry's interests. In order to prove that excessive claims by the gentry in case of abolition would be unfounded he presented his own calculations of norms for redemption and these were published in Sovremennik. He also wanted to show that the financial burden on the government would not / necessarily be heavy if abolition were carried through.

In 1858, he published an article under the title, "On the necessity of Keeping to the Most Moderate Sums (of money) in determining the amount of redemption payment." ('O neobkhodimosti derzhat'sa vozmozhno umerennykh tsifr pri opredelenii velichiny vykupa') (1). He examined the inter-play of economic factors that usually entered into any scheme of determining redemption payment. First he dealt with the length of the period of redemption payment. He understood rightly that the official scheme of redemption would be formulated in such a manner that the peasants would have to pay

over a long period of time and during this period they would have to remain in a condition of semi-serfdom, even if they were legally liberated.

"But everyone proposes," he says, "a sum for redemption such as cannot be paid by the peasants at one time: so that it is generally accepted that the redemption must be spread over a number of years. Thus the account will not be closed in one instalment and the peasants will remain debtors for some time." (2)

He asserted that three conditions had to be taken into consideration while examining the length of the period for repayment of debts by the peasants. They were: (a) the amount of the principal, (b) the rate of interest and (c) the amount of the annual payment that would repay the principal plus the interest on the outstanding balance. So, (a) the more the capital, the longer would be the time to repay under a condition of fixed rate of interest and annual payment; (b) the higher the rate of interest, the more prolonged would be the time for total repayment if the amount of instalment and capital remain the same; and (c) the more the annual payment the quicker will be the repayment, if the principal and rate of interest are fixed. (3) As an illustration he takes 100 rubles as the amount of annual payment to repay both the capital and the interest accumulated on the outstanding balance. He first considers the length of time necessary with varying amounts of capital. Chernyshevskii presents the following table to demonstrate his point. (4)

<u>Capital</u>	<u>Rubles</u>					
	1000	1500	2000	2500	3000	3300
Years(*)	12.06	20.22	30.99	46.88	77.89	155.77
Total Payment Necessary	1206	2022	3099	4688	7789	15577

(*) necessary for paying off the debt

According to this table (the calculations are correct to the nearest integer). The difference in the amount of payment increases exponentially as the capital increases. As is evident from the above table 46.88 years are required to pay off a debt of 2500 rubles at an annual payment of 100 rubles at 3%, whereas the corresponding figure for 1000 rubles is only 12.06 years. Again if the debt increases only by 500 rubles, the debtors have to wait for an additional 16.73 years (46.88 less 30.15 years): the above table also clearly demonstrates the great increase in premium that the debtors would have to pay with a moderate increase of capital. By a straightforward arithmetical calculation it can be seen that an increase of 50% of capital, that is from 1000 rubles to 1500 rubles would mean that the debtors would be compelled to pay a premium of nearly 17% more per unit capital. This premium goes on increasing as the amount of capital increases.

In the second example Chernyshevskii considers the role of the rate of interest. In this case he examines the effect of a change in the rate of interest with a constant capital of 1000 rubles and a constant annual payment of 50 rubles. (5)

Table

Rate of Interest	4	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.9
Period of Payment (in years)	41.06	42.69	44.54	46.71	49.24	52.30	56.16	61.24	68.66	82.76
Total Payment (Rubles)	2052	2139	2227	2335	2462	2615	2803	3062	3433	4138

As is evident from the table, an increase of the rate of interest of 0.9% increases the period of payment from 41.06 years to 82.76 years i.e the total payment is more than doubled. So, as soon as either the capital for the interest exceeds a moderate value, the repayment of the debt by the peasants will not only take a very long period but the whole amount will become burdensome for them.

In the third example he assumes an annual payment of 125 rubles; by keeping this payment constant he examines the nature and period of payment under varying capital and rates of interest.

Capital	Rate of Interest	Period necessary for paying off	Total Sum to be paid	Payment of Interest alone Col. 5 less Col. 1
1000	3	9.29	1151 rub 25 kop	151 rub 25 kop
1200	3½	11.90	1487 " 50 "	287 " 50 "
1400	4	18.05	2250 " 62 "	850 " 62 "
1600	4½	28.95	3618 " 75 "	2018 " 75 "
1800	5	41.64	5205 " 00 "	3405 " 00 "
2000	6	74.18	9272 " 50 "	7272 " 50 " (6)

As is evident from the above table, with a constant increase of 200 rubles of capital and a ½% increase of rate of interest (excepting the last row), the period and the amount of payment become exceedingly large and the premium over the original capital (col. 5) also increase exponentially. All these examples were introduced by Chernyshevskii to emphasize one basic point, that only a moderate and a bearable debt by the "emancipated" peasants had a meaning. It cannot be ascertained from Chernyshevskii's writing at this time whether he was a supporter of some kind of redemption or whether he was totally against any sort of redemption. It is very possible that in criticising so strongly

redemption schemes in which more than very moderate redemption was to be paid, he was obliquely hinting at the view he later expressed openly that no redemption payment at all should be paid. It must be borne in mind that even if he had wanted to say something specific on this issue in the best interests of the peasants, he would not have been able to do so because of the censorship. He emphasised the reference in the rescript to the betterment of their (the peasants') condition in many of his arguments in support of his views on emancipation.

When he published excerpts from Kavelin's article in Sovremennik in order to advance the cause of emancipation with land grant he had to face an attack from the censorship authority. In reply to this he maintained that the rescript did not simply use the expressions 'liberation' or 'emancipation' but 'betterment of their condition' (uluchshenie ikh byta) and he adds, "it follows that the will of the emperor is that the emancipation of peasants should be accomplished in such a way as definitely to bring about the betterment of their (the peasants) condition." (7)

The implication of Chernyshevskii's hypothetical redemption schemes as evident in tables 1 to 3 is that burdensome redemption was incompatible with the betterment of the condition of the peasants. The betterment of the condition of the peasants was the stated objective in the rescript. He also said that heavy redemption payment may be of immediate advantage to the creditors in quantitative financial terms, but in the long run would cause the ruination of the debtors, that is the peasants, so that the very economic purpose for which abolition was designed would be defeated. Assuming that the government could be, in the last resort, at the receiving end financially after the peasants had been emancipated, a heavy redemption payment would kill the

goose that laid the golden egg and thus prove uneconomic.

"Even arithmetic shows," Chernyshevskii observes, "that greed is not at all economic; that, on the contrary, the truly prudent is as moderate as possible in his demands; we only ask at this point that the creditors should as far as possible calculate precisely, what they will get if they are moderate and what the consequences will be if their demands are excessive or immoderate." (8)

At the beginning of 1859, Chernyshevskii published a most comprehensive treatise on redemption payments in Sovremennik under the title, Ustroistvo byta pomeshchich'ikh krest'ian - 6: truden li vykup zemli? This develops further the previously formulated minimum scheme. In the meantime the Main Committee which was set up to recommend to the emperor ways and means for the successful abolition of serfdom had almost finished its deliberations and the trend of its recommendation was becoming quite transparent to Chernyshevskii. It is this that made him put forward his own comprehensive plan of redemption which would be truly in the interests of the peasants, rather than of the landlords, as was the case in official projects. The purpose of this paper was to show that the landlords are entitled only to a very low redemption payment and in some cases to no payment at all. As has been explained above, Chernyshevskii was entirely opposed to the idea that the redemption payment, if spread over longer period, would be easier for the peasants to bear and this he tried to prove by concrete examples. He also reaffirms his earlier view that "the redemption of land given over to peasants who were formerly serfs, presents to many, almost all, a very serious problem ---- Some deceive themselves by masking the difficulties, by having recourse to such phrases as 'it will be easy for the peasants to pay such-

and-such an annual instalment' or in this way the peasants will quickly be able to repay the loan for their land.' It is sufficient to look at the figures produced by these (people who think redemption payment can be met 'easily' and 'quickly') to see that the matter is neither 'easy' nor 'quick'. It will be clear to almost everyone that the peasants would have to pay redemption money for land in excess of the obrok which they have to pay now and it would take 30, 35, 40 years or even longer, to repay in full. How can it be 'easy' or 'quick'? The figures do not correspond to the accompanying words. "...Many people who argue about the peasant question say openly that the redemption of land at the present time is difficult, almost impossible and that it would be better to defer the measure to the future." (9) There was a view current in economic circles at the time that the state finances were incapable of providing the necessary funds to compensate the landlord (in anticipation of repayment by the peasants) if the programme was carried out in a shorter period. The financial debacle of the Crimean war and the general economic crisis of 1857 were stated to be the reason for this.

In replying to this thinking Chernyshevskii said, "political economy openly affirms that the sum of the capital acquired by one generation from the preceding ones is very insignificant in comparison with the aggregate of values produced by the labour of this generation. For example, the entire land belonging to the French nation with all its buildings and everything inside them, with all its ships and cargoes, with all its cattle, all its money and all other wealth belonging to that country hardly comprises a value of a hundred milliard francs; and the labour of the French people produces annually a value of fifteen or more

milliard francs, that is, in not more than seven years the French people produce an aggregate of values equal to the value of the whole of France from the English channel to the Pyrenees. It follows that if the French had to redeem the whole of France from someone, they could do it in the course of one generation, using a fifth part of their income for redemption. And how does the matter stand with us? Is it the whole of Russia with all her wealth that needs to be redeemed? No, only the land. Is it the entire land of Russia? No, redemption applies only to those provinces of European Russia in which serfdom has taken root, that is, an area not extending over more than 60 thousand geographical square miles. Is the entire land of this area subject to redemption? Not at all: in this area as many free people live as there are serfs. And (although we have no correct information about the proportion of land there belonging to the state) one can say definitely that a little less than half of these 60 thousand square miles belong to the state and a little more than half belong to the serf-estates. Shall we claim the entire land from these 30 or 25 thousand square miles? No, only about a third is in the use of serf peasants. ..So, can it be difficult really for the great Russian people to redeem one-sixth of the area of European Russia?"(10)

In order to arrive at the mean value of redemption for the whole of Russia, Chernyshevskii considers the data of two provinces, namely, Kiev and Smolensk, which were at the two extremes of the productivity range. The obvious procedure to arrive at the mean value would have been to compute the average of the magnitudes of two extreme values. He does not take this logical course, but bases his estimate on the data concerning the province of Kiev, which was one of the richest in Russia. The purpose of this procedure is to show that even accepting the higher values of

the data of Kiev, one could arrive at a redemption scheme which would not be burdensome for the peasants. He justifies this method with the following words: "thus, for example, as the basis for our approximate conclusions, we will take a figure presented by the late Zhuravskii for the province of Kiev, one of the richest provinces; and this time we will not use the figures presented by Solov'ev for the province of Smolensk at all, because it is one of the poorest, and a combination of its figure with that of Kiev would significantly reduce the result. In strict justice one must say that in our country provinces similar to those of Smolensk are not less typical than those of Kiev, and we would have the full right to base our results on Mr. Solov'ev's estimate as much as on the results of the late Zhuravskii. But I repeat, we would rather err on the side of too high a value than risk the possibility of the opposite." (11)

With this object in view, Chernyshevskii computed the average income per soul in Kiev. The number of souls in 1834 in Kiev, according to Zhuravskii was 504,431 and the total income was 7,123,380 rubles, so the average income was 14 rubles 12 kopeks per soul. But according to claims of the landlords on the basis of the return of the income^{of} their estates income was only 4,020,557 rubles, an average of 7 rubles and 9 kopeks per soul. Chernyshevskii does not use this last lower figure in his analysis. He wants to show that even with the greater valuation, only a very modest redemption payment is justified. With a note of irony he states, "We would have been justified of course, in not estimating the incomes of the properties higher than the estimate of the owners themselves; but we only want to ask our readers to remember if need be, that whatever the

results obtained by us, the amount would have been decreased by more than 43% had we accepted the figure which it pleased the landlords themselves to quote before the peasant question arose. We will observe this principle to the point of exaggeration. We will be concerned with the advantage of the landlords more than they are themselves, and instead of their own low figures, we will take a higher figure compiled by Zhuravskii himself." (12) From the total gross income of 7,123,380 rubles, Chernyshevskii deducts the cost of management of estates and the insurance premia. The two charges taken together comprised between 3 to 40% of the total gross income. Chernyshevskii deducts only 10%, but also deducts the amount which the landlords receive as income from factories and other productive activities not connected with their estates. This amount was three million rubles. The remaining income is 3,711,042 rubles or 7 rubles 36 kopeks per soul. Then capitalising this amount at $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ (which he thought to be a reasonable rate of capitalisation) he obtains the figure of 98 silver rubles and 10 kopeks for the average redemption price of 'souls' of male sex. Now this amount included the redemption value of both land and persons and there was no formula, he stated, by which the relative proportion of these values could be worked out. Though he admitted that, according to the provisions laid down by the Imperial rescript, a person was not subject to redemption, he could not ignore this factor. The reason was that Chernyshevskii wanted to show that even providing for redemption of persons the redemption payment by the peasants could not be burdensome. In addition, by applying his principle of maximum advantage, he assumed that incomes from and the value of the land in both the obrok and the barshchina dominated sectors were the same. "According to our rule, in those cases where the correct figure is not known and an error is therefore

unavoidable, it is better to err on the side of an increase than a decrease. We will take it that the estates under obrok must be valued exactly in the same way as those under barshchina.

The reader will see that in this way the redemption sum clearly becomes more than the actual value; we have already said that estates under obrok yield less income in general than those in barshchina. But in spite of this, let us assume that they yield the same income. Again it is well-known that the personal obligations of a peasant emancipated without redemption are a much greater part, and the land a much lesser part of the overall value of the estates under obrok, than of those under barshchina. But we will again stretch a point by increasing the sum of redemption: let us assume that in the obrok estates land has the same value as under barshchina." (13)

Applying this principle and using the data for 11 Kievian uezds given by Zhuravskii, and assuming that the value of personal labour is twice the value of land, Chernyshevskii arrives at the following interesting figures:

Value of landlords' land per unit	621 rubles or 35.5%
Value of the peasants' land per unit	379 rubles or 21.5%
Value of forced labour (twice the value of the land of peasants)	758 rubles or 43%
Total	1758 rubles

As 21.5% is the total value of peasants' land and as the total value per soul has been calculated at 98.1 rubles per soul, the redemption value in barshchina areas where the value of the person is nil, cannot exceed 21 rubles. But the argument does not end here. At this stage, Chernyshevskii brings in an interesting argument in support of a 'negative' redemption value. According to some landlords the income from forced labour was not less than 30 silver rubles per tiaglo: he takes this figure and,

assuming that 100 souls comprised 30 tiaglos, calculates that the total income accrued from forced labour alone was 900 rubles, whereas, according to earlier calculations, the total annual value of the person and the land per soul ^{was} 7 rubles and 36 kopeks, that is 736 rubles for 100 souls or 30 tiaglos. In such cases, therefore, the landlords were due to receive a 'negative' redemption payment of 1 ruble 64 kopeks per annum or 21 rubles 90 kopeks in a lot when capitalised at 7½%. This meant that not only would the landlords have to give all lands to the peasants free but would also have to pay a sum of 21 rubles and 90 kopeks. (15)

If, on the other hand, the value is taken at a higher level, that is, at 36 rubles per tiaglo, and if it is assumed that 100 souls comprise 40 tiaglos, then the total capitalised value of forced labour at 7½% would be 19200 rubles and the redemption value of the entire estate with 100 souls, would be 9810 rubles (7 rubles 36 kopeks capitalised at 7½% as shown before). Thus in the event of the abolition of serfdom on such estates, not the peasants but the landlords who would be obliged to pay 9390 rubles to the peasants and, at the same time give them the land.

Chernyshevskii's argument, though appearing somewhat perverse in the face of the actual discussion of emancipation, is perfectly logical and incontrovertible. There is no doubt that at this stage he was trying to emphasise that the abolition of serfdom should be without any sort of redemption payment by the peasants or, to be precise, the landlords had no right to accept any payment from the peasants as their price for being freed from serfdom. The article, 'O neobkhodimosti derzhat'sa vozmozhno umerennykh tsifr pri opredelenii velichiny vykupa' gives no indication that the landlords had no right to compensation: on the contrary, it suggests, moderate schemes of redemption payment,

as has been pointed out earlier. Whether the proposed amount of payment would have satisfied even the most liberal proponents of abolition is another question, but at that stage he did not challenge the landlords' right to ask for compensation. Yet hardly a year had passed when the situation was made clear to him and he shed any illusion he may have entertained about the real aims of the landowning gentry and the reformist government.

Chernyshevskii did not, of course, stick unrealistically to his discovery of the validity of negative redemption payment. He wanted to allow as much flexibility as possible in his analysis. He displayed all signs of objectivity by concentrating, as he himself repeatedly pointed out, on sound economic principles. But he sought to dispel the mist of confusion and double-thinking that was created in the minds of the public by the deliberations in the different committees on abolition and to emphasise the immensity of the task and the difficulties involved in its fulfilment.

Pursuing his calculations, Chernyshevskii contended that one-fifth of the total value of estates per soul was the value of forced labour. By deducting one-fifth from 98 rubles 10 kopeks, the value of land comes to 78 rubles 48 kopeks, while, according to the previous table, the proportion of peasant allotment was 37.9%. Applying this percentage to the value of land, Chernyshevskii arrives at the average figure of redemption per person in areas under barshchina of 29 rubles 74 kopeks. After giving allowance for pastures and meadows, he arrives at the mean value of redemption in regions under obrok, which was 68 rubles 67 kopeks. Assuming further that the ratio of barshchina to obrok was 2:1, he concluded that the redemption payment amounts to an average figure of 49 rubles 5 kopeks for all estates in the Kiev province. Now for the whole of Russia he employed the weighted average method

in computing the average redemption payment.(16) The procedure was as follows: after calculating the average redemption figure for Kiev, which was one of the richest provinces, he used Solov'ev's figures for the province of Smolensk, which was one of the poorest. Combining these two figures and assigning weights according to the total serf population in these two provinces, and assuming that the ratio between obrok and barshchina peasants was 1:19 in Kiev, the mean amount of redemption for the whole of Russia was found to be 36 rubles and 12 kopeks. Chernyshevskii used the usual formulae for weighted average.

$$w_k y_k + w_s y_s / w_k + w_s, \text{ where } w_k = 594431 \text{ souls,}$$
$$y_k = 40 \text{ rubles } 71 \text{ kopeks}$$
$$\text{and } w_s = 378038 \text{ souls,}$$
$$y_s = 29 \text{ rubles } 95 \text{ kopeks}$$

Next, Chernyshevskii discusses ways of obtaining the necessary finance for redemption payments. Broadly speaking, he suggested three mutually exclusive plans. In the first of these, which was the most important from the economic point of view, he suggested the following procedure: according to his calculation there was a difference of 3 rubles between the taxes of serfs and free peasants, i.e the state peasant had to pay 12 rubles as tax and the landlords' peasants 9 rubles in addition to other obligations.(17) When emancipated the serfs would be expected to pay 12 rubles per annum as tax and they would be relieved from any obligation to the landlord. So, this additional amount of 3 rubles (12 rubles less 9 rubles) paid as tax by the emancipated peasants would be a source of extra revenue to the state treasury. Hence if this additional revenue of 3 rubles per soul is paid back to the landlords by being converted into bonds of different denominations, the entire amount of redemption would in fact

be paid by the peasants themselves and thus the state would not have to take any additional burden for paying compensation to the landlords. Chernyshevskii showed, with the help of figures, that these bonds would finally mature after 22 years 4 months, assuming that the landlords would be allowed to withdraw money by cashing the bonds only thrice a year. He also made a distinction between the different categories of serfowners and suggested that the date of maturity of bonds should depend on the economic status of the landlord, that is, whether he belonged to the poorer or the richer class of landlords. Since the small landlords were not well-off and were not due to receive a large payment of redemption, these bonds should, in his opinion, have earlier dates of maturity, say within the first two or three years. Following the same rule, the owners of the middle sized estates would have to wait 7 or 8 years before these bonds mature; the rich landlords would have to wait still more. In this scheme, with the passage of time, the number and quantum of unredeemed estates would gradually decrease, until in the very last phase only a handful of very large estates will remain unpaid (but retaining ownership of the bonds.) (18)

After presenting this scheme, Chernyshevskii asks whether it would not all of a sudden vest the landlords with huge spending power, and whether this would not lead to an inflationary situation affecting the economic stability of the country. The suggestion that small landlords should be the first to cash their bonds was supposed to obviate such a prospect. To meet the state's deficiency of cash reserves a limited extra issue of notes would be made, which would constitute only a very small and hardly inflationary percentage, say 5% of the total amount

of notes in circulation. As the landlords could only cash three ^{not} times a year, there would be continuous flow of additional money throughout the year. When bonds of medium landlords would come to maturity the additional spending ability of the community in the shape of its disposable income would be offset by a corresponding increase in the productivity of land after emancipation, and thus the apprehended 'inflationary gap' would no longer be real. As regards the big landlords, Chernyshevskii proposed that their denomination of bonds should be of a very high value, for example, 10,000 or 20,000 rubles, and there should be a provision that they could not be cashed in parts. He knew that this group of landlords were generally very rich and they could easily find other means to get the required amount of money than by the disposal of these bonds. There was every chance that they would keep them as a fixed asset, rather than convert them into liquid assets. This argument is quite indisputable from the theoretical stand-point. Subsequent theories of government budgeting uphold Chernyshevskii's approach. That an additional flow of money at any given time in the presence of a productivity lag creates an inflationary situation is well-known, but this is off-set by an increased tempo of production in any sphere, if the institutional set-up allows it. In Chernyshevskii's scheme, there are fixed points in time (viz. three) when an additional flow of money is suggested, and the government, having prior information, can carefully avoid the widening of the inflationary gap. From this point of view the scheme and the economic reasoning contained in it are perfectly plausible, although Chernyshevskii did not contribute significantly in the theoretical sense, apart from presenting clearly a criticism of the classical quantity theory. In fact, in this essay he produced Irving Fisher's argument in the early twentieth century and showed the invalidity of the latter's position in a condition of less than full employment. Chernyshevskii anticipated

the criticisms of adherents of the quantity theory of money and clearly refuted those in support of his position.

In another article in the same year under the title, 'Materials for the solution of the peasant question' (Materialy dlia resheniya krest'ianskogo voprosa) Chernyshevskii follows up his arguments and schemes for the extent of compensation. It is worthwhile to examine these in detail. He first indicates the paradox in the sale price of landlords' estates. It is found, he says, that, given the income per dessyatina to a landlord of 40 rubles on an estate comprising 100 souls and 1000 dessyatin, the profit would not be 40,000 but only 25,000 rubles, or 30,000 rubles at the most. The main reason for this paradox lies in the fact that a portion of the land is given out to the peasants and this portion is not included in the valuation of the estates. Chernyshevskii presented this example to assert that any redemption scheme based on landlords' earning capacity according to his size of estate would be misleading. Then Chernyshevskii presents his arguments in favour of hired labour with the help of hypothetical example to show that even if the serfs were freed without any compensation to the landlords, the estates could be run more profitably. He assumes that landlords had to spend 3 rubles towards working capital for cultivating their portion of the land, applying forced labour. The gross income per dess. in such cases is 12 rubles, that is, a net income of 9 rubles per dessyatina. Whereas, if he employs hired labour, he has to spend, say, another 4 rubles in wages, so that his cost of production comes to 7 rubles. But the gross income per dessyatina in this case would be 20 rubles. According to this calculation the landlord gains 4 rubles per dess. if he employs hired labour (20 rubles less 12 rubles, less 4 rubles). It is worth mentioning that Chernyshevskii did not use any empirical data to illustrate the point; rather, he chooses some hypothetical

figures to demonstrate his consistent assertion that productivity under hired labour is greater than under forced labour. "Thank heavens", Chernyshevskii observes, "landlords have understood this and, apart from a few people with very little foresight, everyone finds a direct advantage in freeing peasants from personal bondage without any compensation. In this case as in all others, that which is most profitable from the economic point of view coincides with justice".(19) This statement evidently contains a note of irony because the landlords never considered emancipation without compensation for persons.

Chernyshevskii then proceeds to demonstrate the extent of capital gain that would accrue to the landlord after emancipation. Assuming that 220 dessyatins of landlords' land were cultivated at 9 rubles per dessyatina, the gross income would come to 1980 rubles, which, when capitalised at 8%, gives the sale price of the estate at 20,000 rubles. With the emancipation from servile labour and the introduction of hired labour, 220 dess. of land yields an income of 2860 rubles which, when capitalised at 8%, gives 35,650 rubles as the sale price of the estate. Thus, inspite of the fact that the amount of land would decrease for the landlords, due to the abolition of serfdom, the part remaining with them (two-third) would fetch a much higher price than the entire estate under serfdom. This type of capital gain, therefore, would make it unnecessary for the landlords, especially for those practising barshchina, to have any compensation. Some economists, Chernyshevskii adds, may raise the question of how to acquire the additional working capital of 4 rubles per dessyatina to spend on hired labour. But this is, according to him, the responsibility of the landlord because if he seeks additional benefit from his enterprise, it is up to him to find further resources for his own benefit and, in any case, the amount (that is, 4 rubles per dess.) was quite insignificant for a landlord.(20)

Yet there was one more important question to settle, namely the landlord's indebtedness. An opinion was expressed in the course of the discussion of the emancipation projects that a portion of this debt was to be compensated for by the peasants, who would be allotted land as part of the emancipation deal. Chernyshevskii rejected this opinion on the following grounds: "If we examine the utilisation of the loan, obtained by the landlords from credit institutions, we find that a greater portion of it, at least two-thirds, went to meet the personal expenses of the landlords themselves, for whose way of life their income was insufficient. A significant part of the rest was then utilised for the buying of new estates or the establishment of industrial undertakings, that is, again for the personal benefit of the landlords. Excluding these two items from the sum of debt, we find that scarcely one-fifteenth part, or one-twelfth at most, was applied for aid to the peasants. If a precise, mathematical assessment is made, only that part of the loan utilised by the peasants should be transferred to them." (21) After agreeing provisionally that landlords should be compensated for one-twelfth or one-fifteenth part of their debt, Chernyshevskii expresses willingness to make a further allowance to them. He agrees with others that, after abolition, the landlords would have to spend a considerable amount to increase the working capital for their own agriculture, and this will take some time. During this period it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to pay the annual instalment of their debt to the credit institutions. Such being the case, he included the amount of payment of two instalments in the total sum of compensation to be paid by the peasants.

He arrives at the following break-down:

Wages to be paid for tilling the land @ 4 rubles per	880 rubles
dessyatina for 220 dessyatin	

One-twelfth part of the loan used for the benefit of

the peasants, that is, 5 rubles per soul (since	500 rubles
the total loan was 60 rubles per soul) for 100	
souls	

The two instalments of loan at 3 rubles 30 kopeks

per soul per year; so for 100 souls for 2 years	660 rubles
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Total	2040 rubles (22)
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Thus, the necessary compensation per soul comes to 20.4 rubles.

This when capitalised at 8% becomes 294 rubles 80 kopeks. This

shows roughly the situation in estates under barshchina. As for

the estates under obrok, Chernyshevskii challenges the very

right of the landlords to receive obrok. As has been mentioned,

in his view, the basis of serfdom is forced labour and if the

land of any estate is infertile or not sufficiently productive in

the estimation of the landlords, they have no right to extract

money obligation from their peasants. Legal serfdom, he says,

requires the peasants to remain within the boundary of the estate

and to work for their landlords a certain period of time every week

and the rest for their own subsistence. The law did not recognise

anything more than this. He therefore condemns, firstly, the

practice of the landlords to receive money payments when the peasants

remain within the boundary of the estate and, secondly, resolutely

rejects the still less tolerable condition of those who have to go

elsewhere in search of non-agricultural work in order to pay their

obligations to the landlords. He calls this an 'excess of serfdom'

(prevyshenie krepostnogo prava) which was quite illegal.(23)

But the landlords in obrok areas, according to Chernyshevskii,

were not only not entitled to compensation because of its question-

able legal validity and indeed its immorality; they were not even

entitled to it on strictly economic grounds. His own scheme for

the redemption of estates under obrok contained the following argument: In obrok the entire land is utilised by the peasants against a definite money payment. Chernyshevskii takes 440 dessyatins (instead of 220 dessyatins, as in the case of barshchina) which, when multiplied by a net income of 9 rubles per dess., gives 3960 rubles. Since the peasants were obliged to work half of their time for the landlords (3 days a week according to the law), the value of obrok stood at 1980 rubles. Capitalising this at 7½% or 8%, gives nearly 25000 rubles, which, according to Chernyshevskii, is the legal value of redemption. This value is identical with that of estates under barshchina. But, he states, it is well-known that instead of 440 dessyatins of aerable land, the peasants do not find more than 250 dess. fit for cultivation on obrok estates, because the rest is barren.(24) Out of this 250 dess. the peasants can till 180 dess., if they work for three days a week for their own subsistence, while the remainder, that is, 70 dess. is left for the landlords. This, multiplied by the net income of 9 rubles per dess., yields an income of 630 rubles which, when capitalised at 8%, gives the value of redemption at 7875 rubles. At this point he introduces again his interesting idea of a negative redemption payment. There were endless estates under obrok where the value of produce did not cover the expenses of production. Say 15 rubles was the cost of production per dess. and 13 rubles the gross value of the product, then for 440 dessyatin occupied by 100 souls, the loss would be 880 rubles and the capitalised value of this sum would be 11000 rubles at 8%. In other words, if the peasants insist on going back to barshchina, the landlords would have to spend 2 rubles per dessyatina over and above the value of the produce

just to feed the peasants. When, therefore, the peasants are emancipated they will be entitled to a payment of 110 rubles per soul. But, as before, Chernyshevskii does not insist on this. He concentrates rather on the landlords' debt to the credit institutions and also on the rate of obrok per tiaglo and, finally, comes to the conclusion that a compensation of 89 rubles per soul would be quite justified. (25) This amount can look after the expenses for hired labour that would be necessary after emancipation to till the landlords' land and can also pay back the money owed to the government credit institutions. But he warns that this money is quite adequate if it is utilised for production purposes. If, on the contrary, the landlords spend this compensation money on unproductive and conspicuous consumption, it would not help them in any way. According to Chernyshevskii this amount of redemption is reasonable. "The Russian people", he says, "do not consist of economists, they have not read Adam Smith". They know that the landlords must be compensated and this compensation should serve to bridge the difference in the conditions of the state and the landlords' peasants: there should be no difference between the two after abolition. (26) "The code of laws", Chernyshevskii concludes, "national feeling, political economy lead to the (idea) that redemption is hardly advantageous and even hardly possible; but redemption can be obtained in as much as state finance permits it and in accordance with national feeling." (27) The general impression gained from Chernyshevskii's analysis and suggestions is that they represent a challenge to the schemes formulated by the gentry guberniia committees and the Editorial commission engaged in working out the abolition measures. Because of the

trend taken by those who were preparing the official emancipation projects, he became opposed to the principle of redemption payments to the landlords, although he could not spell out his views because of the censorship. This clearly demonstrates a change in his attitude between 1858 and 1859 from one of relative enthusiasm for the Imperial rescript to one of growing scepticism about the whole enterprise.

Chernyshevskii and liberal opinion

As has been mentioned earlier, Chernyshevskii tried, shortly after the publication of the rescript, to assemble liberal opinion on the abolition of serfdom as a move against the anti-abolitionist gentry position. His journal Sovremennik became one of the principal forums of genuine emancipation opinion. In 1858, he published an extensive excerpt from Kavelin's 'Notes on the Emancipation of the Serf-peasants' (Zapiski ob osbovozhdenii krepostnykh krest'ian) with some minor modifications. Chernyshevskii did not agree with Kavelin on many points, specially where they concerned redemption payments. But, though Sovremennik was an organ of radical thinking, he chose to publicize Kavelin's view on the matter. Apart from rallying all available opinion in favour of abolition, this served to weaken the vacillation in governmental circles and, at the same time, to contribute to the polarization of opinion.

Kavelin's observations in his Zapiski on serfdom and emancipation are summarised by him as follows: "... it is hardly possible," he says, "to find another state where well-being was at such a low stage of development, where so little capital was in circulation and where poverty was so uniformly spread between all the classes of the nation." (28) The reason of such a situation according to him, was not inefficient management, or absence of a strong

judiciary and a correct credit system, or 'deep' ignorance or general diseconomy in production. He says, "but neither of these reasons can penetrate so deep in the national life, neither of these defeats industrial activities of the people at its very embryonic stage, neither of these kills the moral and material success of Russia as serfdom in which the entire half of general population is entangled." (29) Kavelin found the root-cause of all the maladies of Russia in serfdom, or to be more precise, in forced and unpaid labour. There may be plenty of right-thinking people in Russia, but she was inhabited by 25.5 million men and women who were deprived of "every stimulus to pursue their trades, and the right to demand the compensation for their work". Kavelin here agrees with Chernyshevskii in ascribing the backwardness of Russia to the existence of serfdom. When Kavelin speaks of obrok, he, like Chernyshevskii, condemns it as the primary cause of diseconomy in the whole sphere of agriculture. "Obrok by serfs who live on passports is a tax on labour, a personal payment, which is so immoderate that it deprives the serf of all energy, of all willingness to pursue any occupation." (30) As a consequence of this system, he says, "a considerable percentage of the working force of the entire serf-population of Russia is lost without being of use to the landlords or to itself, and consequently to the state in general". (31) Serfdom, according to Kavelin, is associated with a primitive economic accounting, with a regime of low prices of crops. "Not having any opportunity to calculate how much he himself spent on the production of crops, the landlord is not in a position to determine the lowest and the minimum price below which it is not possible for him to sell crops without suffering a loss, and so most landlords consider only the market price and their own consumption." (32) An artificial deflationary

price thus created, affects everyone "who lives in Russia and lives on the land." (33) Furthermore, the existence of such a mass of unpaid labour inevitably lowers wages. Thus, not only the lower classes are the losers but also the government. (34) This echoes Chernyshevskii's arguments against Tengoborskii, referred to earlier.

Kavelin's verdict is that "... Russia is condemned to petrify, to exist in the present form, neither advancing forward, nor having anything that could promote a change in the situation so long as serfdom overshadows our basic social and civil life; all our social maladies are tied with this Gordian knot." (35) In analysing the 'main principle' or 'the basis' of the emancipation of the landlords' peasants, Kavelin proposes the following measures: (a) serfs should be emancipated completely from their dependence on the master; (b) it is incumbent upon the government to emancipate the peasants not only with all the property belonging to them but also definitely with land and (c) emancipation must be carried out by compensating the landlords and not otherwise. (36) Compensation was necessary because "the emancipation of peasants without compensation to the landlords, would, firstly, be a dangerous precedent undermining the social order and the community in its very foundation; secondly, it would suddenly subject the numerous class of educated and prosperous consumers to misery in Russia...; thirdly, the landlords of the estates, where cultivation of land by hired labour will cost more than the income it will accrue with the emancipation, will be deprived of income altogether from these estates." (37) As a basis of compensation, Kavelin suggested a redemption payment for both land and person. The validity of a redemption for land seemed self-evident to almost all sections of the public, but

the right to redemption of persons was not clearly justifiable to everybody. Kavelin criticises the view against the redemption of person by saying that 'it is unjust' to deprive the landlord of his property, "because the serfs are as much a property of the landlords as is the land; it is inequitable because only in a few densely populated and agricultural gubernias, has land much value while serfs have none or very little; in all the other primarily industrial or at least in agricultural provinces with a thin population, the landlords do not get income from the land, but from the serfs." (38) In spite of the fact that Kavelin condemned obrok he came out with a justification of compensation to the receivers of obrok for the payers of obrok. It may be remembered that, though Chernyshevskii did not subscribe to this view, in his article 'Is the redemption of land difficult' (Truden li vykup zemli?) discussed the possibility of redemption of person under obrok; yet, as has been pointed out, all his arguments are basically directed to show the unjustifiability of redemption for either person or land. This became quite clear in his 'Materials for the Solution of the Peasant question' (Materialy dlia reshenia krest'ianskogo voprosa), published in 1859, which deal predominantly with the compensation of estates under obrok.

Another important figure in the liberal camp was Boris Chicherin. His views on emancipation almost coincided with those of Kavelin: both represented the typical trend of liberal thinking. In an article published in Atenei in 1858 under the title, 'On the Present and the Future Position of the Landlords' Peasants' (O nastoiashchem i budushchem polozhenii pomeshchich'ikh krest'ian) Chicherin states that "the purpose of the reform is the fullest freedom of the individual in his economic relations". (39) Chicherin did not attach any importance to the legal concept of equality because

he believed that "equality under freedom is nothing but mockery (chimera)"(40). According to him the aim of the reform should be the replacement of forced labour by hired labour based on an agreement ^{between} /₂ individual persons. (41) He characterised the consequences of serfdom in the following way: "the higher class guaranteed in its existence by the labour of the subjects, is deprived of all encouraging reasons to personal endeavour; in the lower classes, on the other hand, forced labour and a desperate situation kill all energy and initiative.*(42) As regards the question of whether emancipation should be with or without land, Chicherin asserted that the peasants must be emancipated with land, in fact with the land which they were tilling for their own use before the abolition of serfdom, (43) because "peasants must not be homeless farm labourers but settled property holders".(44) In spite of such a criticism of serfdom and advocacy for emancipation, Chicherin proposed redemption of both land and person as the basis for abolition of serfdom.(45)

Part 3

Chernyshevskii's views on the Commune and
his theory of social development.

Chapter One Chernyshevskii and the economic advantages
of the Commune

As capitalism developed in the 19th century in western Europe, there was a growing concern in Russia about the impoverishment and pauperisation of workers that went hand in hand with such a development. All variants of public opinion were apprehensive of the formation of a proletariat within Russian society in the event of a capitalist path of development of her economy. Consequently the government was not keen on freeing the serfs even if the situation demanded so lest the free serf population were transformed into a city proletariat. The radical intelligentsia, on the other hand, fought for the emancipation of serfs and projected a non-capitalistic path of development. The main source of such a socialist trend of thought lay in the existence of a village organisation known as the obshchina (commune). The socialist pattern of corporate ownership of land by the members of the commune and the nature of its redistribution amongst them prompted social thinkers to believe that Russia could avoid capitalism and its associated miseries if she could build ^{an} economy based on an improved form of the communal organisation. The salient feature of the commune was that land at its disposal was owned communally. The rationale of its distribution among its members was described by Baron von Haxthausen: "The following information was given to us concerning the division of land in the village Communes. The principle is, that the whole of the land (tillage, meadows, pasture, woods, streams, etc.,) belongs to the population regarded as a unity, and every male inhabitant has a right to an equal share. This share is therefore constantly changing; for the birth

of every boy creates a new claim, and the share of those who die revert to the Commune. The woods, pastures, hunting-grounds, and fisheries remain undivided, and free to all the inhabitants; but the aerable land and meadows are divided, according to their value, amongst the males. This equal division is of course difficult, as the soil differs in quality, and portions of it may be distant or inconveniently situated. There are however in each commune skilful land-surveyors, without any education but what has been acquired from the traditional habits of the place, who execute the work to the satisfaction of all; the land is first divided, according to its quality, position, or general value, into sections, each possessing on the whole equal advantages, the sections are then divided into as many portions, in long strips, as there are shares required, and these are taken by lot. This is the usual plan but each District, and frequently each Commune, has its local customs and it would be very interesting to collect these. The allotment takes place in an assembly of the whole Commune, including the women and children. A very just spirit prevails, and disputes never occur. If too small a share is supposed to have fallen to any one, it is made up to him of the reserve. In the Government of Yaroslav, for instance, many of the Communes have peculiar measuring rods, which are almost regarded as sacred; they correspond with the quality of the soil, the rod for the best land being the shortest, and that for the worst the longest; the shares therefore vary in size, but are equal in value."(1)

In his numerous writings, Herzen also expressed the belief that the village commune was the key to the trans-

formation of Russian society. He believed that powerful elements of socialism were included in the very structure of the obshchina. "In the form of communal ownership," he said, "socialism becomes realistically possible; under hereditary land ownership it is deprived of its basis. Perhaps theoretical socialism does not recognise this because it does not find its worked-out forms in the existing communes. But in historical experience as well as in all types of organic life, forms are realised not according to prescription but according to the necessary combination of highly complex elements." (2) Herzen was evidently attacking the necessitarian socialist position of his time. He was also opposed to the contemporary liberal opinion in Russia which considered the commune an outdated organisation serving no longer any useful purpose. Herzen believed that although the commune was an ancient institution it could rescue Russia from the series of misfortunes that western Europe was subjected to. But he insisted that it was not the fear of impoverishment of the masses but the dream of a healthy society that prompted him to advocate the benefits of the commune. "There are different attitudes to the Russian commune", he says. "Many valued it especially for economic reasons and among other things (they) find that the communal organisation will rescue (Russia) from proletarianisation. I, for my part, find the communal organisation only a guarantee of an orderly, healthy and a humane rural administration in Russia. Besides, I love the commune because I am convinced that communal life has saved the Russian peasants from an ultimate and a total intellectual and moral decline." (3) Elsewhere Herzon stated that the peasants who were united in a commune were

immune from the misfortunes that an individual peasant proprietor was vulnerable to. If there were crop failures or other misfortunes, it was the landlord who would lose his estate but the members of the commune would remain in a healthy bond as before, though temporarily in a straightened economic circumstance.(4)

Many followed Herzen, Ogarev and Chernyshevskii in believing that Russia had a unique advantage over other European nations because the commune was still a living social organism, whereas elsewhere it had virtually disappeared. Herzen said that the Russian commune survived in spite of the 'blows of Imperial battering'. Ogarev, Herzen's friend and collaborator, stated that the future of Russia depended on the commune. "...Right to land and its communal ownership" he wrote, "presupposes communal reorganisation as a geneological base of the whole structure of the state which was supposed to develop on this basis. The communal administration survived in spite of the pressure of foreign governments and power of the landlords... This character of communal administration struck Haxthausen, then various American travellers, including the well-known economist Carey, who himself told me this year after returning from Russia, that in the corporate principle of our commune lies the great foundation of self-administration. Thus, immemorial elements of cooperation brought in by the Russian peasants through the Mir are now coming into their own and meeting the need of economic transformation in Europe."(5)

Ogarev mentions three principles of this transformation and insists that only on the basis of these principles could Russia progress towards the future. These are:

(a) right of everyone to land, (b) communal ownership of land, and (c) communal administration.(6)

Haxthausen also discovered a unique potential in the Russian commune, that is, its capacity to hinder a social process leading to the formation of a proletariat in Russia. "The facts here described" he says "constitute the basis of the Russian communal system, one of the most remarkable and interesting political institutions in existence, and which possesses great advantages for the social condition of the country. The communes present an organic coherence and compact social strength which can be found nowhere else, and yield the incalculable advantage that no proletariat can be formed so long as they exist with their present constitution. A man may lose or squander all he possesses, but his children do not inherit his poverty: they still retain their claim upon the land, by a right not derived from him, but from their birth as members of the commune."(7) Elsewhere Haxthausen states paradoxically that the commune not only protects Russian society from proletarianisation and pauperism but also defends her from the assaults of socialistic and communistic ideas. "Russia has nothing to fear" he says, echoing or anticipating the Slavophiles, "from the revolutionary tendencies which threaten the rest of Europe. Its own internal healthy organisation protects it against pauperism and the doctrines of communism and socialism. In the other modern states, pauperism and proletarianisation are the festering sores to which the present condition of society has given birth. Can they be healed? The communistic doctors propose, as a preliminary step, the destruction of the present organisation, as new

buildings can best be erected upon a tabula rasa. But death never produces life. One thing however is certain, if these people succeed in carrying out their schemes, the result will not be a political but a social revolution, a war against all property, and complete anarchy. Will new states then be constituted, and upon what basis, moral or social? Who can raise the veil of the future? and what course will Russia then take? A Russian proverb says, "I sit upon the shore and wait for the wind"(8) Though Haxthausen considered the Commune a bulwark against socialism, he finds funnily enough that through it the principles of St. Simon were being realised in Russia. It is worth quoting his observations in length because Chernyshevskii introduced a lengthy discussion in his own polemic against Vernadskii of the utility of communal ownership of land based on this observation by Haxthausen.

"We see, at present," Haxthausen says, "three distinct principles prevailing with regard to the possession of land in Europe. In three countries they are distinctly marked, and in the others they exist in a modified form."

"In England we find this principle: the land must be divided as little as possible, and only so many hands devoted to agriculture as are absolutely necessary; for in this way alone can it be energetically prosecuted and maintained in a flourishing condition. The whole country therefore is cultivated by means of large (though not overgrown) farms, which have the advantage of providing work the whole year for all the hands employed upon the land and no labour is lost. Lasting improvements can only be effected upon large farms.

"The second principle is represented by France. "

The principle is this: Agriculture is a free-trade employment, and therefore all the land must be divisible; every man must be able to acquire it; in other words, the land must be a commodity, and pass like a coin from hand to hand. It is in consequence subdivided into innumerable small properties.

"The third principle is represented by Russia. France has the principle of divisibility of the soil: Russia goes much further; it divides it constantly. France represents the principle of free competition, and considers all the land as a commodity which every one can acquire with money: Russia gives the right to every one of her sons to participate in the usufruct of the land, in perfect equality in each Commune. In France the land is the private property of the individual: in Russia it is the property of the people, and their microcosm the Commune, the individual having only a right to the usufruct in common with all the rest. That agriculture cannot attain so high a degree under this system as in England, or even in Germany, must be allowed; but in our opinion it might attain the degree which it has reached in France, if some other conditions of social progress were fulfilled, and certain obstacles removed.

"In considering the social condition of Russia, ... we cannot fail to be struck with the remarkable points of comparison which it offers to the dreams of some of the modern political sects, particularly the St. Simonians and the Communists. The social state however which they imagine to be the highest development of the human race can never be established upon the bases of their doctrines, because these are unchristian, untrue, and atheistical;

it would be to build upon sand, and anarchy would be the certain consequence of the attempt. But I deny that such an order of things, apart from the principles upon which these sectaries would erect it, is in itself unchristian and unreasonable, and therefore impossible: the present condition of Russia is a proof, that a political and social State and a Christian monarchy may coexist with such institutions.

"The St. Simonians would abolish all private property in land, and the right of inheriting it, substituting only a life interest in its place. In Russia this arrangement actually exists. Among the people, individuals have usually no property in land, not even a certain and fixed occupation; they have only a claim to the usufruct; there can therefore be no inheritance. The principles however which lie at the base of this social condition are different from those upon which the St. Simonians would establish their modern polity; they are completely national, and adapted to a Christian monarchy.

"According to St. Simon, the land belongs to the Spirit of Humanity, as the God of the earth. Every man is a temporary emanation from this Deity; and therefore, so long as he exists as an individual in the world, and has not yet flowed back into the universal spirit, he has a right to a certain amount of what the earth produces. This right however is wholly personal; he cannot bequeath it to his children, for these, like all past and future generations, are emanations, and have merely a personal, not an inherited, claim to a portion of the earth's produce.

"The Russians, on the other hand, say that the earth

belongs to the Creator, and has been granted by Him to Adam and his descendants. Successive generations inherited possession; and as their numbers increased they occupied a greater extent of the earth's surface, which they shared under the Divine guidance in the world's history. The country now called Russia fell to the progenitors of the Russians; and his descendants, remaining united under the head of their race, and thus constituting a people, spread over the territory which has thus by the providence of God become their property. The disposal of it, as in a family, belongs to the father, the head of the race, the Czar: an individual has a right to share in it only so long as he lives in unity with the Czar, and his people. The soil is the joint property of the national family, and the father or Czar has the sole disposal of it, and distributes it among the families into which the nation has in the course of time been divided.

"A joint occupancy of the whole could only exist while the people led a nomadic life: when they became settled, a portion was assigned to each family, which occupied its share under a separate head. The right of the family thus arose in a manner quite analogous to that of the nation. The property is a family property, belonging equally but undivided to all the members of the family, --the father having the disposal and distribution of the produce. If a member insists on a division, he receives his portion, but loses all claim upon the joint possession; he is paid off and excluded, and thenceforth constitutes a new family. The families thus remained for many generations under their respective heads, and became family Communes: hence arose the communal rights". "The Commune

is still considered in law to form a family. If a stranger comes to reside in a village, he is adopted. Every member has an equal claim upon the joint and undivided communal property; the distribution of the produce rests with the fathers, the 'Whiteheads' or the Starosta (Elder). A member cannot possess private property in the land, and therefore cannot bequeath it; but his sons, by virtue of their birth into the family, have an immediate right to a share in the joint property and its usufruct.

"According to St. Simon, the individual, as an emanation from the God of the earth, has a joint right to the possessions of the whole earth. With the Russian people, the individual, as a son of the Czar, as a Russian, and member of the Commune, has a joint right to Russia which has been granted by God to the Russian people, and particularly to the property of the family or Commune to which he belongs." (9)

Chernyshevskii discussed the commune in its various aspects in a number of articles published in Sovremennik, mainly between 1856 and 1859. Two of his publications - 'Baron von Haxthausen's Studies of the Internal Relations of National Life and in Particular of the Rural Institution of Russia' ('Issledovaniya o vnutrennikh otnosheniyakh narodnoi zhizni i v osobennosti sel'skikh uchrezhdeniyakh Rossi Barona Avgusta Gakstgausena') and 'On the Landed Property' (O pozemelnoi sobstvennosti) - were aimed at refuting the arguments put forward by Vernadskii, a well-known economist in Chernyshevskii's time, who called in question the relevance of the commune for Russian society. Vernadskii characterised the commune as an old outdated organisation which had no justification in the middle

of the 19th century. He expressed his view in an article in the journal 'Economic Indicator' (Ekonomicheskii ukazatel). There ensued a long series of arguments and counter-arguments on the pages of Sovremennik and Ekonomicheskii ukazatel. Vernadskii's economic ideas were derived from western sources and he believed that private property in land was a higher and a more progressive form of ownership than the communal one: Russia could not be an exception to this principle. Vernadskii went as far as to brand supporters of communal land ownership as 'dilletantes in science'.(10) Chernyshevskii's first reaction to this attack on communal landownership was to present a detailed evaluation of Haxthausen's findings on the commune in the above cited article (Issledovaniya etc.) and to show that in the conditions prevailing in Russia, communal landownership, in spite of its archaic and patriarchal nature, was a living and beneficial force and that it could be developed further in order to foster the economic growth of the country. According to Chernyshevskii, large scale farming in agriculture needed a substantial amount of capital and this was not available in Russia at that time. Moreover the commune and the communal administration were part and parcel of Russian rural life and a large section of the rural population were wedded to this concept of land ownership. If one accepts, Chernyshevskii said, even for argument's sake, that sufficient capital was available to transform the Russian rural economy into a western system, then doing this would destroy the organic foundation of rural life because a large number of people had given the allegiance to the village commune. Consequently, the breakdown of

the communal structure in the village was not desirable. Chernyshevskii did not deny that there were elements of patriarchalism in the communal structure and he also admitted that rapid economic growth was needed. But while pursuing the policy of economic growth, was there any need to destroy the communal basis of land ownership?(11) He agreed that a patriarchal form of economic organisation was incompatible with a high degree of civilisation and that is why the majority of the people of his time subscribed to the view that such organisations should be done away with in the interest of the national economy.(12) But he asserted that the particular form of an organisation and principles on which it^{is}/based are two different ideas. Even if the patriarchal form of communal organisation was replaced by a modern one, the communal principle of redistribution of land should be preserved because, provided serfdom is abolished, this principle was superior in Russia to that of private ownership of land.(13) It should be preserved, firstly, because of the painful experience of the transformation of the rural economy into a capitalistic one in western Europe; and secondly in the structure of communal organisation was to be found a means of guaranteeing the maximum well-being of the people by resorting to socialist production, the seeds of which lay hidden in the commune.(14)

In his polemic against Vernadskii on the utility of the commune, Chernyshevskii extensively used Haxthausen's arguments in its favour. It may come as a surprise to many that Chernyshevskii, an outspoken opponent of the gentry interest, should support the arguments of Haxthausen, a Prussian landlord, on a question of agricultural economics.

But his attitude to Haxthausen is ambiguous. "Firstly, it is necessary to say," Chernyshevskii writes, "that Haxthausen in his political views is not only not a republican, or a liberal or even a simple conservative, but is a complete reactionery of the kind to be found only in Germany among the landlords of some Prussian provinces... He regards any German or French who does not recognise the necessity of monarchical power in either Germany or France as the enemy of God or of his fatherland. He not only desires the revival of monarchical power in those countries of western Europe where a struggle is going on between autocracy and constitutional structure, but would also have wished to introduce autocratic monarchy in north America, which is inferior to Russia in respect of political organisation." (15)

And yet Chernyshevskii uses Haxthausen's view on the commune in arguing with Vernadskii, because in Chernyshevskii's own words, "he (Haxthausen) is a fine agronomist and knows about the agricultural institution of all the countries of western Europe thoroughly and particularly of Germany which he studied extensively from the economic point of view; he not only knows these institutions well but argues about them with fairness. He is a highly practical man," especially in those matters where one can entertain independent opinions through close familiarity with them. He was not actively involved in politics; while talking politics, he takes for granted certain traditional concepts peculiar to the class in which he was brought up and still lives. But as soon as he comes to agricultural problems, Haxthausen sheds his skin of a Prussian landlord, and turns into a fairly enlightened,

experienced and astute landowner. He does not even care what this or that political party may think of him. He would confine himself to a consideration of the rural economic or the general economic consequences of the communal institution. He disowns institutions favoured by his own political party, whenever he finds that they are disadvantageous or unsatisfactory for the national economy. He openly declares that : 'The economic sphere must be separate from political prejudice or partiality: questions about national well-being are higher than arguments about political form.'(16) In spite of such praise of Haxthausen for his understanding of agricultural question, one cannot fail to see that Haxthausen's defense of the communal structure in Russia was entirely serving the interest of the autocracy. He thought of the Tsar as the father of the nation and regarded members of the commune as the Tsar's children.(17) He also failed to mention that the role of the landlords would become useless if one adheres strictly to the communal principle. So Haxthausen spoke in favour of a society based on the coexistence of Tsar, the nobility and the members of the commune - a position which Chernyshevskii could not, of course, share. In this respect Chernyshevskii's attitude was characteristically unequivocal. To fight against Vernadskii, he used those arguments of Haxthausen with which he agreed and openly criticised/^{those} which he could not accept. For example, Vernadskii had argued in the above mentioned journal that communal organisation was a hindrance to the effectiveness of capital investment in increasing the agricul-

tural production in Russia, because of the small size and fragmentated nature of communal holdings. If total agricultural production was the criterion, Vernadskii's argument was correct. Chernyshevskii opposed this view because he believed in the fundamental economic principle that more total production at the expense of many of the people is to be rejected in favour of a smaller total production which is fairly distributed among all. He admitted that enclosure of the land of the communes and creation of privately owned large scale farms would increase production but this would be at the expense of the landholders of the commune who would become landless labours. Then, paradoxically, Chernyshevskii asserted that an outlay of capital is not economically viable in land in the absence of communal ownership. He refers to Haxthausen in this matter saying that, "as a practical man, Haxthausen correctly observes that if communal ownership in actuality was a hindrance to the investment of capital for increasing agricultural production as in western Europe, then without communal ownership such an investment of capital is even more impossible in Russia".(18) After presenting some of Haxthausen's views on the need for preserving the commune as a rural institution in Russia, Chernyshevskii goes on to point out in clear terms the defects in Haxthausen's position. The latter expressed the opinion that communal tillage in all its aspects was a special feature of a Slavic or Great Russian community. Chernyshevskii was of the opinion that the village commune had been a living organisation in all the countries of western Europe and that the communal spirit had been a powerful uniting force of the people in these countries.

But, in the course of time, many of these countries had gone through a series of economic and social changes. As a result, the communes disintegrated and gave away to new forms of rural economic organisations, devoid of cohesion. In Russia the village commune survived and served a very useful purpose. This did not necessarily mean that Russia remained absolutely free from the economic upheavals peculiar to western European countries. The growth of industrialisation and capitalistic modes of production - the two most vital signs of economic change in western Europe - had affected Russia. Still, Chernyshevskii did not see any important symptoms of the cracking up of communal organisation in Russia. He even contended that it remained as powerful and well-knit in the middle of the 19th as in the 17th century.(19) Therefore it was not some sort of esoteric quality of the Slav people but an ascertainable practice as well as a necessity of social survival.

Chernyshevskii was also critical of Haxthausen's view that communal life in the Russian villages was a translation of Saint-Simonism into reality. According to Chernyshevskii, Saint-Simon had a confused understanding and an underestimation of the economic implications of socialism, being as he was primarily concerned with social organization. The commune was socialistic in the economic sense and therein resided its importance.(20) Admittedly economic transformation was not sufficient to effect a complete change in the patterns of social life. According to Chernyshevskii, socialism ^{encompasses} all aspects of life, starting from one's attitude to one's neighbour to the people of another country.(21) The main objective for

which socialism strives is the betterment of the life of men. By 'betterment of the life of men,' Chernyshevskii wanted to convey two ideas - (a) betterment at a purely economic level and (b) betterment at a purely moral or intellectual level. The former, according to Chernyshevskii, is a prerequisite for the attainment of the latter. Saint-Simon's idea of socialism ignored this and turned into an 'undetermined and exalted' (neopredelennoi i ekzal'tirovannoi) utopia which endeavoured to recreate the entire life of men by fitting it into an abstract formula, softened by appeals to 'love' which would replace the existing inimical relationship between man and man (even between a master and a worker).(22) In Haxthausen's scheme this 'love' was to operate between the members of the commune and the "father" of the land, the Tsar. Chernyshevskii denied that there could be a relationship of love between two parties whose interests clashed with one another. He even tried to analyse the word 'love' from a semantic angle and concluded that this had only an erotic significance. The confusion in Saint-Simon was worse confounded because he applied the same word to economic matters and to questions of marriage and free love. All this appeared to Chernyshevskii as highly unscientific. How indeed is one to explain the economic structure of a society or the cause of its transformation by means of such notions?(23)

The Russian communal organisations then, whose socialism was economic in nature had nothing to do with the translation of Saint-Simonian ideas into reality. In this connection Chernyshevskii makes a general point about the priority of economics in all discussions of political

problems and insists that political economy is the basis of scientific social thinking.(24) This idea was not known in the days of Saint-Simon whose system, according to Chernyshevskii, was outmoded and irrelevant as a social science and indeed as a philosophy of life.

In the second of his works on the commune referred to earlier (25) Chernyshevskii continued his polemic on the superiority of communal ownership of land against both Vernadskii and his journal 'Ekonomicheskii ukazatel'. After the publication of Chernyshevskii's first article (Issledovaniya etc.) Vernadskii made a comment in his journal (Ek, uk. no.25) that the village commune issue was neither a contemporary nor an important one in Russia. Vernadskii went as far as to say that only dilettants in science would be concerned with such issues.(26) This adverse comment provoked Chernyshevskii to publish a lengthy reply in the form of a treatise, not only to challenge Vernadskii's remarks but also to establish the case for the village commune. Chernyshevskii commented that it was very surprising that Vernadskii did not find anything important or contemporary in communal landownership. Any living force in a country was bound to be contemporaneous and if a large number of people adhere to the principles of a particular economic organisation, it must be regarded as important regardless of any prejudice against it. "You do not consider the question of the preservation or destruction of communal ownership as either contemporary or too important", Chernyshevskii addressed himself to Vernadskii, "but millions of people in Russia use the land according to the right of communal ownership; if the French consider their law of the equal division among children of their inheritance to be an important

historical achievement, then why is the question of the right of ownership not important? The law of inheritance allows every Frenchman to be in a position to receive something sometime, will many of them receive it? But each one of the fifteen million Russians who makes use of land by this right are interested directly and constantly in the right to communal ownership. Inheritance is an important fact of national life, but it is only a partial case of the right to property; many things depend on inheritance, yet not the whole of economic life; but many things definitely depend on property. This question is 'not contemporary' - but is not everybody really arguing about economic transformation, is not everybody preparing for it, are we not each in our own way preparing for it"? (27) Chernyshevskii attached more importance to property than to inheritance because the right to inherit itself does not guarantee the right to acquire property.

The next point of controversy between Chernyshevskii and Vernadskii turned on the definition of the proletariat and on whether the members of the commune could be called a proletariat. Chernyshevskii, in his article 'Issledovaniya etc.' traced the origins of the proletariat in England and France. He stated that in course of the transformation of ownership of land from the communal to the private form a great number of people who had no immovable property were transformed into proletarians. Vernadskii in his reply stated that in France many proletarians had immovable property. (28) Chernyshevskii expressed great surprise at this remark and asserted that as soon as a group of people were termed proletarians, the question of them owning immovable property did not arise because

owning immovable property and being a proletarian were by definition, exclusive categories.(29) According to him, a group of men may be very poor, may live in miserable conditions, may have only sufficient means to subsist, but in spite of this may own immovable property. But they can no longer be called proletarians. On the other hand, a group of people, in spite of not owning immovable property, may lead an ordered life by selling their labour and may be better off than the aforementioned group.

"The French settlers", he says, "who have five hectares of land may live very meagrely if their land is bad or if their families are too large, but nevertheless they are not proletarians; on the other hand a factory worker in Paris or Lyons can live in a warmer and more comfortable room, can eat more tasty food and dress better than these agriculturists; yet they will be proletarians if they have neither immovable property nor capital, and if their fate depends exclusively on wages!"(30) Chernyshevskii's argument seems unassailable here. Vernadskii plainly made the mistake of confusing the notions of the poor and of the proletariat. Having made his point, Chernyshevskii ironically observed that, following Vernadskii's classification of people, some blind men may be found who had some vision.(31)

This controversy between Chernyshevskii and Vernadskii is not important in itself. It indicates why Chernyshevskii attached importance to property, especially immovable property, rather than to inheritance. He was such an outspoken supporter of communal ownership of land (which was one form of property) because he was confident that only communal ownership could prevent a large section of the

Russian people from becoming propertyless proletarians. He did not believe in the process of the alienation of the producers from the means of production. He was an opponent of private ownership of land because this had led to the creation of a large rural proletariat in England and a substantial fall in the general well-being of the masses. As will be discussed later, he even presented a new theory of social change which would avoid the development of capitalism in Russia (and thus of a landless proletariat). This theory had as its main emphasis in the communal ownership of land and property not by inheritance but by the principle of redistribution amongst the members of the commune.

One might wonder, as Vernadskii did, how the members of a commune differed from proletarians when they had neither the right to inherit property nor to sell or mortgage it.(32) Chernyshevskii pointed out that the difference lay in the manner in which the members of the commune utilised their land. They remained the owners of land during the whole of their life time because the commune was concerned with advantages of the members only during their life span although the children of deceased members had an equal right to become members of the commune.(33) In the case of the proletarians there was no question of such privilege or any possibility of acquiring property. Chernyshevskii gives the following example to clarify the distinction. Supposing a joint-stock ~~company~~ for water transport was formed with an authorised capital of ten million rubles and that one of the founders bought shares worth, say, 200,000 rubles and on the strength of this investment was made director of the firm but only on the condition that as a director he would have no right to sell or mortgage

his holding in the company. If such a director has no other means apart from the money invested in the stock of the company, Chernyshevskii asks whether he can be classed as a proletarian?(34) He is correct in pointing out that owning a property without the right to sell or mortgage it (as in the case of the above director) is quite different from not owning a property at all, or for owning a property for only a short period, that is, during one's lifetime. But Chernyshevskii failed to notice that a director of a company, even if he is not entitled to sell or mortgage his holdings during his lifetime, has the right to leave it as a legacy to his children, which right was absent in the Russian commune. In concluding his polemic with Vernadskii, Chernyshevskii maintained the idea of the economic superiority of communal ownership over private ownership in concrete terms. He considered two possibilities in this connection: (a) production on land under private ownership where the owner received the bulk of the income accrued from this land, while the others, the farmers and agricultural wage earners, receive only a very small portion of this income. (For argument's sake Chernyshevskii assumed that the landlord, because of his capacity to invest the necessary capital, will be able to produce more than in any other form of ownership); and (b) production under communal ownership where each member will receive an income more than that which can be obtained as a wage earner in a farm owned by a private landlord. Here the assumption is that the members of the commune because of insufficient capital will not be in a position to effect much improvement in the techniques of production and hence the total production

will be less than that possible in a farm owned by an individual. Chernyshevskii explains the two possibilities thus: "Let us take two holdings of 5000 dessyatin of land (one square mile). There are 2000 men on each holding. One holding is divided into thirty farms; with the improved method of agriculture of the second period (the period when private property is evidently advantageous) each dessyatina gives in general an income of 20 rubles. Of these 5 rubles go as rent to the landlords, 6 rubles as wage and maintenance of the workers and 9 rubles remain at the disposal of the farm. In the second holding, on account of communal ownership, cultivation was less successful, and a dessyatina gives an income of 12 rubles, but this entire income remains at the disposal of the tillers, all of whom according to the general communal principle participate in the use of the land. Let us compare these two holdings:

The general value of production in the first holding = 5000 times 20 = 100,000 rubles. The general value of production in the second holding = 5000 times 12 = 60,000 rubles."

"As regards production, that of the holding with the farms has a much higher value than that of the holding with the communal usage. But let us turn from the state of production to the condition of the people who live on these holdings. Let us consider the situation as it affects each family, assuming that each family consists of five people.

Holding with the Farms:

1 Family (the landlord) receives	5 times 5000 =
	25,000 rubles.

30 families (farmers) receives 9 times 5000 = 45,000 rubles
or each family gets 1500 rubles.

369 Families (Hired agricultural workers) get 6 times 5000 =
30,000 rubles or each family gets 81 rubles 25 kopeks.

The Holding with Communal Ownership:

400 families receive 12 times 5000 = 60,000 rubles or
each family receives 150 rubles.

The conclusion is clear. In the second holding the
mass of the population are almost twice as well off as
those in the first, though the value of produce in the
first is almost twice as much as that of the second."(35)

This is Chernyshevskii's calculation in support of
the superiority of communal over private ownership. The
well-being of the majority is ensured even if the level
of production is not maximum. He restates the argument
in a concluding remark to Vernadskii: "Opponents of com-
munal landownership assert that (under this form of
ownership) a dessyatina of land cannot give as large an
income as under agriculture by farming. ...even if this
unfounded prejudice is valid, for the majority of agri-
culturists communal ownership is more advantageous, be-
cause in the case of agriculture under farming the majo-
rity of the agriculturists are turned into hired workers,
and therefore, although with the system of farms the amount
of value produced was greater, the condition of the majo-
rity of the agricultural class is nevertheless better
under communal tillage." (36)

In all his economic arguments, Chernyshevskii adhered
to this principle which he took as a foundation from
which to make his critique of the dominant political economy

of his time and on which to base his own theory of socialist production.

CHAPTER TWO CHERNYSHEVSKII'S DIALECTICAL THEORY OF DEVELOPMENT,
ITS APPLICATION TO THE QUESTION OF COMMUNAL PROPERTY
OWNERSHIP

In 1858 Chernyshevskii published an article in Sovremennik entitled, "A Critique of the Philosophical Prejudices against Communal Ownership" ('Kritika filosofskikh predubezhdenii protiv obshchinnogo vladeniya'). The original purpose of this article was to restate his case on communal ownership and to refute the arguments in favour of private property. On this occasion he produced two of his celebrated arguments in defence of communal ownership. In the first of these, he developed a theory of social change based upon Hegelian dialectics, but, unlike the German philosopher, ^{he} shifted his attention from "the logic of movement of ideas to that of movement of things" (1). His second concern was whether in processes of social change a society had to pass through all stages to reach the culmination of its development. Chernyshevskii came to the conclusion that it is possible for a society to by-pass an intermediate stage in its development while attaining the highest degree of development.

According to Chernyshevskii, contradiction and struggle between content and form are the most powerful causes of development and change in all spheres of nature and society. By 'content' Chernyshevskii meant the aggregative effect of the interplay of forces within a given structure, either in nature or in society or in the life of an individual. The structure in this case is the 'form'. When a change takes place in the content, it comes into conflict with the form of the hitherto unchanged content. In Chernyshevskii's language, the content becomes 'aggravated' because of its change and thus the form associated with it becomes incapable of holding the same

content within its limits. Consequently, the latter discards its old form and accepts a new one. So, development is an endless process of abandonment of old and birth of new forms. This is Chernyshevskii's universal law of progress which applies not only in society but also in nature. This idea is original in that it points out the inevitability of social change. "The eternal change of form, eternal abandonment of forms, born of certain contents or aspiration due to an aggravation of that aspiration, highest development of the same content - who has understood this eternal general law, who has learnt it to apply to all types of phenomena - oh, how calmly he takes chances which trouble others - he does not complain of that which has outlived its time and says, 'let it happen - we will win the day in spite of everything'." (2) Development thus consists of endless 'aggravation' of the content and endless change of the form; each phase of the process following the dialectical principle of 'negation of negation'. According to the dialectical principle of change enunciated by Hegel, the development of every event passes through three states, of which the last one resembles the first but is at a higher level. Chernyshevskii stated this dialectical law in the following manner: "The end of the development is a return to its beginning" (3). He used the word to mean that the end will resemble the beginning in form. (4) He explains the character of development by asserting that when the content of a particular form reaches a stage of extreme 'aggravation', it discards or is emancipated from the old and gives birth to a new form. When this process has continued for a long time the content reaches its fullest development; it then returns to the form which existed at the very beginning of the process of development. This is due to the fact that "the surplus of quality

affects the form in a way opposite to that by which the lesser degree of the same quality affected it." (5) Chernyshevskii further adds in this connection that everywhere the most powerful development of the content leads to the revival of the same form which had been abandoned when the content was weak and undeveloped.

By 'everywhere' Chernyshevskii means nature as well as society.

In all these somewhat abstract arguments Chernyshevskii endeavours to explain that development involves not simply a quantitative but a qualitative change. He spoke of distinct social periods each arising as the result of the struggle between content and form; and each of these periods was characterised by him as something qualitatively different from the previous phase. He gave several examples illustrating the dialectical development of history. His main purpose in presenting these illustrations was to refute the opinion prevalent in his time that private ownership of the means of production was the most developed form of property relations that had ever existed and that communal ownership was a vestige of a bygone era. Chernyshevskii contended that private ownership had no resemblance either in form or in content with first form of property relation which was communal; hence private ownership could not be the most developed form. The Russian commune was not the most developed form of communal ownership but it was not primitive either, and there were reasons to believe that the commune could be developed further in response to social needs. Since, according to Chernyshevskii's theory of dialectical development of society, 'the end of a development is a return to its beginning' and since the Russian commune resembled the primitive commune in form, he held that communal ownership of the means of production and not the private ownership was the most developed form of property relations.

Chernyshevskii illustrates this contention by taking some examples of social activity. "At the beginning we find small tribes, where each governs itself quite independently and is united in a common bond with other homogeneous tribes only in a few cases when these demand common action: for example, in case of war and other relations with foreign nations; and also in undertakings which exceed the means of one tribe; for example, gigantic structures such as the tower of Babylon and the Cyclopean walls. Each member of the tribe is united with the other not only by legal obligation, but by living personal interests, on account of mutual acquaintance, blood relationship and the common advantages of neighbours. Each member takes a personal and active part in all matters concerning the social group to which he belongs. In the language of a scholar such a state of affairs is called self-rule and federation. Little by little the small tribes become more and more merged, so that they are finally absorbed as regards administration into large states such as France, Austria, Prussia, etc. The administrative character of societies in this stage of development is bureaucracy, a complete contrast to the primitive tribal way of life. Administrative districts are defined with less and less relation to the interests of the inhabitants themselves who lay independent of the central source. Neither in Prussia nor in Austria has the region corresponding to our uezd any living connection between its various parts; only by a wider demarcation of the provinces have living connections between the component parts been maintained. But this is a deviation from the general rule and at the first opportunity reforms are carried out such as have already succeeded in dividing France into departments devoid of organic unity instead of the former provinces. Members of an administrative district having no living connection either through

their history or their material interests are at the same time deprived of the full power that they had before in the administration of the region. Everything is managed by a special kind of men, called officials and police, who by their origin and in their personal relationship have no connection with the people of the region; they are transferred from one place to another simply in the interest of the central authority; they act on its orders and are obliged to submit an account of their activities to it alone. An inhabitant of the region in relation to its administration is a purely passive person, *materia gubernanda*. Is it necessary to say that society cannot stop at this stage? Switzerland and the North American States are in administrative structure a complete return from a bureaucratic order to the primitive conditions before the rise of big states." (6) Thus Chernyshevskii seeks to show that the latest stage of any development in any sphere of activity corresponds in form to the primitive stage. Though his characterisation of administration of Switzerland is correct, his assessment of the form of government in the North American states is not entirely correct. In the southern states a large number of the inhabitants were still slaves, unable to play any role in government.

The development of a judiciary in society is another case in point cited by Chernyshevskii. According to him, in the primitive stage, administration and execution of justice were carried out by common men; the responsibility of imparting justice was shared by all the male members of a tribe. The communal assembly was the only operative body and each male member of the tribe had the right to participate in the proceedings of the communal assembly. In the course of time the judiciary became separated from the common men and the task of making judicial decisions was increasingly restricted to people who were specially trained in this field. But, according to Chernyshevskii, social development did not stop

at this point; it continued further and eventually the ordinary members of society who had been deprived of the right to administer justice were reinstated in their former position by being given the right to become members of the jury in trials. (7) This was a 'return' to the primitive form. Chernyshevskii divides the history of justice into three distinct stages - (a) trial by the whole society, (b) trial by the jurists (a special class of people qualified to do the same) and (c) trial by jury (who are again ordinary members of the society without any special legal training).

(8) This is a typical example of Chernyshevskii's dialectical method applied to the development of social phenomena. He also finds dialectical change in the development of a language. At the very first stage there were neither grammatical complexities nor complexities of manner and style. Everyone expressed his thought in a simple, unambiguous form. In the course of time complicated grammatical structures evolved with a multitude of inflections, conjugations and declensions. Chernyshevskii referred to Sanskrit, Latin and Greek as such complex languages. But as society emerged from the ancient past, the need for more spontaneous communication arose. Consequently the content of the living language could no longer express itself in complex, archaic forms of communication. As a result linguistic patterns came into being in accordance with new social and cultural needs; new languages evolved with a minimum of inflection, intricacy, convention. A process of simplification ensued. The end of the development was a return to the beginning. (9)

It should be borne in mind that Chernyshevskii never suggested that a 'return' to the original form signified a return to the exact original form. According to the dialectical law of development, the

last stage would be richer in content but will correspond to the initial or first stage of the development in form only. That is why, in speaking of simplicity as the sign of a more developed language, Chernyshevskii does not mean artlessness or naivete but, rather, elimination of the elaborate, the studied and the unnatural.

Chernyshevskii gave these examples in order to convince his opponents of the dialectical nature of historical development. He then applied this principle to show that the communal ownership and not private ownership was the highest form of property ownership. According to the dialectical law of development, then, the most developed social form would resemble the first stage which was the primitive commune. The village commune at that time in Russia was a living force and seemed to fit Chernyshevskii's pattern. He insisted that he was not championing a social organisation which had outlived its existence: he claimed to support the cause of social progress, since the commune in Russia was a progressive rural organisation. He admitted on numerous occasions that the commune as it existed was not at its highest stage of development, but insisted that there was potential for further development so that the commune would fulfil the task that society expected of it. This point is shown in Chernyshevskii's discussion of the theory of socialist production. He contends that, in spite of its limitations, the 19th century Russian commune was a more developed social organisation than private ownership of property because the commune alone could guarantee the maximum well-being of all its members. (10)

Another contribution of Chernyshevskii to the theory of social evolution was his idea of "decisive moments" (logicheskie momenty) in any development, whether in history or in nature. According to him,

any phenomenon passes through certain "logical" or "decisive" moments in the process of development from the initial to the most mature stage. In Chernyshevskii's view, some of these "decisive moments" were intermediate and some were final. (11) This point is again illustrated with reference to the development of linguistic expression, in particular, of writing. In the history of writing there were logographic and pictographic representation of ideas in the initial stage, as in the Chinese and Semitic languages. The next decisive moment was the invention of phonetic alphabets and these were combined to convey an idea. The development did not however stop here. The most mature stage was reached when new simplicity of structure and content came into its own. (12)

With regard to the economic sphere, the decisive moments in Chernyshevskii's view were these: (a) primitive economic organisation (the beginning of development) based on communal ownership of land. At this stage the outlay of capital on land was impossible since people pursued a largely nomadic life. Those engaged in agriculture had only one means of production - their own labour. As a result co-operation became absolutely essential and communal form of ownership helped to strengthen this co-operation; (b) the second stage (intensification of development): agriculture needed an outlay of sufficient capital and labour on land. Improvements were effected on land by capital investments and those who did it became the owners of land. Thus private property in land became the rule. (c) The third stage - the rise of speculation, (Chernyshevskii had evidently the capitalist form of production in mind) due to increasing trading and industrial activities. Speculation did not remain confined to industry alone, it also entered into agriculture. Consequently,

instead of small scale tilling, large scale farms became the order of the day. (13) "So", Chernyshevskii says, "the private ownership of land ceases to be a means to compensate for the outlay of capital for the improvement of land. At the same time the cultivation of land begins to demand an amount of capital that far exceeds the means of the great majority of the agriculturists; agricultural economy is on a scale that far exceeds the capacity of individual families and agricultural holdings; on account of its size it excludes (under private ownership) the great majority of agriculturists from any advantage which could be derived by the introduction of farming, and turns this majority into hired workers." (14) In the light of this state of affairs, according to Chernyshevskii, society would no longer derive any benefit or advantage from the form of private ownership in land (which was in fact capitalism in land). The next decisive moment would therefore be a communal form of ownership, which according to the dialectical pattern of growth would be a return to the form which existed at the first stage of economic development. "The communal ownership", Chernyshevskii says, "becomes the only means to enable the great majority of agriculturists to have a share in the reward offered by the land as a result of improvements effected on it by (their) labour." (15) So, communal ownership in land was not only necessary for the well-being of the agriculturists but also for the success of agriculture itself; it appeared to Chernyshevskii to be the only reasonable and healthy means to unite the interest of the agriculturists with the cause of improvement on land. Chernyshevskii emphatically stated that without this unity, a really successful productive activity was impossible.

In spite of the desirability of communal ownership, however, it was not the only form that existed in Russia in Chernyshevskii's time. In any case, capitalism either in land or in industry had not penetrated as deeply in Russia in the middle of the 19th century as in other European countries. According to the dialectical pattern of development presented by Chernyshevskii, Russia was supposed to pass through the stage of capitalist development (a "decisive moment") and only in case of too much 'aggravation' in the 'content' of this stage would a new form arise. Consequently, in spite of the virtues of communal ownership, Russia was supposed to pass through capitalism before reaching the phase of communal ownership. Hence the celebrated notion of 'by-passing the intermediate decisive moment' (capitalism). Chernyshevskii contended that, in spite of the fact that in any process of development the mature stage is reached after the necessary "decisive moment", in certain situations, any of the intermediate moments could be by-passed to reach the mature stage. For example, anyone who aspired to be proficient in a language does not need to go through all the stages in the development of a language or languages in general.(16) Without knowing anything of the Chinese or the Semitic languages (which were important "decisive moments" in the history of the development of languages) one can learn a modern language, though this language may represent a later stage in the development of writing. In other words, by-passing the intermediate "decisive moments" is a possibility if not a necessity in this case. Chernyshevskii also refers to the use of arms in the training of an army. The soldiers do not need to know how to use bows and arrows and other primitive weapons to become efficient fighters. They are straightaway taught to learn the use of modern weapons. What was true in the life of individuals (learning a language and the use of arms) was also true of a society. (17)

"Social life", he says, "is the sum of individual lives; and if in an individual life the course of events can jump from the lowest logical moment to the highest, by-passing those in the middle, then it is quite evident from this that we must expect to come across the same possibility in social life. This is simple mathematical deduction. In fact, let the course of development of an individual life not shortened by favourable circumstances be expressed by the progression:

1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64.

In this progression let each term express a moment which was not speeded by favourable circumstances of development. Let the society consist of A members. Then, evidently, the development of the society will be expressed by the following progression:

1A, 2A, 4A, 8A, 16A, 32A, 64A...

But we have seen that the course of an individual life can skip over from the first stage to the third or the fourth or the seventh; and let us suppose that with reference to a certain conception or fact it proceeded by the following rapid path:

1, 4, 64...

Then evidently the course of social life with reference to this event will be:

1A, 4A, 64A..." (18)

To make this rather notional example concrete, Chernyshevskii described the experience of the New Zealand settlers. He says that when people migrated to New Zealand, they found themselves faced with an uncultivated and almost uninhabited land. So, they had to start their lives from the very beginning in the new country. While doing so, they did not go through all the stages of human civilisation

to reach the present standard of social and economic development. In fact, they reached the level of development of any advanced nation in the quickest possible time. This is a clear case of by-passing the intermediate "decisive moment" in social development. (19)

The purpose of this whole argumentation was to show that it was not necessary for Russia to go through the painful stage of capitalist development. Russia could, according to Chernyshevskii, straightaway enter into a phase of socialist economy from the then existing economic structure. The seeds of a socialist economy, according to Chernyshevskii, were latent in the very structure of the commune. Chernyshevskii, of course, was not the first to put forward this idea. It was the cause of the idealisation of the commune by all Slavophil and early populist thinkers. But whereas the latter had only a vague conception of a socialist society, Chernyshevskii was concerned with practice as well as theory. He tried to show in concrete terms that the well-being of every individual, and the right to own the products of one's own labour, were the two basic principles of a society and that capitalism was incapable of safeguarding these conditions. The two principles were the product of rational analysis of real situations and not of preconceived ideas and preferences. (20) Fear of capitalism endemic among the Russian 19th century intelligentsia, does not in itself explain Chernyshevskii's advocacy of communal ownership and he cannot be criticised for unawareness of the necessary stages in social transformation. He found in the commune the essential ingredients for building up a healthy economy in Russia which would guarantee maximum well-being to its people. But there was a corollary reason for the need to by-pass capitalism in Russia; Chernyshevskii believed that the growth of capitalism as a way to a socialist society was in fact redundant in Russia. It could only delay the establishment of a

socialist economy because it would serve to impoverish, to 'proletarianize' Russian society. Unlike Marx, he held that Verelendung (immiseration) frustrates the advent of socialism in the face of an existing and viable economy.

Yet Chernyshevskii was not unaware that his theory was liable to criticism and ^{he} anticipated such criticism. If Russia by-passes capitalism and relies on the commune to build her new economy, would she not by the same token by-pass the technological and scientific developments associated with the growth of capitalism? He admitted that the commune as it existed in Russia in his time was at a much lower level, economically speaking, than economic organisation in Western Europe under capitalism. But so was the state of economy of the New Zealanders when they migrated to New Zealand. They raised their economic standard by utilising their knowledge of economically advanced countries. Chernyshevskii thinks optimistically that the situation would be the same in Russia, because there is a definite process of development of backward countries which he generalises as follows: (21) (a) when a certain society or nation reaches a high stage of development, another society or nation will take a comparatively short period to reach this stage. (England took 1500 years to reach that stage of civilisation which existed in the 19th century, whereas New Zealanders clearly took a much shorter period). (b) This quickening process takes place because of contact between the advanced and the backward countries. The contact also helps the backward country to develop certain economic forces which otherwise would have taken a long time to come into play if they could come into play at all. (c) Because of the rapidity of the process of development in backward countries, some of the stages of the

development are by-passed making those moments only potential but not actual. (The New Zealanders will know only from books that protectionism as a system existed in a particular economic period.)

These generalisations are not implausible. The process of economic development in backward countries all over the world in the 19th and 20th centuries followed largely the pattern predicted by Chernyshevskii. The experience of the contemporary developing countries also corresponds to this pattern. Chernyshevskii's views therefore, represent a valuable contribution to economic thinking.

Chernyshevskii summarised his theory of development as follows:

"(a) In form the highest stage of development corresponds to its beginning. (b) Under the influence of an advanced stage in development, which stage has been attained by advanced countries, this can be developed very quickly by other societies, the level can be raised direct from the lowest to the highest stage by-passing the intermediate logical moment." (22)

PART FOUR

Chernyshevskii and the Political Economy of his time
and his Theory of Socialist Production

CHAPTER ONE CHERNYSHEVSKII'S ATTITUDE TO 'LAISSEZ-FAIRE' PRINCIPLE

In formulating his economic views, Chernyshevskii always made a distinction between 'the wealth of a nation' and 'national well-being'. He did not consider these two ideas ^{identical} as did the classical economists. Political economy of the 18th and the first six decades of the 19th century in western Europe was mainly concerned with an enquiry into the causes of the wealth of nations. The classical economists believed that the invisible forces of an economy were always self-adjusting, and that this automatic adjustment brought about maximum prosperity in a nation. This was the premise on which all theories of political economy of that time were formulated. The productivity of a nation was taken to be the main criterion of national prosperity by political economists from Adam Smith and David Ricardo down to Jean Baptiste Say. In such a scheme, what was the fate of the ordinary individual? Most of the individuals comprising society at that time were struggling units of society, economically speaking. That increased productivity in a nation leads to an increased welfare of the individuals who are units of that nation is the common belief. But the political economy of this time looked upon the individual as an abstract idea; the improvement of the condition of the individual was thought to be guaranteed by an improvement of the whole society, which was the nation. It was a concept of the well-being of the abstract individual, not the real individual. In fact, the 18th and the 19th century brought increasing pauperisation and impoverishment of the masses in England and France, and simultaneously increasing productivity and wealth of these nations as a whole. This paradox was not evident to anyone who had unshakable faith in the ideas of 'automatic adjustment', which had productivity and not

distribution of wealth as its focal point. The principle of 'laissez-faire' was the main reason for ignoring the plight of the real ordinary individual in the capitalist economies of England and other countries of western Europe. Contemporaneous with the rise of doctrines justifying the 'laissez-faire' principle, there arose other ideas which endeavoured to deal with the real individual and refused to treat the individual simply as an abstract entity. The economic formulations of Saint Simon and Fourier, in spite of their technical inadequacies and utopianism, had one strength: they put the ordinary man in the forefront and made his well-being the first consideration in all economic arguments. If they were utopians in their suggestions for realising their objectives, the theorists of laissez-faire principle were likewise utopians in assuming that the wealth of a nation implied the well-being of the ordinary members of that nation. The economist who believed that the equal distribution of wealth was the key to bringing about the maximum well-being of all members of society reacted against this Zeitgeist. Russian populists were part of this reaction.

The first economic formulation of populism was made by Chernyshevskii in his writings on political economy. As the basis of this formulation he considered society as an additive whole, that is, a sum of individuals rather than a qualitative whole.(1) Hence, according to him, the well-being of the society is dependent on the well-being of its individual members and not vice-versa. He always distinguished between natsia and narod, wealth and well-being. (2) He attached great emphasis to the equal distribution of wealth which, he considered, would finally lead to individual well-being. He was not so much concerned with mere production of wealth. In one of his works he stated that even if under certain

conditions the income of a farm is increased but is unfavourably distributed among the peasants, it is to be abandoned in favour of a smaller income of the farm which is more favourably distributed. (3) In the first case he assumed private ownership of land, and in the second - a communal ownership. In one of his well-known articles (4), he designates the economists who ignore the cause of the 'real individual' "economists of a backward school" (ekonomisty otstaloi shkoly), and asserts that their formulation was disadvantageous to the real individual. The main reason for naming the second generation of classical economists as 'backward' lay in their insistence on prescribing the same medicine for all diseases, as their predecessors did at an earlier epoch. This second generation, which included J. B. Say, Bastiat and others according to Chernyshevskii, did not take into account that time had changed and a new medicine was needed to cure economic diseases. This attitude, according to him, was like the attitude of medical men who relied on the principle of 'purgare et clystirizare' alone from generation to to generation in treating patients. The backward economists were blinkered, they used only those concepts which had come down from the previous generation such as Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and others. One of the most important premises of the first generation of the classical school of economics was to treat man as an abstract entity and not to consider the 'real' man and his well-being. Say and others adhering to these premises were blind to the changing attitude towards man in their time.

How did it come about that the interest of the real man ignored? By the very premise of the principle of laissez-faire, laissez-passer which was enunciated by Chernyshevskii as follows:

"Economic activity of individual persons must be guaranteed complete freedom. Society has no right to impose any restriction on them. The state has no right to pursue any of those activities which can be performed by the power of individual persons. The state exists only for guaranteeing security of individual persons and for removing restrictions which prevent the fullest development of individual activities. In other words, the concern of the state lies only in that which cannot be attained by activities of individual persons; unconditional freedom of activity of individual persons is the supreme principle of society and the state should act only to safeguard this supreme principle. In other words, as far as activities of the state are concerned the ideal is that they should be reduced to nil, and the closer this can be approached, the better for society."(6) This is in brief the principle of laissez-faire laissez-passer, the principle of automatic adjustment.

The advocated freedom of economic activity and non-interference of the State in such activities, then, caused the oppression of the common man in this scheme of things. Such economic activity includes not only the enterpreneurial activities of the capitalist but also the struggle of the workers, both rural and urban, to survive. Owing to the state's non-interference in economic activity the weak, deprived of any help, become weaker and the strong become stronger because of unrestricted freedom enjoyed by them. Thus, according to Chernyshevskii, the masses, enjoy only the freedom of deprivation. "How much misery the people of the world would avoid", he states, "if they understood that there is no freedom where the weak remain unaided."(7) Elsewhere, he states that as an implication of the principle of laissez-faire the worker had the right to look for work but not the right to obtain it.(8) This inevitably led to an unhealthy competition

between workers for work. Some succeeded, others did not. Those who were not fortunate enough to succeed had to remain in misery because the theory implied that their misery would lead to the maximum prosperity of the nation, while the government could not as a matter of principle, intervene.

Chernyshevskii endeavours to trace the origin of the laissez-faire principle and examines whether the way it was interpreted by later economists and implemented by the governments of his time was in accordance with the original spirit of the principle. He maintained that Gournet's purpose in proclaiming the principle of laissez-faire was to counteract the body of doctrines advocated by Quesnay, with his three-class scheme and advocacy of strict tariff, prohibition and restraint. Since this physiocratic principle held sway for some time, the rising bourgeoisie in France found its growth checked. Not only did the opening up of foreign markets become difficult, but also the expansion of production in their own countries was hindered. England and Holland had already passed this 'barbaric' stage (Chernyshevskii's term) and the bourgeois was engaged in expanding factory production. The restraint on such production still prevailing in France due to the dominance of Quesnay's ideas was thought to be a hindrance to the growth of individualism, and so the celebrated principle was formulated. It was an attempt to rationalize the emancipation of the individual from all sorts of restrictions. (10) But what was the result? The suppression of the individual again. Chernyshevskii illustrates this point by quoting Turgot, the physiocrat who developed Gournet's basic idea: "A simple worker who does not have anything apart from his hands and his trade gets something only after he succeeds in selling his labour to another. He sells it either more dearly or more cheaply: but his price,

high or low, does not depend on him alone. It arises from the conditions under which he is hired. The employer pays him as cheaply as possible for his work; since he has the choice of a large number of workers, he prefers the one who works more cheaply. So the workers are forced to lower their price in rivalry with one another. In all spheres of work it must and does happen that the wage of the workers is limited to the figure necessary to provide him with subsistence." (11) And elsewhere Turgot held the opinion that the workers were free in name but slaves in reality. (12)

In his article, 'Economic Activity and Legislation' ('Ekonomicheskaya deiatel'nost'i zakonodatel'stvo') (1859) Chernyshevskii attacked the principle of laissez-faire from a different angle. He tried to show that its basic tenet is self-contradictory. He takes up the first requirement of the principle, namely, "the economic activity of individual persons must be guaranteed complete freedom."(*) He presents a hypothetical case to show the contradiction in the premise. Let us assume he says, that somebody wants to open a shop to sell crockery. He is free to do so. At the same time, somebody with enough money has the right to buy all the crockery produced in the same area and even has the right to make a forward purchase of all the forthcoming production, so that the person who wants to open a shop will not be able to get any stock. Both these persons have freedom to do business in the same field but the latter's freedom encroaches on the freedom of the former.(13) Chernyshevskii also says that the principle that "society has no right to impose any restraint on the economic activities of individual persons"(**) cannot be maintained without qualification. In many cases the

(*) See page 189

(**) See page 189

ownership of certain properties by certain persons becomes restraint on the freedom of activity of other persons as is illustrated in the above example. The burden of Chernyshevskii's argument is really that the freedom of the mass of people is impossible when private property remains the dominant economic institution. The capitalist idea of society turns out to be an abstraction, although capitalists claim to be eminently practical men in pursuit of eminently practical aims. They speak of the interests of the individuals, while ignoring individuals. A realistic theory, in Chernyshevskii's view, has the obligation to find means to remove any restraint on the freedom of economic activities by ordinary individuals. (14)

If, according to the followers of the laissez-faire principle, the ideal is for the state to abstain from any activity, why he asks, does the state exist at all? According to the 'principle' the state exists only for guaranteeing the security of individual persons and averting restraint which would prevent the full development of individual activities. If this is the case, the state's aim of securing the inviolability of the individual and the aim, stated earlier on, of reducing itself to nothing contradict each other. If the state intervenes to guarantee the full freedom of activity of individuals in^a/real sense, which it should do, then the philosophy of non-intervention loses all its point. "We already know," Chernyshevskii says, "that the state exists only for guaranteeing security. This basic principle of the theory is developed and explained by certain paraphrases with the same idea in view. The first paragraph runs as follows: 'in other words, the concern of the state lies only with that which is not achieved or cannot be achieved by the activities of individual persons.' Very well. According to this rule, the state has the

obligation to build an army and navy, without which there is no security; and these cannot be built by individuals. But what if I ask if it is not the right of every member of society to have the opportunity to live by honest labour, (this is also necessary for security in society because he who cannot live by honest labour, of necessity takes up bad ways)? This can be attained only by the will of society (the law) and through social activities: not through the activities of individual persons." (15)

So, according to Chernyshevskii, the state can guarantee security to individuals only when the people are guaranteed an honest means of livelihood and if such a condition is absent in a society, the state has the obligation to intervene. Chernyshevskii gives several allegories to illustrate his point that the state must intervene to secure the well-being of the people." "... in the present state of navigation astronomy is necessary. ...To make a catalogue of stars takes many years. How will the compiler of stars live until his work is finished? After the work is finished perhaps fifty copies of it will be sold: thus its publication means a large deficit, and not a profit. A catalogue of stars is useful. But individual persons taken separately do not guarantee proper remuneration for it. Let us take another example. Let us suppose that a small boy or a man who suffers from a mental illness inherits a house; let us suppose that this unfortunate person has no near relatives or if he has they are unreliable. It is clear that the house should be put under trustees. Is it clear? We warn you that the conclusions drawn from this are quite important. Not one of the economists, backward as they are has yet considered refuting the necessity of trusteeship under similar circumstances. So the matter can be considered settled." (16)

Chernyshevskii tries to defend the above statements (whose manner is rather typical of his style of argument) that it may be necessary for the state to intervene in the economic life of a country. It is admitted that the state must act to protect the lives of individuals within it against external and internal aggression, it is unreasonable for it not to intervene to prevent economic oppression of some people by other people. The second generation of classical economists were blind to this necessity. It was Chernyshevskii's real merit to have stated this as part of relevant economic thinking. Plekhanov branded him a utopian. But anyone ^{examining} his arguments against the principle of laissez-faire cannot but praise him for his realism.

Ivanov-Razumnik observed that if the social conditions of a country was such that the "national wealth" and "national well-being" clashed, then Chernyshevskii would have unhesitatingly opted for national well-being. (17) "We are always ready to remain on the side of that party", Chernyshevskii said, "which succeeds in proving that its solution of the problem corresponds to national well-being." (18) While explaining the formation of capital in his article on the Reproduction of National Capital ('Umnozhenie narodnogo kapitala') Chernyshevskii stated that it (capital) is the embodiment of national well-being. In other words, an increase of capital in a country should imply an increase of national well-being, if the word 'capital' is taken in its correct meaning. He adds that by capital one should not mean money in circulation, factories, machines, goods etc., but products of labour which serve as means of new production. (19) This definition of capital anticipates the idea put forward later by Bohm Bawerk.

Chernyshevskii is not opposed either to capital or to greater production of wealth, provided they do not go against the interest of national well-being. In his fourth commentary on Mill, he shows that an increase in national wealth may lead to a decrease of the welfare of the people. In order to prove this he presents a hypothetical case. "Let us assume", he says, "that in a certain ancient Greek society, there were 1000 adult workers in a population of 4000; that 200 adult workers went to Persia in the service of a certain Artakherxes, that 50 of them were killed in war and died of other causes in a foreign land, and that 150 came back and each of them brought with him a pood of gold; while in this society 25 chetverts of corn produced by the workers cost in all one-tenth part of a pood of gold. Thus everyone who came back returned as rich as an agriculturist of our country who has thousand dessyatins of the best land. Let us then examine the state of production of this society before the departure of the adventurers for war, then during their absence and finally when they came back.

"Before the departure of the adventurers there were 1000 adult workers maintaining 4000 persons. Let us assume that each of them produce 25 chetverts of grain; in this case every inhabitant got 6.25 chetverts; if for a comfortable life 6 chetverts per capita was necessary, then this society had some surplus: not large it is true, but noticeable.

"But then 200 adventurers went to Persia. There remained 800 workers out of a population of 3800. Every worker is forced to maintain not 4 as before, but 4.75 (persons), that is, 4 workers do not maintain 16 men as before, but 19 in all. Producing at the rate of 25 chetverts per worker, society has only 5.25 chetverts per capita, and hence suffers from a rather acute shortage."

"Now the adventurers come back. They are rich people and they do not want to do unpleasant hard jobs. Because of their wealth it is not fitting for them not only to till the land, but also to clean their rooms themselves and wash their clothes; everyone of them needs a man-servant. They do not grudge money and everyone is ready to abandon agriculture in order to be a servant to one of them. With the appearance of 150 masters there were 150 man-servants and for agriculture there remained only 650 men: they have to maintain 3950 men (3800 of the previous population and 150 adventurers who have come back); so everyone is forced to maintain 6.05 persons per head, that is, for each member society has only 4.13 chetverts of grain. The need became incomparably greater than before. To have only 4 chetverts per capita instead of 6 means either that everyone goes without food once in three days or one out of three men dies of starvation. It would have been better if the 200 adventurers had perished in the war; then 200 men would have perished, now 1300 are going to perish."

"This conclusion can be applied to all circumstances, when a nation acquires a certain amount of wealth at the expense of other nations: wealth acquired by her at the price of loss to others, becomes the source of ruin for herself. Every economist says that such was the influence of the great mass of wealth which came to Philip II and his successors in Spain from America."(20)

By this out-of-the way but quite illuminating illustration, Chernyshevskii demonstrates his persistent idea that a society or a nation can become richer, while at the same time its people become poorer, which view was also put forward by Marx and Engels but Chernyshevskii preceded them, although, somewhat ironically, the early Slavophiles suggested a similar distinction, with

characteristic mystic connotation, which disabled them from considering its real social and economic significance. (21)

Ivanov-Razumnik held that Cheryshevskii's reaction to and criticism of classical economists of the second generation and of the laissez-faire principle in particular, marked his essentially "humanistic" approach, that natsia and narod were not economic concepts. (22) Chernyshevskii may have been or was a humanist: all social thinkers sympathising with the plight of the masses could be called that. But the interest lies in Chernyshevskii's fusion of economic realism and humanism. He was concerned with the realities of the conditions of the people rather than with the deductive propositions pertaining to the abstractions of metaphysics or, for that matter, of classical economy. The fusion of realism and humanism was most appropriate in economic analysis during Chernyshevskii's time. But it was similarly appropriate in political analysis. Side by side with the principle of laissez-faire, the whole idea of 'formal' democracy with its advocacy of legal freedom was at stake. When men working for sixteen hours a day could not earn a meagre subsistence, the concept of democracy appeared nothing less than hypocrisy. In the face of such conditions the improvement in the standard of living had absolute priority over consideration of political democracy. Humanism deepened Chernyshevskii's understanding of man's economic situation and this understanding of the economic situation and a concern for it made his humanism socially relevant.

It has been pointed out, by Ivanov-Razumnik for instance, that Chernyshevskii's economic arguments imply a notion of society as an additive whole, something which does not differ qualitatively from a mere aggregate of individuals that constitute it. (23) In other words, Chernyshevskii was said to have presented an atomistic

view of society. This is not correct. Or rather, he treated society in this way only in certain contexts. 'Society' for him was an ambiguous concept. He considered society as an aggregate of individuals when speaking of 'national prosperity' and 'well-being' because to him 'national prosperity' had no meaning unless all the individuals comprising the society prospered. There are many other instances in his writings when he considered society as a qualitative whole because the context demanded so. In his discussion on capital, (Kapital i trud) he categorically stated that utilisation towards the well-being of the people depended on the existing institutional set-up, i.e something that is not reducible to a collection of isolated persons. Indeed he believed that to effect real change one must alter the institutional set-up of a country or the entire social structure rather than relations between individuals. (24) While formulating his theory of the working class he mentioned the need or a change of the whole society, (25), although to say this needed indirect statement, circumlocution in view of the watchful censorship.

Chapter Two Chernyshevskii and The Scope and Nature of
Political Economy

A substantial part of Chernyshevskii's critique of the different branches of political economy of his time was contained in his commentary on J.S. Mill's Principles of Political Economy. The commentary was published in two sections under the titles Osnovaniya politicheskoi ekonomii and Ocherki iz politicheskoi ekonomii (po Milliu). In the first of these Chernyshevskii undertook the task of translating J.S. Mill's famous text with copious explanatory notes and criticisms for the Russian reader. These critical notes contain many original ideas and a careful analysis of the notes is helpful in ascertaining Chernyshevskii's position vis-a-vis the political economy of his time.

Before he attempted to define what Political Economy was, Chernyshevskii concerned himself at some length with the duality in the methodological approach of the Smithian School. In Adam Smith's scheme of political economy, 'wealth' was the most important factor. It's maximisation was the cause of the prosperity of a nation. Historically, this was an improvement over the Mercantilist notion of maximisation of 'riches'. While making this comment, Chernyshevskii agreed completely with Mill's criticism of Mercantilism and his (Mill's) contention that an absurd politico-economic principle was dominant for a long time.

In Chernyshevskii's opinion, there was an ambiguity in the meaning of 'wealth' as developed by Adam Smith when he (Smith) analysed the effect of its increase in a country. According to Adam Smith, there are two types of wealth:
a) relative wealth, that is, wealth of X, an individual,

in relation to that of Y when X and Y are two individuals in a community.

b) an absolute wealth or a wealth of a nation which is not affected by any interpersonal transfer of relative wealth. J.S. Mill's analysis of these two kinds of wealth is as follows:

"This classification leads to an important distinction in the meaning of the word wealth, as applied to the possessions of an individual, and to those of a nation, or of mankind. In the wealth of mankind, nothing is included which does not of itself answer some purpose of utility or pleasure. To an individual anything is wealth, which, though useless in itself, enables him to claim from others a part of their stock of things useful or pleasant. Take, for instance, a mortgage of a thousand pounds on a landed estate. This is wealth to the person to whom it brings in a revenue, and who could perhaps sell it in the market for the full amount of the debt. But it is not wealth to the country; if the engagement were annulled, the country would be neither poorer nor richer. The mortgagee would have lost a thousand pounds, and the owner of the land would have gained it. Speaking nationally, the mortgage was not itself wealth, but merely gave A a claim to a portion of the wealth of B. It was the wealth of A, and wealth which he could transfer to a third person; but what he so transferred was in fact a joint ownership, to the extent of a thousand pounds, in the land of which B was nominally the sole proprietor. The position of fundholders, or owners of the public debt of a country, is similar. They are mortgagees on the general wealth of the country. The cancelling of the debt would be no de-

struction of wealth, but a transfer of it: a wrongful abstraction of wealth from certain members of the community, for the profit of the government, or of the tax-payers. Funded property therefore cannot be counted as part of the national wealth." (1) Chernyshevskii asks which of these wealths leads to prosperity. (2) In his view the Smithian School was not clear and specific on this point. Adam Smith's analysis wavered between one meaning of wealth and the other. (3) His followers, including J.S. Mill, could not avoid this ambiguity in their analysis. "According to the theory presented by Mill, the conception of 'bogatstvo' (wealth) dominates everything. This word was first used by Adam Smith, the founder of the theory. When you go through the treatise of Smith, the first and the basic book of the school, you will come across the title, 'Essay on the Wealth of Nations'. The word 'wealth' has the same shade of meaning as we have in the word 'bogatstvo'; it is not prosperity, but wealth. Let us look more closely at its meaning. Wealth is a purely relative concept; there is no independent scale of measurement for it, but only a conclusion about superiority over other comparable objects. A man's satisfaction of his needs is sufficient or insufficient not in comparison with others but according to him alone. The scale here is determined by the nature of man himself, as it is in the case of health, truth, intellect and other positive qualities and propositions." (4) In other words, wealth as understood by Chernyshevskii, is wealth which is properly distributed and is not a measure of one's superiority over others. "The owners of a few thousand dessyatins of good land," Chernyshevskii says, "is a very rich man in comparison with an agriculturist who tills his land, but he is definitely a poor man com-

pared with Rothschild. The concept of wealth is something accidental and external. ...But it seems to us that the science (of political economy) offers, by its definition, an interpretation neither comparable nor relative but direct and positive."(5)

Chernyshevskii challenges Mill's contention that "Everyone has a notion, sufficiently correct for common purposes, of what is meant by wealth." In Chernyshevskii's view this is not correct. Wealth, according to him, has one meaning in political economy and another in everyday language. In the former wealth means the sum of useful and pleasant things which have exchange values. Consequently wealth refers to ^{the} quality of things (i.e. which can be exchanged or distributed) and not to their quantity. When such things are numerous, wealth can be assumed to be sizeable; when they are not many, wealth is not great. In everyday language, on the other hand, wealth does not refer to quality at all. It refers exclusively to ^{the} quantity of things, that is, in everyday language, by wealth only the relative aspect of it is understood. According to Chernyshevskii wealth measured in terms of quantity alone does not guarantee welfare and this was his concern when he started the discussion with the point that 'bogatstvo' is not welfare but wealth. If wealth is measured in quantitative terms alone, or in other words, if it is relative wealth only, on Mill's own showing, possession of human beings as slaves (or serfs) makes one relatively rich. "Another example of a possession which is wealth to the person holding it, but not wealth to the nation, or to mankind, is slaves. It is by a strange confusion of ideas that slave property (as it is termed) is counted,

at so much per head, in an estimate of the wealth, or of the capital, of the country which tolerates the existence of such property. If a human being, considered as an object possessing productive powers, is part of the national wealth when his powers are owned by another man, he cannot be less a part of it when they are owned by himself. Whatever he is worth to his master is so much property abstracted from himself, and its abstraction cannot augment the possession of the two together, or of the country to which they both belong. In propriety of classification, however, the people of a country are not to be counted in its wealth. They are that for the sake of which wealth exists. The term wealth is wanted to denote the desirable objects which they possess, not inclusive of, but in contradistinction to, their own persons. They are not wealth to themselves, though they are means of acquiring it."(6) This is Mill's criticism of the practice in some societies of regarding human beings as property. The logical outcome of this practice is enrichment of a handful of individuals by 'possessing' other individuals and the deprivation of the freedom and economic security of the latter. In the words of Chernyshevskii, absolute wealth (which is true wealth according to him) will be sacrificed on the altar of relative wealth in this situation. A perusal of Chernyshevskii's discussion of 'absolute wealth' leads one to think that its increase implied increase of the production of useful and pleasant things in a country for the purpose of an equitable distribution to the individuals. Unfortunately, he was not specific in his analysis of this issue. But his arguments identifying wealth and welfare in his 'formulations' on the other hand, is free from any contradiction. The implication

of his position is that desirable distribution of wealth will maximise the absolute wealth of a nation and this in turn also implies that a deviation from this distribution will entail unhappiness to individuals.

But many economists in Chernyshevskii's time and later held the view that ... cardinal measurement of levels of satisfaction (to arrive at different scales of social prosperity) is impossible. The feeling of contentment is subjective and unquantifiable. A scheme of aggregation of 'absolute wealth' (maximisation involves aggregation) is unscientific, and is not a feasible scheme for solving social problems. According to these critiques, the knowledge of every individual (so far as the consciousness of his own welfare is concerned) is naturally and necessarily restricted to his own experience; so to arrive at a social index of this personal experience is unrealisable. This position is apparently sound in logic. But it challenges our capacity to acquire an objective knowledge of others' sufferings with a view to change it.(7) Welfare and misery, it is true, cannot be mathematically quantified, but their existence can always be objectively determined. Such objective evaluation has always been the basis of politico-economic judgement. We are always in a position to ascertain the depth of human misery in a certain politico-economic environment. We can also calculate mathematically the inequality in the distribution of wealth. So, welfare of the people as the main criterion of judging whether a nation is wealthy as suggested by Chernyshevskii is not so unreal.

Chernyshevskii says: "The Smithian school is not aware of this duality; thus through the school's whole theory there runs a dichotomy of concepts and the constant con-

fusion of one, purely scientific way of seeing things, which goes to the roots, with another outlook appertaining to the language of conversation and the superficial way of thinking of people not accustomed to abstract thought".(8)

In exposing the duality between wealth and prosperity Chernyshevskii introduces the welfare concept of wealth. His definition of political economy is: "Political Economy is a science about the material well-being of man in as far as it depends on things and situations produced by labour".(9) From this definition it follows that the most important object of study of political economy is the 'material well-being of man'. The latter-day utilitarian definition of economics as a science which studies the causes of the material welfare of man is almost an echo of Chernyshevskii's definition of political economy. According to Chernyshevskii, ~~therefore~~, wealth and material well-being of man were complimentary to each other. Elsewhere Chernyshevskii attempts to present the characteristics of political economy. "The object of political economy", he says "according to the general decision of all economists, consists in the study of the conditions of production and distribution of value or objects of consumption or objects necessary for the well-being of man".(10) This is an extension of his original definition (see above) and here again he emphasised the well-being of man as the main object of the study of political economy. On more than one occasion Chernyshevskii used the expression, "according to the general decision of all economists" before stating his own particular view. There are two reasons for his using this expression: the first is that he considered the classical economists of his time backward and so they could

not be counted as economists at all. Those who were opposed to the views of these classical economists were the real economists of whom Chernyshevskii considered himself a representative and theoretician. The second reason was that Chernyshevskii wanted the censorship authorities of his time to think that any radical element in his writings was not his alone but shared by all economists.

Since the material well-being of man ought to be the goal of all economic activities, it follows that the production of material goods is necessary. "The concern of political economy is that branch of labour which aims at the satisfaction of the material needs of human beings"(11) Chernyshevskii emphasised that the material objects that guaranteed human welfare were the outcome of labour. He in fact presented a labour theory of value. He held the view that labour was the source of all wealth. This view is not a departure from the classical political economy of his time. Many of the celebrities of this school from Adam Smith's time to his were exponents of the labour theory of value. "The product arises out of a combination of three basic elements", Chernyshevskii says "of which one is contributed by the human element and the other two by external nature;...When the external objects and the forces of external objects which have a part in the production of goods are not created by labour but only by the whimsical activities of nature, they do not enter into economic calculations."(12) This is a reiteration of the position of classical economics.

Chernyshevskii held the view that the three branches of political economy, viz. production, consumption and distribution were closely connected and analyses of these

three branches should not be carried out with the assumption that they were mutually exclusive. He explains the interconnection of these three branches of political economy in the following manner: "...the distribution of existing values is represented as a condition of production. Besides this, value is in itself a much more wider concept than that of production which is only one of the moments through which value passes; all types of production are directed to the creation of value, but value is not an object of production alone; it serves also as the object of preservation, exchange and consumption. Let us add that production is not an end in itself but is directed to consumption, and consumption is based on the distribution of value; thus the basic object of a study of political economy is the theory of distribution; production concerns it only as the preparation of materials for distribution."(13)

Thus Chernyshevskii not only shows an intimate connection between the three branches of political economy through exchange but attaches the most important role to distribution, because the material well-being of the masses is not dependent on the level of production alone but also on the nature of its distribution. In other words, he did not accept the position of the 'most feasible distribution' of classical economists; rather he advocated the most desirable distribution. The utility of such a distribution cannot be challenged either from Chernyshevskii's standpoint or even from the standpoint of Gossen, a marginalist and a contemporary of Chernyshevskii. "The measure of the physical welfare of a nation", Gossen said

"is the degree of the enjoyment of life which every individual belonging to the nation can procure himself"(14)

In Chernyshevskii's view a scheme of distribution of values which maximises the absolute wealth of the individuals comprising a society is the most desirable. The task of political economy, Chernyshevskii insists, is not only to observe and generalise economic phenomena but also to prescribe both curative and prophylactic medicines for economic diseases. "Economic science", he says "is a medicine for economic conditions. But apart from writing prescriptions, medicine has another, much more important duty: to explain to man the conditions which he should observe in order not to need a prescription. The dominant theory is confined to pathology; the more important part of the science which concerns hygiene has been neglected".(15)

The contention of the classical economists that the spirit of competition was the key-note to all progress and that any economic activity which did not take place through competition was alien to the science of political economy was challenged by Chernyshevskii. In his view such an idea of the scope of political economy was partial and incomplete.(16) Here is how he views the situation. "It is said that those economic transactions, which are still, undetermined by competition, are not fully developed and are unsatisfactory. But we have seen that the most important half of economic transactions can in fact never be subordinated to the principle of competition to such an extent as to contribute to a theory based exclusively on it."(17) Chernyshevskii asks the question: if a part of the economic life of any country does not attain such a degree of development to be included in economic theory, does it mean that this undeve-

loped economic activity is not economic activity at all? "This means," Chernyshevskii contends, "that it (undeveloped economic activity) will never fit the present day dominant theory; it means that this theory, however satisfactory it may seem to itself, must recognize unequivocally that it is not a theory of economic life, but only of some particular forms of this life; that it is not a science, but only part of a science; it is related to a complete economic theory in the same way as the anatomy of the hand is related to the whole science known as Anatomy or as a monograph on England is related to Geography"(18) Chernyshevskii evidently referred to obschchina and artel' and similar organisations which played an important role in the economic life of his country and which were not accepted as suitable for inclusion into the classical economic theory. Even forced labour, which was such an important factor in the economic lives of many nations at different historical periods and of Russia at that particular time, was not considered in the political economy of Chernyshevskii's time. Chernyshevskii wanted to formulate a more general political economy which would include such features.

Method of Study of Political Economy

According to Chernyshevskii, the method of analysis of Political Economy is to single out important variables from a conglomeration of economic factors and then to determine the nature of interaction of these variables. This is, in fact, the basic method of analysis in all sciences. "This method of analysis (in political economy) implies that when we need to determine the nature of a given factor we must temporarily concentrate on one aspect of a complicated problem; and we must look for

problems of the simplest structure in which the factor which interests us is most clearly displayed. Then, having discovered the nature of the said factor, we can discover the role it plays in the whole complex of problems which we are considering."(19)

This is self-evident. In all the sciences we have to ascertain the contributions of all the variables towards a certain phenomenon. But it is very difficult if not impossible to understand the role of each variable when many factors are acting simultaneously. So, it is the usual practice of scientists to isolate some important variables and then to examine only their influence on the phenomenon, making a 'ceteris paribus' assumption. This is the idea of abstraction. A description of the politico-economic events of history is not political economy, but some degree of abstraction is essential to theory building in political economy. "So, from the sphere of historical events", Chernyshevskii says "we must move to the sphere of abstract thinking, which instead of statistical data presented by history works with abstract figures, the significance of which is conditional, and which are determined only for the sake of convenience."(20) This is the usual methodological approach in all abstractions both in the sphere of natural and social sciences. Elsewhere he says: "These conclusions remain indisputable, are entirely mathematically reliable, though the figures taken by us were 'assumed' and simply accompanied the words, 'let us assume!'. In this sense, politico-economic questions are solved by means of the hypothetical method with mathematical reliability, if only they are presented correctly, if only they are turned into an equation in the correct way.(21)"

What sort of hypothetical method did Cherny-

shevskii have in mind? Was it purely a method of a prior generalisation of the interactions of politico-economic variables; did such generalisations involve only logical consistency and mathematical nicety?(22) From Chernyshevskii's own explanation of this method it does not follow that he wanted to build abstract models of politico-economic phenomena without any reference to reality. Any abstraction needs some hypothetical base as in present day economics we have the ceteris paribus assumption. Moreover all abstractions are some deviation from reality because abstraction gives a model picture of the behaviour of variables without concerning itself with factual details of any particular situation. Otherwise, as Wiener and Rosenbleuth have said, 'the best model of a cat would be a cat and preferably the same cat.' On the other hand, if ^{any} one wants only to emphasise the reality he will have to be satisfied with merely a description of events in detail as those historians who eschew explanation do, and the objective of building a theory will not be achieved. In constructing politico-economic theories, deductions are indispensable and so there is need for the hypothetical method. A theory while taking foundation from reality offers as conclusion a theoretical reality which may or may not correspond to actual reality under certain circumstances. But this theoretical reality may be instrumental in showing the path and process of a change towards better in politico-economic matters. Without this aspect of a theory no science can develop or progress. That is why Chernyshevskii insisted on ^{the} reliability of such theories. By reliability he did not mean an extensive empirical verifiability, but

logical and mathematical reliability, not to the extent of reducing the theory to an end in itself but to the extent of making it a guide to socio-economic change.

As an illustration of his hypothetical method, Chernyshevskii presented the following case. "Let us assume," he says, "that a society has a population of 5000 men, which includes 1000 adult males. The entire society is maintained by their labour. Let us assume that 200 of them went to war. It can be asked - what is the economic connection of this war with the society? Did it increase or decrease the well-being of the society?

"We have only to present such a very simple statement of the problem for the solution to become simple and indisputable, so that it can be understood easily by everybody and cannot be refuted by anyone or by anything.

"Anyone who is conversant with the operations of multiplication and division can say without thinking : before the war every worker had to support five persons, and during the war when 200 workers were taken away from work there remained only 800 workers: they must maintain themselves, and 400 of the remaining population, and besides that another 200 former workers who have gone to the war - in all 5000 persons: so every (worker) has to maintain 6.25 persons (in other words, formerly 100 workers maintained 500 men, now they maintain 625 men). It is clear that the condition of the workers ^{has} become more burdensome, and that the remaining members of society cannot be maintained in abundance as before. It is clear that war is harmful for the welfare of society.

"The reader can see that no importance is attached here to the absolute magnitude of figures: the importance

lies only in whether a certain proportion has increased or decreased on account of a change in the figure of the element, the nature of which we want to ascertain. Whether it will be more or less that is all we need to know and we will attach importance to it (alone). If it turns out to be greater, it remains greater whatever figure we may take; and if it turns out to be smaller, then it will remain smaller whatever figure we take.

"For example, let us assume that there are 6,00,000 and not 5000 men in the society; let us assume that there are 150,000 and not 1000 workers: let us (further) assume that 50,000, not 200 men went to war; the conclusion will be the same.

"Before the war a worker maintained 4 men: during the war, out of 150,000 workers there remained only 1,00,000 workers; so every one is forced to maintain 6 men. It is the same as before: (the condition) of the workers has become more burdensome and the condition of the entire population has become worse.

"We also see that the proportion by which it has worsened depended on the magnitude of the figures taken by us: they were approximate, so we did not attach importance to the precise proportions. But we can also see that the greater the proportion of men sent to war, the greater the harm brought by war to the society, and so we say: the unprofitableness of war to society is directly proportional to the number of men who go to war."(23)

G.V. Plekhanov criticised Chernyshevskii's hypothetical thinking as pure abstraction without any basis in reality.(24) Antonov's view on Chernyshevskii's hypothetical method is as follows: "Though...social events are

extremely complex and entangled, their methods of study are the same; only here it is more difficult to isolate the influence of separate factors. But evidently social life represents the sum of the living events of individual lives; for this reason we can directly arrive at the laws of human nature (determined by physiology and psychology) and from a synthesis of them one can obtain the sociological causal connections for example, the connection between activities undertaken for different degrees of satisfaction according to the intensity of demand; or the connection between the demand for goods and their prices. Here, in fact, the concern is not to establish a causal connection, but only to determine the aggregate activity of elementary laws. As the quantity of active forces (demand, desire and so on) are not determined, the conclusions obtained by such a deductive method cannot be correct. The essential method for establishing the causal connections of social events consists in mass observation of them, as carried out by statistics. It can determine, for example, the influence of the harvest or in general of economic prosperity on the number of marriages and deaths; the connection between the nature of a profession and the average expectation of life, etc.; these inductive inferences are real and are fairly correct sociological laws.

Chernyshevskii's hypothetical method consists basically of deductive inferences from definite social situations, but the special feature of this method was the numerical illustrations of these conclusions which, according to Chernyshevskii, give them more reliability."(25)

If Chernyshevskii's hypothetical method consists of

deductive inferences from definite social situations, as Antonov has pointed out, he cannot be accused of ignoring the social reality and his insistence on this method in political economy is not at odds with modern practice. Generalisation and inductive inference from a detailed statistical investigation of the workings of economic variables is only one part of economics.

Antonov's contention that the only reliable method of economic reasoning is inductive, is incorrect. Equally important are deductive inferences from simple models of the situation. An example from present day economics will suffice to show that the same hypothetical method as Chernyshevskii used is extensively applied.*

There is of course a difference between the expression of Chernyshevskii's argument and the expression of the argument in the illustration given below. Whereas the former relied exclusively on numerical, the latter used algebraic statements.

*See Appendix to this Chapter.

Appendix to Chapter 2.

"To generalise the problem of demand, we suppose that n consumers' goods $X_1, X_2, X_3, \dots, X_n$ are sold at uniform prices $p_1, p_2, p_3, \dots, p_n$ on a competitive market consisting of a fixed number of consumers with given tastes and incomes. Then the amount x_r of any one good X_r demanded by the market is uniquely dependent on the prices of all the goods on the market. We can thus write

$$x_r = \phi_r(p_1, p_2, p_3, \dots, p_n)$$

as the demand function for the good X_r , a function which, for convenience, can be assumed continuous in all the variables.

"The number of the variables overcrowds our picture of market demand. It is possible, however, to select a few of the prices according to the particular aspect of the problem considered and to assume that all the other prices are fixed. In particular, we can study the inter-relations of the demands for two goods X_1 and X_2 by assuming that the prices of all other goods are fixed. Then

$$x_1 = \phi_1(p_1, p_2) \quad \text{and} \quad x_2 = \phi_2(p_1, p_2)$$

are the demand functions, each dependent on the two variable prices. Each function can be shown as a demand surface with heights above the horizontal plane Op_1p_2 representing the varying demand for the good. The vertical sections of such a surface are particularly interesting. The section of the surface $x_1 = \phi_1(p_1, p_2)$ by any plane perpendicular to Op_2 (on which p_2 has a fixed value) is an ordinary demand curve showing the variation of x_1 as p_1 varies. There is one such demand curve for each fixed price p_2 of the other good and the whole system of demand curves shows the way in which demand shifts as the price p_2 is changed. All these demand curves are downward sloping in the normal case. The section of the surface by a plane perpendicular to Op_1 is a curve showing the variation of x_1 as p_2 varies for a given value of p_1 . At any point where this section is upward sloping, a rise in the price of X_2 results in a rise in the demand for X_1 and the goods can be called

"competitive", at least in a rough sence. If the section is downward sloping, the converse holds and the goods can be called "complementary" at the prices concerned."

"Mathematical Analysis for Economists" - R. G. D. Allen.
pages 281 - 282.

Chapter Three Productivity and Unproductivity of Labour

Chernyshevskii presented a new approach to the question of productive and unproductive labour. Considerable confusion was evident in the discussion of this distinction by classical economists from Adam Smith to J.S. Mill. In spite of the fact that the controversy concerning the classification of labour as either productive or unproductive was mainly a matter of definitions, it occupied an important place in the political economy during this time. The distinction between productive and unproductive labour, which can be traced to the physiocrats, became an important issue with Adam Smith. He presented three definitions of productive and unproductive labour. "There is one sort of labour which adds to the value of the subject upon which it is bestowed: there is another which has no such effect". This first definition by Smith is simple enough: any labour which creates value was productive (1). The second reads: "... the labour of a manufacturer adds generally to the value of the materials which he works upon, that of his own maintenance, and of his master's profit"(2). In the third definition Smith treats all labour spent on producing services as unproductive. Thus any labour spent by individuals for improving the moral, intellectual or spiritual condition of a nation was not productive. According to John Stuart Mill, all labour which is employed in creating permanent utilities, whether embodied in human beings or in any other animate or inanimate objects is productive.(3) Mill departs from Smith in treating as productive the potential of human beings such as skills as wealth. In Mill's scheme the labour of an instructor teaching skills to his students is productive, whereas Adam Smith considered

all services unproductive.

Mill stated that there are three kinds of utility which are produced by labour: "first, utilities fixed and embodied in outward objects by labour employed in investing external material things with properties which render them serviceable to human beings. ..." "Secondly, utilities fixed and embodied in human beings; the labour being in this case employed in conferring on human beings qualities which render them serviceable to themselves and others. To this class belongs the labour of all concerned in education; not only schoolmaster, tutors and professors, but governments, so far as they aim successfully at the improvement of the people; moralists, and clergyman, as far as productive of benefit; the labour of physicians, as far as instrumental in preserving life and physical or mental efficiency; of the teachers of bodily exercises, and of the various trades, sciences and arts, together with the labour of the learners in acquiring them; ..." "Thirdly, and lastly, utilities not fixed or embodied in any object, but consisting of a mere service rendered; a pleasure given, an inconvenience or a pain averted, during a longer or a shorter time, but without leaving a permanent acquisition in the improved qualities of any person or thing; the labour being employed in producing an utility directly, not (as in the former cases) in fitting some other things to afford as utility. Such, for example, is the labour of the musical performer, the actor, the public declaimer or reciter or the showman..."

"We have now to consider which of these three classes of labour should be accounted productive of wealth, since that

is what the term productive, when used by itself, must be understood to import. Utilities of the third class, consisting in pleasures which only exist while being enjoyed, and services which only exist while being performed, cannot be spoken of as wealth, except by an acknowledged metaphor."(4)

Chernyshevskii criticised the above classification of labour by Mill. He asked how the labour of a sculptor or an artist could be considered productive when that of a musician was considered unproductive; both endeavour to produce the same - to offer pleasure, the difference between them being in form only.(5) Chernyshevskii adds that by designating the labour of a sculptor or artist as productive, Mill puts him in the same category as ploughmen, which is a mistake.(6) If one examines Chernyshevskii's own system of the classification of labour the relevance of this criticism will become apparent.

Although the controversy concerning productive and unproductive labour was one of the most important issues in classical economic thought, in retrospect this controversy appears to be not more than an exercise in scholasticism. Adam Smith's main criterion was the production of material objects. Mill's criterion was labour that left a surplus of production over consumption. J.B. Say, on the other hand, considered any labour which produced a benefit or pleasure worth the cost as productive. He saw both labour used to produce material objects and that used to give services as equally productive. Say regarded as productive all activities which create utilities, as evidenced by their ability to command a price in the market.(7)

In Chernyshevskii's view, there are two kinds of goods that are produced in any economy: (a) the objects of primary necessity and (b) objects of secondary necessity, that is, objects of luxury. He does not make a further classification of objects of secondary necessity into material objects and services. Objects of primary necessity include food, clothing, shelter, etc; in other words, objects that are essential for men for their survival. Any labour that was spent on producing goods of primary necessity was productive and labour spent not on producing goods of primary necessity was unproductive. Since his main concern was the well-being of man, his departure from the classifications of the traditional political economists is quite consistent. To prove his point, Chernyshevskii explains how a disequilibrium in the material well-being of society can occur if there is a shift of emphasis from objects of primary necessity to objects of luxury. "Let us assume," he says, "that a society consists of 4000 men, out of which 1000 are adult males and the entire society must be maintained by their labour. Let us suppose that every worker pursuing agriculture half the year or 150 working days produces 20 chetvert (of crops) per annum. In this case, to produce 8000 chetvert of crops, 400 men are needed, who will be engaged in production half the year, which is the same as the number of days that 200 workers will remain engaged if they work every day in the year. Let us suppose that for the production of other types of food (meat, milk, vegetables) necessary for nutrition, the same amount of time, that is, the annual labour of 200 workers, are needed. Let us suppose that the same amount of labour (of 200 workers)

is necessary to maintain and repair houses and to keep them warm; the same amount of labour for producing necessary clothing and small essential agricultural instruments. All this labour is directly employed on objects of necessity. Apart from this, a certain amount of productive labour of an indirect nature is necessary to support this direct labour. Let us suppose that for protection, 50 labourers are necessary and the same number are required for other types of indirect work (maintenance of instruments etc.). This entire labour is applied to the production of objects of primary necessity; so, we find that the following number of annual units of labour are necessary for the society (or the following number of workers who will work all the year with 300 working days per man) to keep a supply of objects of primary necessity in the necessary quantity to satisfy the needs of the entire society.

"So there remains 100 units of labour or 100 adult males on all other occupations apart from those engaged in the production of objects of primary needs,"(8) In the above scheme the entire labour force of the community, apart from the residual 100, are employed in productive labour, since that is necessary to secure the people a minimum standard of well-being. Consequently, according to Chernyshevskii, this is the optimum allocation of labour into production of the two types of objects. In his hypothetical example, these additional 100 units of labour were the maximum amount that society could afford to spend on producing goods of secondary necessity. Chernyshevskii asserted that the society of his day was blind to the needs for such a rational allocation of the two types of labour, and consequently there was a growing imbalance between the two sectors (productive and unproductive),

resulting in greater and greater shortages of goods of primary necessity, which in turn caused greater inefficiency in the use of labour. Here is how Chernyshevskii presents the picture: "We need (1) a theatre - this requires 20 men. We need (2) an orchestra - this requires another 20 men. We need (3) bronze decoration - this requires yet another 20 men. We need (4) ornaments of gold (5) silk curtains and wall papers (and) (6) various other sorts of articles of different types; at 20 workers for every object altogether 120 workers (are necessary). All these are for seeing and hearing, but why are we not thinking of the stomach? We need food for dinner. Let us suppose that at least 40 workers are necessary for this. It is quite a modest estimate; fine wine is necessary - so another 40 men (are required); therefore, the total (number of men required) for gastronomic pleasure is 80 and for other objects of luxury, 120 men - in all 200 workers.

"It is clear that there remain only 800 workers for objects of primary necessity instead of 900, who are necessary in order to produce such objects in sufficient quantities. It is clear that to many members of a society, these objects will be insufficient and there will be much more scope for the increase of theft and other forms of loss. To protect society from this, more labour is necessary; instead of 50 workers (as estimated before) 100 are necessary. What will become of the direct production of objects of primary necessity? From the gross total, by deducting 200 workers for objects of luxury, 100 for protection and 50 for indirect production of other types, there remains 650 men for the direct production of objects

of primary necessity instead of the 800 required"(9)
The consequence of such an allocation of labour will deprive society of the ability to provide for the minimum needs of its members; while at the same time some of its members will have the privilege of consuming expensive objects of luxury, including works of art. Hence Chernyshevskii's conclusion; "...political economy says that if in any society unproductive labour is applied to production of objects of luxury where there is a shortage of goods of primary necessity, this society suffers from a wasteful economy incompatible with its demands and its means of the distribution of labour between different types of occupation."(10) Anything short of the optimum allocation of productive labour in society is harmful because the material well-being of the people is not then secured.

Chernyshevskii does not want to argue that there is no need for producing objects of art and other goods of luxury. Rather, he emphasises the need to change the economic structure in such a way as to enable the citizens of a country to appreciate the objects of secondary necessity for what they are. If someone was able to indulge in luxuries, while others remained in misery, such indulgence was socially and economically destructive. When misery had been eradicated he would enjoy luxury all the more fully and creatively. Comparing the imbalance between production of primary and secondary necessities in the existing society with his own rational scheme, Chernyshevskii writes: "In the present still unsatisfactory state of many spheres of moral science, it is possible to say that it is better to admire a painting by Raphael than to have wholesome food. It is necessary to say

however, and it will be generally accepted, that poverty hinders the development of man's dignified life, that the higher pleasures become accessible to him only after the satisfaction of lower necessities. For example, philosophers and astronomers can engage in their pursuits with success and satisfaction only when they are to some extent free from material deprivation. From this it would follow that even he to whom the interest of art, abstract science, painting or sculpture, philology or archaeology, theatre or poetry appear more attractive than the material well-being of society - even he would be bound to find a distribution of occupation better if it provides the material needs of the society - because in a condition of material well-being, science and art will develop more fully than in the absence of it."(11)

Evidently Chernyshevskii does not accept the classification made by both Adam Smith and J.S. Mill. He does not follow the distinction of material objects and services. In Chernyshevskii's scheme material objects and services can be productive or otherwise depending on whether they play or do not play a role in satisfying the primary needs of the people. Even the services protecting the objects of primary necessity from damage are seen as productive labour.

In Chernyshevskii's time it was commonplace to utilize the labour of many for the profit of a few.(12) That being the case, the few individuals had enough surplus spending power, after meeting their primary needs, to spend generously on goods of luxury and thus to encourage production of luxury goods. This created a steady demand for and supply of goods of secondary necessity, even while

goods of primary necessity were insufficient for the people at large. The solution to the problem of optimum allocation of the two kinds of labour, according to Chernyshevskii, lay in doing away with a system of production which fostered this state of affairs.. Only a system of production where every individual gets a fair share of the total production in a country can guarantee a proper allocation of productive and unproductive labour. Such a system of production, Chernyshevskii contends, is only possible under socialism where the fruits of man's labour are enjoyed by the producer himself and where there is no national wastage of efforts through misdirection of labour.(13)

CHAPTER FOUR CHERNYSHEVSKII AND MALTHUS

One of Chernyshevskii's important contributions to economic thought was his criticism of the Malthusian theory of population. In 1797, Malthus published An Essay on the Principle of Population as It Affects the Future Improvement of Society. Since the day of its publication, economic and social thinkers have been divided into two groups: one supporting the contents of the 'Essay' and looking at the future of mankind pessimistically, and the other championing the growth and progress of civilisation which are capable, according to them, of combating population growth. Chernyshevskii's contribution lies not simply in his criticism of the arguments of the 'Essay,' but in his championing of the view that man was capable of solving his problems with the resources and the know-how at his disposal. As will become evident in the course of this discussion, the philosophical optimism of Chernyshevskii underlay his criticism of the 'Essay'. Chernyshevskii's optimistic theory of population as a criticism of Malthus was the first of its kind in the history of Russian economic thought. Strangely enough, this contribution of Chernyshevskii has not until now been recognised by Western economists. In his criticism of the 'Essay' he also pointed out its class content. Subsequently, Marx, of course, dealt with this aspect of the 'Essay', but Chernyshevskii's contention that the population theory of Malthus by implication supported the supremacy of the landowning class was the pioneer attempt to interpret the class content of the Malthusian theory.

Immediately prior to the publication of Malthus' 'Essay', the ideas of freedom expounded in the French revolution caught the imagination of progressively minded Englishmen. Hopes rose high of ending the social and economic stagnation of England. Optimistic thinkers abounded, and not all of them avoided naivety.

A singularly striking example of such an optimistic thinker of this period was William Godwin, a minister and pamphleteer who was dismayed by the cruel and vulgar world around him. But he did not lose faith in the future. In his Political Justice (1793) he envisaged a distant future where "there would no longer be a handful of rich and a multitude of poor.. There will be no war, no crime, no administration of justice, as it is called, and no government. Besides this there will be no disease, anguish, melancholy, or resentment." (1) These lines are of course the epitome of utopianism. Chernyshevskii, in spite of Godwin's utopianism, accepted him as a champion of progress. Chernyshevskii time and again singled out individuals or groups of thinkers and used some of their arguments to justify his own scheme even if he did not agree fully with their views. Especially when he needed support for his criticism of the old social order against its defenders, he resorted to this method of selecting opinions to his own advantage. So, he found in Godwin an important thinker to oppose Malthus. Here is how Chernyshevskii characterises the "moderate liberalism" of Malthus: "The old institutions never had a lack of defenders. But the political tendencies of that part of English society whose publicist was Malthus, were such that all the previous objections against revolutionary ideas seemed to it unsatisfactory; they seemed to be unsatisfactory to Malthus himself; he belonged to the party of moderate liberals, who discuss very freely matters referring only to second grade institutions, are very fond of personal and respectable progress and become conservatives only when the revolutionaries in society become more aggressive, not confining themselves to criticism of unimportant details but aspiring to change the very basis of the existing order. Formerly the only opponents of democratic ideas in England were the

supporters of stagnation, defenders of medieval institutions; their objections against the democrats were based on reactionary principles which led towards proclamation of the justice and usefulness of medieval institutions; the party to which Malthus belonged was inimical to those peculiarities by which the 13th century was distinguished from the 18th; it considered those principles good on which the social order was based in all the previous periods of advanced social development. The arguments of the reactionaries defended not the essence of these principles but their medieval forms; for the moderate liberals there was the need of another theory which would disown the oppressive medieval details, would show the necessity of only basic principles and would only admit a certain progress in their development. Such a theory appeared to be the result of the research of Malthus."(2)

Chernyshevskii points out as an extension of this view that according to Malthus the miseries of the poor did not arise from human institutions against which the radicals revolted. The miseries with all their consequences were produced by a law of nature whose actions were not strengthened but, on the contrary, eased by the institutions based on private property. Equality and socialisation of property would only mean giving greater rein to the natural law which in its turn would bring poverty to the people of all classes of society.

The cardinal point of the above position of Malthus, according to Chernyshevskii, was the rate of human reproduction and the idea of 'doubling'. (3) In Malthus' own words, "if any person will take the trouble of making the calculations, he will see that if the necessaries of life could be obtained without limit, and the number of people could be doubled every twenty five years, the population which might have been produced from a single pair since

the Christian era, would have been sufficient, not only to fill the earth quite full of people so that four should stand in every square yard, but to fill all the planets of our solar system in the same way, and not only them but all the planets revolving around the stars which are visible to the naked eye, supposing each of them... ..to have as many planets belonging to it as our sun has."(4) Attempts to eradicate human miseries would only aggravate the problems by offering more comfort to the people and thus helping them to reproduce at a greater rate. By implication, deaths by starvation, epidemics and natural calamities were far more welcome to Malthus than social progress aimed at preventing these things.

Chernyshevskii first examined the basic premise of Malthus that the population of any country doubled itself in 25 years. Chernyshevskii considered the data on population growth in France during the 50 years from 1790. In that year the population of France was 25 million and in 1840 the same population stood at 35 million, not 100 million as it ought to have been according to the prediction of Malthus. But Chernyshevskii had omitted to consider one vital point. He did not show that the deviation of the population figures of France from the Malthusian estimate was not due to 'positive' checks (to use Malthusian terminology). Perhaps a significant proportion of the population perished before their time due to famine, disease, pestilence and war. In fact, Chernyshevskii did not account for such a low rate of nett growth of the population of France during these fifty years. Subsequent analysis of French population growth, however, has proved that Chernyshevskii was correct in taking up the population growth of France as a basic criticism of Malthus. The causes of this stagnation of population growth in France have not been attributed

by economists to any of the elements which, according to the Malthusian scheme, could make the population growth of a country stagnate. A recent survey of French population from 1801 shows that it was 28.2 million in 1801 and 40.6 million in 1901, but only 39.2 million in 1921 and again 40.5 in 1946. (5)

A single example does not invalidate a general theory, but, Chernyshevskii was also able to raise strong doubts whether the Malthusian theory is born out in the U.S. This is particularly important because the population data for that country was the basis of Malthus' theory. Going through the data of population growth of ^{the} United States, Malthus came to the conclusion that the population of a country doubles every 25 years. (6)

Chernyshevskii raises two important questions on this position of Malthus, viz. (a) was the 'doubling' of the U.S. population due to nett reproduction rate alone, and (b) assuming the Malthusian hypothesis of the 'doubling' of population within a certain period was true, did it follow from this that his prognosis of the future of mankind was correct?

In answer to the first question Chernyshevskii tries to separate out the components of population growth. The first, according to him, was the rate of reproduction and the consequent nett addition to population, that is, the nett growth of the original inhabitants of the United States. The second component which was also important in the United States was immigration from other countries of the world. According to Chernyshevskii, it has been observed time and again in history that new colonies show a tremendous rate of growth of population due to the influx of new settlers from far and near. So he raises an important question, that is, which of these components contributed most towards doubling of the population of the United States in 25

years? According to Chernyshevskii, and rightly so, Malthus in his study failed to distinguish between the two forces that were acting simultaneously towards the increase of population of the United States.

The followers of Malthus were conscious of this weakness in the Malthus' theory. They tried to show that the influence of immigration on the growth of population in the United States was slight. William Godwin, on the other hand, believed that immigration was the major factor in the U.S. population growth. Chernyshevskii assesses the various arguments as follows:

"Malthus took the 25 year period for the doubling of the population from the population census of the United States. Similar census in the new colonies show a doubling of the population in much shorter periods. But in new colonies the size of the population increases much more from the flow of the settlers than from natural reproduction and, in the United States, resettlement constantly played a significant part in the increase of the population. When formulating his theory Malthus completely forgot this circumstance and attributed the whole increase in population of the United States to natural reproduction alone. Such an extreme view provoked another extreme view. Subjecting the North-American population data to a very detailed analysis, Godwin came to the conclusion that the entire increase in population in the United States undoubtedly arose from the addition of new people from other countries; and if one were to draw any conclusion about the capacity of people to reproduce on the basis of North-American census, then one would have to conclude that this capacity was extremely poor, in fact scarcely visible. But the followers of Malthus tried to show that if Malthus made a mistake, having completely forgotten about the influence of resettlement, this influence was not great in comparison with the influence of natural

reproduction; and, excluding all additional inhabitants due to resettlement, there remains such an increase through natural reproduction in the United States as to double the population in 29 years." (7)

In these lines we have a clear view of the two extremes mentioned by Chernyshevskii. Neither Godwin nor the followers of Malthus could show by evidence that their positions were justified. Chernyshevskii's critical strength lies in the fact that though he welcomed Godwin's optimism as opposed to the pessimistic predictions of Malthus, he did not uncritically accept the former's position on the cause of the increase of population in the United States.

Chernyshevskii then takes up the second question, that is, whether the Malthusian prognosis was correctly deduced, assuming his premise was true. The idea that the growth of food production would lag far behind the growth of population in the future, creating a calamitous situation for mankind, had dealt a staggering blow to the hopes of an age "oriented towards self-satisfaction and a comfortable vista of progress". People had begun to accept the Malthusian theory as if it were beyond dispute. Between the extremes of utopianism and Malthusian pessimism the golden path could, in Chernyshevskii's time, six decades after the publication of the famous 'Essay', be hardly discernible. In this situation Chernyshevskii's scathing criticism of the Malthusian assumption that food production could not be increased sufficiently to match the increase in population was very timely.

As the first weapon for his criticism Chernyshevskii used the results of contemporary research in agronomy. He tried to show that the whole idea of slow growth of food production was a myth. He advanced the views of Gosparen, a leading agronomist of his time, who stated that if a new type of crop-rotation

system could be introduced, the total area of arable land in Great Britain and Ireland could feed a population of 230 million . In 1860 when Chernyshevskii wrote his critique of Malthus, the population of Great Britain and Ireland was only 29 million. So if the results of the research of Gosparen was applied in Great Britain, food production could be increased by about eight times. This claim was evidently a formidable attack on the Malthusian assumption of a static productivity of agriculture. This claim was also one of the foundations of the attack on Malthus by the latter day optimum population theorists, notable ^{among} / them being Edwin Cannan. Chernyshevskii used the same arguments as they did some decades later. "Still more interesting", he states "is his (Malthus') conception of a subject which is closer to him - the English agriculture. He had an exaggerated idea that agricultural production in England cannot be doubled in 25 years. This is naive, and people who read present day books on agronomy would smile at this. In Great Britain and Ireland, there are 61½ million acres of land suitable for agriculture." (8) Then he quotes the views of Gosparen and argues that given sufficient time, say, 25 years, the food production could be increased by 9 times. "Thus the inhabitants of the British Isles, could increase their present agricultural production ninefold if they introduced better methods of cultivation. Is 25 years enough for the introduction of a rotary system of agriculture on land that already had an agricultural system much better than the simple 3-field system? We leave everyone to judge this for himself. It is clear from modern books on agronomy that if England wanted and needed to increase her agricultural product in 25 years not 2-fold but 5 or even 9-fold, it would not be at all difficult in the present state of agricultural knowledge. Have we not the right to say

that the ideas by which Malthus was influenced, imagining that he was making a great concession in suggesting the possibility of doubling England's agricultural production in 25 years, were too naive."?(9)

The Law of the Increase of Agricultural Products

In these lines an attempt will be made to present Chernyshevskii's analytical criticism of the Malthusian assumption of the rate of growth of agricultural production. It will be evident that he undermined the entire foundation of Malthusian prediction. In fact he presented an original theorem on the trend of the growth of agricultural production. To proceed with his analysis Chernyshevskii first assumes the Malthusian assumption that a population of a country doubles itself in 25 years. He also takes it for granted that the supply of food cannot be increased in the same proportion. Consequently, there will be a food-supply lag. As is well-known Malthus predicted that this gap will become increasingly larger in course of time because of his hypothesis that, while the rate of growth of population follows a geometric progression, that of food production follows an arithmetical progression. The cause of this gap is, according to Malthus, the constancy of supply of land. Any attempt to increase the food supply based on this constant factor invariably leads to a diminishing productivity of labour. The assumption of Malthus, therefore, can be presented as follows: 'Other things (level of technology and supply of land) remaining constant the productivity of labour would diminish in proportion to the increase in population.' Chernyshevskii pointed out that since the fertility of land varies widely from region to region, the rate at which the productivity of added labour falls must vary according to the fertility of the soil on which the added labour works. "What is the extent of this decrease in productivity of agricultural labour with the gradual cultivation of new inferior land, or with an increase of labour

on former lands? Clearly everything here depends on circumstances which differ from region to region. On one soil the doubling of labour can give almost a doubling of product; on another soil a much smaller increase. In one region the second 200 dessyatin produce only 3 chetverts per dessyatina, when the first 200 dessyatin produce 5 chetverts per dessyatina, while in another region the second 200 dessyatin are almost as good as the first and produce only slightly less than 5 chetverts per dessyatina".(10)

After mentioning this disparity in the productivity of agriculture, Chernyshevskii challenges the empirical validity of the notion of a decreasing rate of productivity of labour in the face of an addition to labour force. He criticises the economists for their failure to produce sufficient evidence to support their picture of the situation. "Up to the present," he says, "this has not been done. It is strange but true that for very many decades the economists have been repeating Malthus, speaking of the progressive decrease in productivity of agricultural labour; and yet not one of them has been concerned to collect any statistical data relating to this decrease. No one has even realised that it was necessary, that until it was done one could only argue at random (naobum.), as Malthus argued and as people argue up to the present about the decrease in productivity of agricultural labour." (11)

In spite of this absence of empirical evidence for the Malthusian hypothesis on the productivity of labour in agriculture, Chernyshevskii assumes it to be true. He then derives algebraically Malthus' conclusion that as population grows geometrically, production of food increases only arithmetically. Mathematically, the assumption is:

$$\frac{\text{Productivity of labour added in a given period}}{\text{Original productivity}} = \frac{\text{Original population}}{\text{population at beginning of growth period}}$$

The arithmetic can be presented in tabular form:

(25 year) period	1	2	3	4	5	
Population at beginning of period	A	2A	4A	8A	16A	(Population increases geometrically)
Population added in period		A	2A	4A	8A	
Productivity of added population		Q	$\frac{1}{2}Q$	$\frac{1}{4}Q$	$\frac{1}{8}Q$	(Original productivity is Q)

Hence the total production in the various periods is:

Period	Production	
1	AQ	= AQ
2	AQ + AQ	= 2AQ
3	AQ + AQ + (2A)($\frac{1}{2}Q$)	= 3AQ
4	AQ + AQ + (2A)($\frac{1}{2}Q$) + (4A)($\frac{1}{4}Q$)	= 4AQ
5	AQ + AQ + (2A)($\frac{1}{2}Q$) + (4A)($\frac{1}{4}Q$) + (8A)($\frac{1}{8}Q$)	= 5AQ
		etc.

i.e. agricultural production increases only arithmetically. (12)

If these equations are correct then, the problem of offsetting the effect of increased population by an increase of food production seems formidable. As has been pointed out earlier, the above relations point out the fact that the gap between the increase in the production of food and the rise in the population will assume a fearful proportion in the course of time. To counter-act this Chernyshevskii suggests a novel remedy. In order to show what the remedy is, he introduces an example of compound interest. If someone borrows 100 rubles at 5% compound interest and leaves the interest unpaid, he will have to pay 238 rubles and 64 kopeks after 25 years though the principal is only 100 rubles. This means that a rate of 9.55% simple interest is payable for the entire sum. But what happens if the borrower pays back 5 rubles every year as interest? Then there is no need to differentiate between the simple and the compound interests. The borrower is burdened only with 5 rubles per annum and nothing more and nothing less. (13)

Similarly if the gap between the increase of population and the increase in the productivity of agricultural labour is allowed to widen sufficiently, the prognosis of Malthus may come true. But what would happen if the annual or periodical gap (if any) is bridged? In the theorem of Malthus, the constancy of supply of land has been correctly assumed. But what about the level of technology? It need not remain constant and Chernyshevskii has this notion in mind when he proceeded with his analysis with the help of hypothetical numerical examples. Here is how he presents his arguments: "Let us suppose a total population of 1000. Let us say that 4 chetverts of wheat per person are necessary for subsistence: then in all 4000 chetverts are needed. Let us suppose that adult male agricultural workers form one-tenth of the population, that is, there are 100 workers on the land. Let us suppose that each of them produces 40 chetvert of wheat, in all 4000 chetvert of wheat will be produced. The population will have sufficient food.

"After twenty five years the population and the number of workers have doubled. The productive force of the new workers has decreased in the same proportion as the number of workers has increased, that is, two-fold. Thus if the first 100 workers produce 40 chetverts each, in all about 4000 chetverts, then the 100 new workers produce only 20 chetverts each, in all 2000 chetverts. The total quantity of corn for 2000 men will be 6000 chetverts; that is, for each inhabitant there will be only 3 chetverts instead of the former 4 chetverts. The quantity of food will be insufficient. Because of this shortage, vice and crime will arise. To avert this deficiency with its disastrous consequences it would be necessary to introduce agricultural improvements during these 25 years. What is the

extent of improvements necessary?

It is clear that agriculture must improve sufficiently to increase the production from 6000 chetverts to 8000 chetverts. Agricultural productivity must increase by $\frac{4}{3}$. (14)

Proceeding with this rate of growth Chernyshevskii calculates the increase in productivity that will be necessary during a period of 100 years to offset the gap between the increase of population and the increase in food production.

Period or the years	1860	1885	1910	1935	1960 etc.
level of agriculture	1.00 ($\frac{4}{3}$)	1.33 ($\frac{4}{3}$)	1.77 ($\frac{4}{3}$)	2.37 ($\frac{4}{3}$)	3.16 etc. (15)

From the above figures it can be seen that Chernyshevskii presupposes a 3.16 times growth of food production in the next hundred years after 1860. Chernyshevskii considered that if the rate of technological progress in the previous century (1760-1860) was a fair precedent, then it was not at all unreasonable to presuppose a ^{growth} 316% in agricultural productivity in the next 100 years, which is only 3.16% per annum.

He goes on to argue that even a much slighter increase in the general level of technology will suffice to prevent the Malthusian gap ever occurring.

"Let us assume that the population on January 1st of the first year was 1000, and that the agricultural workers of this population produced a certain amount of corn, sufficient to feed all the 1000 people reasonably well: that is, 1000 annual portions which we call cart-loads. Thus according to us, a reasonable annual provision for each man is a cart-load of corn. Let us assume that there were 100 agricultural workers among this population. It is evident that for the population to be well provided for, agricultural labour needs to produce

10 cart-loads of corn per worker.

Let us assume that with such an abundance of food, the population grows annually by 3% (this proportion is rather higher than that which doubles the population in 25 years). Thus by January 1st of the second year, the population will be 1030, and if the proportion of agricultural workers remains the same, there will be 1030 of them. If for 1000 men 1000 cart-loads of corn were needed, for 1030 men, 1030 cart-loads are needed. But according to Malthus' theory, the productivity of labour of additional workers will be less than that of the original workers. Malthus assumes that the reduction in productivity of the new labour is equal to the percentage of the growth of its quantity: or, if the proportion between the number of agricultural workers and that of the population is constant, to the percentage of the growth of the population. Thus the productivity of the new labour is related to that of the old as 100:103. According to this, what quantity of corn does the additional worker produce, if the original one produced 10 cart-loads?

$$X:10 = 100:103; \text{ this gives us } X = 9.7087.$$

Thus 3 additional workers will produce only 3 times 9.7087 = 29.1261 cart-loads instead of the 30 cart-loads which would have been necessary according to the previous measurement and in the second year for 1030 men, instead of 1030 cart-loads of corn there will only be 1029.1261.

"In order that instead of 1029.1261 cart-loads, the second year's harvest should give 1030 cart-loads, the productivity of the original workers must be raised above its previous quantity of 10 by as much as the required harvest, 1030 is greater than that of 1029.1261 which is obtained without improvements."

In other words, $X:10 = 1030 : 1029.1261$

From this we get $X = 10.00849\ldots$ "(16)

This means that the required level of improvement is 0.000849 or $\frac{1}{117}$ part of 1 per cent which would not only be easy to attain but could be surpassed to a very great extent with the improvement in the level of technology.

The mathematically minded reader will perhaps see that there is an error in these arguments. Chernyshevskii rightly admitted that his mathematics was weak.

Because of mathematical error, Chernyshevskii could not prove his point beyond any reasonable doubt and to an impartial reader it appears that these arguments assume what Chernyshevskii wants to prove.

In the last two arguments, Chernyshevskii is assuming that the productivity of added labour diminishes in the following manner:

$$\frac{\text{productivity of labour added in a given period}}{\text{average productivity of labour at the beginning of that period}} = \frac{\text{population before addition}}{\text{population after addition}}$$

This formula should be contrasted with the formula given above which leads to Malthus' conclusion that production increases arithmetically. The new formula leads in fact to a geometrical increase in production, albeit at a slower rate than the population increase. The shorter the period over which the formula is applied the more nearly the rate of increase of production reaches that of population.

If the formula is applied on a 25 year basis, the production growth of the first 4 or 5 periods is not very different from that given by the old formula. It would however greatly out-strip the former in later periods, since the increase is geometric, increasing by a factor of $\frac{3}{2}$ in each period.(17)

25 year period	1	2	3	4	5
Population at beginning of period	A	2A	4A	8A	16A
Addition to population in period		A	2A	4A	8A
Productivity of added population		$\frac{1}{2}Q$	$\frac{3}{8}Q$	$\frac{9}{32}Q$	$\frac{27}{128}Q$
Mean productivity in period		$\frac{3}{4}Q$	$\frac{9}{16}Q$	$\frac{27}{64}Q$	$\frac{81}{256}Q$
Production		$\frac{3}{2}AQ$	$\frac{9}{4}AQ$	$\frac{27}{8}AQ$	$\frac{81}{16}AQ$
Production (decimals)	AQ	1.5AQ	2.25AQ	3.375AQ	5.0625AQ

If the formula is applied on an annual basis, it amounts to an annual increase of production only $\frac{1}{11}\%$ less than that of the population as Chernyshevskii points out.

But this does not 'refute Malthus'. It simply shows that an apparently slight change in the mathematical formula for the way productivity diminished as population changes is in fact (because of the nature of compound interest) a major change. The only valid conclusion to be drawn from all the arithmetical calculations given by Chernyshevskii is that the rate at which production increases depends critically on the exact way in which the productivity of the added population falls. Since, as Chernyshevskii has pointed out, there was little evidence as to what this relation was, Malthus' argument has no sound empirical basis.

Events later in history have proved that rate of growth of food production exceeded, sometimes manifold, the rate of growth of population. Chernyshevskii, therefore, in spite of some logical confusion in his calculations was able to raise many doubts about the validity of Malthus' arguments. The pessimism contained in the analysis of Malthus was so all pervading in his time that people started to believe that they had nothing to live for. This pessimism was the main target of Chernyshevskii's criticism. His arguments were not only an attack on Malthus but also on the social

Darwinism which succeeded the Malthusian theory. Latter-day economic theories of population, though more logically presented, contained many of the arguments first put forward by Chernyshevskii in his critique of Malthus. By this extremely enlightening analysis, pointed out above, Chernyshevskii wanted to show that the entire theory of Malthus was in support of a society which was stagnant and which would remain so. If the society showed signs of progress by any means, then the people would show a tendency of multiplying beyond all proportions. That would make the earth too small to accommodate such a vast population in the future. On the other hand, if the society remains static and the population increased it would be immediately offset by deaths due to poverty, disease etc. The improvement of society or a thorough change of it was outside the scheme of Malthus. Society at the time of Malthus was predominantly feudal. The industrial revolution was, of course, making a considerable headway and the age-old feudal structure was showing signs of cracking. Malthus' 'Essay' appeared in this period of transition. Chernyshevskii therefore accused Malthus of being a reactionery, since the latter was afraid of a social change. (18) So, according to Chernyshevskii, the function of the Malthusian theory was to provide a new rationale to support the interests of the landed gentry.

Chernyshevskii also took pains to show that the growth of population that Malthus envisaged in the rural areas to exhaust the productivity of land, in fact changed its centre of gravity from the rural to urban areas. "In reality, the course of events was always of an opposite character. The urban population always increased more quickly in developing countries than the total population and at the same time the number of people pursuing non-agricultural occupations or not

pursuing any occupation at all grows more rapidly than the total number of agricultural population. The proportion of agriculturists in the composition of the population everywhere decreases with the increase of population and growth of civilisation. Let us look at ourselves. In the villages the proportion of people living by trade and not by tilling the land are increasing all the time. In small towns greater and greater proportions of inhabitants who were exclusively occupied with cultivation before are going over to other occupations. In general the city population is growing more rapidly than the total number of inhabitants of the empire. In all the countries which entered on the path of economic progress, the things went constantly in this way." (19)

After making this statement, Chernyshevskii showed by another set of numerical calculations how the deficit in the food production could be off-set in the face of increase in the number of urban population. For brevity's sake, and because of the fact that Chernyshevskii arrived at the same type of generalisation as in the earlier analysis, the calculations have been left out.*

(*) See Page 245.

(*) Chernyshevskii himself admitted his lack of competence in mathematics when he was in exile in Siberia. (Chernyshevskii v Sibiri. St Petersburg 1913, page 140-141) There was a controversy between Plekhanov and Antonov on the mathematical mistakes contained in Chernyshevskii's analysis of Malthus' argument. In his book N. G. Chernyshevskii published in 1909, Plekhanov quoted Chernyshevskii's own admission of his error in the numerical calculations in the above analysis. (In one of his treatises on Economics, 'Ocherki iz politicheskoi ekonomii - po Milliui', Chernyshevskii admits that even a student of a higher class of a school would know better mathematics than he did. (N. G. Chernyshevskii - Pol. sob. soch. Vol 9, page 743). But Plekhanov did not go into details concerning the mathematical soundness of Chernyshevskii's conclusions. One is inclined to think that Plekhanov avoided this issue, as the chapter in which the above quote was given dealt mainly with Chernyshevskii's life in Siberia. (G. V. Plekhanov - Izbrannye filosofskie proizvedeniya, Vol. 4 - Moscow - 1948, page 408). Antonov, on the other hand, accepted all the mathematical formulations of Chernyshevskii as absolutely correct: any criticism of them was unthinkable. Whether this was due to his anti-Marxist position or to his complete faith in Chernyshevskii cannot be inferred. He referred to Plekhanov as a man who showed a "shameful ignorance of arithmetic" (postydnogo neznanie arifmetiki) (M. Antonov - N. G. Chernyshevskii - Sotsial'no-filosofskie etiuudy, Moscow 1910 - Page 252). According to another Soviet commentator the mistakes in the calculations were first pointed out to Chernyshevskii by none other than Dobroliubov, his friend and collaborator. (Chernyshevskii - Pol. sob. soch. Moscow 1950, Vol. 9 page 919)

Chapter Five Chernyshevskii on Different Social
Formations with particular reference
to Capitalism

This chapter will be concerned with Chernyshevskii's critical remarks on slavery, feudalism and capitalism with special emphasis on his discussion of capitalism. An analysis of his arguments shows that his critique was intended to be a mere introduction to his own politico-economic theory of 'the toiling masses'.(1)

Slavery, according to him, was the most disadvantageous economic system in the whole history of human society. He identified any form of forced labour with slavery. "Anyone", he said "who has some familiarity with political economy knows this very well and so there is no need for us to dwell on this matter"(2). His reason for identifying these concepts was that in any social formation where there was forced labour (he had of course Russian serfdom in mind) the entire product belongs to the master. The master is in control of all three factors of production: land, capital and the person who toils to make production possible. The slave does not receive any share of the produce and stands in the same relation to the master as his cattle.(3) According to Chernyshevskii the same is true of serfs under feudalism. The position of the share croppers is quite different. This class is free and has definite rights to a portion of its produce.

In many of his arguments in political economy, Chernyshevskii emphasised the right of the producer to the fruits of his labour. He condemned slavery because this right was absent. In one of his well-known works on political economy he expressed the view that slavery cannot be

beneficial to society.(4) Gorlov, an economist and a contemporary of Chernyshevskii, had once expressed the view that slavery was beneficial for production under certain circumstances and, to prove his point, Gorlov had pointed out that after the abolition of slavery in the West Indies, the planters suffered heavy losses due to the diminished productivity of the emancipated workers. In reply to this argument, Chernyshevskii emphatically asserted that it was not the abolition of slavery but the lack of rational economic calculation which was the cause of this economic decline. "The poverty, of which the French planters complain was produced not by the emancipation of the negroes, but by the unreasonable conduct of the planters themselves in opposing emancipation and thus irritating the negroes"(5) Consequently, Chernyshevskii says, the planters had no right to complain about the laziness of the negroes. By their opposition to emancipation the planters placed themselves in a position in which they could not expect the slaves to work harder. Where the masters had not shown any inimical attitude towards emancipation, as in western Europe, there had not been under-utilisation of labour to any great extent.(6) According to Chernyshevskii, the downfall of slavery became imminent as soon as the masters realised that owning the three main factors of production was disadvantageous to them. Due to a gradual change in the productive processes, slavery became irrelevant. While describing feudalism, Chernyshevskii followed the physiocrats in designating the class of landlords as the highest in society. But the similarity ends here.

According to Chernyshevskii, in feudalism it became accepted that the landlords amassed wealth by force. The

theoreticians of the time idealised the application of such force. In Chernyshevskii's opinion, this caused external relations always to be relations of conflict during feudalism. At home the landlords enjoyed their rights to property by exercising their right to person: this was the essence of serfdom. "The nature of this condition (feudalism)", Chernyshevskii says "did not allow of high economic development and the science of economics was little developed ; but nevertheless, this period had its own economic theory. It (the theory) was expressed in the (assertion) that free men (the feudal landlords were the only ones who were free in the present understanding of the expression 'free men') should not pursue agriculture. They should only remain as consumers." (7) So, according to Chernyshevskii, every period (to be precise every social formation) has its own theory which, in the case of feudalism, justified the parasitic existence of the landlords. Accordingly, from the very logic of feudalism, all other people apart from the masters were destined to produce goods primarily for the consumption of the masters. The institution of feudalism was based on the principle of "take everything but do not give anything in return", which was mercantilism on the individual plane. Ultimately, the very foundation of feudalism started to disintegrate due to the increasing influence of the capitalists ('the middle class' in Chernyshevskii's terminology) in matters of state. In the meantime a revolutionary change in the productive processes was taking place and the 'middle class' was taking leadership in this transition to a better form of economic organisation in many countries of western Europe.

Chernyshevskii on Capitalism

Capitalism, according to Chernyshevskii, became dominant by the middle, and became very strong by the end, of the 17th century. "From the end of the 17th century", he says, "the tempo of progress became quicker, because civilization, which already had become more solid and successful than before, started to fight against conditions which were preventing its development".(8) According to him, feudal dominance, while declining politically in England, remained a powerful force in France, though both these countries had embarked on the capitalist mode of production at the same time. Speaking of the implication of the growth of capitalism in any country, Chernyshevskii observes that with the advent and growth of capitalism, a new theory in political economy was developed; at the same time the old theory which at one time was thought to be the only theory conceivable was abandoned. The new economic order was characterised by large scale production, trade and commerce on a massive scale, the establishment of large factories and other business establishments, and an extended role for banking and credit. Production under capitalism, according to Chernyshevskii, was distinguished from production under feudalism by the dominance of the market by a few large firms. These large concerns were capable of producing goods cheaper than the small scale ones because of the fullest division of labour, better machines and improved techniques of production..(9)

This was obviously a better situation than that prevalent in the days of feudalism; but Chernyshevskii adds that the main business of the new order was to increase the size of industrial establishments and to develop exchange.

In Chernyshevskii's opinion this is a concern of the people who dominate others in civilised countries, and, therefore, the theory upholding such a state of affairs was serving the cause of the inequitable accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few.(10) He adds further that the theoreticians of political economy of his time attached an exaggerated importance to exchange and distribution, like the mercantilists of the preceding era.(11)

But Chernyshevskii was quite emphatic about the progressive role of capitalism. In the feudal economy the landlords' whims were the deciding factor in the planning of production but in capitalism the advantage to the owner was the principal consideration. This was a more rational system. Capitalism also paved the way for large scale manufacture, thanks to the widening of markets and the rise of financial institutions like banks to help the expansion of production. Such development was unthinkable in the feudal era.(12) Chernyshevskii openly criticised those opponents of capitalism who advocated the merits of the ancient patriarchal regime and condemned competition and miserable conditions of the workers in capitalism. He asserted that the ancient order had its merits, no doubt, but that one has the duty to ask whether the system that is being condemned is inferior to that which is being eulogised.(13) There is no doubt in anyone's mind, he adds, that hired labour, which is the only form of labour under capitalism, is definitely an improvement over slavery. So, whenever one dreams of a utopia based on the revival of the ancient regime (14), one is actually thinking of a social order based on slavery. He also considered that competition was a definite improvement over production for consumption

by the masters where no attempt was made to pursue productive activities rationally. If it is the concept of competition itself that is causing misery, as he argues, it will not do any good to attempt to remove the miseries without altering the form of the economy. One will have to remove competition itself. According to Chernyshevskii, capitalism reached its zenith of development towards the end of the 17th century. Feudalism had reached the same stage of development in the 11th century. From the 13th century feudalism started to show signs of stagnation and in Chernyshevskii's view the same was true of capitalism in his time.(15) By comparing the development of feudalism with the development of capitalism, Chernyshevskii endeavours to refute the current opinion that capitalism was there to stay.

Chernyshevskii explained the relationship in capitalism between the landlords (the highest class), the capitalists, (the middle class) and the workers. The landlords were in possession of land, in his opinion, the most important factor of production. The capitalists, on the other hand, owned the working or circulating capital and dominated the sphere of industrial production. But the most important part in production was carried out by the workers (the 'simple people') (to use Chernyshevskii's expression) who, in his opinion, bore the brunt of the struggle between the landlords and the capitalists.(16) The cause of this struggle can be traced, according to Chernyshevskii, to the different attitude of these two classes towards the two important factors of production, land and capital. Whereas the highest class considered land the all-important factor, the capitalists did not attach importance to land and

considered capital the principal agent of production. This struggle was resolved historically in favour of the capitalists. "... firstly, " Chernyshevskii says, "if the middle class has not yet completely destroyed the independence of the highest class and has not completely absorbed it, if they have to carry on the struggle against them, they at least feel that they have the decisive superiority over them; every year in every country the middle class has been winning economic victories and has often brought defeat to its opponents."(17)

But the capitalists, according to Chernyshevskii, did not want to destroy the class of the landlords because they shared common interest. He clearly asserts the view held by many social and economic historians that in the first stage of the rise of the bourgeoisie as a class, the interest of this class and that of the landlords coincided in many ways. For example, some of the landlords became capitalists because of the new opportunities available to invest their accumulated wealth in the industries. Also many capitalists showed genuine interest in agricultural production. Chernyshevskii also pointed to family links and personal relations as a reason for the fusion of interest between these two classes.(18)

But Chernyshevskii states that despite this unity of interests there was also antagonism as to which class would dominate society. There was, however, no hostility in the sphere of distribution: on the contrary there was a marked alliance. The feudal landlords received rent without offering anything in exchange; the merchants, traders and factory owners acquired wealth through the market. The latter class transformed raw materials into finished products by the

application of labour and sold the goods on the market. The only function performed by the capitalists in this process is the investment of money.(19)

There is an apparent difference, in Chernyshevskii's opinion, between a capitalist and a landlord in the fact that the former compensates labour by money payment whereas the latter utilises forced labour. But in both cases the fruits of other's labour are appropriated unjustly. The owners of the factors of production, land and capital, enjoy an income far exceeding the value of their contribution to the process of production,(20) which value is in fact vested in the activity of the worker-producer. In the absence of any restriction, the capitalists and the landlords both attempt to acquire as large a share as possible of the value produced in a country at the expense of a natural distribution of income. In this respect, there was not the slightest clash of interest between the upper and the middle class; their interests coincided to form a bulwark against the workers.(21)

From the above observation, one can see that Chernyshevskii explicitly states the inevitable conflict of interest between the master and the worker in the capitalist form of production. He asserts that in a capitalist society there are two classes of people; the first grabs as much as it can of the fruits of the labour of the second and the second has no choice but to surrender a substantial portion of the value produced by his own labour. Chernyshevskii elucidates this as follows: "A factory owner in England, who, for example, earns an income of a thousand pounds a year, belongs to the class of smaller factory owners; but the labour of ten or twenty workers is needed to earn a profit of a thousand pounds. So, in respect of distribution of value, the society is divided into two groups, the economic

position of one of them is based on the fact that each member of this group acquires values produced by the labour of many persons of the second category; the economic position of persons of the second category is such that part of the value produced by the labour of each of its members falls into the hands of persons of the first category".(22)

Having pointed out the reason of a clash of interest between the master and the worker Chernyshevskii concludes that the outcome can only be a continuous struggle between the two classes. "It is evident," Chernyshevskii says, "what the relation of the interests of these two groups should be; one will want the increase and the other the decrease to zero of that part of the value which passes from persons of the second category to those of the first category".(23) He adds that this struggle of the workers to get their due share is a cause of the closer identification of interests between the capitalists and the landlords.

In clear and precise terms Chernyshevskii has put forward the reasons for class conflict in a capitalist society. He has also explained the economic basis of exploitation of the workers in such a society; it is, he asserts, in the interest of the owners of the means of production under capitalism to deprive the workers of their legitimate share of the fruits of their labour. The capitalist is in a perpetual state of war with his workers to increase his gain. The workers have no alternative but to fight ceaselessly to reduce capitalists' gain.

Chernyshevskii's criticism of the classical political economy of his time is a logical extension of his view of the class-nature of the society. The dominant economic theory, according to him, concerned itself with capital and wealth, and not with how these are acquired in a par-

ticular form of production. That is why, according to Chernyshevskii, this theory overlooked the conflict between the classes, and remained silent about the plight of the workers in capitalism, knowing full well that workers alone produce value.(24) "We have seen", Chernyshevskii says, "that in political life up to the present the common people have served simply as the instrument of the upper and the middle classes and have not had solid independent significance; in the same way the dominant economic theory regards the labour of simple people only as an instrument for the utilization by the master for the increase of his property and circulation of capital. We have seen that the upper and the middle classes have a direct interest in reducing the share of labour in the distribution of values, because their own share consists of a sum of products less the sum given away to the labour; hence the theory (Chernyshevskii refers to the political economy of his time) also says that products must belong to the owners of property and circulating capital and the workers should be given for subsistence only that part of the value produced by them which will be found possible, bearing in mind the interests of property and circulating capital under the influence of competition".(25)

This argument in support of the theory that the workers are engaged in a perpetual struggle with the capitalists, because they are deprived of the legitimate share of the value they produce, and his critique of the political economy of his time, have a close resemblance to the analysis of Marx, especially with respect to his theory of surplus value. Like Marx, Chernyshevskii points out that a worker's wage does not amount to the full value of the

produce of his labour. Whereas Marx examined the process of creation of surplus value by partitioning the labour time of an individual worker into time for earning his wage and time for creating surplus value for the capitalist, Chernyshevskii took the total value produced in a country at a given period as the starting point of his discussion. So Chernyshevskii's theory of exploitation is macroeconomic whereas that of Marx is microeconomic. Both were adherents of the labour theory of value and both stated implicitly or explicitly that this theory could be derived from the teachings of Adam Smith and Ricardo (with necessary modifications and corrections). The difference between the formulations of Marx and Chernyshevskii is in the emphasis. Whereas Marx had made a detailed analysis of the process in the formation of surplus value in production, Chernyshevskii's treatment of the subject is brief but illuminating.

Antonov, while supporting Chernyshevskii's theory of exploitation, has put forward a rather unusual criticism of Marx's theory of surplus value. After explaining Marx's theory of how surplus value is created, Antonov says: "In these arguments Marx supposes that a worker employs his labour for his wage only part of the working day and the remaining part for the capitalist creating a surplus value. So, Marx starts from the fact of exploitation of workers. Of course, this exploitation present in unearned income or surplus value is an undisputed fact, but it does not depend on the labour theory of value; on the contrary, the labour theory of value is based on the fact of surplus value. For this reason, the theory of socialism should and must start not from the labour theory of value but from the indisputable fact of exploitation of workers by the owners of the means of production".(26) According to

Antonov, Chernyshevskii's theory of socialism evolved directly from the concept of exploitation and not the other way round.(27) But this is incorrect, for Chernyshevskii on more than one occasion insisted that his theory of socialism (the theory of 'toilers') was a logical extension of the labour theory of value originally formulated by Adam Smith and developed further by David Ricardo. Moreover the idea of exploitation arose because of the conviction of some social thinkers that the transformation of raw materials into finished goods is possible only by the application of labour and hence labour is the creator of value. Therefore the profit of any concern is properly speaking due to the workers. The exploitation of the workers is a consequence of the creation of value by labour in particular socio-economic formations. Therefore, a theory of exploitation should be developed from the labour theory of value as Marx and Chernyshevskii have done and not the other way round. Perhaps Antonov, in his overzealousness to place Chernyshevskii on a higher plane than Marx as the more acceptable theoretician of economic exploitation, confused the logical ideas of cause and effect which were, doubtless, quite clear to both Marx and Chernyshevskii.

Capitalism and Competition

Chernyshevskii examined in detail the effects of competition in the capitalistic economy. According to him, capitalism and competition were inseparable. The theory of capitalism put great emphasis on competition as the moving force of all economic activities. This position, according to Chernyshevskii, is erroneous. "Competition gives us the result, but not the method by which the result is arrived at".(28) The true function of an economic theory,

according to him, is to be interested not only in the result but also in the process behind such results.

Elsewhere he admitted that competition was a much better medium of economic activity than the patriarchal form of the past. At the same time he said that in spite of this advantage, competition does not satisfy the conditions of an acceptable theory.(29) One of the main defects of competition is the absence of any information to the public about the productive process of the manufacturer, which is a closely guarded secret to every producer. Whatever information is available to the outsiders about any product is quite inadequate. "Under competition", Chernyshevskii says, "practice as well as theory are guarded secrets." (30) The result is that one producer takes a long time to find out the improved technique which another producer has discovered. In the market the goods of all producers arrive without any information to the buyers as to the improved or better techniques that in a given case may have gone into the production of the goods. In addition, cliques and intrigues among producers are very common because of economic advantage gained by keeping knowledge of certain productive processes secret. "So", Chernyshevskii contends, "under competition art is bound to be practised by unskilled men (and) knowledge (theory) is bound to be spread by ignorant people" (31) In these observations Chernyshevskii seeks to emphasize that the spread of knowledge will benefit society, whereas mystification will not. He expressed the opinion that a theory which justifies competition is only concerned with the exterior and not with the object itself. In other words, the theory of competition is not

so much concerned with determining a connection between the market price and the cost of an object (in the social sense) but just with the market price. "...But for the success of production it is necessary that the calculation bears on the cost of the object".(32) This is what Chernyshevskii considers to be the theoretical limitation of a theory based on competition. It should be borne in mind that 'cost of an object' Chernyshevskii always understood to mean a socially desirable cost and not the cost calculated according to the advantage of the producer.

Chernyshevskii then sets out to show the defects of competition in the practical sphere. The consequence of the application of the principle of competition, according to him, is economic and commercial crisis. Chernyshevskii outlines the reasons for such crises as follows: "Industrial hostilities between different countries, between different provinces of the same country, between different producers of the same province, between classes; too risky trade ventures which lead to industrial crises. ...All these harmful manifestations in practical life are based on the principle itself, on the very logic of competition".(33) In these lines Chernyshevskii tries to indicate the reasons for recurrence of economic crises under capitalism. Competition, according to him, though regarded by the theoreticians of capitalism as a means of healthy productive growth, is the cause of much harm to society. That is why Chernyshevskii criticises the optimism of the upholders of the principle of competition in the following way: "the dominant economic theory proclaims the supremacy of competition, that is, the concern of every producer is to undermine other

producers; but at the same time it shows that the welfare of every nation is increased by the welfare of other nations, because the richer the latter become the more goods they will buy from them. Similarly it shows that the more successful an industry is in a nation in general, the more advantageous will it be for every individual, the wider will be the internal market for its products and the greater the well-being of the society. But, preaching such solicitude for foreigners and people from outside as consumers, the dominant politico-economic theory does not see the possibility of averting ruinous internecine wars among the producers whose business is the same. Competition, as the instrument of this internecine war takes, among other things, the form of speculation, which constantly leads to unreasonable risks and commercial fraud; this attitude towards industrial and trading activities periodically produces economic crises in which a considerable part of the value produced perishes and during which the wage-earners undergo terrible sufferings".(34)

The working masses, that is to say, were bound to suffer in capitalism because competition was its underlying feature. The consequences of its development were ruinous for any country, especially for his own country.

Chernyshevskii concludes that in taking price rather than cost as the norm of calculation the theory of competition substitutes fiction for the real thing or as he says, "accidental consequences" replace real value in terms of human productive activity.(35) By "accidental consequences" Chernyshevskii means situations in which competition really works in ensuring the employment to

the masses and well-being of the nation. Since economic crises are the rule in capitalism, such/^{deviations} are accidental occurrences only. In order to introduce a more rational form of calculation in economic activities, a greater participation of the people was necessary. In the conditions prevailing in Chernyshevskii's time a handful of men only had the privilege of planning and executing the programmes of production and the great majority of the people were destined to part with their labour for the benefits of the few.(36) The great majority was indifferent to any sort of calculations for they themselves entered into them only as manipulated objects. Chernyshevskii asserted that a man could consider his work important only when he was able to calculate its value in respect of his own self. This statement implies that a worker is inspired to work only when he is the master of his own labour and, according to Chernyshevskii, a theory based on this principle has infinite possibilities for progress.

Chernyshevskii's other conclusion in respect of capitalism is that its advantages concern a social group (the capitalists) who, owing to its privileged position in society, enjoys the benefits of other people's skill, while lacking any of its own. According to Chernyshevskii, in capitalism the masters not only grab the labour of the workers but also their skill. In other words, the workers not only surrender their physical labour but also their intelligence to their employers and still do not receive any advantage from this sacrifice.

Chernyshevskii's critique of capitalism acquired a special significance in mid-19th century Russia when the

need to free the serfs became urgent, but when it was also clear to many that the abolition of serfdom would lead to a capitalistic development of the Russian economy. For Chernyshevskii such a prospect spelt the substitution of one type of misery for another. He sought to overcome feudalism and yet avoid capitalism. He wanted it both ways, and in pursuing them proposed an alternative form of social relations based on the ownership of the products of labour by the workers themselves. In this kind of society alone, according to him, could rational economic calculation be the guide to all productive activities. The next chapter will be devoted to an elucidation of the alternative form of social relations proposed by Chernyshevskii.

Chapter Six Political Economy of the Working Class and
Socialist Production

After condemning the oppression and exploitation of the poor masses by the society of his time, Chernyshevskii always endeavoured to present a picture of an alternative society based not on exploitation but on cooperation which would necessitate a change in the social structure and usher in a new era based on justice.(1) "If the character of processes of production changes," Chernyshevskii says, "the character of labour will certainly change too and consequently one should not be apprehensive about the fate of labour in the future. Its improvement is inevitable, as has been shown by the very development of the processes of production".(2) But how long a time would pass before this new society, free from exploitation, was created? Chernyshevskii only claims to discern the direction of a historical trend but resists predicting future historical events. In his opinion, there are so many factors of a complex nature involved in the genesis of any single historical event that the time of a future event cannot be determined with scientific precision. "In questions of the future," he states, "only the aim to which things are moving as they develop can be clearly seen, but it is impossible to guess with mathematical precision how much time is needed to attain this objective. Historical movement is accomplished under the influence of so many heterogeneous trends that it is possible only to see in which direction it is going, but its speed is subject to constant variation."(3) The social sciences could not give an answer to the question of when the existing structure will be replaced by a different one. Political economy could only

point out the eventual inevitability of such a change.

The theory that would be associated with and would serve the new era was termed by Chernyshevskii as the theory of the working class. The main emphasis of this theory would be on the distribution of value.(4) This particular aspect of political economy was his focal concern, because, as has been pointed out, he believed that only a proper distribution of income could maximise the well-being of man, and it was this that was his main aim.

While expounding the theory of the working class, Chernyshevskii asserted that this theory could be traced back to the writings of Adam Smith. "The principle," Chernyshevskii says, "of the most advantageous distribution, according to Adam Smith, is that all values are produced exclusively by labour and by the rule of rational thought, what is produced must belong to him who produced it."(5) In order to achieve this objective, the problem was to discover the means by which an economic structure could be established which would follow this rational pattern.

The theory of the working class, according to Chernyshevskii, is the antithesis of the theory of the capitalists because he regarded the latter theory as outmoded as well as unfair. The classical economists of Chernyshevskii's time did not see the need for a new theory. They were serving the cause of the past and were blind to the fact that their theories had no relevance to the conditions which were prevalent in their time.(6) A new theory, according to Chernyshevskii, arises from the elements of the past. The rationale of the new theory is as follows: "As in the history of society each later

phase is a development of the essentials of the previous phase and only discards facts which prevented a fuller manifestation of the basic aspirations of the nature of man; so in the development of theory, the later school usually accepts the essential conclusions which the former school arrived at: it develops the theory further, discarding conceptions contradictory to it, the incompatibility of which was not taken into account by the previous theory." (7) Proceeding from this premise, Chernyshevskii contends that classical economic theory reached a point from where it could be inferred that the most advantageous system of production is where the products of labour belong to the workers and the most advantageous distribution of value was that where value was distributed more or less equally among all members of society. Chernyshevskii's 'theory of the working class' takes productive labour as the main agent of fulfilment of these aims. He designated that labour as unproductive which did not produce goods to satisfy the primary needs of the human organism. The only way to maximise productive labour and minimise unproductive labour "was to distribute value equally amongst the members of the society." (8) This marked a decidedly new approach. In fact, none of the theoreticians of political economy of his time or before who championed the capitalist mode of production presented a scheme of the most advantageous distribution of value similar to that given by Chernyshevskii. He thought however that his theory of the working class was the logical extension of classical economy. One might think it a sign of weakness in his position not to have presented his theory of the working class as a new departure from the dominant theory of his time. But, here too, censorship consideration might have inhibited Chernyshevskii.

The basic differences between a worker in a working class society and a capitalist would be that the worker will apply all his energy and strength for production whereas a man owning capital has to rely on the labour of others and hence does not get maximum efficiency from them; the aim of production in a working class society would be for each to consume as much as he produces, whereas the aim of the capitalist is to sell the products to make a profit. Necessity would be the measuring rod of production in the working class, society, whereas the size of the market is the only criterion of production for the capitalist.(9) Chernyshevskii's presentation of the essential features of socialist production does not contain any trace of utopianism. Production according to need is the instituted principle of production and planning in the socialist countries of the present day world. It is no fault of the economic theory of socialism that in the socialist countries this principle has not always been upheld. This deficiency actually points to the need for further improvements in the system of production in these countries.

Chernyshevskii asserted that the socialist economy envisaged by him would be superior to capitalism in that there would be no harmful competition amongst individuals who were engaged in production in different capacities, such as (a) between the capitalist and the worker - the former endeavouring to maximise his profit at the expense of the latter, and the latter trying to resist this attempt and (b) between two workers for obtaining work, where the advantage of one is the ruin of the other.(10)

In the socialist economy proposed by Chernyshevskii, the methods of production would be improved by the joint

efforts of all the workers. Just as the capitalists are able to discover the means to maximise their profits, the workers will also be in a position to achieve maximum productivity through experience and initiative. This could be done by improving the quality of the instruments of production and raising the level of technology.(11) According to Chernyshevskii the workers will be inspired to effect improvements in the techniques of production. This inspiration is absent among the workers in capitalism. "Let us imagine a society," Chernyshevskii muses, "where 2000 dresses are necessary to satisfy its demands, which are produced by the labour of 6000 man-days; supposing that there are 300 man-days a year, we find that 20 men should be employed to make dresses. Let us imagine that not one of these twenty men finds advantage or opportunity to increase his production at the expense of others. In these circumstances should he desire an improvement in the production of dresses?"(12) Chernyshevskii emphasises the point that if one of the workers in a capitalistic system shows initiative in improving his own production the effect on another will be harmful because he will become unemployed if demand is constant.

In an economy of the working class the situation would be different. In the same field of production (dress making) every worker will be allotted the task of finishing, say, 50 pairs of dresses and according to the previous calculation 6 man-days of labour is necessary for each pair of dress. Since the improvement in the technique of production would not involve ruin to the others, the workers will be interested in curtailing total working time through the improvement of techniques. The result would be that instead of, say, 6 man-

days for making a pair of dresses, only 4 would be required and the remaining period could be spent on some other new field of work.(13) This, in Chernyshevskii's view, is possible only because cooperation is in the interest of the workers themselves.

Chernyshevskii on Tovarishchestvo*

Cooperation will be the foundation on which the future society will rest and production will occur in the framework of comradeship and association. Chernyshevskii predicted this as well as aspired towards it. Will this form of production be more successful than the capitalistic one? To this Chernyshevskii replies that he is not worried whether there will be more or less production under such a system.(14) His concern is to remove the inimical relationship between man and man and thus guarantee the well-being of the individual rather than merely to increase the production of wealth. Nonetheless, production was, according to Chernyshevskii, bound to be more successful in these circumstances because free people always produced more than slaves.(15) The relationship between capitalists and workers was always a relationship between masters and slaves. Freedom was an incentive to work harder, but in capitalism the workers were deprived of this incentive. "The success of production", Chernyshevskii says, "is proportional to the energy of labour, and the energy of

*Tovarishchestvo - Comradeship or friendship; Chernyshevskii refers to an economy founded on association and cooperation.

labour is proportional to the degree of participation of the workers in the products; so the condition most advantageous for production is when the entire product of labour belongs to the worker. The form of tovarishchestvo of the workers alone gives this opportunity to them and thus it must be recognised as the most successful form of production."(16)

The rationale of production under tovarishchestvo, would be proper planning of the utilisation of labour. If in a particular period there is a shortage of primary goods, then re-allocation of men and materials would be effected so that the disequilibrium in the supply of primary goods would be removed. As has been pointed out, Chernyshevskii believed that only when the demand for basic necessities has been met, should the society endeavour to produce goods for comfort or for luxury. Such would be the guiding principle in the production by tovarishchestvo. He explains this principle in the following way: "Let production per man-day be of value worth one ruble. Let the primary needs of the worker and his family be valued at 200 rubles per year. Let the society consist of 100 workers. Let 40 workers be engaged in the production of object of luxury. Then there remain 60 workers for the production of objects of primary necessity. They would produce value worth 1 ruble per day for 300 days - in all 15000 rubles worth of production of primary necessities, that is, for consumption every worker produces value worth 150 rubles, but the value worth 200 rubles is necessary for their well-being. It is clear that the workers will be in want.

"The independence of the workers means that they work for their own consumption. Consequently, so long as there

is not a sufficient amount of products of primary necessity available for their consumption, they will not carry out production of other goods. Let us suppose that in the system of tovarishchestvo the quality of labour deteriorates so that value worth 70 rubles only is produced in a man-day. On the other hand all the 100 workers labour in producing objects of primary necessity, the total production is worth 21000 rubles in 300 days, as every worker produces value worth 70 rubles a day. It is clear that every worker will have 210 rubles worth of goods of primary necessity when goods worth 200 rubles only are necessary for their well-being. It is clear that the society of the working class would have a surplus even under conditions of the supposedly deteriorated quality of labour; whereas before they had to suffer from want even under a supposedly better quality of labour."(17) Starting from a level of higher but unplanned production in capitalism, Chernyshevskii shows that even if there is less productivity in the future society, there will still be a surplus after meeting the basic needs of each man. Society, according to him, does not become poorer if there are fewer luxuries but becomes so only when there are not enough primary goods. Chernyshevskii contends that there will ultimately be an increased tempo of production in the whole society and that production will eventually exceed the level under capitalism. This improvement in the level of production will take place because the workers will be increasingly aware of the potential for producing more and will have the inspiration to do it.

Chernyshevskii asserted further that workers had exclusive rights to the products of their labour and that

this view was the logical outcome of Adam Smith's teaching. In Chernyshevskii's opinion, Adam Smith only succeeded in laying the foundation of this principle and the duty of developing it to its logical conclusion fell on the shoulders of his followers. But they did not perceive the implication of Adam Smith's formulation. Chernyshevskii contends that according to Adam Smith, value is created by labour and capital itself is the product of labour. So, "if all values and all types of capital are produced by labour, it is evident that labour is the only source of all types of production and every phrase about the participation of movable or immovable capital in production is just an indirect way of assigning this important role to labour. In this case labour should be the sole owner of the values produced." (18) Once again Chernyshevskii tries to convince his readers that the right of the workers to own the means of production can be found in the classical teachings of Adam Smith.

Chernyshevskii believed in a distinct advantage of socialist production (or production under tovarishchestvo) over capitalist production because the former precluded trade crises. The criterion of socialist production was not a market for its products but the needs of the community, which are very constant. "You can correctly calculate," Chernyshevskii says, "how much corn is needed for a certain family per week, per month, or per year; there must be dinner to-day and tomorrow. But it is not the same with the market: to-day there is a demand for hundreds and thousands of chetverts of corn or bales of cotton; a week later perhaps not a single chetvert of corn nor a single bale of cotton will be needed. The market does not move

with even steps like consumption; it is always in a state of feverish paroxysm and extreme energy alternates with complete lethargy. Finally, it is impossible to foresee well in advance the time or the length of these changes or the intensity of each of them. For this reason the production of capitalists is subject to continuous stagnation, and the entire economic order based not on consumption but on the market is subject to inevitable industrial and trading crises. As a result millions and tens of millions of working days are lost." (19)

Having shown the inevitability of an economic crisis under capitalism, Chernyshevskii insisted that in an economy based on tovarishchestvo this does not happen because this economy does not depend on the stability of the market. It is superior not only in securing the material well-being of man but also in respect of the efficiency of production. The ideologists of capitalism may not believe that a radical improvement in the economic and social order is possible. Such disbeliefs were not new, Chernyshevskii says. (20) During feudalism, many people, mainly its upholders, maintained that no better social order was possible. But history belied this. (21)

Thus, in the historical perspective capitalism was seen by Chernyshevskii as superior to feudalism, and socialism was in turn superior to its predecessor - capitalism. Similarly feudalism was an advance on slavery. (22) This periodisation of the economic history of society is of course, analogous to that of Marx and Engels, although he arrived at it quite independently of them. Chernyshevskii did not however put the same emphasis on the 'class-struggle' as the motive force of historical change. Also he was not

always consistent in his evaluation of the different phases of historical development, i.e. slavery, feudalism and capitalism. Whereas Marx and his followers contended that when a particular social order disintegrated, the new structure that evolved from the old was always more progressive than the preceding one, Chernyshevskii tended to discard a linear view of history and in some instances even saw later historical epochs as a step backward in relation to the earlier ones. In his article 'On the Causes of the Fall of Rome' (O prichinakh padeniya Rima) he maintained explicitly that feudalism was not an improvement on Roman society, that, indeed, Roman civilisation even in its worst days was better than feudalism in its best days. Feudalism by its nature spelt 'robbery' and internecine wars. It was responsible for the decline of civilisation(23)

A great importance was attached by Chernyshevskii to ideas in human progress. "Progress is based on intellectual development," he says, "its essential feature consists of the success in the growth of knowledge...The development of mathematics precedes the development of applied mechanics; and from applied mechanics evolve all manufacture and trade, and so on... Historical knowledge grows and with this growth false conceptions that prevent people from organising their social lives decrease and life improves... All types of intellectual labour are developed by ^{the} power of the human intellect. As people become more educated they acquire the habit and the eagerness to read and hence a greater number amongst them learn to organize their lives in an intelligent and orderly fashion, which leads to an all-round improvement of the country's life. ...The basic force of progress is science; the success of progress is proportional

to the degree of improvement in and the spread of knowledge."(24)

This may sound credulous, but, as Plekhanov rightly pointed out, Chernyshevskii was far from consistent in reducing social progress to the spread of reading matter. Indeed Chernyshevskii approvingly quoted Pliny's famous dictum 'latifundia perdidere Italium'(25). The article 'O prichinakh padeniya Rima' does give the impression that for Chernyshevskii human opinion governs the fate of the world. But Plekhanov underestimated another aspect of Chernyshevskii's position, namely his view that unless the well-being of all men in society is ensured, which was possible only under conditions of tovarishchestvo, any increase in the objects of art and culture would be self-defeating. In the last resort, no development of any aspect of human life, including intellectual culture, was conceivable for Chernyshevskii in the absence of man's material well-being. As for Chernyshevskii's somewhat derogatory assessment of feudalism, this could be seen as a reflection of the fact that Russian feudalism represented the most regressive force in contemporary Russia.

The New Theory and the Old Theory

While Chernyshevskii attacked the classical political economy of his time he also formulated his own theory of the working masses. He branded the contemporary classical politico-economic conceptions as obscurantist, because he believed them to have little if any bearing on reality; and its proponents refused to admit this. But he did not of course attribute obscurantism to Adam Smith and David Ricardo. He tried to build further on the foundation laid by these economists. "The previous theory proclaimed", Chernyshevskii says, "friendship between nations, because

the welfare of one nation was necessary for the well-being of another. The new theory applies the same principle of 'friendship' for every group of workers. The previous theory states: everything is produced by labour: the new theory adds: therefore everything must belong to labour; the previous theory said: that occupation is unproductive which does not increase the aggregate of values in society by its products; the new theory adds: no labour is productive apart from that which produces goods necessary for satisfying the needs of the society in conformity with a rational economy. The previous theory speaks of the freedom of labour, the new theory adds to this the independence of the workers."(26)

Well-being of the individual, production of goods to sustain it and freedom are the three constituent elements of Chernyshevskii's new theory of the workers. The transformation from capitalism to the new order depends, according to Chernyshevskii, on the 'morals of people' and other conditions which vary from place to place. 'Morals' denote the level of the people's consciousness of the need to change existing society. Chernyshevskii denied that socialism endangers the freedom of the individual.(27) Chernyshevskii believed that the dominant contemporary school of political economy failed to define precisely what is meant by freedom of the individual.(28)

In his view, real freedom of action will come only in a society based on tovarishohestvo since in such a society alone the freedom of one group will not be a restriction on that of another.(29)

A society based on tovarishchestvo, Chernyshevskii held, could be brought about with the help of the government.(30) But he did not make it clear whether he thought that the Tsarist government could carry out the task. He held no brief for Tsarism, as is well-known he exposed in whatever 'Aesopian' manner, the oppressive policy of the Russian government, especially in regard to the agrarian question. Tsarism was bankrupt, morally and politically (although he could not say this in so many words). Indeed, it can be inferred from Chernyshevskii's writings that he did not conceive of a society based on tovarishchestvo, except in terms of a new kind of state, i.e. in terms of overthrowing/^{the} Tsarist order. But at the same time Chernyshevskii did not ignore the fact that whatever economic development Russia had attained by the middle of the 19th century, it was to a significant extent due to government initiative. In England and France, the Industrial Revolution, and/^{the} economic expansion that followed from it, were largely the outcome of individual initiative. The government remained a relative spectator of the economic processes that were giving shape to industrial society. The state's role in the industrialization of these countries was negligible. In Russia, the situation was different. From the days of Peter the Great government took the initiative in many spheres of economic development. Even the measures of an economically conservative Kankrin during Nicholas I's reign were inspired and carried out by the government. Being aware of these circumstances, Chernyshevskii hoped, even if he did not expect, that the government might see the light and appreciate the merits of a society based on tovarishchestvo, because if for no

other reason, this kind of society was an improvement on capitalism and he knew that all the recent Tsarist governments dreaded the prospect of the development of capitalism in Russia and the creation of an urban proletariat which it entailed.

Nature of Tovarishchestvo

Chernyshevskii gives a picture of the ideal cooperative society or tovarishchestvo which he envisaged. A tovarishchestvo would comprise between 1500 and 2000 persons. The "director"s consent would be necessary before one applied for membership. Family men would be given preference over single persons.(31) With 400 to 500 families there would be 500 or more working hands in each association. Membership would be on a voluntary basis. Chernyshevskii considered this to be very important.(32) He also designed a number of curious provisions such as the government putting at the free disposal of the associations old buildings and assuming responsibility for their improvement. If not suitable for the association, new buildings could be built "without much difficulty." Apartments for the workers would be arranged according to their own wishes and their own notions of comfort.

Production would be carried out through planning on the basis of the needs of the association. Independence of the workers from the yoke of the capitalist method of production would make production more efficient, labour would be saved and there would be more for the loftier activities of life.(33) Chernyshevskii dwelt at some length on the character of labour in socialist production. "...Labour", he says, "is an activity of the brain and muscle as comprising the natural, inner needs of these

organs(!) which find pleasure in it and its outward result is the application of strength...to the production of objects ...which satisfy the needs of the human organism."(34)

According to Chernyshevskii work does not become onerous because it expends energy but because of "accidental, external circumstances", by which he meant the organisation of labour in his time. Workers would enjoy working hard in conditions of a more equitable organisation of labour, i.e., in production under tovarishchestvo.

As regards non-economic activity, Chernyshevskii recommended a wide range of facilities, such as churches, schools, theatres, concert halls and libraries which would enable members of an association to engage in cultural pursuits. There would also be an extended health service.

Chernyshevskii visualised two sectors of production, industrial and agricultural, according to conditions of particular regions. Machines and instruments would be bought from the funds of the association. A special feature of work in an association would be that each member will work in a field of his or her own interest as opposed to being compelled to work in a certain field in the capitalist mode of production.(35) Each worker would be under the guidance of the administrative soviet of his own region and the soviet's consent would be necessary in all important matters. Chernyshevskii believed that after a year's work each association would gather sufficient experience to administer its own units without interference of managers ('directors'). The role of managers would be decreased and an association would gain in autonomy in proportion to the increase in efficiency.(36) To the expected warning that autonomy would encourage laziness and lack of initiative

among the members of an association, Chernyshevskii replies that an organization aimed at the association's well-being and the well-being of its members will inspire to work harder, although "some laziness" is inevitable in any society, but, he assures us, it is bound to be minimal in a tovarishchestvo. (37)

Profit from any surplus produced, Chernyshevskii muses, would go partly towards the maintenance of churches, schools, hospitals and other social institutions and partly towards repayment of capital with interest. What remains would be kept as a reserve to meet any contingency that may arise. (38) The main profit would be distributed as dividends among the members of each association. After all, in the capitalist form of production, the capitalist earns a huge net profit for himself even after taking account of interest on capital, salaries and depreciation of assets and, in some cases, even after expenditure on schools, hospitals, and social institutions prior to ascertaining the net profit. There is no reason, according to Chernyshevskii, why there should not be a sufficient surplus in the more equitable and more efficient running of the association. (39)

Chernyshevskii's bright vistas in no way prevented him from closely analysing the special characteristics of the economic structure of tovarishchestvo and the principles underlying economic life under socialism. This principle is defined in terms of the equal distribution of the value between the members of the society, a planned distribution of the materials of production and a spontaneous application of labour to production. These measures, according to Chernyshevskii, could guarantee a balance between demand and supply. (40) Many of these ideas, it is true, appear utopian; yet no social plan for the future is possible

without a utopian element, as one author states: "no movement that sets out to change the world can do without its Utopia".(41) Chernyshevskii's scheme marks an important step forward towards such change.

Chernyshevskii's theory of the working class and theories of other European Utopian socialists

One of the most interesting points made by Chernyshevskii was the rejection of the idea of any sort of hired labour in socialism. In tovarishchestvo members are precluded from selling the labour to others. This condition is absent in the thinking of Saint-Simon, Fourier or Owen. Chernyshevskii and Saint-Simon both approached the economic system from the point of view of the producer and both regarded production not as an end in itself but as a means to guarantee social well-being. Both conceived a planned economy. The 'industrial system' of Saint-Simon has certain resemblances with Chernyshevskii's association of workers. In the 'organisateur' Saint-Simon had outlined an industrial parliament consisting of three chambers: chambers of invention, examination and execution. The first was composed of scientists, having only the responsibility of planning the annual programme of public works; the second was to be composed also of scientists but with responsibility of supervising the above projects and supervising education; the third was to consist of leaders of industry who would implement the projects and control the finance. Chernyshevskii's scheme is simpler and, in a way more realistic. He puts maximum emphasis on the consent of the members of the association in framing any policy. Saint-Simon and Chernyshevskii alike rejected the basic assumption of classical political economy that the interest of the indi-

viduals automatically coincided with the national interest. But Saint-Simon's 'Nouveau Christianisme' was intended to be a new religion; historically speaking this marked a step backward. Chernyshevskii's formula for a new socialist order was prompted by the inadequacies of the capitalist order in ensuring social well-being and was a radical corrective to this order.(42) Whereas Saint-Simon wanted to avert a conflict between the capitalist and the worker by creating a new 'organic state' based on property, Chernyshevskii always condemned the propertied class and asserted on numerous occasions that the interests of the propertied people and the workers were opposed to each other.(43) According to one author, "he (Saint-Simon) was a socialist only if socialism means the conscious direction and planning of the economic system from the centre."(44) Chernyshevskii's brand of socialism, on the contrary, was based on the principle of ownership of the means of production by the workers.

Robert Owen's practical experiment in New Lanark undoubtedly inspired Chernyshevskii in formulating his 'new theory'. But whereas Robert Owen's endeavour was a micro-experiment, Chernyshevskii's theory involved the whole society. He wanted to establish a 'New Lanark' on a national scale. The success of Robert Owen's scheme at a national level was to depend on a change of heart of the whole capitalistic class. The success of Chernyshevskii's scheme did not depend on the goodwill of the capitalists; he openly advocated the need of changing the social order, by force if necessary.

The success of Fourier's phalanxes was also made dependent by him on capitalists' generosity or change of the capitalist heart. Chernyshevskii, whatever the limita-

tions in his schemes could not be said to have entertained that kind of utopian dream. Saint-Simon, Fourier, Robert Owen all diagnosed the main social disease of their time correctly but their prescription for its remedy were unconvincing. Chernyshevskii was much less utopian, more realistic than his forerunners. This is born out by the fact that he spent the last 26 years of his life in prison and exile at the hands of those for whom his ideas were realistic enough to regard them as a real threat to the existing order.

Conclusion

In the body of the thesis, an attempt has been made to present Chernyshevskii's economic views on (a) the agrarian situation in his time and the abolition of serfdom; (b) social and economic development generally; (c) different social formations, particularly capitalism and (d) socialist production. An account of the contemporary economic, political and social conditions provides the context, the relevance of which becomes particularly apparant because Chernyshevskii was not a professional economist but essentially a polemical commentator on the economic trends and situations of his time.

I have endeavoured to present Chernyshevskii's economic formulations as faithfully as possible even where they contain technical flaws and misunderstandings. He raised many important problems and in some cases offered solutions, which, however unacceptable they may have proved to his contemporaries, must be regarded as a significant contribution to Russian economic theory and practice. But while little known outside Russia, the importance of this contribution goes beyond the Russian scene and occupies an impressive place in the development of economic doctrines generally. This is well illustrated by Chernyshevskii's polemic against Tengoborskii on the superiority of hired labour over forced labour. Similarly, although there was nothing new in Chernyshevskii's discussion of the diseconomy in the agricultural sector due to serfdom, he was the first to raise the problems of the existence of disguised unemployment in the rural sector. To prove his point he used data collected by government officials. This shows the

extent of professionalism in Chernyshevskii's approach to economic matters. He argued that the massive indebtedness of the landlords in Russia was caused not by their over-indulgence in luxury but by the inadequacies of an economy based on forced labour. This argument is more revealing than those put forward by later economic historians (for example Blum) who insisted that the landlords' extravagance was the principal cause of their indebtedness.

Chernyshevskii's analysis of the legal basis of serfdom and discussion of the landlord's practice of flouting the law are illuminating not only for the new facts presented but also in the economic argument he uses viz. the important argument that if the peasants in barshchina are forced to perform their three days labour for the landlord on the days most suitable for agriculture, then the national production suffers and for this the landlords and not the peasants are to be blamed. Similarly, his argument that excessive obrok destroys the initiative of the peasants and affects national economy is also absolutely correct. The same criticisms were made by liberals like Kavelin and Chicherin, but they then went on advocating the abolition of serfdom with redemption payments for both land and person, thus revealing a fundamental inconsistency in their thinking. On the other hand, Chernyshevskii's various redemption schemes are consistent with his analysis of the conditions of the peasantry. If one goes through his redemption schemes, it seems that Chernyshevskii darted from one position to another. In one instance he argues in favour

of a moderate scheme, in another he challenged the very basis of redemption by suggesting negative redemption payments; he characterises obrok as an excess of serfdom, but presents a scheme of redemption payment of persons to landlords. There is no doubt that there was a change in his attitude towards reform between 1858 and 1859, from being a supporter of compensation to the landlords (perhaps for the sake of expediency) to one where he questioned their right to any compensation. But even in articles published in 1859 (for example his 'Ustroistvo byta pomeschich'ikh krest'ian - truden li vykup zemli?') he envisaged moderate redemption payments and suggested schemes for such payments. One must conclude that these conflicting utterances were a camouflage to hoodwink the censorship. Anyone who has some familiarity with Chernyshevskii's radical views and knows about his life and activities in the days preceding his collaboration with and eventual editorship of Sovremennik will understand such tactics on his part. Only the naive will think that he also thought of the well-being of the landlords when formulating his schemes of redemption payments. The central theme in all his writings condemning serfdom is that the entire gentry as a class is superfluous in society.

The quality of his discussion of how to avoid an inflationary situation in the economy due to the increase in the stock of money needed to supplement government finance to pay compensation to the landlords (chapter 2, part 2) places him on a par with professional policy economists.

Throughout his economic writings he used only one criterion for the acceptability of any economic theory

or economic policy - the good of the maximum number of individuals in a society. He followed this criterion in all his articles on the agrarian situation or the reform when he spoke of the betterment of the conditions of the peasants who constituted the overwhelming majority in the society. One author has remarked: "He consistently favoured the many over the few, and he refused to allow general consideration of economic growth to overshadow a humanitarian concern for the material condition of the common people"(1). In his discussion on the superiority of communal ownership over private ownership (Chapter 1, part 3) his refutation of the arguments of his opponents (Vernadskii and the contributors in 'Ekonomicheskii ukazatel') was based mainly on this criterion. He did not deny that private form of ownership had contributed towards the greater technological progress in the west, but that alone was not sufficient to undermine his faith in the necessity of guaranteeing the welfare to the individual rather than raising the standard of the country's scientific and technological progress. There is no doubt that in presenting his views, some of the illustrations that he used were too simple and naive. In fact, if he had not used some of these illustrations, his arguments would have appealed more to sophisticated readers. But his journal Sovremennik catered for the layman and these illustrations helped the readers to understand his arguments. The substance of what he said is however exceedingly important, and any weakness in his presentation should be treated of secondary importance only, and in this way alone can full justice be done to Chernyshevskii.

In the period in which Chernyshevskii was brought up the miserable lot of the comm^{on} man was overlooked. He understood one basic quality of any economic theory, - i.e. that the theory is for men, not men for the theory. He successfully followed this principle while arguing against the upholders of private property. In his defense of the commune and ^{of} communal property, the main argument was that the economists of his time ('backward economists' to use his expression) were blind to the potential of the commune for guaranteeing the welfare of the people. Time and again he criticised J.B. Say as a prominent member of this 'backward' school. The main reason was that Say did not believe that it was any part of the economist's task to suggest remedies for economic maladies. "The role of an economist, like that of the savant, is not to give advice, but simply to observe, to analyse, to describe. He must be content to remain an impartial spectator." (2) Say wrote to Malthus in 1820: "what we owe to the public is to tell them how and why such and such a fact is the consequence of another. Whether the conclusion be welcomed or rejected, it is enough that the economist should have demonstrated its cause; but he must give no advice." (3) The conflict between Chernyshevskii and classical economists of his time centred around the right of an economist to pass a value judgement. While discussing the benefits of the commune, Chernyshevskii, on a number of occasions, came to this issue and branded his opponents as people with preconceived ideas abstracted from reality and with superstitions. (4) The burden of his criticism was indirectly recognised in the economic policies of welfare states in western Europe, Chernyshevskii therefore deserves

a mention for his insistence on an active role of an economist in social change, in guaranteeing the well-being of the people of a country.

While criticising the classical economists of his time, however, Chernyshevskii was outspoken in his praise for the classical economists Smith, Ricardo and even Malthus (though he rejected the Malthusian theory of population). The ideas of these economists opened up new paths of economic reasoning corresponding to the reality of their time, and he regarded them as pioneers in the field of political economy. But he would not contend himself with the view that generation after generation the same analysis was sufficient. He envisaged a different economic theory for changed historical circumstances.

His theory of social development in which he detected 'decisive moments' and 'intermediate moments' is extremely valuable. He was one of the few to put forward a theory of economic change which eschewed ready-made formulae and took account of the necessity and different needs of different situations. Some of his evidence referring especially to patterns of economic and social changes, are pertinent and interesting, although his illustrations from individual lives tend to be cumbersome and at times off the point.

Chernyshevskii suggested that a society can reach a phase of socialised production straightaway from a stage dependent mainly on agricultural production within a feudal framework. His argument was that contact between developed and undeveloped countries helps the latter to by-pass 'intermediate moments' of technological progress and reach a mature stage of development. He cites the

development of New Zealand as an instance of this. History has shown that the theory of social development in which contact between advanced and underdeveloped countries plays a crucial role is valid. After the second world war when many nations became free from colonial domination, and the question of economic development of these countries came into the forefront, the idea that there could be a non-capitalist path of development became a matter of a controversy in some of these countries. The main point that was raised was whether these countries were in a position to bring about a full-fledged capitalist development. If so, would capitalism be able to effect the re-organisation and improvement of these economies on a scale sufficient to secure the welfare of the people, considering that at the end of the period of colonial domination of these nations the people were living in a miserable condition? India is a case in point. After independence, the ruling Indian National Congress was split into two, one argued in favour of a non-capitalist path of development (Nehru gave passive support to this group) and the other believed in a free-enterprise capitalist economy (supported by Patel). The arguments that were put forward by both groups are significant. The proponents of a free-enterprise capitalist economy held that India was primarily an agricultural country and any plan of economic development must be a capitalistic one. The supporters of the first opinion held that, leaving aside the question of whether capitalistic development was desirable or not, this idea could not be entertained because of the time required to bring about economic development under capitalism in a poor and undeveloped

country, where the rate of investment of capital would be very low and where one of the ingredients of such development, that is, a foreign market, would not exist because of competition with advanced capitalist countries. They advocated an alternate plan for economic development which was a 'socialist pattern' of growth, envisaging in effect/^amixed economy with more emphasis on the nationalised than on the private sector. The argument of the majority group (the supporters of a 'socialist pattern of society') was that India, or for that matter any other underdeveloped country, was no longer isolated from the rest of the world. In spite of the fact that the creation of a sizeable nationalised sector was beyond the means of the government, other countries would come forward to help them with financial aid and technical know-how.

Consequently, a technological base would be established in a short time as a result of the contact between India and economically advanced countries. This is a validation of Chernyshevskii's position formulated a century in advance.

As has been mentioned, Chernyshevskii assumes that in political economy priority belongs to concrete men and their well-being. He protested against poverty and misery; against luxury in the midst of plenty. He advocated the equal distribution of what wealth there was. While doing so he came up against great names in political economy, but this did not deter him from presenting his idea of what he considered true national prosperity.

It has taken nearly two hundred years (if we take 1760 as the year marking the beginning of the industrial

revolution and capitalist development) for political economists to discard fully the idea of non-intervention and to come to the idea of the welfare state implemented in some European countries. The main reason behind such a change of attitude towards the welfare of the citizens of a country was the experience of economic crisis in which the ordinary people were placed in a pitiable position. The extensive social security system in many European countries, introduced after the Second World War, is a recognition of the fact that the well-being of ordinary men is not safe-guarded in unrestricted capitalism. Chernyshevskii raised this question of the need to guarantee minimum well-being of the individuals in a society long ago and that is why he presented his theory of socialist production as a replacement of the theory of capitalism.

His definition of political economy emphasised the need to produce material objects which should be equitably distributed. He agreed with Mill in condemning the idea accepted in some societies that possession of human beings as slaves or serfs should count as wealth. The accepted theories in Chernyshevskii's time regarded serfs as wealth to the landlords, and consequently the owners of this wealth had the 'wealth' at their mercy. His criticism of the accepted theory that forced labour was not a form of labour to be studied in political economy, is also interesting. If production means production for sale then, since forced labour contributed to a great extent to the production of goods for the market and the landlords earned a considerable amount

of profit from it, forced labour must be considered in political economy. Also the 'ancestral' and 'possessional' factories earned profit with the help of forced labour. If this is the situation why, Chernyshevskii asked, should forced labor not come under factors of production in politico-economic discussion? He also pointed to the existence of a large area of production for self-consumption in backward countries and contended that this production should also come within the ambit of politico-economic consideration.

Much has been said about Chernyshevskii's 'hypothetical method'. Scholars, both Soviet and western, have raised doubts about its validity. There is no doubt that this method has need of improvement. His examples are in some cases used to justify a pre-conceived notion. And the numerical evidence which he adduces is not always conclusive. But it must be noted that the 'hypothetical method' in the main was aimed at showing the implications and trends of interaction of certain economic variables in certain situations and Chernyshevskii has succeeded in doing so up to a point. As has been mentioned, ironically Plekhanov has criticised him for indulging in too much abstraction with little relevance to reality. But the 'hypothetical' illustrations Chernyshevskii used to show that more national wealth may lead to less well-being of the people or production on a farm will guarantee less advantage to its peasants than production under communal ownership, were by no means as irrelevant as it appeared to Plekhanov or might appear to us, for it reflected to some extent at least real situations in the Russian agrarian practise. It is true however that, as he himself

readily admitted, he was not well-equipped with mathematical knowledge to provide his theory with sufficient technical support.

Chernyshevskii's classification of productive and unproductive labour emphasises the well-being of the ordinary man. He did not make a distinction between goods and services. Any material object or service satisfying his criterion was treated as the outcome of productive labour. Chernyshevskii's choice of the criterion of productive labour arose from the needs of his time. Today, many underdeveloped countries could well pay attention to Chernyshevskii's emphasis on the benefit of utilising more productive labour, when these countries think of plans of economic growth; and his criterion of determining the quality of labour is equally valid. Too much emphasis is now being put on the idea of 'self-sufficiency' in the aggregative sense in these countries, which means sufficient production to meet the demand for all kinds of goods including those of luxury. But not enough attention is paid to determining whether there are sufficient goods to meet the primary need of the ordinary people. Moreover, if a nation is economically self-sufficient it does not follow that all the individuals in a country will be able to satisfy their needs, because purchasing power may be inequitably distributed. Chernyshevskii not only insisted that goods of primary necessity should be produced in sufficient quantity but insisted that all individuals must be in a position to be able to consume them; hence the necessity of an equitable distribution of income.

Chernyshevskii always criticised those who advocated the existing regime. His rejection of Hegel's political philosophy and admiration of Feuerbach's is a case in point. On the same basis he criticised Malthus' theory of population which led, in his view, to stagnation rather than ^{the} to change. His treatment of/Malthusian theory of population has its merits and defects. He was one of the first to challenge the validity of Malthus's prediction. He could not subscribe to the pessimistic view of the future contemplated by Malthus. He had always been a supporter and theoretical advocate of radical change. If the existing conditions seemed dismal, he thought it to be his duty to point to the future rather than come to terms with the present. But he discovered the ingredients of change for the better even in the desperate situation of the present. This was one of the main points of his attack against Malthus, and it occupies a considerable space in his Osnovaniya politicheskoi ekonomii. Another reason for his criticism of Malthus was that in his time 'social Darwinism' was creating many preconceptions designed to bolster up the existing order. Malthusian theory contributed greatly to the rise of 'social Darwinism'. Chernyshevskii regarded this as an ominous development endangering the 'real man' in the name of a spurious scientific theory. It may be noted however that he was an admirer of Malthus as an economist and believed that Malthus carried on the great tradition of Adam Smith. However, there are defects in his criticism of Malthus' theory of population. Chernyshevskii's lack of mathematical ability led to errors and confusions in his mathematical arguments.

In his discussion of different social formations Chernyshevskii did not adhere strictly to the views that each social formation is more preogressive than the preceding one. He did not condemn all the features of capitalism and recognised its positive contribution to the productive potential in his time. He did not of course believe that capitalism was a perennial or ineluctable phenomenon, and he was confident that it would be replaced by a society based on socialist principles. In fact, it was the one change that was inevitable in his view. He was not very specific in his economic writings whether deliberate action by the oppressed masses was necessary for the overthrow of capitalism, but, in view of the censorship, this is hardly surprising. But it was clear to him that a conflict between capitalists and workers for the major share of the value of produce in the country was a fact which could not be explained away, and he gave a striking analysis of this conflict. He also pointed out the effect of economic collusion between the rising bourgeoisie and the landlords and how this affected the interests of the workers. More often than not he used the expression 'common people' to denote the exploited class; he included not only the workers but also the peasants and other groups of people in this term and whenever he referred to the well-being of the individual, he was thinking of the individuals belonging to this group as comprising those who were engaged in productive work.

Chernyshevskii dealt at length with effects of competition in capitalism. He analysed the ill-effects of competition between employers and between workers and asserted that as a result of competition small firms

would go out of existence, and the people associated with them would be reduced to hired workers. Similarly, competition forces workers to sell their labour at a price much below the desired level and does not even then guarantee them employment. He quoted Turgot to second his conclusion that the miserable condition of the ordinary wage-earners should be sought in the competition among workers for work. The surprising part of Chernyshevskii's concept of capitalism is that he adhered to Quesnay's three class classification (although he attacked Quesnay for his support of the gentry's interest) and followed him in designating the landlords as the highest class (vychshee soslovie) but attaching the dominant role to the middle class.

In his theory of socialist production, Chernyshevskii tried to show the benefits of production based on workers' association (tovarishchestvo), while implying the necessity for economic planning in a country with limited resources. He emphasised the need to give the workers the incentive to produce more and believed that in an 'association' there will be more incentive to work for the betterment of the workers themselves and of their fellow-workers. He also developed a new theory of the 'toiling masses' as the framework for guiding the economic activities in a society based on association. As can be seen in one of Chernyshevskii's major works, Kapital i trud, the idea of workers' association was not conceived in terms of disparate units or of model cooperative but as a framework in which production is effected in the country as a whole. It is true, in his What is to be Done?

he depicted the virtues of a model cooperative, (5) resembling Robert Owen's utopian 'socialist' model. This, after all, was a novel in which practical elaboration gave way to imaginative design.

Looking at the plight of the majority of people in many underdeveloped countries where ambitious plans for growth^{are} formulated on the basis of western economic ideas, one cannot fail to notice the vast inequality in the standard of living between the privileged minority and the underprivileged majority of the people. The economists talk of increasing national income, maintaining a steady rate of growth and so forth, but the plight of concrete suffering men remains unalleviated. The only way this problem can be solved is to rely on Chernyshevskii's criterion for national prosperity, that is, the well-being of the ordinary human beings. This should be the first priority in any programme of economic development in the poor countries. This is the main lesson that one can learn, if one chooses to learn, from a study of Chernyshevskii's principal economic writings.

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- (16) Liashchenko op.cit. page 570 and Zaionchkovskii op.cit. page 48
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- (4) Ivaniukov op.cit. pages 22-24
- (5) Chernyshevskii N.G. O novykh usloviakh sel'skogo byta
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- (8) Leroy-Beaulieu Anatole See his Un homme d'etat Russe
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Miliutin and Alexander's attitude to him.
- (9) A transition period during which the peasants though
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period was eventually fixed at 12 years.

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